

IRISH CLUB OF REGINA  
**NOTAÍ ÉIREANN**  
 IRISH NOTES

---

WINTER EDITION 2008

## HONOURING OUR ANCIENT PEOPLES

The observation of Winter Solstice (and other Sun vigils) in our modern culture is enjoying a minor revival following centuries of being considered 'out of favour' in relation to the dominant Christian celebration of Christmas.

The celebratory connection to the natural phenomenon of Solstice is quite understandable, particularly in the northern hemisphere where the periods of light grew shorter with the intrusion of winter. This phenomenon is, of course, the result of Earth's position in relation to Sun. In the winter the northern half of planet Earth tilts away from the sun. The hours of daylight and warmth are gradually reduced as Earth rotates counter clockwise around Sun.

Our ancient peoples with their sense of wonder, concluded that there must be a spiritual mystery around this darkening. Hence, many celebrations and vigil ceremonies evolved to create a sense of fear and foreboding at the shortening of the days – and then, of course, the joyous celebra-

tion that followed as Sun returned to lengthen the days. (One will find this fear and relief cycle common to all belief systems.)

Winter Solstice is one of four balance points that acknowledge the fragility of our existence in relationship to Sun. The opposing or balancing of light is Summer Solstice, the longest day, which occurs on June 22 – six months from the Winter Solstice.

The other balance points are Spring /Vernal Equinox (around March 21) and

Fall/Autumnal Equinox (around September 23) when the center of Sun can be observed to be directly above Earth's equator. At this time, day and night are of approximately the same duration.

Thus the human expression of time and season is centred on the factor of 3's of 12.

Each of the balance points of our mysterious journey around Sun are separated by three months duration.

In respect to honouring the Irish/Celtic origins, the early Celts of northern European origin were fervent practitio-

ners of vigil ceremony and celebration at Winter Solstice. It was these ancient and meaningful celebrations that were opted and modified by the newly arrived Christians as a means of ingratiating themselves with the Celts and eventually denying these people the right to practice their ancient beliefs and ceremonies.

Nevertheless, the ancient Celtic rites and rituals remain as a vital part of the modern and highly commercialized celebration of Christmas. One has only to view the beauty of the Christmas tree (a symbol of enduring life), enjoy the warmth of the Yule Log, and see the glow of candles (and the more modern 'Christmas' lights) to recognize those times when our ancient ancestors would gather at the time of the greatest darkness, light their fires and wait in wonder for the return of Sun.

Winter Solstice is a time of renewal of light – and life. Whatever form the celebration has taken in the mad rush of spending and excess, the quiet appreciation of Sun as the source of our continu-

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- *January 20, 2008—Potluck Supper*
- *February 6, 2008—Stitch'n'chat*
- *February 8, 2008—Set Dancing*
- *March 14, 2008—Set Dancing*
- *March 16, 2008—St. Patrick's Day Dinner*

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

IRISH CLUB OF REGINA DANCERS 2008 ACTIVITIES	2
LIMERICKS	3
CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS	4
2007 -2008 EXECUTIVE	4



The Paper Tree

Vincent Murphy tells a story as MC at Mosaic 2007

## HONOURING OUR ANCIENT PEOPLES (CONT'D)

ing existence should be considered as part of our celebration of renewal of life – whether in the sense of natural life or in the context of our own personal sense of renewal.

It is interesting and equally mystifying that such a large percentage of humanity has lost a sense of awareness of its relationship to the fireball that sustains our existence. While not suggesting we should defer to the ancient

Egyptian practice of worshipping Sun as a deity, an increased awareness and understanding of our relationship to Sun would serve to provide the foundation for a better appreciation of our interconnection to all things – on Earth – and in the Universe.

Vincent Murphy

© 2008



## IRISH CLUB OF REGINA DANCERS

### Adult classes

The City of Regina again offered an 8 week session of introductory adult Irish soft-shoe and hard-shoe dance classes at the NW Leisure Centre (1121 Arnason St, off Rochdale Blvd). Class leaders are from the Irish Club of Regina Dancers.

These classes are for adults of any age with little to no dance experience. Students learn basic Irish dance steps and dances in a fun and relaxed atmosphere. This session runs from January 8— March 11/08. Spaces are extremely limited. For registration or more information, please call Marcille @777-7044.

The Irish Club of Regina will also offer a weekly Level I class from January - May 2008 at St Luke's Hall (3233 Argyle Road). Class leaders are from the Irish Club of Regina Dancers. This is for adults of any age with some dance experience who are familiar with the basic Irish dance steps (skips, 7s and back 2,3s) and may want to work towards the goal of performance and/or competition.

Syllabus includes both traditional and contemporary dances. Dancers with the Irish Club must register for soft-shoe with optional registration for hard-shoe. For registration or more information, please go on-line to [www.irishclubofregina.org](http://www.irishclubofregina.org) (to Dance page – online registration form) or call Sherry @539-4720.

### Children's classes

The City of Regina will be offering 1 - 8 week session of introductory children's Irish soft-shoe dance classes at the NW Leisure Centre (1121 Arnason St, off Rochdale Blvd). Class leaders are from the Irish Club of Regina Dancers.

These classes are for children with little to no dance experience. They will learn basic Irish dance steps in a fun and relaxed atmosphere. This session runs from January 8-March 11/08. Spaces are extremely limited. For registration or more information, please call Marcille @777-7044.

### What to bring:

- Clothing that allows movement (T-shirts, shorts, sweats, running wear, etc.) is suitable for dance class.
- Footwear must be secure on the foot with non-marking, non-slippery soles and no high heels (jazz shoes or ballet shoes are acceptable for introductory classes).
- Long hair should be secured off the face.
- Bring a water bottle and get ready to have some fun!



## LIMERICKS

### **A Form of Poetry? Limerick Poems? Limericks the genre?**

The form of poetry referred to as Limerick poems have received incredibly bad press and dismissed as not having a rightful place amongst what is seen as 'cultivated poetry'.

The reason for this is three-fold:

The content of many limericks is often of a bawdy and humorous nature.

A Limerick as a poetry form is by nature simple and short - limericks only have five lines.

And finally the somewhat dubious history of limericks have contributed to the critics attitudes.

### **Limericks - The History**

Variants of the form of poetry referred to as Limerick poems can be traced back to the fourteenth century English history. Limericks were used in Nursery Rhymes and other poems for children. But as limericks were short, relatively easy to compose and bawdy or sexual in nature they were often repeated by beggars or the working classes in the British pubs and taverns of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventh centuries. The poets who created these limericks were therefore often drunkards! Limericks were also referred to as dirty.

### **Where does the term**

### **'Limerick' come from?**

The word derives from the Irish town of Limerick. Apparently a pub song or tavern chorus based on the refrain "Will you come up to Limerick?" where, of course, such bawdy songs or 'Limericks' were sung.

### **Limericks - The form**

Limericks consist of five anapaestic lines.

Lines 1, 2, and 5 of Limericks have seven to ten syllables and rhyme with one another.

Lines 3 and 4 of Limericks have five to seven syllables and also rhyme with each other.

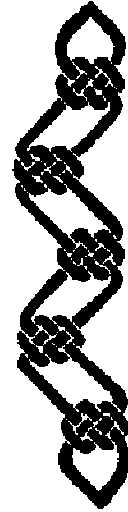
### **Limericks - A Defence - even Shakespeare wrote Limericks!**

Admittedly the content of Limericks can often verge on the indecent, the dirty, or even the obscene, but they make people laugh! Limericks are easy to remember! Limericks are short and no great talent is necessary to compose one - Limericks are a form of poetry that everyone feels happy to try (especially when inebriated!). Limericks as a form of poetry has survived the test of time dating back for centuries! And whilst the poetic and literary skills of Shakespeare are not necessary for the composition of a limerick the great Bard himself did in fact write limericks

which can be found in two of his greatest plays - Othello and King Lear.

### **The Limericks of Edward Lear - Limericks are Fun!!**

Edward Lear's Book of Nonsense included the poetry form of Limericks. His work with limericks were, however, was not in any way indecent and this particular book proved to be extremely popular in the nineteenth century and this was contributed to by the humorous magazine Punch which started printing examples of limericks leading to a craze by its readers. The first edition of Edward Lear's Book of Nonsense was published by Thomas McLean on 10th February 1846. There were altogether seventy-two limericks in two volumes which sold at 3s 6d each. These limericks have proven to be extremely popular with children.



Limerick by  
Edward Lear Limerick

There was on Old Man of  
the Isles,

Whose face was pervaded  
with smiles;

He sung high dum  
diddle,

And played on the fiddle,

That amiable man of the  
Isles





## Irish Club of Regina

P.O. Box 37171,  
Landmark Shoppers  
REGINA SK S4S 7K4

Email: [info@irishclubofregina.org](mailto:info@irishclubofregina.org)

---

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

[www.irishclubofregina.org](http://www.irishclubofregina.org)

---

### CALL FOR NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS:

If you have anything you would like to submit to Notáí Éireann, please email it to [seananq@gmail.com](mailto:seananq@gmail.com) or “snail mail” it to 1025 Campbell Street, REGINA SK S4T 5P5. Arrangements can also be made to pick an article up by calling 543-0722.

If you have an article, poem, recipe, or story you would like to see in the next newsletter, please send it by the end of February.

All submissions are gratefully accepted.

---

### EXECUTIVE FOR 2007—2008

Our AGM was a success and we were very glad to see some new faces at the meeting as well as new faces on the board! Here is our Board of Directors for 2007 - 2008:

President - Alice MacDougall  
Past President - Mary Mackniak  
Vice-President - Britt Hall  
Secretary - Marie Matheson  
Treasurer - Gail Kruger

#### Members at Large:

Keith Cunningham  
Sarah Dodd  
Vic Mackniak  
Shannon Quinn

