

St. Paddy's Day

Irish family is full of pride

By AMY STYERS
Staff Writer

Tucked away in the outskirts of Chapel Hill is a little bit of Ireland. The Moneyhun family, manifesting a love for their heritage, has added Irish touches to their home, "Beag Eire," Gaelic for "Little Ireland."

An Irish flag stands masked in the middle of an azalea garden in their front yard. The mailbox displays shamrocks and a plaque by the front door greets visitors with "Ceao Mile Failta," meaning "100,000 welcomes."

"It's bad luck not to greet someone at the door, so we let the sign take care of that for us," Michael Moneyhun said with a laugh. He, his wife Anne, assistant to the associate dean of the Office of Enrolled Students, and their son, Don, a UNC sophomore, take great pride in their ancestry. "Irish don't have more pride, they just brag about it more," he said.

The Moneyhun name was originally O'Manachain, named after Monaghan County in Ireland. When the O'Manachains came to America, they Anglicized the name to Moneyhun because of discrimination against the Irish.

Michael Moneyhun's father, Marion Luther Moneyhun, is responsible for instilling such an Irish pride in the family, Michael Moneyhun said. His father is fondly remembered for his leprechaun stories and his hand carvings. He died the day after St. Patrick's Day in 1973. "He was determined to live through St. Patrick's Day," Moneyhun said. Marion Luther Moneyhun was buried with a bag of Irish soil that Don and his sister, Anne Michael, who lives in Charlottesville, Va., got for him when they visited the country.

"Ireland is remarkably beautiful," Don Moneyhun said, remembering his visit. "The hospitality is just incredible," he added.

While he and his sister were there, they were able to see the O'Manachain castle

where their ancestors lived. They also visited the Blarney Castle and kissed the Blarney stone which, legend holds, bestows the gift of flattery to all those who kiss it.

The Moneyhun household prides itself in several Irish collectables including a Shillelagh, which is a knocker made from the root of a blackthorn bush, a bush common to Ireland. They also have a cane carved from a blackthorn bush and items made from connemara marble, a marble found in Ireland.

Michael Moneyhun told of his being named as an honorary Irish poet by Paddy and Murphy's Irish Whiskey. He won this title by submitting a 12-line limerick describing the virtues of drinking the whiskey. "I'd even forgotten I sent the thing in," he said.

Despite the mispronunciations and jests the name Moneyhun inspires, they are very proud of the name. When someone responds, "Moneyhun?" Don says, "Yes, a little of the first and a lot of the last."

Michael Moneyhun said he looks for the name in phone books when he travels. He once found a cousin he did not know he had in Charleston, S.C.

"We're all American but you can have a fierce pride in your home country; that's the beauty of America," Michael Moneyhun said.

He recited an old Irish saying — "If you're lucky enough to be born Irish, you're lucky enough."



Mike Cross (alone) and Stockton's Wing mix musical elements. These and other musicians will perform on St. Patrick's Day.

Cross, bands play here as part of Green Day

By DAVID SOTOLONGO
Staff Writer

Saturday is St. Patrick's Day, and Chapel Hill nightspots will showcase Irish music that comes in as many varieties as the Irish potato.

The Pratie Heads, a local band with an Irish tint, will play at Rhythm Alley. Stockton's Wing, an Irish band with American country music seasoning, will perform at the ArtSchool. And Mike Cross, a Tar Heel native who translates Irish traditional music via the Carolina mountain culture, will play to a sold-out Memorial Hall crowd.

For current Pratie Heads Jane Pepler and Bob Vasile, playing Chapel Hill on green beer day is a homecoming of sorts. "The first Pratie Heads gig was about four years ago on St. Patrick's Day," Vasile said. The band was a quartet then. To celebrate the anniversary, former members Chuck Jones and Rob Van Veld will jam with the band for a set.

"The two of us (Pepler and Vasile) have been performing for the last year, but we make a lot more noise with four than with two," she said. "We tend to get a little more rowdy (with Chuck and Rob)."

In addition to the reunion, the Pratie Heads have invited several friends to bolster the concert. Sandy Jones, an Irish fiddler from Charlotte, will open the show along with guitarist and mandolinist Rob Hinson of Cheap Thrills. Honey-suckle will also perform, as well as several "mystery guests," according to Pepler and Vasile.

The Pratie Heads play mostly British Isles music, a mixture of English, Scottish and Irish traditional music.

"We try to maintain our identity as American musicians interpreting British Isles music," Vasile said. "We're Americans who play British Isles music and also play it in our own styles. The music is definitely of traditional flavor and we try to preserve that flavor."

Down the street in Carrboro, the ArtSchool landed one of Ireland's premier bands, Stockton's Wing, for St. Patrick's Day festivities.

Stockton's Wing is currently on a two-month tour of the United States and Canada, and it was a stroke of good fortune that the Chapel Hill performance was booked for the same day the world toasts Ireland, said Herschel Freeman, the band's agent.

Stockton's Wing is a little more contemporary than most acoustic bands that

play traditional Irish music, Freeman said.

"These guys have a lot of energy, (and) there's a lot of interaction between the players," he said. "They're playing Irish music with the energy of an American band, so it's kind of unusual."

The band features three musicians who have been honored as All-Ireland instrumental champions, an award similar to America's Grammy Awards.

Kieran Hanrahan has won several national championships and plays the banjo, mandolin and bouzouki. Paul Roche was the All-Ireland flute champion in 1978, and Maurice Lennon captured the award in 1977 with his fiddle prowess.

Also in the band are Kieran's brother Michael Hanrahan (guitar and vocals) and Tommy Hughes, who plays goat-skinned drums called bodhrans.

In honor of the day, the ArtSchool will give a free Irish beer to anyone who brings in a four-leaf clover.

And then there is Mike Cross, a jokester and philosopher who is as funny as he is talented. Cross first began to integrate the Irish sound in a visit to Chapel Hill during his law school tenure in Atlanta, Ga.

Cross said some friends he was staying with put on a song by Irish fiddler Kevin Burke, and Cross watched the sun rise as he listened to the tape.

"It was a mystical experience," Cross said, half in jest. He picked up his fiddle and learned how to play that song, and soon mixed the sound in with his native songs.

"The songs that I write and the music that I play is more a part of the ballad tradition — telling stories by way of song," he said. Many mountain residents have roots that travel back to the British Isles, Cross said. Culturally and musically, the two regions have much in common.

Cross plays a few Irish fiddle songs during his shows, but he also has to play selections from his vast repertoire of original material.

Cross is enthusiastic about playing Memorial Hall for the second St. Patrick's Day in as many years.

The Pratie Heads are sponsored by Carolina Area Friends of Folk, Bluegrass and Blues. Tickets are \$3.00 and the doors will open at 8:30 p.m. For more information, call 929-8172.

Stockton's Wing will perform at 8 and 10:30 p.m. Tickets are \$4.50 for ArtSchool members and \$5 for non-members. For more information, call 929-2896.

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