**St. Patrick's Day**

**After noticing the sign “St. Patrick’s Church,” Billy says to his Mom: “That church should have GREEN windows!” (Bil Keane, in The Family Circus comic strip)**

**On St. Patrick's Day there are many different customs that people do. One of the most widely known customs is to wear green. One famous saying is that on St. Patrick's Day everybody is Irish. Every year on March 17 more than 100 U. S. cities have a parade for this festive holiday. The largest parade is held in New York City. Another custom takes place in Chicago. The custom is dyeing the Chicago River green. The tradition started in 1962 when some city pollution control workers used dye to trace some illegal sewage discharge and realized that the green dye might provide a unique way to celebrate St. Patrick's Day. On that year they released 100 pounds of green vegetable dye into the river. That much dye made the river green for a whole week. Today only 40 pounds are used so the river stays green for several hours. Another custom is that people wear shamrocks on their shoulders to remember St. Patrick. (Judy Mackenzie and David Milster, in LakeCrestPark Messenger)**

**Saint Patrick's Day is the Irish feast day that celebrates Saint Patrick (386-461), the patron saint of Ireland. It is a legal holiday in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, the overseas territory of Montserrat and the Canadian province of Newfoundland and Labrador. It is celebrated worldwide by the Irish and those of Irish descent (and increasingly by many of non-Irish descent). A major parade takes place in Dublin and in most other Irish towns and villages. The four largest parades of recent years have been held in Dublin, New York City, Manchester, and Savannah. Parades also take place in other places, including London, Paris, Rome, Munich, Moscow, Beijing, Hong Kong, Singapore, Copenhagen and throughout the Americas. As well as being a celebration of Irish culture, St. Patrick's Day is a Christian festival celebrated in the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of Ireland (among other churches in the Anglican Communion) and some other denominations. However, as a Christian festival, St. Patrick's Day sometimes is required to give way to a more important feast. The day always falls in the season of Lent, and it may fall in Holy Week. In church calendars if St. Patrick's Day falls on a Sunday, it is moved to the following Monday. If it falls in Holy Week, it is moved to the second Monday after Easter. In Ireland it is traditional that those observing a Lenten fast may break it for the duration of St. Patrick's Day. (Judy Mackenzie and David Milster, in South of the Lake Messenger)**

**The longest running St. Patrick's Day parades in the U.S. are:**

**\* Boston, Massachusetts, since 1737**

**\* New York, New York, since 1762**

**\* Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, since 1780**

**\* Savannah, Georgia, since 1813**

**\* Carbondale, Pennsylvania, since 1833**

**\* Chicago, Illinois, since 1843**

**\* New Haven, Connecticut, since 1845**

**\* San Francisco, California, since 1852.**

**The longest running St. Patrick's Day parade in Canada takes place in Montreal, which began in 1824. (Judy Mackenzie and David Milster, in South of the Lake Messenger)**

**Long May Your Shamrock Shine: Shamrocks, worn on St. Patrick's Day in Ireland, tend to wilt by the end of the day. But a team of scientists at University College of Dublin have developed a method of growing shamrocks in a polymer gel solution that produces wilt-free plants. However, they note, the seeds were imported from New Zealand. *(Farm and Food, the Irish agricultural journal, as it appeared in Catholic Digest, March, 1998, page 24)***

**Something From Home: For St. Patrick's Day, I asked the five-year-olds in my Sunday-school class to bring "something green that you love." The next Sunday, they brought the usual green hats, green sweaters and green books. But one boy entered with an especially big grin. Behind him, wearing a green dress, came his four-year-old sister. (Vickie Lucas, in Catholic Digest)**

**St. Patrick's testing ground: Forget the green beer, said Helen O'Neill in the Associated Press. Anyone serious about honoring St. Patrick tries to make a pilgrimage to Ireland's Croagh Patrick, a "remote, rugged" mountain that overlooks the Atlantic. The story goes that the fifty-century preacher who converted Ireland to Christianity fasted and prayed on the peak for 40 days as he wrestled with demons and eventually banished snakes from the entire island. Visitors climb to the summit year-round, often barefoot, including on the saint's feast day, March 17.. Though the mountain is just 2,500 feet high, "even seasoned hikers are surprised by its steepness and difficulty." On the day I climbed to the top last year, many hikers were barefoot, and "all around, thick Irish brogues mingled with languages and accents from around the world." In County Mayo, "St. Patrick is big business," but it is the mountain -- "majestic, mysterious, and a little foreboding" -- that remains the main draw. (The Week magazine, March 13, 2015)**

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