American Irish Newsletter - May 1993

American Ireland Education Foundation - PEC

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Support Mounting For Clinton Peace Envoy

A recent *Los Angeles Times* editorial urged President Clinton to carry through his campaign promise to send a special envoy to Northern Ireland.

The editorial follows a briefing in March that Taoiseach Albert Reynolds gave the *Times* editorial board, which, in turn, interpreted Reynolds’ stand on the envoy as favorable. For example, the editorial states: “The idea of a special envoy has possible merit, if handled sensitively. Indeed, how could it hurt? This appears to be precisely the position of the Irish government in Dublin. Why not try?”

More support came from the New York State Legislature which passed a resolution urging Clinton to implement the Five Recommendations on Irish Issues, including a Special Envoy, which would set in motion a constructive United States policy in regard to Northern Ireland.

On April 5, 1993 the OpEd page of the *New York Times* featured an editorial by the senior editor of the *San Francisco Weekly*, Andrew O’Hehir. The editorial, in response to the recent bombings in Warrington, concluded: “Irish indignation at IRA atrocities is heartfelt. And Ireland must face its history of violence and victimhood if Catholic-Protestant peace is ever to be possible. But that process must not obscure a central fact: British policy created and feeds the cycle of hatred and killing in which the Irish and British remain trapped.”

The PEC Newspaper Advertising Campaign will place an OpEd page ad in the *New York Times* on Sunday, May 23. It also placed an OpEd page ad in the *Philadelphia Enquirer* (more than 2,000,000 readers) on Sunday, April 25.

(See this month’s *Reproduce & Distribute*: “Ireland’s Troubled Sleep.” Be sure to send the R&D to your U.S. Senators and Congressional Representatives, and media people.)

**New York City PEC Fundraiser**

Come out and support us as we present an evening of great Irish music and dancing! A ceili will be held Sunday, May 23 at St. Stephen of Hungary, 414 East 82nd Street, New York City. The first dance will kick off at 3:30 pm. Music will be provided by Brendan Dolan, Mary Teresa Kelly and Patty Counan-Furlong. Admission is $8.00.

If you have never done ceili dancing before and want to give it a try, this is the place to be. If you just want to listen to great Irish music, come on over.

For further information, please call Kathy Regan at (212)365-0213 or Maureen Brosnan at (212)364-3935.

**Newsbits** by Kathy Regan

The British government is planning a blueprint for Northern Ireland that will call for the removal of articles 2 & 3 from the Irish constitution (Ireland’s legal claim to the north). They will also call for a return to Stormont (power sharing with Loyalist control). Power-sharing is opposed by both John Hume of the SDLP and Gerry Adams of Sinn Fein, who recently met to discuss this situation. It is implied that Prime Minister John Major will take these steps to win Unionist support for the next election. It is also feared that the Irish government will go along with the British plan. An All Ireland context will not be considered.

Twenty four years of bloodshed, suffering and gross injustice for what? (PEC 4/16/93)

The Beechmount Five, teenagers who claim they were ill-treated in Castlereagh until they signed statements incriminating them in a 1991 attack on an RUC Landrover, have been held in prison and charged with murder based solely on these confessions. One mother, Bridget Coogan, had faith that a judge would see the injustice and free the boys but, after speaking with Noel Bell, she is not so sure. Mr. Bell was one of the UDR Four, four
From The Editor

The recent IRA bombing in Warrington, England, that killed two children, and the killing of six Catholics in the north by the pro-British Ulster Defence Association makes all the more obvious the need for President Clinton to appoint a peace envoy for Northern Ireland. Clinton offers the only hope for peace with justice.

The on again, off again British and Irish government talks will not end the injustice and violence and the leaders know this. The talks, as they are presently structured, exclude Sinn Fein, the legal political party that represents the views of the IRA, and refuse to address the issue that causes the injustice and violence: Britain’s illegal division of Ireland. They are playing with Irish and British lives because both governments oppose Ireland’s reunification—the inevitable solution. That solution is supported by a majority of British and Irish citizens, and a significant and growing number of northern Protestants.

The truth of the matter is: Ireland, an economically and politically insignificant nation, should not be left out of negotiations with the British government. This conflict begs for an international solution.

The thousands of people who rallied in Dublin against the IRA after the Warrington bombing can do much to begin a genuine peace process. They can start by demanding that their government leaders call for international support to pressure a British withdrawal from their island and for the reunification of Ireland. A united Ireland would also enable Ireland to prosper and finally provide for its citizens.

We in America can help by keeping pressure on President Clinton to send a Peace Envoy to Northern Ireland.

MacBride Update

On March 16 the Nebraska Legislature’s Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee held hearings on LB 705 which will incorporate the MacBride Principles into Nebraska law. LB 705 was introduced by Senator Tom Hall of Omaha. He is the Chairman of the Executive Board and the Reference Committee. On March 22 the Committee voted five to two, with one abstention, to advance the bill to the floor of the Legislature. Senators John Lindsey, Jim Jones, Kate Witek and Jennie Robak voted to advance LB 705.

Testifying in favor of LB 705 were AIPEC State Director Larry Doyle, PEC member Jim Birkel, Project Children state chairman Jim Chambers, and Jim Monahan of the AOH.

Representing the British Government in opposition to LB 705 were Sean Neeson and Harry Caul. A representative of Harris Laboratories also appeared in opposition to LB 705. Harris operates a small clinic in Northern Ireland.

The American Irish PEC

founded 1975

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American Irish Newsletter

Editor-In-Chief .............John J. Finucane
Editor ..................Stephanie Finucane

Assistant Editors Sandy Carlson............Albert Doyle.............Kathy Regan

National Headquarters: Fairgrounds Plaza
West Haverstraw, NY 10993  -(914) 947-2726  - Fax (914) 947-2759

STATE DIRECTORS: Jack O’Brien, 11109 Belton Street, Upper Marlboro, MARYLAND 20772-(301)338-5167; Leah Curtin, Hilibrarian Life, 790 Cleveland Avenue, Suite 221, St. Paul, MINNESOTA 55116-(612)690-3888; Kathy Regan, 3045 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NEW YORK 10468-(212)365-0213; Frank O’Day, 21 Pierce Lane, Madison, CONNECTICUT06443 -(203)245-4795; Kevin Murphy, P. O. Box 492 J W McCormack Station, Boston, MASSACHUSETTS 02102-(617)665-5736; Bob West, 683 Walnut Road, Wauconda, ILLINOIS 60084-(708)526-5520; Terry Deem Reilly, 1123 Clarkson, Denver, COLORADO 80216-(303)387-0443; Dan Warren, PO Box 1270, Scarborough, MAINE 04070 -(207)883-4167; Kevin Murphy, 9685 Sunny Isle Cir., Boca Raton, FLORIDA 33428-(305)488-1526; Ned A. Delaney, 1211 EL Grande St., Lafayette, INDIANA 47905-(317)474-2546; Larry Doyle, 46 B 2007 Beltz Road, Bellevue, NEBRASKA 68005-(402)292-6291, Phil Chaney, 663 West 70th Street, Kansas City, MISSOURI 64113 -(816)363-6523; Kathy Whittord, 15910 Lucille Drive, Cleveland, OHIO 44117 -(216)251-7551; Andy Kelly, 188 S Coeur D’Alene Street- 102E, Spokane, WASHINGTON 99204 -(509)747-7431; John Hatch, 302 North Bedford Street, Carlisle, PENNSYLVANIA 17014 -(717)249-4217; Nancy Love, 804 Riverwalk Dr. # 209, Waukesha, WISCONSIN 53186 -(414)542-4767; Dr. John T. Giesen, 1107 Ironwood Dr., Coeur D’Alene, IDAHO 83814 -(208)677-7459; Linda Barker, 2225 Fountain Lake, Apt. 227, Enid, OKLAHOMA 73701 -(405)234-1962; Elizabeth McElligott, 774 E Dale Ln., Scottsdale, ARIZONA 85252 -(602)585-3602.

NATIONAL MACBRIE PRINCIPLES CONSULTANT: John Hatch, 302 North Bedford Street, Carlisle, PA 17014 -(717)249-4217.

NATIONAL ORGANIZER: Pete Foley, 3177 Villa Avenue #3H, Bronx, NEW YORK 10468 -(212)933-7196.

STUDENT ORGANIZER: Sandy Carlson, AIPEC, Fairgrounds Plaza, 18 Route 9W, West Haverstraw, NY 10993 -(914) 947-2725

Supported in part by the Emerald Society, NYC Fire Department

URGENT !!!

President Clinton has not reneged on his promise to send a peace envoy to Northern Ireland, even though he is under intense pressure to do so. We who support the peace envoy must also intensifying the pressure. THIS MEANS WE ALL HAVE TO WORK HARDER! Finally our issue is on a President’s agenda. Getting it there has taken much time and sacrifice. WE MUST KEEP OUR ISSUE ON HIS AGENDA! WE URGENTLY REQUEST that all members and subscribers reproduce and distribute the adjoining flyer on page 3. There Can Be No Turning Back. Get it out to everyone and anyone. Follow the instructions on the flyer. Keep this copy as a master copy for future use. GIVE THIS EFFORT YOUR ALL!
There Can Be No Turning Back !!!

President Bill Clinton Must Keep His Promise
To Send A Peace Envoy To Northern Ireland

With Your Help He Will Keep That Promise !!!

A genuine peace initiative by President Bill Clinton would offer the first real opportunity to end the terrible tragedy in Northern Ireland. All told, over 33,000 people have been killed or injured by all sides in Northern Ireland (population 1.5 million). A comparable number in population in the United States would exceed 5,700,000. Certainly Northern Ireland needs attention. President Clinton's involvement will bring world-wide attention.

You can help influence President Clinton to send a Peace Envoy to Northern Ireland by mailing him the form letter below. Mail to: President Bill Clinton, The White House, Washington, DC 20500. Be sure to sign the form letter and to include your return address. If you want to have an even greater impact, send him a hand-written letter with the message below. One hand-written letter represents the views of 1,000 people. That's clout!

To be even more helpful, you can make copies of this flyer and distribute them at public events, festivals, concerts, colleges/schools, etc. You can mail them to relatives and friends throughout the United States.

This campaign is being conducted by the American Irish Political Education Committee (PEC). If you would like information on the PEC or would like to support this campaign, write: AIPEC, Fairgrounds Plaza, 18 Route 9W, West Haverstraw, NY 10993 or call 1 (800) 777-6807. Send donations to the AIPEC at the above address.

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Return address and date

Honorable William Clinton
President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

American government involvement in finding a solution to the conflict in Northern Ireland will bring this issue much-needed attention and will certainly help bring the suffering and injustice to an end. Please stand firm on your campaign promise to send a peace envoy to Northern Ireland.

Sincerely yours,

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American Irish Political Education Committee
Newsbits (cont'd from page 1)

soldiers sentenced to life imprisonment in 1986 for the murder of a Catholic man, Adrian Carroll. The four repeatedly claimed their confessions were obtained under duress. Mr. Bell told Mrs. Coogan, 'We were soldiers in the UDR, trained for combat, but we weren't prepared for interrogation in Castlcreagh at the hands of the RUC. What they put us through, we would have signed anything. They had me believing that I had actually done it! I'm sorry for your trouble, Mrs. Coogan, but I think your boys will get sold down the river, because this is a very corrupt system.' (Irish Post, 3/20/93)

Former Labor cabinet minister Tony Benn said that the loyalist people of Northern Ireland should not put their faith in any Conservative or Labor government. Mr. Benn said that every single policy followed by London had failed and he believes the time has come to send a UN observer team to Northern Ireland. He remarked that once elected, a candidate can reconsider promises if a candidate decides not to. Once elected, a candidate can reconsider promises in order to "do the right thing," which in the case of MacBride, according to Foley, means forgetting about it. He suggests that MacBride has reduced U.S. investment in Northern Ireland, although there is no evidence of this. Yet there is evidence that MacBride has helped reduce job discrimination. Anti-discrimination is apparently of no interest to Foley as he doesn't mention it. As for a Special Envoy, his obscure reason for opposition seems to be that the British and Irish governments probably wouldn't like the idea. Yet so far the Irish government has not opposed it (at least not in public). Unfortunately, President Clinton has responded to Foley's advice by announcing on St. Patrick's Day that he was deferring consideration of the Special Envoy. Similarly, a spokesman for the President said that Clinton didn't see any human rights violations in Northern Ireland. The PEC has protested both these points.

Foley is a supporter of the International Fund for Ireland (IFI), which is popular in Ireland since it is "free money" with virtually no conditions attached. To appear as a great friend of the Irish, Foley fires his favorite attack on organizations: when the Fund commenced, those organizations (including the PEC) made reasonable criticisms of the ways in which the funds were being spent (many frivolous and politically discriminatory activities). Those criticisms, never refuted by Mr. Foley, provoked his violent accusation, at a Congressional hearing, that all those making such criticisms were agents of the IRA! He's still doing it today, according to the interview. What he doesn't seem to know is that the IFI doesn't seem to know is that the IFI has largely cleaned up its act, as a result of the justifiable criticisms, and concerned organizations have reduced or eliminated their opposition to the IFI! None of this is in the Times.

Foley was reelected by a small margin in his last race in Washington State. Perhaps Americans opposed to British government colonialism and injustice in Northern Ireland will go after him in the next election.
Ireland’s Troubled Sleep

by Andrew O’Hehir, senior editor of San Francisco Weekly

Twenty thousand people thronged central Dublin two Sundays ago, calling on the Irish Republican Army to “Stop the Bloody Murder.” They congregated in silence to hear Sinead O’Connor, the pop star who tore up a photo of the Pope on “Saturday Night Live,” sing the Roman Catholic Hymn, “Make Me a Channel of Your Peace.” The rally made for compelling drama on TV news and on the front pages of American papers. But like many Irish Americans, I was ambivalent. The media’s fixation on the event reinforced misguided conventional wisdom about the Irish conflict.

The rally represented a repudiation of the shadowy organization that claims to represent the Irish soul, that proclaims its legacy of bloodshed and martyrdom to be entwined with the deepest Irish sense of self.

But the IRA’s claim, I’m afraid, is not easily dismissed. The group is best understood as the product of two forces: centuries of British colonial oppression and Irish denial of the meaning of that experience.

Respectable Irish opinion has long opposed the I.R.A. campaign of violence aimed at ending British rule in Northern Ireland. However, the relationship between the Irish and the I.R.A. is a complicated psychological transaction that can’t be addressed by speeches or captured in opinion polls. Many who opposed IRA terrorism privately admit to half-buried feelings of anti-British resentment and to a grudging admiration for the group’s resolute defiance.

In this light, the guerrillas’ brutal acts can be seen as the stirrings of a dark medieval unconsciousness behind the facade of contemporary respectability. As long as Ireland refuses to confront the post-colonial trauma that distorts virtually all aspects of its social, cultural and political life, this dysfunctional pattern is unlikely to end. The country’s headlong rush to “modernize” has largely been an effort to replace its past with the anesthetic sameness of European capitalism. History, to misquote Joyce, is the nightmare from which Ireland is pretending to awaken.

In the American media’s presentation, the rally bore none of this agonized complexity. Instead, the rally and the bomb attack that killed two English children last month have been used to support a particular view of the conflict: Those who oppose British rule are fanatics rejected by their own people. And British policy in Northern Ireland is inherently reasonable.

For years, this has been the general tone of American newspaper editorials and foreign policy, which has adhered to an uncritical special relationship with Britain. Appropriate noises are often made about ending anti-Catholic discrimination in Northern Ireland, but evidence of British injustice and human rights violations are treated as anomalies, never as symptoms of widespread and systematic abuse. Protests in Dublin in response to the killing of unarmed IRA suspects by British forces, for instance, haven’t made the front pages of U.S newspapers.

British policy sustains the cycle of terror.

The media’s bias stems more from ignorance and hazy Anglophilia than from conspiratorial intent. The result is nonetheless to promote an agenda that has less to do with furthering peace in Northern Ireland than with salving wounded British pride.

Rational British policy would dictate jettisoning Northern Ireland. But nations rarely act on a rational basis alone. Perhaps abandoning the final lump of empire is too bitter a pill for the British Establishment to swallow. Instead, Britain attempts to keep violence at “acceptable” levels and presides over a “peace process” in which the principal antagonist - the IRA - is not invited. When such peace talks inevitably fail, Britain throws up its hands and hints at the ancient notion that the Irish cannot govern themselves. This perennial impasse has motivated the IRA - never known for its strategic thinking - to launch a counterproductive campaign on the mainland, which has only stiffened British resolve to stay the course, undefinable though that may be.

Irish indignation at IRA atrocities is heartfelt. And Ireland must face its history of violence and victimhood if Catholic-Protestant peace is ever to be possible. But that process must not obscure a central fact: British policy created and feeds the cycle of hatred and killing in which the Irish and British remain trapped.

JOIN OR SUPPORT
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Published May 1993 by American Irish PEC
PEC Annual Conference and
Northern Ireland Human Rights Seminar
Saturday, June 19, 1993
Boston Park Plaza Hotel
Boston, Massachusetts

Agenda
(10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.)
PPEC General Membership Meeting (Paid Up Members Only)
Don't miss this important meeting! Topics for discussion include: President Clinton's Peace Envoy,
Newspaper Advertising Campaign, Public Relations Consultant, Congressional Action and more.

(12:30 p.m. - 2 p.m.)
Lunch Break
Several restaurants available in and around Hotel.

(2 p.m. - 5 p.m.)
Northern Ireland Human Rights Seminar
(Open to Public)
The seminar will consist of brief addresses by the participants, panel discussion, and open discussion

Participants
John J. Finucane, President, AIPEC
Charles E. Rice, Professor of Law, University of Notre Dame
Richard Harvey, British Attorney and Lecturer
Dr. Frank Costello, Northern Ireland Justice Watch
Jean McGuire, African-American Educator and Civil Rights Activist
Joshua Rubenstein, Northeast Regional Director, Amnesty International
Moderator: James J. Smith, New England Communications Director, AIPEC
Video Presentations by Rev. Des Wilson and other Belfast human rights leaders
Invited guest: Congressman Joseph P. Kennedy

(8 p.m. - midnight)
PPEC Social
Paddy Burke's Restaurant, Boston's North End. Entertainment provided. Bring a friend!
Donation: $10 per person

ACCOMMODATIONS: Special rate for PEC members at the Park Plaza Hotel - all rooms: $99.00/night (single or double room). Call 1 800-343-2900 (Be sure to say you want the $99.00 AIPEC rate). Even lower rates available at the Susse Chalet in nearby Chestnut Hill: call 1 800-258-1980 (Near public transportation). Bed and Breakfasts are available from $60-$80 per night near downtown Boston: call the Bed and Breakfast Agency of Boston at 1 800-248-9262. Dining: A wide variety of restaurants available in and around the hotel. For information call (914) 947-2726

PEC Conference and Seminar Registration -- June 19, 1993 -- Boston Park Plaza Hotel
Registration Fee $30 per person -- Enclosed find my check for $_____ for ____ conference registration(s). Members attending General Membership meeting must be paid up members. List below your name and address and the names of other PEC members who will be attending. Your spouse is considered a member.

Name_________________________ Guest Names_________________________
Address__________________________St______Zip_________________________
Town___________________________Phone#___________________________
Magee Appeals Sentence

by Sandy Carlson

Gerard Magee, sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment for IRA-related offenses on the sole basis of confession evidence, is currently awaiting the results of his appeal. His appeal centered around the allegation of ill-treatment during interrogation, since the judges had to be satisfied "beyond reasonable doubt" there was no substance to Magee's charges.

Magee has maintained that he was seriously ill-treated during his interrogation and that his confession evidence should be ruled inadmissible. He has also maintained that the police altered their notes of his interrogation and that this information is, therefore, unfair and also inadmissible.

During the appeal the defence argued that the trial judge was incorrect in stating in his judgement that there was "no single objective sign" of ill-treatment found. A doctor at Castlereagh was sufficiently convinced of Magee's complaints of head pain to prescribe analgesics and agreed that slaps to the back of the head would not necessarily leave marks. Two other RUC doctors who examined Magee were not able to conclusively state that there was no evidence of ill-treatment.

The appeal judges argued that Magee's failure to complain about RUC brutality more than once or to say that he had complaints about the interrogation procedure when he left Castlereagh undermined his claim that he was abused. Magee's barrister argued that although the errors in the notes themselves were not sinister, when they were added to the slappdash monitoring procedures and rewritten statements, it suggested that safeguards established to protest prisoners and police were not working.

This case shows how difficult it is to protect an innocent prisoner from police abuse. Although a whole series of procedures exist to prevent ill-treatment during interrogation, or false charges of ill-treatment, they can and do break down. Without irrefutable medical evidence, it is all but impossible for the prisoner to prove his case. While judges are part of the establishment the IRA targets, can the real or imagined IRA suspect expect a fair trial without a jury? Not likely.

Keep the Pressure on Clinton

Former Congressman Bruce Morrison, a director of the Americans For a New Irish Agenda, discussed the five points of Clinton's campaign promise concerning Ireland with Nancy Soderburg, Staff Director of the National Security Council at the White House.

According to Morrison, the mood at the White House is not one of abandonment: Clinton has not reneged on his promises. He said the Special Envoy appointment "is still under active consideration," yet "there may be some flexibility of the semantics of 'Factfinder' or 'Envoy.'" He said that during the visits of John Major and Albert Reynolds, questions pertaining to Northern Ireland were repeatedly in the forefront, giving Northern Ireland visibility on the foreign policy agenda during the first two months of the New Administration. In neither case did Clinton abandon his support for the Special Envoy and has continued to publicly announce its viability.

At the meeting, Morrison said Soderburg indicated clear support for the Special Envoy, too. However, her boss, Anthony Lake, has been quoted in the New York Times as hoping to "walk the President away" from his Northern Ireland agenda.

And no one can blame Clinton for abandoning his campaign promises if concerned people walk away from maintaining pressure on the President to fulfill the promises.

The Americans for New Irish Agenda, (ANIA), of which PEC President John Finucane and Vice President Albert Doyle are founding members, formed to simply seek the implementation of the five points of Clinton's campaign promise.

Books

The Man Who Made Ireland: The Life and Death of Michael Collins by Tim Pat Coogan ........... $24.95
Paddy's Lament: Ireland 1846-1847 by Thomas Gallagher ........... $8.95
The Dissenting Voice: Protestant Democracy in Ulster from Plantation to Partition by Flann Campbell ............... $30.00
The Enduring Gael: Our Irish Heritage by F. Robert Dougherty ............... $9.95
The Irish Hunger Strike by Tom Collins ............... $9.95
The Irish Race in America by Edward O'Meagher Condon . $4.95

Please include $1.50 p&h, and 50 cents for each additional item. NYS residents add sales tax. Make checks payable to American Irish Awareness Committee.
Action Requests

Write the letters below, preferably in your own words or as is. Have friends, organizations, business associates, etc., do the same. If you served in the military, you might write in your service number under your signature.

Action Request #1
An editorial in the New York Times calling for President Clinton to send a peace envoy to Northern Ireland would certainly help our cause. As you read elsewhere in this newsletter, the Los Angeles Times called for a peace envoy. Write: Mr. Howell Raines, Editorial Page Editor, New York Times, 229 W 43 Street, New York, NY 10036.

Dear Mr. Raines:

During his campaign President Bill Clinton indicated support for a Northern Ireland peace envoy. He now appears to be stalling on his promise. Please show your support for a peace envoy by an editorial comment.

Sincerely,
signature

Action Request #2
To keep the pressure on President Clinton to send a peace envoy to Northern Ireland, it is important that you write to your US Senators. Write: Honorable (Senator's name), U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510. If you prefer to call, use the Capitol Central phone (202)225-3121. If practical, include a copy of "Why England Must Leave Ireland."

Dear Senator (name):

During his campaign, President Bill Clinton promised to send a peace envoy to Northern Ireland. I ask that you urge President Clinton to do just that. I also ask that you co-sponsor the Northern Ireland Fair Employment Practices Act introduced by Senator Al D'Amato.

I look forward to your response to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,
signature

Join Or Support
The American Irish Political Education Committee (PEC)

I want to join in/support the struggle to end British government civil and human rights violations in northern Ireland. I am sending you this completed form together with my membership fee/donation.

[ ] Regular Membership / Membership Renewal $20
[ ] Senior Citizen, $15  [ ] Student, $15
[ ] Additional Donation $________
[ ] Donation Only $________

Amount enclosed $________

Members receive the monthly American Irish Newsletter. If you give a donation only and would like to receive the newsletter check here [ ].

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