



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear friends and members of St. Patrick's Society of Montreal,

A year of my tenure is already coming to a close. It has been a wonderful period, with memorable gatherings, a new initiative to show appreciation to our volunteers, and a welcome increase in our membership.

This is a clear indication that the St. Patrick's Society of Montreal is well and thriving. But that would not be possible without you—our members, Board of Directors, and Executive Committee. It truly takes many hands to help steer this big, beautiful ship that supports our Irish community.

While it's important to pause and celebrate our accomplishments, time marches on. As we look ahead to 2026, let's focus on making it an even more gratifying year than the last.

I hope each of you will continue to support your St. Patrick's Society in whatever way you can. There will be many opportunities to participate in Society activities, and if attending isn't possible, please remember the Patron's Fund. This is an ideal time of year to contribute, especially with the Income Tax Receipt you will receive—it's a meaningful way to support the Society even when you cannot be present in person.

I wish you all a wonderful Christmas surrounded by family. Cherish every moment and make beautiful memories. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in 2026!



Carol McCormick



The Past President and Volunteer Appreciation Cocktail Evening

BY LAURIE MCKEOWN -THOMASSIN

The St. Patrick's Society proudly hosted its first-ever Past President and Volunteer Appreciation Cocktail Evening at the elegant Beaconsfield Golf Club on October 2, 2025. This inaugural event was created to honour the dedication and commitment of the Society's volunteers, past presidents, and members who contribute tirelessly to the success of our many fundraising initiatives.

The evening recognized those who play key roles in organizing our hallmark events — the St. Patrick's Ball, Annual Luncheon, and Charity Golf Tournament — as well as those members who work diligently behind the scenes on the executive committee and Board of Directors. Their collective efforts sustain the Society's mission and ensure that our traditions of community spirit and philanthropy continue to thrive.



Photo Credit: Laurie McKewyn-Thomassin

Bruce Thomassin, Tom Ireland & Ryan Morris



Photo Credit: Laurie McKewyn-Thomassin

John Murphy & Patrick Short

The event was made possible through the generous support of CIBC Wood Gundy Morris Investment Group and M IMMOBILIER. The Society extends sincere thanks for their continued partnership and generosity.

Special appreciation is also extended to our host venue, the Beaconsfield Golf Club, for their warm hospitality and for providing the event space.

The Past President and Volunteer Appreciation Cocktail Evening (cont'd)

Honouring Our Past Presidents and A Moment of Remembrance



Photo Credit: Sherri McGumaghan

Left to right: Alistair O'Hara, Carol McCormick, Paul Dunne, Kathleen Dunn (wife of the late Patrick Dunn), Christie Brown & Scott Phelan

During the evening's formal remarks, President Carol McCormick paid tribute to several of the Society's past presidents. Portraits of both former and recent presidents were displayed for guests to enjoy. These portraits will soon be permanently installed at St. Patrick's Square, where members will be able to view them during the upcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM).

A moment of silence was observed in memory of Peter Shea, whose recent passing was noted with deep sadness. His service and contributions to the Society will be remembered with gratitude and respect. Guests enjoyed a delightful selection of beverages, hors d'oeuvres, and a sweet table filled with homemade treats. The atmosphere was one of friendship, appreciation, and celebration.

The evening was a fitting tribute to the many individuals who give so generously of their time and talents in support of the St. Patrick's Society.

The Society extends heartfelt thanks to all volunteers, past presidents, executive and board members for their ongoing commitment and service. Your dedication ensures that the values and spirit of the St. Patrick's Society remain strong for years to come.



The St. Patrick's Society

Annual Charity Ball

Honouring Legacy, Inspiring the Future

Friday, February 20, 2026

Cocktails 6:30 PM / Dinner 8 PM

Black Tie

Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth
900 René-Lévesque Blvd West

GUEST OF HONOUR

The Honourable Seamus O'Regan

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Tickets \$299 (Regular \$325)

Junior Tickets \$199 (Regular \$225)

Available for a limited time

spsmtl.com

The 2026 St. Patrick's Society Charity Ball

Honouring Legacy, Inspiring the Future

BY SHERRI MCGURNAGHAN

The St. Patrick's Society of Montreal is pleased to announce that the 2026 Charity Ball will take place on Friday, February 20th, 2026, at the Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth, one of Montreal's most iconic venues. Long regarded as the official kickoff to Montreal's Green Season, the Ball brings together Society members, friends, and the wider community for an evening of elegance, celebration, and Irish pride.

This year's theme, "Honouring Legacy, Inspiring the Future," reflects the Society's longstanding mission to preserve our heritage while encouraging the next generation of leaders, artists, and storytellers who continue to shape the cultural life of our community.

We are delighted to welcome The Honourable Seamus O'Regan as our Guest of Honour. With roots stretching from Dublin to Newfoundland and a distinguished career in public life, Seamus embodies the spirit of this year's theme. His background in journalism and his years of service in Parliament speak to a life dedicated to community, dialogue, and public leadership — values deeply connected to the Society's mission.

The SPS Charity Ball remains one of Montreal's most cherished traditions — a night of music, celebration, and meaningful connection. We look forward to gathering once again to honour our past, celebrate our present, and inspire the future of the Irish community in Montreal.

Save the date — February 20th, 2026.

We look forward to welcoming you to a memorable evening.



The Honourable Seamus O'Regan

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page	\$275	\$725	\$375

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2026 SPS Green Luncheon

A Celebration of All things Irish

BY KEVIN CALLAHAN

Mark your calendars for March! The annual Saint Patrick's Society of Montreal luncheon will take place on Friday, March 13th at noon at the Hotel Bonaventure. We are excited to announce that our guest speaker will be the Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia MP and Speaker of the House of Commons. The luncheon is always a central event in Montreal's Green Season and is an occasion for us to come together and honour the Irish presence in Montreal. It is also an opportunity for the SPS to raise much needed funds so that we can continue our mission of supporting charitable and cultural projects in our community. Individual tickets are \$150 and those who wish to pay \$200 or more as an additional donation will receive recognition at the luncheon as well as a tax receipt. The Friends of the Luncheon category is also available. For \$650, Friends will receive two tickets to the event, recognition at the luncheon, and a tax receipt for \$350. Corporate tables of ten seats are \$2000. The Saint Patrick's Society counts on your help to be able to carry on our important work. Join us on March 13th to celebrate the past and support the future of the Irish in Montreal.



*The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia, MP
Speaker of the House of Commons*

A promotional graphic for National Bank Financial Wealth Management. It features a large red banner with white text that reads "RANKED #1 For Full-Service Investor Satisfaction in Canada by J.D. Power". Below the banner is the National Bank Financial logo, which consists of a red stylized 'N' followed by the text "NATIONAL BANK FINANCIAL" and "WEALTH MANAGEMENT" underneath. At the bottom of the graphic, it says "National Bank Financial Voted #1 by J.D. Power". The background is light blue with faint, scattered icons of the Canadian flag.



ST. PATRICK'S SOCIETY LUNCHEON

MARCH 13, 2026

Reception 11am /Lunch 12pm

Individual Prices

\$150

Friends of the

Luncheon(2)

\$650

Corporate Tables

\$2000

Bonaventure Hotel

900RueDelaGauchetière O



Guest Speaker:

**The Honourable
Francis Scarpaleggia**

MP and Speaker of the

House of Commons



Buy tickets at www.spsmtl.com

VILLE MARIE FEIS

A NUACHT spotlight on our sister Irish societies across Quebec

BY PATRICK SHORT

More than 125 Irish dancers from the four Greater Montreal Irish dance schools are hard at work preparing for the 2025 Canadian Oireachtas, taking place in Toronto from November 28 to 30, 2025. This prestigious annual gathering serves as the qualifying event for both the World Irish Dancing Championships—to be held in Chicago at Easter—and the 2026 North American Championships, scheduled for July 1–6 in Orlando.

Over the course of three days, dancers will compete in single-age categories ranging from under 9 to over 20 years old, in addition to team events such as four-hand and eight-hand céilí competitions. This year's Oireachtas will welcome participants from 50 schools in Ontario, four schools in Quebec, one in New Brunswick, and three in Nova Scotia, making it one of the most diverse regional qualifiers in the country.

Meanwhile, rehearsals are well underway for the eighth annual production of *The Irish Nutcracker*, a beloved musical dance drama returning to Théâtre Desjardins at CEGEP André-Laurendeau, 1111 Rue Lapierre, LaSalle, on December 21, 2025, with performances at 2:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.



This enchanting show retells the classic Nutcracker story with a distinctly Irish twist. Ciara receives a special Nutcracker toy from her Uncle Ryan at her family's annual Christmas céilí, sparking a magical journey into a dreamland filled with Irish snowflakes, sugar plum fairies, candy canes, gingerbreads, and more. The cast features dancers from the Bernadette Short School of Irish Dancing, supported by a talented ensemble of invited Montreal musicians and singers who bring both tradition and imagination to life on stage.



For returning guests, this year's production introduces exciting new scenes and creative additions, offering fresh delights while preserving the magic that audiences have come to cherish.



The show is made possible through the generous support of the Montreal Irish community, including a significant grant from the Charitable Giving Committee of the St. Patrick's Society of Montreal, whose contribution helps ensure top-tier audio and visual production quality.

For updates, visit: shortschoolirishdance.com/irishnutcracker

Tickets available at: theatredesjardins.com

The Taoiseach's Official Visit to Canada 2025

BY JOHN CONCANNON
Ambassador of Ireland to Canada

Taoiseach Micheál Martin T.D. visited Ottawa on September 25th 2025 to meet with Prime Minister Mark Carney, to strengthen the Ireland–Canada relationship. The leaders made a number of important announcements that will significantly strengthen the Ireland-Canada relationship.

Among these, the leaders welcomed the recently announced Agreement on The Legacy of the Troubles and also welcomed the announcement of the De Chastelain Scholarship Programme, which will promote peace and reconciliation and strengthen academic ties. Both leaders expressed their commitment to continued dialogue and cooperation, and to further deepening the Ireland–Canada partnership for future generations.

The Taoiseach met with members of the Irish Canada community, including Quebec’s Irish leaders at which he announced the Canada–Ireland 180 landmark cultural initiative to be held in 2027, commemorating 180 years since the Famine migration of 1847. This initiative will celebrate shared heritage and deepen cultural exchange.

The Taoiseach also launched the Canada–Ireland Economic Impact report, which highlights the growing strength and potential for increased trade and investment between our two nations.

The visit was a great success, especially as Prime Minister Carney accepted the Taoiseach's invitation to visit Ireland in the near future. The Embassy of Ireland is delighted to have coordinated this historic visit.



Prime Minister Mark Carney & Taoiseach Micheál Martin



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Catherine Connolly as Uachtarán na hÉireann in historic election victory

BY KEVIN CALLAHAN

In a seismic change in Irish politics, independent progressive candidate Catherine Connolly won a landslide electoral victory to become Ireland's next president (uachtarán na hÉireann). The stunning victory by Connolly is seen as a sharp rebuke of the two establishment parties Fianna Fail and Fine Gael that currently form the coalition government. The Fianna Fail candidate Jim Gavin, backed by Taoiseach Micheal Martin, withdrew early in the campaign because of a financial scandal, which left a two-candidate race between Connolly and Fine Gael's Heather Humphreys.

Though an underdog at first, Connolly used social media savvily and came across well in the public debates. Crucial to her success was the endorsement of Sinn Féin, which put its formidable electoral machine behind Connolly. As the campaign went on, an increasingly desperate Humphreys was encouraged by party colleagues to "smear the bejusus" out of Connolly. Her campaign then launched many nasty and spurious attacks, but the electorate was not moved. Connolly won handily with 64% of the vote. The election did see a low (by Irish standards) turnout of 46% and a "spoil your ballot" campaign spearheaded by far-right social media commentators and conspiracy theorists that resulted in a high total (almost 13%) of spoiled ballots.

While the office is largely ceremonial, recent presidents such as Michael D. Higgins and Mary Robinson have used the position to speak out on social and international issues. Connolly is a strong advocate for a united Ireland, so she is sure to add her voice to the growing conversation about what a united Ireland should look like and how it can be achieved.

Along with the humiliating defeat for the governing coalition, the campaign saw an additional element that may be important for the next general election. Sinn Féin joined with three smaller parties on the left of the political spectrum to work together in support of Connolly. This progressive coalition showed it could put aside political differences for the common cause. Given the complex electoral system in Ireland, no one party is likely to get a complete majority, so coalitions need to be forged to form a government. It may prove that this election was a portent of a sea change in Irish politics that will see the end of over a century of Fianna Fail and Fine Gael dominance of government.



*Newly elected Irish president Catherine Connolly with Sinn Féin leader Mary Lou McDonald
Photo courtesy of Sinn Féin Press Office*

A Tribute to J. Peter Shea (1943–2025) Honouring a Remarkable Leader, Historian, and Friend of the St. Patrick's Society

BY SHERRI MCGURNAGHAN



J. Peter Shea
2000 - 20002

St. Patrick's Society of Montreal was deeply saddened by the passing of J. Peter Shea on September 25, 2025. Peter's connection to the Society spanned more than fifty years, and at the time of his death he was our longest-serving member — a reflection of his extraordinary loyalty, commitment, and belief in the importance of community.

A fifth-generation Canadian, Peter was immensely proud of his Irish roots, descended from ancestors who emigrated from Ireland to Montreal between the 1820s and 1860s. That history shaped his lifelong dedication to preserving and celebrating Montreal's Irish story. Within the Society, Peter served for many years as a board member, ball committee chairperson, president from 2000 to 2002, and historian, a role that showcased his deep knowledge of our origins and traditions. In 2001, he was honoured as the Montreal Irishman of the Year, a distinction that reflected how widely respected and admired he was.

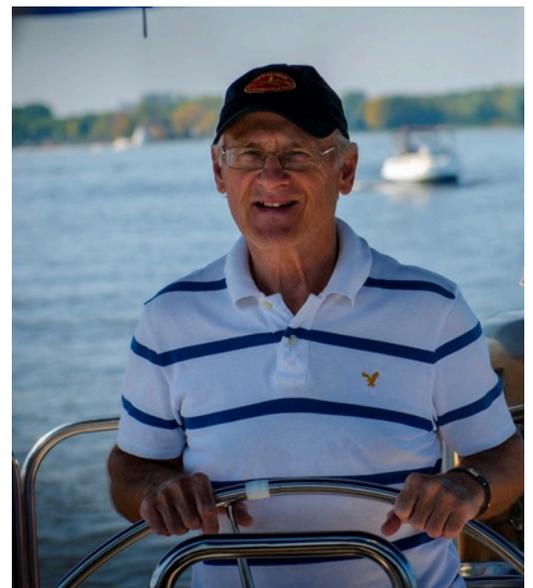
Those who had the privilege of working with Peter remember him for his humour, sharp wit, fairness, and unfailing kindness. He brought a steady, thoughtful presence to every committee and conversation, offering clarity and perspective rooted in genuine service rather than self-interest. His insights were invaluable, and generations of members relied on his understanding of the Society's history and governance.

Beyond SPS, Peter lent his time and expertise to several institutions, including Loyola College, Loyola High School, Catholic Community Services, and Concordia University. Yet the Society always held a special place in his heart, and his contributions helped guide its continuity through times of growth and change.

Above all, Peter was a devoted family man. He is survived by his beloved wife of 54 years, Margaret, his children Patrick (Laurie Birbilas), Kevin (Annie-Claude Asselin), Kathleen (Henrik Johansson), and Brigid (Olivier Winter), and his nine grandchildren: Liam, Hugo, Klara, Oskar, Griffin, Ella, Louise, Elias, and Ciaran. The love and pride he had for them were central to his life.

St. Patrick's Society extends its heartfelt condolences to the Shea family.

Peter's leadership, institutional memory, and steadfast commitment enriched our community immeasurably. His legacy will continue to guide us for many years, and his memory will remain a cherished part of our story.



CLÁR IMEACHTAÍ

DATE	DESCRIPTION	CONTACT
2025 November 25, 2025 December 21, 2025	St. Patrick's Society Annual General Meeting The Irish Nutcracker	spsmtl.com shortschoolirishdance.com
2026 February 20, 2026 March 07, 2026 March 13, 2026 March 22, 2026 June 12, 2026	St. Patrick's Society Annual Charity Ball Erin Sports Irishman of the Year Breakfast St. Patrick's Society Annual Luncheon 201st St. Patrick's Day Parade St. Patrick's Society Golf Tournament	spsmtl.com Ronnie James spsmtl.com unitedirishsocieties.ca spsmtl.com

MOVING FORWARD!

St. Patrick's Society of Montreal, built on a strong support of over 100 years, want to continue growing in members, giving the society the strength in numbers it requires to continue its work in the community.

NEW GENERATION

We are building our "New Generation" division. All those between the ages of: 18-30 are welcome to build with us new ways to reach out to our community besides: The Ball, The Luncheon and The Golf Tournament. New events will give us a way to expand our help to the community. Won't you join us?

Sign up on our website: www.spsmtl.com

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