

Special Edition

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# OHIO LIONS



*Serving with Pride Since 1920*

MD 13 News and Events

State Convention – May 19-21

## Keeping Up with the Kellers!

*(This update from ID Ron Keller is offered to the Lions of MD13 to give you a better idea of what it means to be part of an international organization! Here is a rundown on the Kellers' trip to the Emerald Isle.)*

On Saturday, March 11, ID Ron and Lion Kitty Keller arrived in Belfast for a week of Lions International board and committee meetings, sightseeing and fellowship with Irish Lions. Our meetings were held in the same place as our lodging, the mammoth Culloden Resort, built as the Bishop's Palace during the Victorian Era that overlooks the city and harbor. One highlight of the trip was the tour of the Titanic Museum at the very dock where she was built.

On St. Patrick's Day, March 17, the Lions International Executive Officers, Board of Directors & Spouses, LCI Staff and the Lions of Ireland marched in the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade through downtown Belfast. The Lord Mayor and City Council approved our participation. This year's parade was significant. It marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the **Good Friday Agreement**, also known as the **Belfast Agreement**, which was a political deal designed to bring an end to 30 years of violent conflict in Northern Ireland.

In route to the parade line-up area at Belfast City Hall, a massive Victorian structure that dominates the city, the local Lions had our buses navigate the battle scared neighborhoods on both sides of the divided wall where some of the worst battles that took place for a period of 30 years starting in the 1960s.

The parade is not your typical St. Patrick's Day celebration, but rather one that promotes peace through music and the arts of young performers. The Lions' contingent was the largest unit in the parade and was well received by the massive audience, mostly consisting of young adults, youths and children.

Several of us after the parade admitted that we were apprehensive and tense that violence could have broken out along the parade route at any time since it was the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of peace being established in Northern Ireland. Hopefully the Lions of the world made a difference by offering hope for the future!

Departing Belfast by charter buses on March 18, we traveled south crossing the board into the Republic of Ireland for a trip to Dublin Heuston Train Station to board a fast-speed train to Mallow Train Station in Cork County. Everyone enjoyed seeing the rural countryside of fields borders by hedges or stone walls to keep the sheep or dairy cows safe. Every once in a while, someone would spot an old castle or two from the 12<sup>th</sup> through 15<sup>th</sup> century in the distance. We traveled by charter buses to the Europe Hotel in Killarney to start four days of service projects and sightseeing.

While in Killarney your International Board and spouses toured the Monastery School, planted trees with high school students in the Maurice O'Donoghue Memorial Park, and assisted with competitive Special Olympics sports activities. All of these programs are supported by the Killarney Lions. Highlights of our time in Killarney was a guided tour of the mountainous Kerry area (popular spot for Hollywood movie production) and buying authentic wool clothing. In route to our final destination, Dublin, our buses stopped in Thurles to tour the magnificent public housing complex built and managed by the 50-member Thurles Lions Club. The facility provides modern apartments for those on low income or elderly. Their goal is to eventually build 90 apartments with some being for families. The club recently took in some Syrian earthquake refugees. The current \$3.9 million facility is also where their Lions Club meets regularly. While in Dublin, a city over a thousand years old and founded by Vikings from Denmark, we toured the Holy Family School for the Deaf and participated in classroom activities organized by the students. A tree planting was held here and our entire group was invited to join the school's signing chorus for a dance production following International President Brian Sheehan's theme "Together We Can." During COVID the Dublin Lions purchased Chrome I-pads for every student and staff and has continued their support of fulfilling needs of the school.

Before departing Dublin, time was set aside for seeing this historic city and we chose to spend most of our free day touring Dublin Castle, the administrative center of British rule from 1200s to 1922. Today it is used by the President of Ireland for public ceremonies. During our long flight home, we were still pumped up from witnessing all of the good works done by the Lions of Ireland and how the Lions Clubs International Foundation supports our mission of helping those in need globally.



Cullodeen Resort, where we met (and stayed) in Belfast.



Opening ceremony at the Belfast International Board Meeting.



My colleagues from the International Membership Development committee



Above, scenes from the Belfast parade. To the right, the wall that divides the Catholic and Protestant neighborhoods of Belfast.



Planting trees in Killarney with IP Brian Sheehan (left) and PIP Douglas Alexander (right).



Board Members playing basketball with Special Olympians in Killarney.



A visit and service project at Holy Family School for the Deaf.



# So many sights to see and remember...



The dock, in Belfast, where the Titanic was built.



ID Ron visits with Charlie Chaplin in Kerry.



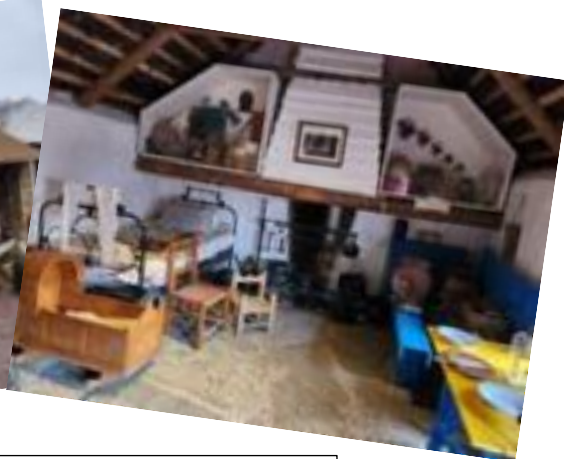
Actress Maureen O'Hara hung out in the picturesque village of Sneem when not in Hollywood.



The majestic Dublin Castle, inside and out!



We had the opportunity to visit with the very active and committed Lions of Thurle.



In stark contrast, we visited these old, restored Irish farm houses.