



# 2025 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 Pride

## a letter from our president

Ceili of the Valley Society outdid itself again. I'm lucky I kept notes of events, comments and special occasions, or I would never be able to compose this annual review.

For a small organization, our community footprint is impressive. Elsewhere in the newsletter is a complete list of our activities. I want to highlight a few.

Our Tuesday night dance classes continue to grow and welcome new participants. One night a group of college students from George Fox University, attended so they could learn dance steps and a few dances prior to a planned trip to Galway in Ireland. We received very positive feedback.

Our monthly Ceilis feature excellent musicians from Eugene, the greater Willamette Valley, Portland and even Seattle. We also utilize a wide variety of experienced callers. Beginners join a core group of dancers, who regularly attend, to make our goal of having fun a standard. One particularly unique Ceili is our Pan Celtic Ceili where we learn dances from the seven Celtic nations. Multiple callers share the duties that night.

Our mission to promote Irish and Celtic culture primarily through music and dance is carried out through participating in community festivals, fairs and community events. We added a few new dance demonstrations to our busy calendar this year. Those were: Nana's Irish pub in Newport, the Corvallis Multicultural Literacy Center 20th Anniversary; Capital Manor's diversity month, Pride in the Park, and the Fairmount Craft Fair and Flea Market in Albany.

Plus, our 10th Annual Samhain Celtic New Year Festival was a highlight! Because of generous grants, sponsorships and donations, this year's event was free to attendees. A fabulous line-up of musicians, presenters, activities and experiences created an atmosphere that people loved. Our soups sold out early, our well-attended pop-up events had large crowds, and the Craft area was so well-attended that we ran out of leaf crown bases and needed to create more on-the-spot. Comments were very complimentary. One child said he'd been to all kinds of festivals and Disneyland. This was the best of them all. I'll copy one comment:

Willamette Valley Pipes and Drums:  
Our meet n greet table was a remarkable success. There were around 15 people that signed up with interest to take lessons and join the band. That is an amazing outcome that may totally revitalize our small group if even half of them follow through.

Your team does a magnificent job and I always enjoy working with Ceili of the Valley.

Scott Cooper  
Drum Sgt/Event Coordinator  
Willamette Valley Pipes and Drums

Media contributed to our successful marketing. Thanks goes out to Press Play, KMUZ, KLCC, the Salem Reporter, and Capital Community Media.

Involving "the next generation" in dance is one of our goals. Dancing at Montessori Discovery Center, at Salem Saturday Market and community festivals allows us to invite kids to do audience participation. From a child with a disability running under the bridges with a huge smile during Bridge of Athlone to a child exclaiming, "That was great!" at the Montessori Discovery Center, we encourage participation. Our youngest members, two-year-old Ezra and nine-month old Guinevere, are regulars on the dance floor.

There is so much more, but I will sign off with a look forward to 2026, our 20th anniversary as a non-profit in Salem. We already have plans in-the-works for it!

Beth Nevue



*Willamette Valley Pipes and Drums  
at the St. Patrick's Walk About*



## 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

Golly...I was going to write something super inspirational...and then I looked back at the 2024 note...and it says it all!!! So, here's pretty much a repeat:

2025 was another banner year! More new faces and new members, lots of laughs as we learn new dances...or relearn 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, again, thank Lydia for stepping in to teach when I can't be there, and I truly 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 2026 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. Still working on this.
- 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

As we write this, the Celtic Music Hour is starting its fifteen year. Each year has been filled with new experiences. 2025 has been a banner year for them! KMUZ changed studio locations from renting space from Day Heating on Front Street to renting studios from Capital Community Media. With that came new equipment and new protocols. And, it happened just in time. The equipment at the old studio crashed right before one of our shows in March. We adjusted and drove to another community radio station, KYAC 90.1 FM Mill City, to record for our Friday rebroadcast and for replay at KYAC. The show must go on!

The transition to the new studio was not without its own glitches. The new studio's internet services did not connect one day. Thanks to our listeners, we were able to alert people to have that timely addressed so streaming could resume. Also, the studio phone lines did not connect. Our planned interview with Hanz Araki happened, but not without some improvisation.

As always, we have created new show themes. This year's latest were mermaids and selkies and oceans and seas.

We continue to get new music from musicians, promoters, supporters and personal purchases, including several new Christmas pieces that just arrived.

Here's to a great 15th year!  
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.



*Dallas Days - Shanless Reel*



*Montessori Discovery - Bridge of Athlone*



*Saturday Market Audience Participation*



*At Capital Manor*



March Ceili (top); Cucunandy at March Ceili (above); Corvallis Celtic Fest (below)



# 2025 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.

- January** • Eliot Grasso & Glen Waddell
- February** • Dale & Nell Russ & Teresa Bake
- March** • Cucunandy
- April** • Two Rivers Ceili Band
- May** • Bob Soper, Elizabeth Nicholson, and Rylan Suehisa
- June** • Geraldine Murray, Nancy Conescu, and Mikey Beglan
- July** • Bronnie Griffin & Elizabeth Nicholson
- August** • Bob Soper, Elizabeth Nicholson, Preston Howard-Wilde, and Rylan Suehisa
- September** • Channing Dodson & Preston Howard-Wilde
- October** • D'n'A (Doug Heydon & Amey Herman)
- November** • Preston, Elizabeth, & Bob
- December** • Dale & Nell Russ & Teresa Baker



Englewood Forest Festival

## CALLERS

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

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

## SOUND

- Preston Jordan & Elizabeth Jordan



Salem Saturday Market

## 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, Richard Chandler, Rob Cokeley, and Tracy Loew.

# 2025 IN REVIEW

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

(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 905 hours in these 24 events. Approximately 2,056 people attended and sometimes jumped in to try a little Irish dancing during audience participation time.

- March**
  - Timberhill Place, Retirement & Assisted Living in Corvallis
  - St. Joseph’s Church
  - Nana’s Irish Pub - Newport
- April**
  - Montessori Discovery Centers
  - International Dance Day at Salem Saturday Market
- May**
  - Eugene Scottish Festival
- June**
  - Salem Make Music Day
  - World Beat Festival
- July**
  - Scio Saturday Market
  - Dallas Days
  - Corvallis Celtic Festival
- August**
  - Englewood Forest festival
- September**
  - Salem Art Fair & Festival
  - National Dance Day at Salem Saturday Market
  - Salem Pride
- October**
  - Corvallis Multicultural Literacy Center
  - Capitol Manor Diversity Festival
- November**
  - Fairmont Grange – Albany
  - Magic at the Mill  
Willamette Heritage Center
- December**
  - Mason’s & Helen’s Wedding
  - Yule Make Music Day – Jigs & Joy

## CLASSES & EVENTS

HOSTED BY CEILI OF THE VALLEY SOCIETY

- March** St. Patrick’s Day Walk-About
- October** Samhain Celtic New Year Festival

## ACHIEVEMENTS

- City of Salem — TOT Grant
- MCDC Grant

CVS made two \$100 donations, one to Notre Dame Ceili Band Fleadh and one to Salem Multicultural Institute. Notre Dame Ceili Band Fleadh helps young people and a small contingent of musicians go to the Fleadh in Wexford to allow them to deepen their knowledge of traditional Irish music heritage and connect with artists.

Salem Multicultural Institute is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that supports all cultures with cultural gallery exhibits, and hosts and organizes the annual World Beat Festival since 1998.

A December solstice event was a joint venture between Salem Yule Make Music, Ceili of the Valley Society, and Salem Trad Session for Jigs & Joy at Salem’s local Venti’s Café. This was a local event that included the public in céilí dancing to live traditional Irish music.



Scio Farmer’s Market (above); Ceili Band (below)



# samhain festival

## SPONSORS

Céili of the Valley was excited to host our 10th annual Samhain Celtic New Year Festival at 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
- All-Ireland Cultural Society
- S & A Irish Entertainment
- Shamrock Cruise LLC
- Friends of Céili of the Valley Society

### LESS THAN \$200:

- Lifestyles Unlimited Hair Company

### IN-KIND DONATIONS:

- Capital Community Media
- KLCC Community Radio
- KMUZ Community Radio
- Press Play Salem - weekly email newsletter



*Photo by Doug Lownsbery*

## PRESENTERS

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

### HEADLINER BAND: Na Rosai Trio

- Amica Grimberg – Hand Painting
- Brian O hAirt – Language Workshop Comparing Irish, Scottish, & Manx Gaelic
- Carl Beilstein – Celtic Knots with Rope
- Capital Calligraphers – Names in Uncial Font
- Ceili of the Valley Society – Scottish Country Dance: Reel of 51st Division, and The Piper and the Penguin
- Emily Bonneau – Scottish Highland Dances, Highland Fling and Seann Triubhas
- Eric Chandler – Sword Dance and The Folding and Wearing of the Great Kilt
- Family Ceili – Maldon Meehan, Dylan Wilde, and Betsy Branch
- Hannah Zelmer – Scottish Highland Dance, Highland Fling & Flora MacDonald's Fancy
- Maldon Meehan, Dylan Wilde, and Betsy Branch – Celebration of Celtic Music & Dance
- Na Rosai – Playing Celtic Music for Dancers
- Rob Gandara – Whistle Workshop
- Vivoce Women's and Welsh Dragon Choruses
- Willamette Valley Pipes & Drums – Festival Opener
- Yeates Academy of Irish Dance

## EXHIBITORS

- All Ireland Cultural Society
- Corrib Theatre
- Irish Cultural Society of the Pacific Northwest
- Oregon Manx Society
- Welsh Society of Oregon
- Willamette Valley Pipes & Drums

# samhain festival

## VENDORS

- Ceili of the Valley Society – General Store
- Angela Dawn
- Carbony Celtic Winds
- Celtic Kate Gemwaith
- Granny Fi's Shortbread
- Heart Song Arts Pottery
- Michelle Lukowski Metalworks
- Mirabri Ceramics
- Oran Mor Artisan Mead
- T and T Creations
- The Celtic Jewelry Studio

We wrapped up the Festival with a céilí finale of Irish Social dancing, with tunes provided by Na Rosai! The audience participants experienced Irish céilí dancing, most for their first time! Dances were called by Elisa Chandler.

**Sound provided by:** Peter Yoakum

**Publicity & Website design by:** Carlee Wright

## VOLUNTEERS

The Festival would not have been possible without these amazing volunteers. Together 931 hours were contributed to make the event fun, festive, and friendly for adults and children alike. The Festival ran like clockwork for the approximate 415 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      | Jessica Boone      |
| Ansley Bonneau   | Jodi O'Neill       |
| Autumn Van Ness  | Jon Pope           |
| Becky Harrison   | Josh Scott         |
| Becky Legrande   | Jude Layton        |
| Ben Willett      | Katharine Bobinski |
| Beth Nevue       | Karen Scrange      |
| Cammie Miner     | Kelly Bonneau      |
| Carl Belstein    | Laura Van Ness     |
| Carolyn Decker   | Lesli Ficker       |
| Christen Short   | Liane Kirchner     |
| Darrin Johnson   | Linda Schaffer     |
| David Scrange    | Lisa Chandler      |
| David Zelmer     | Lydia Goodman      |
| Doug Lownsberry  | Marion Skog        |
| Elle Sherrod     | Megan Willett      |
| Elisa Chandler   | Pam Kelly          |
| Emily Bonneau    | Pat Berger         |
| Eric Chandler    | Patty Thompson     |
| Ernie Kirchner   | Rick Chandler      |
| Ginny Wedel      | Suzanne Cox        |
| Gloria Hall      | Tracy Loew         |
| Gwen Miner       | Valorie Freeman    |
| Hannah Zelmer    | Vere McCarty       |
| Hazel Chandler   | Zoe Scott          |
| Jennifer Johnson |                    |



*Photo by Doug Lownsberry*

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our Samhain Celtic New Year Festival. Visit [celticfestival.info](http://celticfestival.info) for more.

# 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.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
January	90	102	120	82	91	86	43	0	53	66	104
February	125	107	98	51	90	69	23	0	52	89	92
March	139	146	97	79	103	41	52	44	77	74	104
April	100	112	92	84	123	0	9	34	74	89	120
May	92	127	91	95	87	0	0	61	86	84	94
June	102	124	93	54	91	0	0	67	65	81	92
July	90	109	56	89	105	0	0	41	50	106	141
August	68	123	72	63	81	0	12	62	92	73	106
September	118	88	59	76	78	14	0	57	67	90	95
October	86	93	69	106	122	37	0	74	100	111	125
November	81	119	70	99	95	26	0	75	79	101	92
December	74	54	57	55	52	28	0	28	63	64	78
	1,165	1304	974	933	1118	301	139	543	858	1028	1243



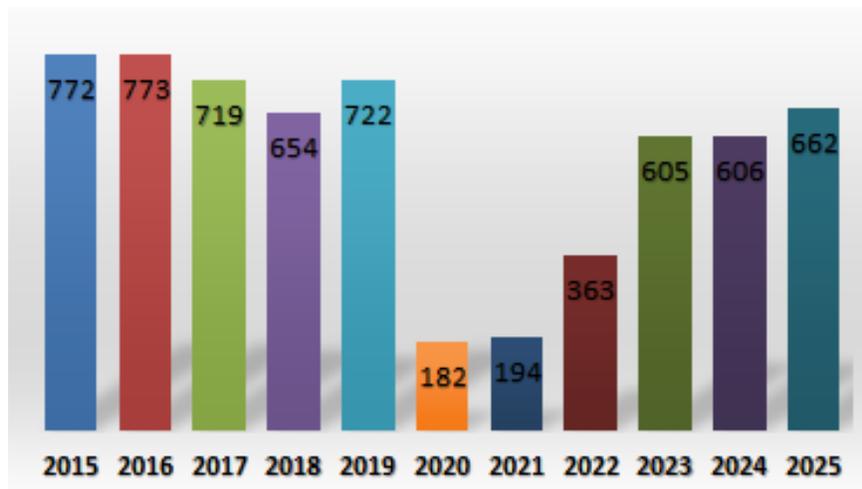
# CÉILI attendance summary

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.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
January	75	69	65	62	52	68	0	0	53	0	53
February	130	76	76	38	72	69	0	0	46	53	40
March	100	100	113	53	63	0	13	46	65	68	74
April	70	65	51	59	60	0	0	35	66	56	77
May	50	40	40	39	60	0	0	38	47	59	49
June	0	60	40	35	36	0	28	30	40	37	62
July	50	67	57	54	66	0	29	41	38	80	42
August	50	47	33	57	46	11	31	34	27	52	46
September	63	54	67	72	72	34	0	27	33	45	48
October	69	67	44	60	65	0	26	38	60	50	59
November	51	68	68	71	79	0	32	48	67	56	47
December	64	60	65	54	51	0	35	26	63	50	65
	<b>772</b>	<b>773</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>662</b>



# samhain festival

Photos by Doug Lownsbery





*St. Patrick's Walk About*



*Magic at the Mill*



*October Ceili*



*Make Music Day*



*Yule Make Music*