



St. Patrick's Day continues rowdy traditions

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A little more than a month ago, those people lucky enough to have a partner got to hear the rest of us bitch and whine about Valentine's Day.

"It's over-commercialized." "It's too exclusionary." The validity of the holiday was challenged by people who claimed that Hallmark had more invested in the holiday than the Catholic church.

Worry no longer, holiday purists: St. Patrick's Day is here!

Between heart-shaped-box-of-chocolates day and giant-creepy-chocolate-egg-hiding-rabbit day, St. Patrick's Day is a beacon of pure Catholic tradition shining forth in viridian and emerald glory.

Just kidding. The traditional Irish dinner of corned beef and cabbage was long ago replaced with green beer and whiskey as the preferred method for celebrating all that is Irish, at least on college campuses.

The story of St. Patrick is intertwined with facts and myths. What is known for certain is that he was kidnapped as a child and taken to Ireland. After escaping and finding his calling as a missionary, he decided to return to the island of his captivity and convert the non-believers.

He was quite successful. St. Patrick is credited with establishing Catholicism's foothold on the island and building a number of monasteries. The two most famous St. Patrick legends are the sermon from the hill-top that eradicated the island of its snakes (a

metaphor for the conversion from paganism) and his use of a shamrock to teach the idea of the Christian Holy Trinity to his converts.

Now we celebrate the man, the myth and Ireland.

People will tastefully hang shamrock cutouts over doorways and adorn dinner plates with home-cooked corned beef. On campus, the story will be a little different.

Some argue that Valentine's Day is pointless. But if St. Patrick's Day ever had a point, it has largely been forgotten. Almost as shamelessly as we use Valentine's Day to promote chocolate and rose sales in the name of love, college kids will use St. Patrick's Day as an excuse to imbibe Irish libations in the name of faith and celebration.

Look no further than our own Harris Teeter, where Guinness and Harp - traditional Irish stouts and lagers, respectively - were both recently put on sale.

Sure, many students are not old enough to drink, and many others will simply choose not to partake. That being said, it is hard to miss the economic drive fueled almost exclusively by breweries.

The commercialism of St. Patrick's Day will shine on campus. In honor of St. Patrick and Ireland, the "of age" population will surely imbibe in green stouts and beers.

Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day are two of a kind. Originally good-natured religious holidays, the two have now been appropriated by American consumerism.

It could be worse, I guess. It's hard to deny that today will be, as the old ads say, "a good time for a Guinness." ☘

Landry Haarmann

Photo Editor

It's a day of debauchery and rowdiness. A night where you go out with your buddies and see who can drink an "Irish Car Bomb" fastest. It's a holiday when, for one night, regardless of where your family is from, you too can be Irish.

I, on the other hand, am Irish all year round. Don't be fooled by my name, the majority of my family hails from the Emerald Isle. Just take a look at my pale, freckled skin.

For my family, St. Patrick's Day has always been a day of cultural recognition, a day when I can acknowledge my heritage and rub it in your face that my ancestors know how to celebrate!

And celebrate we do.

Despite hectic schedules, two working parents and children with too many extracurricular activities, my family always managed to find the time to celebrate St. Patrick's Day as a family.

My mother would make the St. Patrick's Day staple, corned beef and cabbage, a meal which combines two cultures, Irish and Irish-American. Cabbage has always been popular in Ireland, and Irish immigrants used corned beef to save money.

During dinner, my sister and I received small gifts from a "leprechaun," generally little trinkets, which usually were Irish symbols and paraphernalia.

My family would also watch the classic

Irish movie "The Quiet Man." The movie tells the story of a retired American boxer who returns to his native Ireland after the death of his father.

In general, the evening spent with my family lacked any sense of rowdiness or debauchery and was a rather nice recognition and celebration of heritage.

I get the suspicion that, being away from home, my St. Patrick's Day will not be as quiet.

Of course I'll wear green, give the evil eye to those wearing orange, and flaunt my Irish pride like I do every year; but this year's celebration will be different.

I will not be with my Irish-American family. I will not be in New York City, with its dense population of Irish-Americans. I will not get to eat a lovely home-cooked meal of slow-simmered corned beef and cabbage. Instead, I'll get to eat what ever the cafeteria is serving. Yum!

Despite straying from my normal celebration, I feel like this St. Patrick's Day will be fun. This will probably be the rowdiest St. Patrick's Day of my 19 years of celebration, but how could a Friday night on a college campus, which just happens to coincide with St. Patrick's Day, not be?

I'm willing to sacrifice a home-cooked meal for fun, boisterous times with friends, because what better is there to do on a rowdy holiday than celebrate your youth and pride with friend? ☘