



september
11-12, 2026

IRISH ROOTS, AMERICAN SPIRIT



Welcome to the
**EMERALD
ISLE**

Irish Féile

A Celebration of Beaver Island's Irish
Heritage, Culture, & Music



Thank you for attending the 6th annual Emerald Isle Irish Féile. We're glad you have taken the time to travel to the most remote inhabited Island in the Great Lakes to help us celebrate the most amazing authentic connection our Island shares with Ireland's Arranmore Island. We are excited that what started in 2019 as a simple festival has grown to become a recognized pillar of Irish and Celtic festivals in the USA. We are honored to welcome the Arranmore Pipe Band back to Beaver Island!

In 2024 our festival became one part of our newly formed 501(c)3 nonprofit organization: The Beaver Island Irish Heritage Group. While the Féile remains the cornerstone of the group's work, the scope has expanded to include sponsorship of cultural activities throughout the year, adoption of the Irish Currach Club of Beaver Island and sponsoring a podcast, The Tides that Tie, among other things.

You can view our Annual Report and Strategic Plan here:



SCAN ME

We hope you enjoy the music, dancing, activities and culture at this year's festival! We would like to thank our many sponsors, donors and of course, our many volunteers who make this festival so special.

Thank you for attending – Enjoy the Craic!

Paul Cole and Kitty McNamara

Board of Directors:

Chairperson: Paul Cole
Vice Chairperson: Angel Welke
Secretary: Marlaina Cole
Treasurer: Shannon McDonough

Trustees: Bailey McDonough, Barry McDonough, Catherine Meintsma, Linda Wearn, Brian Williams, Tory Fingerle

Supporting Staff: Kathleen McNamara, Executive Director and Festival Coordinator; Katie Johnson, Bookkeeper; Christopher Sorensen, Administrative Assistant

GET FED

There are many options for food and drink on Beaver Island. There is everything from vending machine food to fine dining.



Scan this QR Code
and click on the
Food and Drink
tab for all the
details.

CALLING OF The Clans

BRAGGING RIGHTS:

#1	#2	#3
Green(e) Clan	McDonough Clan	Connaghan Clan

Thank you to the clan supporters:

Boyle, Cairdeas, Connaghan, Cull, Donegal Bay, Devlin, Dunlevy, Gillespie, Green/Greene, Gregg, Heller/Perdue, Kirkwood/Florida, Martin, McCafferty, McCauley/Malloy, McDonough and O'Donnell

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE 2027 FÉILE SEPTEMBER 10 & 11!



2026 FESTIVAL Sponsors

EMERALD ISLE SPONSORS



LYONS MARINE
CONSTRUCTION

EJ HODGSON
ENTERPRISES

Mary Beth Kur
Attorney at Law
231-348-3200

 **McDonough's
Market, Inc.**

*Weathervane
Terrace Inn
& Suites*

ARRANMORE ISLAND SPONSORS

The Jerry
Mitchell family



GREENWALD & B.C. INC.
GENERAL CONTRACTORS



Island Energies
& Circle M



DONEGAL BAY SPONSORS

Blarney Castle Oil Co.
Harbor View Motel
McDonough Construction
Kitty McNamara & Mike Green
Lita Popke
Beaver Island Chamber of Commerce
Whiskey Point Brewing Company
Beaver Island Golf Course
Power's Do It Best Hardware
Sullivan's Irish Alley
Keith Grassmick
Neane Smith
J Bird Provisions
Long Road Distillers
Burton Rentals
Carol Geskus
Beaver Island Septic Services
Meintsma Family

PARADISE BAY SPONSORS

Michigan Traditional Arts Program - MSU
Bingham Insurance
Ace Hardware Charlevoix
Roberta Welke
Bartletts Home Interiors
Linda Wearn
Charlevoix Elks
Beaver Island Elks Lodge
Paradise Bay Coffee Shop
Paradise Bay Dive Shop
Paradise Bay Retreat
Advanced Acupuncture & Massage
Wojan Window & Door
Jim Wojan Excavating
Shipwreck's Shirt & Beaver Gems
Erin Motel
Jeff and Nancy Traudt
Beaver Island Retreat
Chris and Michelle Sorensen
Beaver Island Gallery
Beaver Island Performing Arts Alliance

HOME HOSTS & VEHICLES

Audrey VanDyke
Bill and Tammy McDonough
Brian and Sue Williams
Carol Gillespie
Dan and Carol Burton
Deb and John Robert
Glenn Hendrix
Kim Mitchell
Laura and Rich Gillespie
Leslie Cunningham
Lisa Gillespie
Lois and Kevin Stipp
Lu and Tim OConnor
Mike and Molly Weede
Mike and Patty McKonley
Terry Hodges
Ryan Wojan

MADE POSSIBLE BY GRANTS FROM:



2026 FESTIVAL Bands/Talent

Altan

On the road for 40 years, Altan has carried the music of County Donegal around the world, Irish-language songs, soaring fiddles, and the spirit of a place woven through every tune. After four decades, Altan remains at the forefront of traditional Irish music, blending the raw energy of their native Donegal fiddle style with a rare melodic sensibility.



Bastard Bearded Irishmen

Bastard Bearded Irishmen are a Celtic rock band from Pittsburgh, PA. Combining high-energy modern punk rock with traditional Irish folk roots, their unique sound is an original, ferocious blend of traditional and contemporary Celtic music, mixed with punk, gypsy and high-energy rock n' roll.



Danny Gillespie & Friends

Danny Gillespie is a Beaver Island native and BI Irish American Hall of Fame member. Influenced by his musician parents and other island legends, Danny has become a staple of entertainment for generations through performances at various venues. The group includes Brother Jim Boynton, skilled in fiddle, tin whistle, and vocals, as well as Shawnie McDonough on banjo and vocals, with occasional appearances by Timmy Baker and Jackson Smith.



The Arranmore Pipe Band

Since 1933, the Arranmore Pipe Band has been the heartbeat of Arranmore Island — carrying their music through parades, remembrance, Easter celebrations, and St. Patrick's Day. For generations, their pipers and drummers have lifted spirits, united their community, and told the world: We are here. The band made its first arrival here to Beaver Island three years ago, as they performed while coming off the ferry. It was an emotional sight for all that attended, and we're thrilled to have them return this year.



The Kreellers

The Kreellers are a Celtic roots rock band out of the Motor City, blending Irish tradition with a gritty Detroit edge. Fueled by driving rhythms, rich melodies, and a modern folk-rock sound, they deliver a powerful live experience built for festival stages and concert crowds. From reimagined classics to original tunes, The Kreellers bring a bold, authentic sound that stands out wherever they play.



Roane

Roane's unique twist on traditional and original compositions have earned them a devoted following. Roane is a 6 member band, with a driving acoustic sound and soaring vocal harmonies. Roane will be playing several times during the festival as well as hosting a **Celtic Vocal Workshop on Friday.**



Jerry Early Arranmore Friends

Jerry Early is an Irish singer and songwriter from Arranmore Island, and this group has become a staple at our festival! Jerry is supported by (some might say propped up by) the awesome Anne Connaghan and her husband John Flanagan, and singer John Gallagher. They are known for storytelling, folk melodies, and great singalongs. These musicians put their all into our festival and provide authenticity and a direct link to Arranmore Island.



Enda Reilly

From Dublin, Ireland and now living in Michigan, Enda Reilly's shows delight, educate and entertain with fresh guitar and vocal arrangements of Celtic folk and original songs. A winner of the prestigious IMRO Christie Hennessy Songwriting Competition and co-writer of "All Along The Wild Atlantic Way", which got to #1 in Ireland. Blending old songs with brand new original songs to give both a traditional and fresh authentic flavor to his programs, Enda brings these gems to life with great skill on guitar, the Irish drum or Bodhrán (bowdrum) and live looping.



Latency

Bridging Arranmore and Beaver Island with one shared heartbeat, Latency brings together exceptional musicians whose roots run deep on both shores. Featuring Hilary Palmer and Shawn McDonough, Latency lands on Beaver Island with a sound that is fresh, grounded, and true to the idea of Two Islands, One Soul.



Stay Happy Band

Returning to the Féile this year is the Stay Happy Band. Grown straight from the roots of Beaver Island, this family band performs a mix of traditional Beaver Island songs & Irish ballads, sprinkled with a little old time country. Add in the talent of Michigan fiddler, Ruby John, and you've got a set that will not only keep your toes tappin', but represents the long musical history of Beaver Island.



Catriona Kennedy

With deep family roots in Donegal, Catriona Kennedy is a gifted traditional fiddle player who has been immersed in Irish music since childhood. Drawing inspiration from the renowned fiddlers of south-west Donegal, her playing captures the region's unique pulse and poetry. Catriona also supports our local Tunes Music Makers to mentor the next generation of young fiddle players across the Atlantic.



Beaver Island Dancers

Former Beaver Island Irish Heritage Group board member and long-time accomplished Irish dancer Bridget Wearn Martin has been working with a group of 8 young dancers. This is Beaver Island's first official dance group and they are making great progress. They will entertain the audiences at this year's Féile with their new uniforms and dance shoes; look for them on Saturday afternoon's schedule.



emerald isle irish féile schedule notes

- Féile Headquarters is at Holy Cross Hall Fri & Sat 10-8
- Féile Pub is at Holy Cross Hall Fri 3:30-5 & 7-11 & Sat 6:30-11
- Féile Merch is at Holy Cross Hall Fri & Sat 10-8
- Féile Food Dept is at Holy Cross Hall Fri 2-8 & Sat 11-8
- First Aid Tent is at Convent Green During Festival Hours
- Currach Club Boats on the Water Fri & Sat 2-6

BONUS: Thursday, Sept 10, 2026

- Irish Mummers Workshop is at Convent Green at 10:30
- Gaelic Football Workshop is at Convent Green at 11:30
- Irish Dance Workshop is at Convent Green at 2

ARRANMORE PIPE BAND MARCHES OFF THE EMERALD ISLE FERRY AT 12:45

BONUS: Sunday, Sept 13, 2026

- Mass at the Grotto with Fr. Peter Wigton at 12:15

PIPE BAND BEFORE MASS

- Music Session with Special Guest at Beachcomber at 2:30
- Arranmore Adventures Raffle Draw at Beachcomber at 4

Friday Sept. 11, 2026	Holy Cross Hall & Convent Green	Beaver Island Community Center	Beachcomber	Circle M	Other
Other	10a-8p Féile Headquarters Registration & Information				10:30 PIPE BAND AT THE POINT TO MEET BOAT
1-3	10-11 Irish Dance Workshop @ CG	1-2 Singing Workshop The Singers of Roane (Upstairs)			1-2 Catriona Kennedy @ WSC 2-3 Danny & Friends @ Museum Patio
3-5	1-2 Gaelic Football @ CG			3-4 Kreellers Unplugged	3-4 Roane Unplugged @ WPB
5-7	2-3 Mummers Workshop @ CG				5-6 Enda Reilly @ WPB
7-9	2-6 Currachs on the Water, Races & Pipe Band 3:30-5	5:45-7:15 Bastard Bearded Irishmen	7-8:30 Danny & Friends	8-9:30 Catriona Kennedy & Enda Reilly	
9-11	4:30-5:30 Latency @ Féile Tent	8-9:30 Altan	9-10:30 Roane	10-11:30 Stay Happy Band	
Other	5-5:30 Fiddlers of Donegal Photo Exhibit Presentation @ HCH		11... Seisiun Ceoil (Music Session) Led by Catriona Kennedy & Roane		11... Ceoil Traidisiunta (Traditional Session) Led By Special Guest @ Shamrock
	7:30-9 Pipe Band Arranmore Life Boat Raffle Ceili: Arranmore Friends @ Féile Tent				
	9:30-11 Kreellers @ Féile Tent				

CG= Convent Green JGB= Jewell Gillespie Beach WPB=Whiskey Point Brewery WSC= Wild Strawberry Cafe HCH= Holy Cross Hall
FÉILE PUB OPEN 3:30-5 AND 7-11 PM FÉILE FOOD DEPT OPEN 2-8
FÉILE MERCH OPEN 10-8

Saturday Sept. 12, 2026	Holy Cross Hall & Convent Green	Beaver Island Community Center	Beachcomber	Circle M	Other
Other	10a-8p Féile Headquarters Registration & Information	10:30-11:30 Hall of Fame Ceremony Pipe Band			12-1 Stay Happy Band @ WSC
1-3	Noon Irish Sweater Contests	12:30-1:30 Tides That Tie Live Intview With Altan B.I. Dancers			2-3 Enda Reilly Song and Stories of Irish Folklore @ Museum Patio
3-5	12:30-2:30 Children's Area @ CG Hurling Exhibit St. Brigid's Cross	2:30-4 Irish Language Workshop Catroina Kennedy (Upstairs)		3-4:30 Roane	2:00 Celtic Cross Dedication 3-4:30 O'Donnell Farm Danny & Friends Pipe Band
5-7	2-6 Currachs on the Water	5-6:30 Latency			5-6 BBI Unplugged @ WPB
7-9	5-5:30 Two Islands, Two Quilts Q & A		7-8:30 Stay Happy Band B.I. Dancers		6:30-8 Catriona Kennedy & Enda Reilly @ WPB
9-11	7:00 Pipe Band				
	7:30-9 Altan @ Féile Tent	9-10:30 Kreellers	9-10:30 Roane		
	9:00 Closing Remarks 9:30-11 Bastard Bearded Irishmen @ Féile Tent				
Other			11... Seisiun Ceoil (Music Session) Led by Catroina Kennedy & Roane		11... Ceoil Traidisiunta (Traditional Session) Led By Special Guest @ Shamrock

CG= Convent Green JGB= Jewell Gillespie Beach WPB=Whiskey Point Brewery WSC= Wild Strawberry Cafe HCH= Holy Cross Hall

FÉILE PUB OPEN 6:30-11 PM FÉILE FOOD DEPT OPEN 11-8

FÉILE MERCH OPEN 10-8

Festival Map



- sullivan's irish alleu
- irish gym
- feile merch tene
- feile pub
- feile food depot

wild strawberry
cafe

community
center

whiskey point
brewing company

the beachcomber

beaver island
boat company

the shamrock

beaver island
princ shop
museum

holly cross hall
feile
hontagars

lewell
gillespie
beach

feile tent and
convent green

circle m

holly cross
cemetery
grove

holly cross
cemetery
celtic cross

historic
o'donnell
homestead

island airways
welke airport

paradise
bay

9.11 MEMORIAL

CELEBRITY CURRACH RACES

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 AT 3:30PM
AT JEWELL GILLESPIE BEACH**

Join us as we remember and pay tribute to the unimaginable loss our country and world experienced on September 11, 2001. We will honor and remember the inspiring stories of bravery, compassion, unity, and service that our country has witnessed, and thank our current emergency responders.

REMARKS, MOMENT OF SILENCE, CHRISTENING OF BOATS

FIRST RACE: The Fireman Beaver Island vs The Fireman Arranmore (Ron Marsh vs Sean Gallagher)
SECOND RACE: The EMS Beaver Island vs The Lifeboat Crew Arranmore (Skylar Marsh vs Finbar Gallagher)
CHAMPIONSHIP RACE: Winners of First and Second Races

CURRACH CLUB RACES

Immediately following the Celebrity Currach Races, Currach Clubs from Milwaukee and Beaver Island will race with and against each other.



Contests and Activities

Join us for exciting contests and games for all ages. All winners will have their name in a draw for a gift certificate to our Féile Merch Tent.



CHILD AND ADULT IRISH SWEATER CONTEST:

Saturday at noon at the Hall. Find your old or new Irish sweater and join in the fun of this unique contest - no other Irish festival does this. There will be prizes for youth, most authentic, and most original. All winners will have their name in a draw for a gift certificate to our Féile Merch Tent. Consider wearing your Irish sweater to the Celtic Cross dedication later in the day.

CONCHOBAR THE LEPRECHAUN: Don't miss out on the shenanigans put on by this tin whistle playing leprechaun throughout the festival. There will be 17 hidden golden stones around the beach and cultural center that need to be returned to the pot of gold. Any stone found can be turned into the Children's tent in exchange for a prize.

CHILDREN'S AREA: 100,000 Welcomes to all the children on the island to this fun-filled area where they can enjoy all manner of games, activities and prizes.

Cultural Workshops and Presentations

The Beaver Island Irish Heritage Group is thrilled to announce an exciting array of workshops and presentations as part of this year's Féile. These workshops are designed to immerse participants in the rich heritage, traditions, and spirit of Ireland through a variety of engaging educational and recreational activities.

IRISH SOCIAL DANCING with Anne Conaghan

Gifted musician, teacher and dancer, Anne Conaghan, will lead a captivating workshop on Irish social dancing. This workshop is perfect for dancers of all levels, from beginners to seasoned enthusiasts. Join Anne as she shares the joy and camaraderie of dances that have brought communities together for generations.

GAELIC FOOTBALL with Jerry Early

Dive into the excitement of one of Ireland's most beloved sports with Jerry Early, also hailing from Arranmore. This hands-on workshop will introduce participants to the basics of Gaelic football, including its rules, techniques, and strategies.

IRISH MUMMERS WORKSHOP with John Flannagan

Explore the fascinating tradition of Irish mumming with John Flannagan, who hails from Co. Fermanagh with strong Arranmore connections. This workshop dives into the heritage of Irish mummers, known for their vibrant costumes, storytelling, and performance art.

IRISH LANGUAGE & MUSIC WORKSHOP with Catriona Kennedy

Combine the magic of Ireland's native language and traditional music in this special workshop led by fiddler Catriona Kennedy from Ireland. In the past year, Catriona has been involved in an exciting partnership between Cairdeas na bhFidileiri (Donegal) and TUNES Music Makers to teach online lessons to young fiddle players from Beaver Island.

SAINT BRIGID'S CROSS MAKING WORKSHOP with Cindy Gillespie

Join Cindy Gillespie, from one of the historic Beaver Island Irish families, in making St Brigid's Crosses. St. Brigid's Crosses are woven from dried grasses gathered on the Island by Pam McDonough Grassmick.

SINGING WORKSHOP with the singers of Roane

The singers of Roane, Grace/Nora/MaryLynn, will give a traditional singing workshop where they teach the song "She Moved Through the Faire." This is a song collected in Donegal in the early 1900s. They will teach it line by line then add harmonies.

THE TIDES THAT TIE LIVE INTERVIEW with the Altan band

Ron Gregg and Kevin Green are proud to explore the Irish ties and musical connections with the highly acclaimed band and this year's headliner, Altan. Formed nearly 40 years ago, and led by Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh in County Donegal, Ireland, the band has toured the world, produced 14 studio albums and collaborated with many notable artists including Dolly Parton, Enya, the Chieftains and Alison Krauss. It should be an interesting delve into exploring our "two islands, one soul" connection.

SONGS & STORIES OF IRISH FOLKLORE with Enda Reilly

From Dublin, Ireland and now living in Michigan, Enda Reilly's shows delight, educate and entertain by blending old songs with brand new original songs to give both a traditional and fresh authentic flavor to his programs. Enda brings us this year a display of songs and stories of Ireland, and it has been very well received as he has performed it this year.

DONEGAL FIDDLERS PORTRAIT COLLECTION PROJECT with Donegal Fiddler/Photographer

View portraits and learn about a Donegal, Ireland project that documented every living Donegal fiddler over the age of eighteen, creating a visual record of the musicians who sustain this celebrated tradition today. The portraits have been created over several years by a Donegal photographer, whose acclaimed portraiture and documentary work have deep inspirational roots in Donegal, which of course, is the genesis of Beaver Island's fiddle traditions. Many of these portraits will be on display during the festival and the photographer will be on hand as well.

TWO ISLANDS, TWO QUILTS

View the quilts and hear about the Arranmore Island Community Quilt Project, Love Across the Waves (Grá Thar na dTonn) which will be on display. Created collaboratively by women from Arranmore Island and a mainland County Donegal Community Development group, the quilt represents shared memories, identity, and connection between the two coastal communities. The quilt will be on display at the museum along with an historic 'friendship' quilt made by Beaver Islanders generations ago.

GAA (GAELIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION) HURLING

The ancient Irish sport of hurling is described and demonstrated in this presentation. Administered by the Gaelic Athletic Association, hurling is a fast-paced outdoor team sport. Players use a wooden ash stick called a hurley (or camán) to hit a small, hard ball called a sliotar between H-shaped goalposts. Over the crossbar scores 1 point, and into the net scores 3 points. Come to the Convent Green to learn this history!



Gaelic football



Irish Mummery

SEE SCHEDULE FOR TIMES AND LOCATIONS



BEAVER ISLAND IRISH AMERICAN HALL OF FAME



Class of 2026

Join us for the ceremony 10:30 am, Saturday, September 12 at the Beaver Island Community Center

ANNE CONAGHAN *(Area of Contribution: Arts & Entertainment)*

Anne Conaghan was born and raised in London, with family roots in Arranmore through her parents, who came from the island. Having spent her childhood summers there, she developed a deep love for Arranmore and its traditions. Today, Anne shares that love by travelling weekly from her home, a two-hour drive away, teaching music to young people on the island. Thanks to her dedication, Arranmore now has almost thirty musicians playing a variety of instruments, a remarkable revival from only a few years ago. Last November, Anne organized a twelve-hour music session in Early's Bar, bringing musicians from across the country together and raising over €10,000 for vital repairs to Arranmore Parish church. Since 2023, she has also been a valued part of the Féile, sharing her gifts in music, dance and drama. Her warmth, talent and generosity continue to inspire both island communities. Anne has been vital to the evolution of the Emerald Isle Irish Féile. *Nominated by Paul Cole*

KAYLA EARLY *(Area of Contribution: Arts & Entertainment)*

We proudly nominate this remarkable young woman from Arranmore Island for induction into the Beaver Island Irish American Hall of Fame in Arts and Entertainment. Rooted in island heritage, she carries forward a family legacy as a third-generation bar owner, creating a welcoming place where music, stories, friendship, and tradition thrive. Her warmth toward visitors, especially those connected to Beaver Island, strengthens the historic bond between the two islands. Beyond the bar, she honors that relationship through her yearly participation in the Easter flag ceremony at the Arranmore monument, helping preserve an important symbol of shared history. Recognized as Club Person of the Year by Arranmore's Football Committee, she is known for generosity, reliability, and community spirit. Musically gifted and quick-witted, she brings joy to every gathering while encouraging younger artists to participate and grow. Through hospitality, music, humor, and service, she beautifully represents the heart of Irish culture and deserves this recognition. *Nominated by Bailey McDonough*

KEVIN GREEN *(Area of Contribution: Cultural Heritage)*

Kevin Green's life is rooted in family, Beaver Island, and Arranmore. Raised on Beaver Island, the sixth of eight children of Russell Green and Joy McDonough Green, Kevin grew up with the values that define our community: hard work, loyalty, Irish heritage, and storytelling. Family was, and remains, the center of his world. His deep connection to Arranmore reflects the stories, friendships, and shared heritage linking the two islands. Kevin has helped celebrate that bond through the Calling of the Clans fundraiser and The Tides That Tide podcast, bringing passion, creativity, and steady commitment to both efforts. Those who know Kevin know he always shows up—cheering for family, offering help before it is asked, and giving generously of himself. A gifted storyteller and devoted uncle, Kevin carries forward the voices of generations before him. His heart, heritage, and service make him a deserving nominee for the Beaver Island Irish American Hall of Fame. *Nominated by Kali Delamater*

ELAINE MARIE CONNAGHAN LAFRENIERE *(Area of Contribution: Cultural Heritage)*

Born on Beaver Island to Margaret Ellen McDonough and Gene Connaghan, Marie has long honored the Island's history, families, and traditions. Since returning to live on Beaver Island many years ago, she has promoted and preserved local heritage through the Beaver Island This and That Facebook page. There, she shares photographs of Island people, gatherings, and events, from recent times to generations past. She has also posted photos from Arranmore, renewing memories for Island-connected families and friends who have visited there, while continuing the Island-Arranmore connection through relationships with Arranmore islanders. Marie has helped relatives trace their Island roots through 23&Me, encouraging several to visit Beaver Island and meet family. She also volunteers year-round at Island events, supporting the culture and community she loves. *Nominated by Linda Gatliff Wearn*

JOHN GILES MCCANN

(Area of Contribution: Public Service, Education)

Lt. Col. John Giles McCann was born on Beaver Island on April 12, 1915, the fifth child of Michael and Anna Dunlevy McCann. Known as Giles, he grew up working in family enterprises, including the McCann Store, once located near this gathering place. After earning a teaching certificate in Charlevoix, he returned to teach at Roosevelt School in Greentown. As war approached, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps to pursue his dream of flying. Commissioned a second lieutenant, he earned pilot wings and trained as a bomber pilot. He married fellow Islander Dorothy Rose Gallagher and served in World War II before earning a mathematics degree and reenlisting in the new U.S. Air Force during the Korean War. Over 31 years, he became a lieutenant colonel, Command Pilot, Air Medal and Legion of Merit recipient, and senior base leader. Wherever duty took him, Beaver Island remained home. *Nominated by John Giles McCann, Jr.*

WILLIAM MCDONOUGH

(Area of Contribution: Business, Public Service)

A fifth-generation Beaver Islander, Bill has devoted his life to the Island and to preserving its Irish heritage. For more than 40 years, he served as co-owner of McDonough's Market, providing leadership and stability in a vital family business. For over 25 years, he has also guided the Beaver Island Boat Company as CEO, working to ensure dependable transportation to and from the Island. Bill has been central to strengthening the bond between Beaver Island and Arranmore. He helped establish the twinning of the two islands, supported creation of the Beaver Island Monument on Arranmore, and led efforts to establish the Paideen Og Monument on Beaver Island. Along with his wife, Tammy, Bill maintains a home on Arranmore and has long represented Beaver Island there with pride and goodwill. His dedication and leadership make him an outstanding Hall of Fame candidate. *Nominated by Kevin Green*

CHARLIE O'HARA

(Area of Contribution: Cultural Heritage, Public Service)

Charlie O'Hara was a remarkable advocate, historian, and community leader whose work strengthened life on Arranmore Island and preserved the shared heritage of Arranmore and Beaver Island. A passionate activist, he represented islanders' needs, from fisheries issues to equal educational rights for children. In the early 1970s, he helped organize a major Dublin protest against the proposed salmon-fishing ban, bringing coastal communities together and helping delay the ban for decades. He also led the 18-year campaign to establish a secondary school on Arranmore, serving as chairman and speaking forcefully through writing and television. Alongside John Duffy, Charlie became known as one of Arranmore's key historians. He guided Beaver Island visitors to ancestral homesteads, shared generations of family history, and researched the 1861 eviction of 168 Arranmore islanders who later found a future on Beaver Island. His warmth, memory, and dedication helped give the two islands one enduring soul. *Nominated by Paul Cole*

DEBORAH LAFRENIERE ROBERT

(Area of Contribution: Public Service, Education)

Debbie Robert is a shining example of Christian love, compassion, and selfless service. For decades, she has given tirelessly to Beaver Island and our church community, never seeking recognition, but always answering every need with grace and humility. Whether organizing funeral luncheons for grieving families, leading fundraisers, or volunteering at civic and church events, Debbie serves with a generous heart and quiet strength. Her kindness reaches far beyond donated time or resources; she makes people feel welcomed, cared for, and valued in moments of sorrow, celebration, hardship, and joy. Debbie has also devoted more than 30 years to teaching elementary students at our small school, blessing countless children with patience, encouragement, wisdom, and love. She has touched nearly every family on Beaver Island. To me, Debbie reflects the same caring spirit as my own mother: faithful, humble, and giving without limits. No one is more deserving of this nomination. *Nominated by Beth Anne Green Lucas*

Beaver Island Irish Heritage Group

See what else the BI Irish Heritage Group has been up to - here are just a few of the projects we have been working on:

Tides that Tie Podcast

Two islands. Two countries. One unbreakable bond.

The Tides That Tie explores the extraordinary connection between Beaver Island, Michigan, and Arranmore, County Donegal, Ireland—two communities officially twinned and bound by history, heritage, and heart.

Hosted by Kevin Green and Ron Gregg, each episode dives into the stories, traditions, and challenges that shape life on these islands. From fishing heritage to emigration to celebration, we share voices from both sides of the Atlantic, bringing to life the people and events that keep this transatlantic friendship thriving.

Produced by the Beaver Island Irish Heritage Group, this is more than a podcast—it's a living bridge between two shores.



Beaver Island Dancers

Former Beaver Island Irish Heritage Group board member and long-time accomplished Irish dancer Bridget Wearn Martin has been working with a group of 8 young dancers. This is Beaver Island's first official dance group and they are making great progress. They will entertain the audiences at this year's Féile with their new uniforms and dance shoes; look for them on Saturday afternoon's schedule.



Patrick Páidín Óg Boyle Celtic Cross

This year our group helped facilitate the amazing project brought forth by Bill McDonough who raised funds from the many descendants of Patrick and Ellen to commission this amazing cross. The Celtic Cross honoring Patrick "Páidín Óg" Boyle and his wife Ellen O'Donnell Boyle will be unveiled at the festival this year. A pivotal figure in the genetic and cultural history of the Beaver Island Clans, Patrick Boyle's legacy is deeply woven into our community. This memorial will stand as a lasting tribute to his life, influence, and enduring connection to Beaver Island at Holy Cross Cemetery.



Currach Club

The Irish Currach Club of Beaver Island traces its roots to the inaugural Emerald Isle Irish Féile in 2019, when the Irish Currach Club of Milwaukee brought two currachs and ten members to Beaver Island with support from the Milwaukee Irish Festival Foundation. Today the currach club of Beaver Island has about 20 members and two hand built currachs made entirely of Beaver Island wood. Members of the currach club competed in a regatta in Milwaukee this year!



The Frank Danny Barney O'Donnell Homestead

Daniel "Danny" Bernard O'Donnell, the fourth child of Barney (of Barney's Lake) and Margaret O'Donnell, was among the first generation of the O'Donnell family born on Beaver Island. He spent his entire life here. Danny grew up working alongside his father and brothers on the family farm at Barney's Lake. By the time he was a young man, he was already operating his own farm closer to the four corners, where you are welcome to visit and attend a very special concert on Saturday afternoon. Thanks to current owners Bill and Kendra O'Donnell.