



2024 annual report

Formed in 2006, the Céilí of the Valley Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and perpetuating Irish heritage and culture in the Willamette Valley primarily through social events that incorporate music and dance.

OUR PURPOSE IS:

- ◆ To educate the public about Celtic dance and culture by providing public access to the same;
- ◆ To research the history of Celtic dance and preserve that cultural knowledge through educational outreach to the public;
- ◆ To nurture and develop Celtic dance callers and musicians for the purposes of ensuring the continuation of a vibrant cultural community;
- ◆ To enhance the community by creating a cultural organization dedicated to Celtic music, dance, and other Irish cultural activities;
- ◆ To support the local Irish community and to enhance relationships between the local Irish, Scottish and other Celtic cultural communities in the Salem area and the larger Willamette Valley of Oregon.



at Salem Art Fair & Festival

a letter from our president

Ceili of the Valley Society continues to build its footprint in the Willamette Valley and has even stretched its positivity beyond the Oregon boundary.

2024 started out with a change in plans. An ice storm forming on the day of our January 2024 Ceili necessitated a cancellation, but showed the resiliency and community group spirit. Members jumped into action, making personal contacts with regular, as well as recent, attendees posting notices on social media, the website, and posting a sign on the VFW door. The effort paid off; people were safe and appreciative of the contact.

Our February Annual meeting had members volunteering for various tasks to more evenly divide the ongoing marketing and other responsibilities that keeps Ceili of the Valley vibrant and visible in the community. That type of support is immeasurable.

Dance demonstration invitations increased this year. At Scott Elementary, school staff quieted the excited students with the phrase, “Waterfall,

waterfall, sh, sh, sh.” Several teachers and students volunteered to be a part of audience participation. That is always a crowd-pleaser for kids. As the students were leaving, several remarked how much fun it was, and asked if we’d be returning.

Contrast that with our participation at the DiverseFair at the National Guard Armory in Salem. Because of the military location and emphasis, our group performed the Reel of the 51st and gave a history of the origins of the Scottish dance, created as a way of keeping up morale for prisoners of war in WWII.

But that was not all! Ceili of the Valley jumped at the opportunity to go to Mt. Vernon, Washington. As a group, our dance instructor, Elisa Chandler, led two dance classes and then an evening Ceili at the Celtic Arts Foundation. The weekend was a great success! The Celtic Arts Foundation asked if we would consider returning. Of course!

Dance class attendance and Ceili attendance is improved from 2023 and is returning to pre-pandemic levels. People come from a distance for each of them. It’s the welcoming environment that keeps them returning.

We had a very special Ceili in July. Lydia and Sean asked if they could have their wedding reception at the Ceili. Ceili of the Valley’s own dance choreographer Carl with Ginny & Lydia created a special Irish dance set to Hawaiian music to celebrate Sean’s heritage. The dance demonstration team did a performance with the newlyweds during the intermission to the delight and awe of all attendees.

Ceili of the Valley is very visible and active in the Mid-Willamette Valley. That has been noticed. Our 2023 contact with the City of Salem about lighting up the Gerry Frank/Salem Rotary Club Amphitheater on St. Patrick’s Day was successful. The Pavilion was aglow with green and orange lights, the colors of the Irish flag. It was gorgeous! Writers from the Best of the Willamette Valley and the Oregonian approached us to do articles. The former was to highlight activities around St. Patrick’s Day; the latter was an article about our Ceili and Samhain Festival. Capital Community Media’s presence at the Samhain Celtic New Year Festival was a media highlight. The video result captured the atmosphere and energy.

It is hard to capture all that Ceili of the Valley does in one report. I haven’t highlighted the 9th Annual Samhain Celtic New Year Festival or group’s underwriting of the Celtic Music Hour on KМУZ as much as each deserves. These unique community contributions truly show the commitment to keeping the Celtic spirit in the Willamette Valley and beyond.

Our visibility and mission is only possible through the large volunteer involvement, community support, generous donors and grants and the vision of the Board of Directors. I thank everyone who makes Ceili of the Valley Society such a welcoming and vibrant community organization.

Beth Nevue
President
Ceili of the Valley Society



ceili of the valley society BOARD of DIRECTORS

President: Beth Nevue
Treasurer: Elisa Chandler
Secretary: Ginny Wedel

Members at Large: Ann McBride, David Zelmer, Jessica Kilborn, and Megan Willett

teacher's note

2024 was a banner year! Lots of new faces and new members, lots of laughs as we learned new dances...or relearned old ones and made them new, lots of opportunities to connect with each other. I appreciate the support I receive from all of you. This support is what makes it all worthwhile for me. Your comments, questions, silliness (within reason), and care make each class an adventure! I would like to thank Lydia for stepping in to teach when I can't be there, and I appreciate the help everyone gives her. I would also like to thank everyone that plays a part in running the class...getting the sound set up, information out, announcements gathered, dance sign put out...and then helping to get it all put away again at the end of class. It does take a village, and our village is strong & thriving!!!

I have some personal goals for 2025 that I hope everyone is willing to go along with (these may look familiar):

- ◆ Continue to have fun with the dances...always the most important goal
- ◆ Make the classes inviting & accessible to new students and also relevant to the more experienced dancers.
- ◆ Explore the “Thirty” Popular dances of the Ár Rinci Fóirne (now known as the Ár Rinci Céilí)...we are more than half-way there, but there are some that I would like to know better. More on that as the year progresses.
- ◆ Keep adding to the Google Doc with video links. Please let me know if you would like me to share this with you.

As always, let me know if you have questions during (or after) class, or if you need me to slow down while we are learning things. Let me know what you would like to learn, or if there's anything you never want to do again (no promises). You can use my personal phone & email below if you want to chat.

Off we go...another fun year of dancing, music, fun, and most of all...friendships!

Elisa

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celtic music hour

The Celtic Music Hour is finishing 13 years on KMUZ radio 88.5 & 100.7 AM in 2024.

Each year brings fresh ideas. This year there were nine new themes. The first happened after Beth's Italian vacation where one of the drivers was a musician, too. In fact, he was a Celtic musician. After sharing the names of his favorite groups, that sparked a show featuring his musical suggestions plus other Italian musicians who also play Celtic music.

In another experience that might be considered a small world, a friend was visiting the Isle of Man and noticed a statue of the Bee Gees. It turns out the members were born there before going onto their famous musical life. That spawned a show featuring Celtic-born musicians who are famous for singing non-trad music. Those musicians included the Bee Gees, Tom Jones, U2, Sinéad O'Connor, Van Morrison, Hozier and more. And, of course, there was a show of the cut number 13 from an album to give a tip of the hat to our years on the radio.

Listeners have sought us out at both the World Beat Festival booth and the Salem Art Fair booth to tell us how much they appreciate the show. Plus, KMUZ receives special donations in honor of the Celtic Music Hour.

It's an honor to continue to get music from promoters and friends of the Celtic Music Hour, and to have opportunities to interview musicians, including John Whelan this year.

We plan to keep the music going!
Beth & Ann

The Celtic Music Hour presents music from the seven Celtic nations from musicians throughout the world. The show airs Tuesday mornings from 10 to 11 a.m. on 100.7 & 88.5 FM and rebroadcasts on Friday evenings at 7 p.m.



Samhain Celtic New Year Festival



Willamette Valley Pipes & Drums at Samhain Festival



Blaz Dañjerus at Samhain Festival



Ceili Musicians



St. Patrick's Walk-About



Corvallis Celtic Fest



Corvallis Celtic Fest



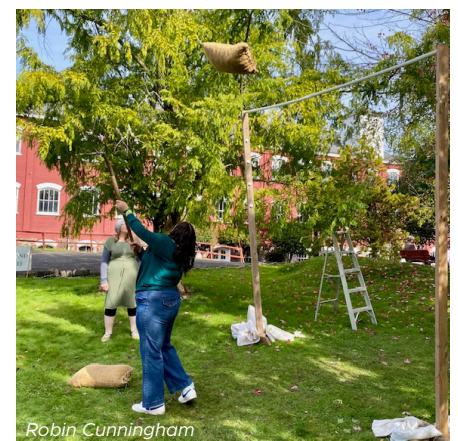
Knot making at Samhain Festival. Photo by John DeJarnett



Kids craft area at Samhain Festival. Photo by John DeJarnett



John DeJarnett



Robin Cunningham

Mini Highland Games at the Samhain Celtic New Year Festival.

2024 IN REVIEW

ceilis

The Ceilis are a great opportunity to discover Celtic music and dance in an open community social gathering!

MUSICIANS:

Many thanks to the excellent musicians that played music at our céilís. Lively traditional Irish music was provided by the below musicians playing an array of instruments.

- Betsy Branch
- Bob Soper
- Bronnie Griffin
- Channing Dodson
- Conor O'Bryan
- D'n'A – Doug Heydon & Amey Herman
- Eliot Grasso
- Elizabeth Nicholson
- Erik Killops
- Geraldine Murray
- Glen Waddell
- July- Cucunandy: Katie Maxey, Laureen Urey, Beth Brown, & Riley Neil
- Kate Gregory
- Mikey Beglan
- Nancy Conescu
- Preston Howard-Wilde
- Richie Rosencrans
- Teresa Baker
- Two Rivers Ceili Band: (13-member all-women céilí band)
- Zac Leger

CALLERS:

These callers call everything from Irish céilí to set dances. October Pan-Celtic céilí showcase dances from different Celtic nations.

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| • Elisa Chandler | • Bruce Kenny |
| • Geraldine Murray | • Griff |
| • Harry Reed | • Maldon Meehan |
| • Mary Lowes | • Nancy Jarrell |
| • Sam Keator | • Shannon Brown |

SOUND:

- Preston Jordan & Elizabeth Jordan



2024 IN REVIEW

events

Our volunteer performance team is (17) strong. Leading our team is Elisa Chandler with volunteer dancers: Ann McBride, Beth Nevue, Cammie Miner, Carl Beilstein, Darrin Johnson, David Zelmer, Ernie Kirchner, Ginny Wedel, Hannah Zelmer, Jessica Kilborn, Laura DeVoe, Lydia Goodman, Megan Willett, Mark Thimm, Patti McCarthy, Richard Chandler, and Tracy Loew.

Community Outreach Events: (All events in Salem unless otherwise noted.). Ceili of the Valley Society (CVS) spreads Celtic joy in communities all year long. Our volunteer performance team put in an estimated 986 hours in these 16 events. Approximately 2,066 people attended and sometimes jumped in to try a little Irish dancing during audience participation time.

- Feb Scott Elementary School
- Mar Timberhill Place, Retirement & Assisted Living in Corvallis
- April International Dance Day — Saturday Market
- May Wright Elementary School — Music in the Park
Eugene Scottish Festival
- June Oregon National Guard — DiverseFest
World Beat Festival
- July Scio Saturday Market
Corvallis Celtic Festival
- Aug Englewood Forest Festival
- Sept Salem Art Fair & Festival
National Dance Day — Saturday Market
- Nov Celtic Arts Foundation — Mount Vernon, WA
- Dec Magic at the Mill — Willamette Heritage Ctr

Classes & Events hosted by Céili of the Valley:

- Mar St. Patrick's Day Parade
- Oct Samhain Celtic New Year Festival



at Salem Art Fair & Festival



at Scott Elementary School



at World Beat Festival

accomplishments

City of Salem — TOT Grant

Another Wedding Celebration dance choreographed by Carl/Ginny/Lydia & CVS for a volunteer dance demo team member. This dance is a celebration of both the Irish and Hawaiian and was danced to Hawaiian music.

Carl and CVS have created, choreographed, and performed at least seven dances.

samhain festival

SPONSORS:

Céili of the Valley was excited to host our 9th annual Samhain Celtic New Year Festival to Salem's historical venue, Willamette Heritage Center! The festival was made possible by the generous support from these grants and sponsors.

\$500 AND MORE:

- City of Salem – TOT Grant
- Marion Cultural Development Corporation Grant
- Capitol Subaru
- Real Systems

\$250 AND MORE:

- The Summit Group of Oregon
- Friends of Céili of the Valley Society
- Willamette Health Council

LESS THAN \$200:

- Cochell Family Dentistry
- Lifestyles Unlimited Hair Company

IN-KIND DONATIONS:

- Capital Community Media
- KLCC Community Radio
- KMUZ Community Radio
- Oregonian



PRESENTERS:

The following individuals and musicians created workshops, presentations, and music specifically for our Festival.

HEADLINER BAND: Blaz Dañjerus (Breton for “dangerous taste”) was an exciting new project focusing on both Irish and Breton dance music and featuring the musical talents of Zac Léger (button accordion, guitar, bouzouki, vocals), Preston Wilde (fiddle, Flemish bagpipes, uilleann pipes, bombarde), and Channing Dodson (bombarde, binioù-kozh, Turkish oud, uilleann pipes, & flute).

- Amica Grimberg – Hand Painting
- Carl Beilstein – Celtic Knots with Rope
- Capital Calligraphers – Names in Uncial Font
- Ceili of the Valley Society – Scottish Country Dance: D.A.V.I.D. (David Admires vEry Involved Dances) & Story and Dance Demonstration
- Channing Dodson & Presong Howard Wilde – Culture & Music of Brittany
- Eric Chandler – Sword Dance and The Folding and Wearing of the Great Kilt
- Geraldine Murray – Jig & Reel Dance Workshop
- Mícheál Ó Domhnaill Branch of Oregon Comhaltas Ceoilí Éireann – Janey Mack & What's the Craic – Uniquely Irish Expressions
- Scottish Highland Dance Presentation – Emily Bonneau (Seann Triubhas) and Hannah Zelmer (Flora MacDonald's Fancy Dance). Dances were accompanied with Highland Pipes music provided by Nate Wahlgren
- The Murray Irish Dancers – Irish Step Dance Performance
- Vi Voce – Songs from Breton, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales
- Will Hornyak – Well Told. Storytelling Workshop and Tales from the Hedgerow
- Willamette Valley Pipes & Drums – Festival Opener & Closing March Through
- Zac Leger – Intro to DADGAD Guitar

samhain festival

EXHIBITORS:

- All Ireland Cultural Society
- Comhaltas Ceoilí Éireann (CCE)
- Oregon Manx Society
- Welsh Society of Oregon
- Willamette Valley Pipes & Drums

VENDORS:

- Céilí of the Valley Society – General Store
- Bridie’s Irish Faire
- Celtic Kate Gemwaith
- Granny Fi’s Shortbread
- Heart Song Arts Pottery
- Michelle Lukowski Metalworks
- Oran Mor Artisan Mead
- T and T Creations
- The Celtic Jewelry Studio

Sound provided by: Peter Yoakum

Publicity and website design by: Carlee Wright

Festival finale ended with a céilí, Irish Social dancing and Breton Fest Noz with tunes provided by Blaz Dañjerus! The audience participants experienced both Irish céilí dancing and a mini Fest Noz which incorporated Breton music and dances. A Fest Noz is a Breton traditional festival, with dancing in groups and musicians playing acoustic instruments. Dances were called by Elisa Chandler and Geraldine Murray.



Thank you to everyone who contributed to our Samhain Celtic New Year Festival.
Visit celticfestival.info for more.

VOLUNTEERS:

The Festival would not have been possible without these amazing volunteers. Together 753 hours were contributed to make the event fun, festive, and friendly for adults and children alike. The Festival ran like clockwork for the approximate 400 attendees experiencing culture of the seven Celtic nations.

FESTIVAL COMMITTEE:

- Beth Nevue – Family Crafts Area Coordinator
- Elisa Chandler – Festival Co-chair
- Ginny Wedel – Festival Co-chair
- Jessica Boone - Signage
- Megan Willett – Volunteer Coordinator
- Pamela Kelly – Vendor Coordinator
- Patty Thompson – Food Coordinator
- Rick Chandler – Outdoor Mini-Highland Games

VOLUNTEERS:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Ann McBride | Kim Mann |
| Becky Harrison | Liane Kirchner |
| Ben Willett | Linda Schaffer |
| Beth Fox | Lisa Chandler |
| Beth Nevue | Lori Veach |
| Bob Garcia | Lydia Goodman |
| Cammie Miner | Marion Skog |
| Carl Beilstein | Mark Thimm |
| Darrin Johnson | Megan Willett |
| David Scrange | Nancy Kurz |
| David Zelmer | Pam Kelly |
| Doug Lowensbery | Pat Berger |
| Eliot Skelton | Patti McCarthy |
| Elisa Chandler | Patty Thompson |
| Emily Bonneau | Red Kirchner |
| Eric Chandler | Richard Chandler |
| Ginny Wedel | Rob Cokeley |
| Hannah Zelmer | Robin Albrecht |
| Jessica Kilborn | Robin Cunningham |
| Jodi O’Neill | Sandra Siegienski |
| John De Jarnett | Suzanne Cox |
| John Johnson | Tracy Loew |
| Jon Pope | Vere McCarty |
| Karen Scrange | Zoe Davis |
| Kathleen Fish | |

class attendance summary

NOTE: Years 2020 through 2022, attendance was down due to Covid.
 For part of 2020 through 2021, Virtual classes were held January through April. One in-person class was held in August 2021 before we canceled classes.
 In January and February 2022, classes were canceled. On March 2022, in-person classes resumed.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
January	93	90	102	120	82	91	86	43	0	53	66
February	87	125	107	98	51	90	69	23	0	52	89
March	95	139	146	97	79	103	41	52	44	77	74
April	132	100	112	92	84	123	0	9	34	74	89
May	98	92	127	91	95	87	0	0	61	86	84
June	92	102	124	93	54	91	0	0	67	65	81
July	123	90	109	56	89	105	0	0	41	50	106
August	80	68	123	72	63	81	0	12	62	92	73
September	128	118	88	59	76	78	14	0	57	67	90
October	84	86	93	69	106	122	37	0	74	100	111
November	92	81	119	70	99	95	26	0	75	79	101
December	55	74	54	57	55	52	28	0	28	63	64
	1,159	1,165	1304	974	933	1118	301	139	543	858	1028



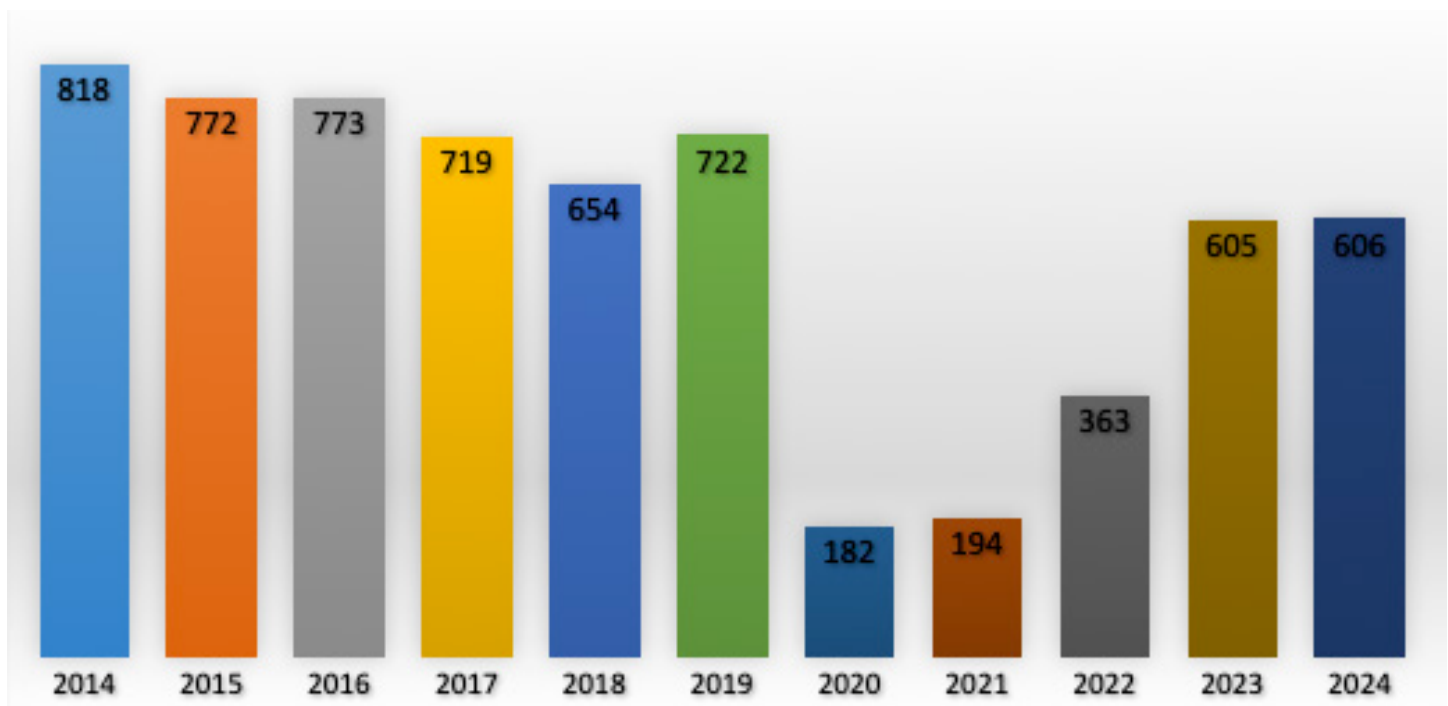
CÉILÍ attendance summary

NOTE: Years 2020 through 2022, attendance was down due to Covid.

In 2021, we had a combination of virtual, outdoor, and indoor céilís. It was a year of flexibility.

In 2022, due to Covid, céilís were canceled in January and February. In March 2022, in-person céilís resumed.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
January	137	75	69	65	62	52	68	0	0	53	0
February	76	130	76	76	38	72	69	0	0	46	53
March	108	100	100	113	53	63	0	13	46	65	68
April	52	70	65	51	59	60	0	0	35	66	56
May	53	50	40	40	39	60	0	0	38	47	59
June	0	0	60	40	35	36	0	28	30	40	37
July	54	50	67	57	54	66	0	29	41	38	80
August	67	50	47	33	57	46	11	31	34	27	52
September	73	63	54	67	72	72	34	0	27	33	45
October	50	69	67	44	60	65	0	26	38	60	50
November	78	51	68	68	71	79	0	32	48	67	56
December	70	64	60	65	54	51	0	35	26	63	50
	818	772	773	719	654	722	182	194	363	605	606





Ceili and Wedding



St. Patrick's Walk-About



Magic at the Mill



Magic at the Mill



Ceili Musicians



DiverseFest



The Littlest Ceili Supporter



Englewood Forest Festival