



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT GO HABS GO! – GO SPS GO!

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

You guessed it—I am writing this message right after the Montreal Canadiens' first win against the Carolina Hurricanes. What a great game!

It got me thinking, what has made this team so powerful on the ice? These have been challenging series against all opponents. How have they gotten this far?



**Carol McCormick**

Certainly, it comes down to team spirit, commitment, camaraderie, and the incredible support of their coach, Martin St. Louis. His leadership and care for his players are evident in every game. When asked why he makes the sign of the cross, he simply said, "I ask that He takes care of my players." It's inspiring to see that kind of dedication and authenticity.

You may be wondering—am I trying to become a sportswriter? Not at all! I'll leave that to the experts. The reason I bring up the Habs is because their success reflects qualities that all organizations, especially ones like the St. Patrick's Society of Montreal, need in order to thrive: teamwork, dedication, compassion, and the determination to rise to any challenge. I say with confidence that the SPS has always had, and will continue to have, what it takes to support the community we serve.

As with all non-profit organizations, our ability to meet challenges depends on the strength of our supporters—a truth clearly demonstrated during this past "Green Season." Our 2026 Ball and Luncheon were tremendous successes. These events truly showcased what I call teamwork—the harmony between our dedicated members and the generosity of those who made it all possible. It is wonderful to see our membership growing, with more and more people attending and supporting our events.

You may also wish to support us through our Patron's Fund and receive an income tax receipt. And if you're considering becoming a member of the St. Patrick's Society of Montreal, know that you will be welcomed with open arms. Until next time—Go SPS Go!

**Carol McCormick**  
**President, St. Patrick's Society of Montreal**



# 2026 St. Patrick's Society Charity Ball: Honouring Legacy, Inspiring the Future

BY SHERRI MCGURNAGHAN  
*Chair, 2026 SPS Charity Ball*

The St. Patrick's Society of Montreal's 2026 Charity Ball, held on February 20 at the Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth, was an evening that beautifully captured the spirit of our community, one rooted in tradition, strengthened by generosity, and inspired by a shared vision for the future.

This year's Ball brought together members, friends, and distinguished guests in celebration of Irish heritage and the enduring impact of the Society's cultural and charitable work. We were especially honoured to welcome our Guest of Honour, The Honourable Seamus O'Regan, whose presence underscored the deep and ongoing connections between Ireland and Canada.



*From left to right: Montréal City Councillor Sterling Downey, Désirée McGraw, MNA for NDG, Past SPS President Ken Quinn & 2026 Ball Chair Sherri McGurnaghan. Photo credit: Julian Haber*

We were also proud to recognize Mary Jeanne Phelan as our Honorary Patron. Her remarkable leadership and commitment to community reflect the very values the Society strives to uphold.

The evening was marked by a strong sense of camaraderie and purpose, from the warmth of the VIP reception to a lively and memorable celebration that continued well into the night.



*From left to right: UIS President Lori Morrison, UIS Fundraising Chair Karen Ritchie, The Honourable Seamus O'Regan, SPS President Carol McCormick, Stelios Doussis. Photo credit: Julian Haber*

None of this would have been possible without the extraordinary support of our sponsors, donors, and volunteers. We extend our sincere thanks to our Platinum Sponsor, Blake, Cassels & Graydon (Blakes), for their leadership and commitment, as well as to all those whose generosity ensures the continued success of the Society's initiatives.

Thanks to this collective effort, the 2026 Ball has already raised over \$50,000 in support of the Society's cultural, charitable, and educational endeavours, with final figures continuing to grow.

As we reflect on this year's success, we are reminded that the strength of the St. Patrick's Society lies in its people and in the shared commitment to honouring our legacy while building for the future.

# UPCOMING EVENTS



## Siamsa Montreal School of Irish Music: SIAMSA CÉILÍ - Last of the 2025-2026 season

📅 Saturday, May 30, 2026 • 7:30 – 11:30pm

📍 St. Kevin's Church, 5600 Chen, de la Côte-des-Neiges,  
Montréal, QC H3T 1Z1

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



## Canadian Association of Irish Studies: Conference in Quebec City,

📅 June 17–19, 2026

[www.canadianirishstudies.org/activities](http://www.canadianirishstudies.org/activities)



## Bloomsday Festival Montreal: takes place annually around June 11 - 16, 2026 in Montreal, commemorating the Irish literary heritage of James Joyce.

📅 June 11 - 16, 2026

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



## Festival celtique de Québec:

📅 Summer 2026 - TBD

[www.festival-celtique.com](http://www.festival-celtique.com)



## Montreal Highland Games and Festival:

📅 Sunday, August 2, 2026

📍 Douglas Hospital grounds, Verdun - Québec

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



## Erin Sports Association - 95th Anniversary Golf Tournament

📅 August 22nd, 2026

✉ Contact [joepilotte@gmail.com](mailto:joepilotte@gmail.com)



## Montreal Irish Monument Annual Golf Tournament:

📅 September 28, 2026, at the Kanawaki Golf Club

[www.montrealirishmonument.com/golf2026](http://www.montrealirishmonument.com/golf2026)



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# Montreal Irish Celebrate: 193<sup>rd</sup> Annual Luncheon

BY GEORGE MCCOURT  
*Chair, 2026 SPS Luncheon*

The 193rd Annual Luncheon of the St. Patrick's Society of Montreal was held on March 13th at Hotel Bonaventure. By all accounts, the gathering of 450 guests to celebrate the history of the Irish presence in Montreal was a fantastic success.

Those in attendance had the opportunity to hear guest speaker, the federal MP for Lac-Saint-Louis and current Speaker of the House of Commons, The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia, deliver a speech entitled "Parliament, McGee and the Canadian Identity". Mr. Speaker shared eloquently "how our identity as a country is deeply rooted in how we govern ourselves" and how our governance structure has made us a democratic superpower.

Among the VIP guests, we were delighted to welcome His Excellency, John Concannon, the *Irish Ambassador to Canada*, Ciaran Mac Golla Bhein, *President of the Irish League*, who proposed a toast to Ireland, and *Irish Minister for Rural and Community Development*, Dara Calleary, who touched on the importance of continuing to build business links between our two nations. We were honored by the presence of Grand Chief Cody Diabo of the Kanien'kehá peoples who kindly welcomed everyone to the lands of the Mohawk nation.

It was a touching moment when Past President Pamela McGovern awarded the SPS Community Award to former board members, and father and son, Peter and Patrick Shea for their many years of service to the Montreal Irish community. Sadly, Peter Shea's award was presented posthumously as he passed away earlier this year.

Patrick paid tribute to his father in a moving acceptance speech recognizing his father's contributions to the Irish community and his influence in shaping his own contributions to the community.



*Guest Speaker, The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia,  
Speaker of the House of Commons  
Photo Credit: Luigi D'Astolfo*

## Montreal Irish Celebrate: 193<sup>rd</sup> Annual Luncheon (*cont'd*)

Finishing on a high note, board member Mark O'Neill organized the Raffle draw, with the Grand Prize of two round trip tickets Montreal-Dublin generously donated by Air Canada and Tourism Ireland.

The 2026 Annual Luncheon was a great success, raising just over \$18,000 towards the Society's charitable endeavours.

As the Irish would say it was great "craic", which is a foundational term for good times, enjoyable conversation and atmosphere. I think this is the perfect description for this year's luncheon. Finally, a huge thank-you to all members of the Luncheon Committee whose hard work and humour actually made chairing this committee an enjoyable event. *Sláinte!*



*From left to right: Scott Phelan, member of the Board of Directors, Montreal Irish Monument, and SPS Past President; The Honourable Francis Scarpaleggia, Speaker of the House of Commons; Charles Milliard, Leader of the Quebec Liberal Party; Gregory Kelley, MNA for Jacques-Cartier; and Désirée McGraw, MNA for NDG, in attendance at the 2026 SPS Annual Luncheon. Photo Credit: Luigi D'Astolfo*

# Snow, Spirit, and Stamina: SPS & 2026 Montreal St. Patrick's Parade

BY CHRISTIE BROWN  
*St. Patrick's Society Past President*

On March 22, 2026, the Montreal St. Patrick's Day Parade marched on, despite winter making an unexpected encore. With snow falling steadily, it felt as though Mother Nature had mistaken the day for the Santa Claus Parade rather than one of our most cherished Irish traditions to start Spring.

Undeterred, thousands lined the route along de Maisonneuve Boulevard to cheer us on, bundled against the cold but full of enthusiasm. Their presence was a testament to the enduring spirit of the Irish community and the deep affection Montrealers hold for this annual celebration organized by the United Irish Society of Montreal.

The St. Patrick's Society of Montreal contingent may have been small in number this year, but it was certainly mighty in spirit. Led by President Carol McCormick and a dedicated team of Past-Presidents and Members, we braved the elements with resilience (and a generous supply of hand warmers). Spirits remained high as the group proudly represented the Society, demonstrating once again that commitment and camaraderie outweigh even the harshest weather.

Leading the contingent were the Montreal Pipes and Drums, whose members faced the additional challenge of playing their instruments in the cold and wet conditions. The band had even more to contend with as the effects of the cold and damp conditions can make bagpipes difficult to tune and play reliably (and the kilts didn't provide much protection from the weather this year!).



*SPS contingent at the 2026 St Patrick's Day Parade  
Photo credit: Peter McCabe*



*Enthusiastic parade-goers despite the weather  
Photo credit: Peter McCabe*

# Snow, Spirit, and Stamina: SPS & 2026 Montreal St. Patrick's Parade (cont'd)

Despite the difficulty, their music carried clearly along the route, adding a joyful soundtrack to an already memorable day.

While the snow may have been unseasonable, the warmth of community more than made up for it. The 2026 parade will be remembered not only for its wintry conditions but for the determination, pride, and good cheer shown by all who took part.



*Montreal Pipes and Drums at the 2026 Parade - Photo credit: Peter McCabe*

***Sláinte* to all who marched, played, and cheered. They are all proof that not even a snowstorm could dampen Montreal's Irish spirit during the Green Season.**



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# Montreal Shamrocks: Gaelic Football & 2026 World Games

BY SARAH CROTTY

*Camogie*, a fast-paced Gaelic stick-and-ball sport played with a hurley and a ball called a sliotar, is closely related to hurling. While it may not be as ancient as hurling, which has been played in Ireland for thousands of years, it is over a century old and continues to grow among the Irish diaspora around the world.

In an effort to bring together non-Irish-born players from around the world, the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) hosts the GAA World Games every three years. The 2026 Canada Camogie team is made up of athletes from Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and Quebec City, and I am proud to say that I will be joining the team in Waterford this summer to compete. The 16 teammates come from different backgrounds, careers, and experiences, but we are bonded by a shared love of the sport and a strong sense of community.

When I joined the Montreal Shamrocks in January 2024, I never could have imagined the journey I was about to embark on. I am most looking forward to the camaraderie between teammates and competitors. Although the matches are competitive, they always end with smiles and handshakes between everyone on the pitch.

Playing camogie has brought me closer to my Irish roots. My grandfather, Dr. Thomas Crotty, played on the Cork hurling team in the 1950s. Several of my cousins played hurling, camogie, and Gaelic football, and I love getting to continue that tradition here in Montreal.

Joining the Montreal Shamrocks also led to some other incredible adventures over the past year. Last November, I was selected as the United Irish Society's 2026 Parade Queen. During the Green Season, I was fortunate enough to meet numerous members of Montreal's Irish community and take part in cultural and community events. Witnessing how every member of this community contributes in their own way, has inspired me to stay connected in the coming years.



*Sarah Crotty, during a game of Camogie  
Photo credit: Montreal Shamrocks*

## Montreal Shamrocks: Gaelic Football & 2026 World Games (cont'd)

Over the past few years, camogie in Montreal has grown enormously. Our goal is to keep the momentum alive while building a youth program. Our youth officer currently runs Gaelic football and hurling programs each Sunday for young players of all ages.

I can't wait to see how this sport and community will evolve over the next few years. I would encourage everyone, no matter their age or experience level, to give the sport a try.



2026 Montreal Shamrocks Team

*The St. Patrick's Society has proudly supported the Montreal Shamrocks Gaelic Athletic Club's endeavours through its charitable giving.*

*Established in 1948, its mission is to promote Ireland's national sports—Gaelic football, camogie, and hurling—to the community of Montreal. Today, with approximately 200 active members, they are one of the oldest GAA clubs in North America. Members include people from all walks of life, nationalities, and skill levels.*

*Learn more about the GAA on their website, or even better, check out an upcoming game in Montreal: <https://montrealshamrocks.com>*

# Where The Green Land Holds Weight

A poem composed by Samara O’Gorman

If you are seeking a new life,  
winters here are delivered in flight  
a place to heal and to celebrate  
not foolproof, and aware of it  
that’s her best trait.

Here, you can catch and release your burdens  
you can graze freely in the plains  
I am a clover-grown child  
but it’s maple sap that runs through my veins.

From her throat, she forms a note  
a call delivered to you on your lap  
a sweetness that flows  
during the spring thaw  
and can be found using the right map.

To find it, turn towards the new world  
the colours here are key  
the plumage is the brightest  
and can be seen across the sea.

A union of deep cherry red  
and white, like a dove  
her presence is strong  
one of longevity and love

My country is a strong woman  
she stands tall  
you’d be wrong to silence her  
so when she sings, sing along.

I cling to her trunk for sugar  
the past is being passed down  
but I am free, and revere no crown.

In every direction,  
you will have a neighbour here  
run alongside the caribou,  
the fox, and the deer.



*Photo credit: Signal Hill National Historic Site,  
Parks Canada*

A beaver will knot your curls  
let the sparrows detangle your hair  
you will soon start to crave that chill  
just like the pale, pale bear.

I know you have travelled far  
forget all with which you have dealt  
because under her wing,  
your courage will be felt.

Leave behind the glaring wind,  
and the endless silent wounds  
blood has still been spread here  
but the peace is finely tuned.

I’ve been to where the green land holds weight  
it remembers, and it aches  
my roots are buried there,  
but not my fate.

*August 2025*

# About the Author

## Biography:

*Samara O’Gorman is an Irish-Canadian actress, poet, and singer from Montreal. She is the author of the #1 bestselling poetry collection, What If The Sun Died. A scholar of Irish studies, she is also a sought-after public speaker who engages audiences on topics such as leadership, Irish culture, and literature. She is currently writing a book about her hometown of Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue.*



Samara O’Gorman

## Author's Note:

*By using imagery from both Canadian and Irish landscapes and histories, the poem explores the theory that land itself can carry trauma. It suggests that seeking a new life elsewhere, particularly in Canada, can be both brave and, in some cases, essential for survival. The poem also celebrates the pride and culture of both Irish and Canadian identities.*



An advertisement for National Bank Financial Wealth Management. It features a large red banner with the text "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" below it. At the bottom of the advertisement, it says "National Bank Financial Voted #1 by J.D. Power". The background is light blue with small, faint floral patterns.

# MOVING FORWARD!

St. Patrick's Society of Montreal, built on nearly 200 years of strong support, wants to continue growing its membership, giving the Society the strength in numbers it needs to carry forward its work in the community.

## JUNIOR MEMBERSHIP

We are building our Junior Membership 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?

Become a member: [www.spsmtl.com](http://www.spsmtl.com)

Sign up to receive the Nuacht by email: [office@spsmtl.com](mailto:office@spsmtl.com)



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