



Letter from New President Mary McGough Schultz

Greetings to all Celtic Women,

The Board of Celtic Women International is very happy to report that we have resolved the problems that had arisen within the last few years. With an overwhelmingly Midwest base, too many travel and financial constraints arose with non-Milwaukee meetings. But we are moving forward. At this point, our finances are in the black and we have several great ideas for enriching our future.

CWI's mission - to honor, celebrate and promote Celtic women and their heritage – has not changed. To that end, we will be partnering with other Celtic groups for mutual benefit and promoting gatherings, both large and small, of Celtic women throughout the USA, Canada and Europe. In addition to the small group meetings the Chicago chapter is sponsoring, we will be much more visible at Milwaukee's Irishfest and an active participant in Chicago's CelticFest in September.

The CWI Board invites all members to consider sharing their local celebrations with the membership. A Gathering of 10 or 200 accomplishes the same thing – sharing our joy and pride in our heritage.

Slainte,
Mary McGough Schultz



Letter from Peggy Cassidy, Outgoing President

As I finish my term as President and leave the Board of Directors, once again I reflect on how quickly time passes. Already it's a new year which means a "changing of the guard". Retiring from the Board of Directors after several years of service are Maureen Holland, Sheila Isakson and Catherine Crowe. They will be sorely missed by those of us who have served with them.

As President, Sheila Isakson guided the organization through a difficult transition period. She was also our expert on governance and how boards operate. Catherine Crowe chaired the 2003 Conference in Toronto. What a wonderful event that was thanks to the tremendous effort put forth by Catherine and her committee. Maureen Holland, with her holistic approach to things, brought fresh perspectives to the Board. Finishing her one year term on the Board, is Betsy McGovern.

While it is sad for continuing Board members to lose directors with whom we have worked so closely, the upside is that we now have the opportunity to work with other women equally as dedicated to the ideals of CWI. I am very pleased to welcome to the board Maureen Smith, Mary Schultz, Eileen Niehouse, Emily Isakson and Jean Whalen. All are longtime members of CWI and bring with them strong commitments, fresh ideas and needed skills. Some of these names will be familiar to members, the others will soon become familiar as we carry on the business of this organization.

Sound Financial Base

Probably the most important goal the the Board had set was to put CWI on a sound financial footing. While we ended 2004 in the black, the margin was only about \$600. This is not sufficient for us to accomplish our mission. We need to grow our membership as well as explore other funding opportunities.

Member Services

The Board is committed to growing the organization. To this end, efforts have been made to establish local chapters in Chicago (Maureen Smith) and Denver (Eileen Niehouse). Chicago is off to a promising start and you can read the local newsletters on the CWI website. Denver has had a slower start, but the interest and potential are there.

We continue to refine the member database. Our hope is to be able to define membership by geographic areas and identify the potential for local or regional chapters. The key to a vibrant organization is communication and interaction among members. One way to promote this would be through regional activities for members.

Check out the newly revamped website. Maureen Smith has used her talents and experience to update the site.

Participation

CWI exists to serve its members. Your active participation is needed to achieve our mission and goals.

Meet Your New Board Members

Eileen Niehouse

Eileen Niehouse hails from Denver, Colorado. She was "raised Irish" attending wakes and hoolies and taking Irish dance lessons way before Riverdance. She is a founding member of the notorious all-woman, all eclectic musical group, the Mother Folkers, and is known nationally as one of the very few guitarists specializing in finger-style guitar within the Irish music repertoire. Currently, she is expanding her repertoire of Irish ecclesiastical music and working on establishing a chapter of CWI in Denver.

Emily Isakson

Emily works as a physical therapist at St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center in Milwaukee. Her interests include music, movies, and sports. She is currently fixing up the house she bought last year – which features a "Harley - Irish" bar in the basement.

Jean Whalen

Jean has been busy most of her life! With three children and six grandchildren, she has still found the time to volunteer for health, history, and religion-based causes,

including now CWI. Her pastimes include reading (anything except mysteries and science fiction) and her beloved Chicago Cubs. She also follows professional and women's college basketball.

Mary McGough Schultze

Mary, a native Chicagoan, was born on the West Side, the oldest of seven. Now the mother of three, she has been a member of CWI since the second conference. A recently-retired librarian and teacher, she has been involved in Irish Dancing for 25 years.

Maureen Smith

Maureen Smith is fifth-generation Irish, born in Minnesota. Now living in Chicago, she is currently a database administrator/webmaster for Loyola University Chicago. Her interest in Celtic history, music and culture date back to her childhood.

A member of CWI since the third Conference last spring, she facilitated the start of a local Chicago-area CWI branch which offers monthly meetings and programs for area Celtic women. The branch is growing and developing, slowly but surely.

2005 CWI Board of Directors		
Rosemary Baumann Milwaukee, WI baumann@merr.com <i>Membership Committee</i>	Emily Isakson Milwaukee, WI <i>Secretary</i>	Mary McGough Schultze Schaumburg, IL mms2770@yahoo.com <i>President</i>
Patti Garrity Oconomowoc, WI garrity@mailbag.com	Gail McAleese Milwaukee, WI mcaleese@merr.com <i>Membership Committee</i>	Maureen Smith Chicago, IL msmith@luc.edu <i>Website</i>
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Eileen Niehouse Denver, Colorado madgrace@rmi <i>Newsletter</i>	CWI By-Laws provide for a Board of up to 12 members. The 2005 Board now stands at 10. It's not too late to nominate members to fill the remaining two spots, or for you to volunteer yourself! Contact any of the Board to express your interest in serving.	



Celtic Women International Membership

It's CWI membership renewal time - memberships run from January through December each year. Annual dues are \$25. Membership provides an opportunity to share in CWI's mission - to honor, celebrate and promote Celtic women and their heritage.

CWI membership:

- Entitles you to discount rates at CWI events.
- Makes you eligible for an elected office.
- Entitles you to participate in our own private CWI Yahoo Group and communicate with other CWI members on an informal - yet private and secure - basis.

- Receive quarterly CWI newsletters.
- Automatically makes you a member of our Chicago Branch or any local CWI Branch in your area.
- Meet other women in your area with similar interests
- A member of a global community of Celtic women

To join, complete and return the membership form included with this newsletter along with your \$25 dues. The membership form can also be downloaded from our website - just go to our website at www.celticwomen.org and click on **Membership** on the sidebar menu.

Participate

We are always seeking volunteers for committees. If you are interested in these areas, please contact the Board Members Committee Chair listed above.

Have You Checked Your Website Lately?



You can once again learn about:

- CWI Conferences
- Recipients of CWI Exceptional Celtic Woman Award
- CWI's current and recent newsletters

- Access the Yahoo newsgroup
- Download membership renewal forms
- Local CWI Branches
- Access the local CWI Branch websites, information, newsletters and calendars

Coming soon:

- Links to other Celtic organizations - please send us your favorites!
- A combined calendar showing all CWI and Local Branch upcoming gatherings

This site has all of the potential to become a wonderful source of communication between our members. Join up now. You must be a CWI member in order to subscribe. And here is your chance to be published: Send us your articles, stories, poems, books reviews, or other items you feel that CWI members would enjoy. Send them to madgrace@rmi.net

The CWI Yahoo Group

Want to keep in touch with other Celtic women? Subscribe to the CWI Yahoo Group! Start a conversation by posting a message - and receive responses to other members. Not too long ago, the Yahoo group generated a list of favorite movies submitted by different members:

Movies, Movies, Movies!

Our CWI Yahoo Group recently had a discussion of favorite movies featuring our Celtic locations and/or actors. Here is a short selection of suggestions for a list of titles to carry with you to the video store:

- Waking Ned Devine
- The Secret of Roan Inish
- Into the West

- The Dead
- Widow's Peak
- The Full Monty
- Local Hero
- Cal
- Veronica Guerin
- Rob Roy
- Michael Collins
- The Quiet Man

Are we missing five or six favorites of yours? Members can go to groups.yahoo.com and search for Celtic Women International to find the site and join up. There are some great book recommendations and even some recipes!

Seal Woman's Lament

Lulled by a sweet thrum
of waves on shelled strand,
tide running the shimmery reef,
moon full and cornsilk bright,
a shore wanderer on midsummer eve
unearths cockles and lugworms,
plentiful in the sandy bay.

Near waterline where streamlet
meets surf and the sheen sand
connects boulders on the point,
he detects a cry, a haunting keen
emerging from the sea
a groan like tortured slip hinges:
She Who Weeps.

He finds her, his selkie wife,
spared to the land,
cradled in rockweed
eyes desolate and blurred brown
crooning like a daft thrush
pining for her stolen skin:
Away to me, away to me.

He knows her despair
as he knows the sea,
her breath and blood still part of it,
skimming the swells like wind
spilling into her song, his love for her
a groping turmoil,
powerless to free her.

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News from Local Branches



Local branches in various stages of development now exist in Chicago, Denver, New Orleans, Toronto and Winona, MN.

Create a local CWI branch in your area!

Have a small group of women who share your Celtic interests? Got a teapot? ... some cookies or snacks? ... what are you waiting for? Why form a local CWI branch? Think in terms of a "gathering," and plan based on what works for you in your area. Here are some ideas:

- Gathering around a pre-existing Celtic event, such as a play, musical concert, or existing festival.
 - Book club that focuses on resources by or about Celtic women
 - Quarterly or monthly programs that feature a local Celtic expert, entertainer or speaker
- Travel group interested in Celtic sites, locations or tours
 - Work with your local arts council to help produced at Celtic Art Fest and invite the fine Celtic artists who are connected with CWI.
 - Throw a Celtic picnic and invite other area Celtic organizations to attend.

Contact CWI President Mary Schultze and let her know of your interest in setting up a local group for specific guidelines and requirements, and so that we can publicize your events to all CWI members in the newsletter and website.

News from the Chicago Local Branch

Each year, after coming home from a CWI conference, I wished that there was something local so I could keep on learning, could interact with more women who shared my Celtic interests, could feel more a part of my Celtic heritage.

Finally last spring, with the approval of CWI's Board of Directors, a small group of us - Dana McDermott and I - decided to plan a "trial meeting" featuring a formal presentation, tea pot and refreshments, slide presentation and lots of time to socialize. We sent out lots of invitations to current CWI members who reside in Illinois, to friends, to anyone we thought would be interested. The meeting's success encouraged us to go forward with a local CWI branch.

Rachel Riley, Mary Schultze, Diane McCarty, Kathie Ferran Rose and Linda Rosenfeld joined our small planning group, as we spent summer developing our fall schedule. To date we've had a lot of successes; we've also learned from some mistakes; we offered some truly incredible programs; and, most importantly, have connected with wonderful Celtic women.

Our recommendations to others who wish to start a local branch in their own area: Start small! You don't have to plan a huge, expensive event and attract a hundred people to have a very meaningful, fun and outright powerful function. Think about a dozen as your goal. Start with your own personal connections - they are the ones most likely to attend (at least early on). Take advantage of any free things - free meeting rooms (i.e., at libraries), free publicity (i.e., press releases to Irish radio programs as well as Irish or local newspapers), flyers, and local presenters who are willing to share their information and expertise (check with any colleges in your area!).



We offered a series of "Third Thursday" evening meetings, each featuring a formal program, plenty of socializing and networking. The formal programs were:

- September - the "senior ladies" (late teens) of the American Academy of Irish Music, who performed and shared their "stories" during a question and answer session. (see photo above)
- Claudia Traudt - "Yeats and his Ladies,"
- Janet Nolan - "Servants of the Poor: Teachers and Mobility in Ireland and Irish America."
- Patricia Monaghan - "Brigit: Goddess, Saint, Bridge."
- Susan Pellowe - "Cornish Saints and Bards" (photo at right)
- Vivian Williams - "Celtic Spirituality"
- Bernadette Moore - "Wearable Celtic Art: Ballyea Jewelry Designs" (upcoming May 19 program)

(more information about these programs may be found in our newsletters found on the CWI website - select Local Branches, click on Chicago, then newsletters.)

Book Review: The Pirate Queen: In Search of Grace O'Malley and Other Legendary Women of the Sea
BARBARA SJOHOLM. *Reviewed by Kathleen Cain, Previously published in The Bloomsbury Review*

On my first pilgrimage to Ireland in 1984, I wandered into the tourist office in Westport, County Mayo, and asked about "Gra-noola.." The startled young woman across the counter suppressed the urge to burst out laughing and politely inquired "And just how would be spelling that?" I was trying to say *Granuaile* (often pronounced GRANN-yuh-WALE), the name of the notorious Irish pirate queen...or Grace O'Malley, as English would have it. I was directed to Westport House, the O'Malley ancestral home. I loitered on the grounds of the vacant elegant house and looked out toward Clew Bay. At the time, "Gra-noola" was a footnote in Irish history. These days, Grace O'Malley is a cottage industry within Irish tourism. In twenty years, though, much serious research has focused on this fine fierce woman of the Irish seas, a contemporary of Elizabeth I whose credits include clan chieftain, merchant, mother, and, as Captain Jack Sparrow might say, "...Pirate...." Most notably, Anne Chambers has written a fine biography (*Granuaile: The Life and Times of Grace O'Malley*. Wolfhound Press. Dublin. rev. ed. 1998). Add to the list Barbara Sjöholm's pilgrim's tale in search of Grace and other women whose lives contributed to the maritime history of the North Atlantic.

Sjöholm (who changed her name from Wilson as a result of this journey; it means "sea-island" in Swedish [p.332-33]) set out to visit the places Grace O'Malley made famous. First stop: Clare Island and Grace's castle fortress:

But this castle had a sour, fusty, smell, the mortared walls pee-stained and scarred with initials. The stone-stairs that led to the rooms above had broken off at head level; a ladder lay in several pieces below....it was hard to imagine the castle and outbuildings full of life as the O'Malley clan entertained friends, relatives, and wandering bards and feasted....I tried to picture young Grace running through the yard.... (p.14)

Undaunted, she visits with local people and historians to discover a greater sense of Grace's enduring life and legend. She travels on, mostly by boat, all the way to Iceland in search of women whose lives were determined by the sea.

Other Resources About Grace O'Malley:

Granuaile: Ireland's Pirate Queen C. 1530-1603, Anne Chambers (non-fiction)

Pirate Queen : The Life of Grace O'Malley 1530-1603 by Judith Cook

Grania : She-King of the Irish Seas by Morgan Llywelyn (fiction)

The Wild Irish: A Novel of Elizabeth I and the Pirate O'Malley by Robin Maxwell

Grace O'Malley by Ann Moore

Rebel sea queen;: The story of Grace O'Malley, by Helen O'Clery

She's met with stern looks when she inquires about these women in libraries, museums, and research centers—and even sterner words: "Women didn't go to the fishing." (p.134) She persists. She finds sea goddesses whose stories still hover around Scotland (p.44). Her understanding of how female deities were transformed into witches deepens in the Orkney Islands (p.57). Also in the Orkneys she documents historical traces of very human women, including Janet Forsyth, the "Storm Witch of Westray" (p.70), whose prowess at the prow earned her a trial for witchcraft. Then there's the "Herring Lassies"—young, single women who followed the herring migrations during the 1930s; a viable, necessary part of the fishing industry (p.79). Not an overly romantic occupation, gutting fish all day in record-breaking time, but proof of ability and independence—and a way of going to the fishing.

Since hers is a journey within a journey, that of the clearly determined pilgrim humbled before all she finds, Sjöholm generously shares the "fishing" her travels entail—navigating through paths where legend and history diverge; trolling for local historians, even relatives, in bleak and cold little towns. Refusing any windy words that turn her back she is searching for the women who fished, sailed, skippered and contribute to the maritime life along the coasts of the northern lands. Whether it's outwitting a cranky landlady or finding a great-great-grandniece willing to share the family history of the Sami (Lapp) woman captain known as "Trouser Beret," (p.285), Sjöholm tells her own sea tales in crisp and saucy prose that makes each chapter a mini adventure. She features heroines and anti-heroines alike. "Turkish Gudda" (Gudríd Simonardóttir) (p.194+) was kidnapped in Iceland by Corsairs from Algiers and held captive for nine years before buying her way back to freedom and home. Freydís, (sp. p.228), the apparently frightful, ax-wielding sister of Leif Eirícksson (sp. p.228) still sports a reputation akin to that of Lizzie Borden, to whom Sjöholm questioningly compares her. My favorite was Aud the Deep-Minded, whose tale derives from two main sources of Icelandic history (p.183). Having fled with her father from Norway to Scotland after he and her son were killed, Aud secretly built a ship in the forest. When the time came, she loaded it with all she needed for the journey, including her surviving kinfolk, to join her brothers in Iceland. (pp.182-183). Refused by one, she was welcomed by the other, near whom she settled her large retinue. She became the ruling matriarch and passed along her lands and wealth when she died, in a generous and graceful way (pp.188-189). But Aud is just one of the many women whose stories Sjöholm brings to the surface.

Appropriately enough, the pilgrimage ends at Westport House, currently owned by Jeremy Brown, Lord

Altamont, the eleventh Marquess of Sligo and the thirteenth great-grandson of Grace O'Malley (p. 325). Here, as a statue is dedicated to Grace O'Malley, Sjöholm provides an appropriate meditation upon Grace's life and a closing invocation for her own journey. A great read all-around (perfect for slashingly cold and windy weather) and a perfectly suitable source for any undergraduate course in women's studies or women's history—and certainly of maritime history—a rising tide of proof that women, indeed, did “go to the fishing” (to say the least!).

Kathleen Cain, 6636 Fenton Street, Arvada, CO 80003-4344, 303-424-2452, email: bmdk65a@prodigy.net

The Pirate Queen: In Search of Grace O'Malley and Other Legendary Women of the Sea, BARBARA SJOHOLM. Seal Press, \$15.95 paper, ISBN 1-58005-109-X.



“Pilgrimage” by Cynthia Matyi

Article originally published in CWI - Local Chicago Branch December 2004 newsletter.

Artist **Cynthia Matyi** continues to create stunning oil paintings incorporating Celtic knots, spirals and other motifs as language which is both ancient and very contemporary. Her display at Milwaukee's Irish Fest this summer in the Moore St. Market Cultural tent, drew gasps from viewers who hardly expected to see such complex, colorful, intense pieces of art at the festival. Some even told Cindy that her work has healing powers. As a two-time cancer survivor, Cindy will at least agree with the healing power creative work can have on anyone involved.

New works from this artist in the past year have also been shown in Virginia and Ohio. She pushes the envelope of Celtic art, both in composition, theme and a multi-dimensional, surrealist approach. Her latest, called **Pilgrimage**, was inspired by a new book from spiritual author Edward Sellner.

The ancient practice of pilgrimage, or sacred journey, is as relevant today as it was in medieval times. It is symbolic of the journey of the soul, transforming, awakening and healing the pilgrim who travels through unfamiliar lands. This image depicts many who have made journeys in search of enlightenment or meaning -from the Irish St. Brendan the Navigator whose quote is seen in the upper left, to the 5th century Spanish nun, Egeria, to the Holy Roman Emperor, Charlemagne. English noblewoman Margery Kempe with her children, St. Francis of Assisi, Chinese pilgrims Fa-hsien and Hsuan-tsang, Gerald of Wales, Helena, the mother of Constantine, Muhammad, founder of Islam and Columbanus, the great Irish missionary are also seen in this panorama of pilgrims.

Celtic knotwork in the painting suggests the style of an illuminated manuscript. The scallop-shells seen on the left, are a universal symbol of pilgrimage originally linked with St. James and the pilgrims visiting his shrine at Santiago de Compostela, and the word “Imrama” seen in the lower right signifies Spiritual Journey.

This painting is now available as a Giclee print on canvas and in greeting card. Please contact the artist by e-mail at matyi@fuse.net for details or visit her website: <http://home.fuse.net/smatyi/bkgd.htm>

Share Your Events

We would love to include your articles, stories, poems, recipes, Celtic links, favorites and other items. Please let us also know of any upcoming celtic events! Just e-mail your items to Eileen Niehouse at madgrace@rmi.net. This newsletter will become much more interesting if there is plenty of input from all of you. Our next issue is scheduled to be out (gasp!) in mid-summer. A deluge of interesting material will, of course, ensure that it will come out on time!

Thanks to our contributing writers for this issue: Peggy Cassidy, Mary McGough Schultze, Cheryl Loetscher, Susan Pellowe, Kathleen Cain, Cynthia Matyi and Margaret O'Hara.

ST PIRAN'S RETURN TO CORNWALL

Written by Susan Pellowe for the Illinois Cornish Society Newsletter and used with her permission

In cooperation with sculptor Peter Walker, the Parish of Perranzabuloe in North Cornwall is in the process of bringing St Piran back to the site where, legend tells us, he miraculously came ashore after being tied to a millstone and set adrift from Ireland. A life sized bronze statue of the saint will be located in the parish and will become a major focal point for the heritage of the area. This will be a welcome sight to all those interested in seeing the preservation and celebration of all that is Cornish.

The life-sized statue – expected to be unveiled in 2006 – will rise eight to ten feet high when it is placed on its plinth. In order to fund the casting and installation of the statue, Mr Walker has created a small scale version of the final sculpture; a limited edition of eighty copies will be available at an affordable price. For more information, contact Peter Walker at pwalkersculptor@msn.com.

Peter Walker has produced a number of major sculptures and is currently working towards the creation of further monumental works. His public work includes a monument to Sir Izaak Walton (author of *The Compleat Angler*) and a recently completed fourteen foot statue of the goddess Isis in Staffordshire. His sculptures have been exhibited widely. He worked on The Eden Project, and his work is in a number of important collections, including The National Maritime Museum Cornwall.



Sue Pellowe displaying her Cornish bardic robes at local Chicago CWI branch meeting

Brehon Law

First of a series of articles published in the CWI Local Chicago Branch newsletters from an article, "Women of Equal Dignity," written by Margaret O'Hara and published in the CARN, the journal of the Celtic League. This issue will set the stage for future newsletter articles.

Women Among the Celts

"Women of equal dignity", "Wife of equal lordship", "Wife of equal rank," - such are the terms ancient Irish law uses to describe the status of women.

As these descriptions indicate, the status of women was very high in Celtic countries. In fact the laws of Ireland and Wales gave more rights and protection to women than any other western law code at that time or since. Equal pay for work of equal value, "wages for house-work," protection from violence, equitable separation laws, the right of both spouses to respect and fidelity - such were Celtic women's rights under native law.

We know of these rights mainly because a few copies of early Irish law, known as Brehon Law, survived the tremendous destruction of Gaelic books in the early modern era. These laws differ greatly from modern law codes. For one thing, Irish law was customary. Laws were not "made" by kings or legislatures; rather they were statements of practices common when laws were codified. Because of this it is necessary to know something about the Ireland of 1,000-1,500 years ago, when these customary laws were first written down.

First and foremost, Ireland was tribal. This meant that everyone, from tenant to lord, owed their loyalty first of all to a group, such as a family or clan, not a person. Likewise, land belonged ultimately to the tribe. Although

individual families worked and profited from their farms, tribal land could not be sold to outsiders. It was an important duty of all tribe members to keep tribal lands intact. And, in return, "It is one of the duties of the tribe to support her tribesmen." The tribe took care of members who had no one to care for them in old age, sickness or time of need. No tribe member, unless declared an outlaw, had to fear being left alone in time of trouble.

Although communal, Irish society was by no means egalitarian. The class system was extremely important, ranging from slaves to the warrior classes. Celtic society, however, had not always been so stratified. Before 500 BC Celtic tribes seem to have been classless. Around then chieftain classes emerged which became arrogant, proud of their class and contemptuous of inferiors - a universal picture of what privilege and a sense of elitism does to human nature. Compared to Irish privileged classes of later eras, however, they were much more socially responsible, for in no way did they have the power they had in more "civilized" times.

This, then is the society reflected in the law codes - where the state is almost non-existent, kinship is the most important bond among people and where community is still organized basically from the bottom up. These laws were transmitted in secular law schools by professional jurists (brehons), a profession open to women, several of whom like "Brigh Ambui, a female author of wisdom and prudence among the men of Erin," are referred to in the law codes.

Excerpts from Margaret's article in future newsletters will examine the main principles behind Brehon Law and how they pertained to women.

