

Maynooth Barn celebrates Celtic traditions



Addison and Kynsee, sisters from Cambridge, danced to local music, at the ANAF hall in Maynooth as part of the annual St. Patrick's Day celebrations. Photo by SARAH VANCE

By Sarah Vance

Last Saturday afternoon, the Madawaska Army, Navy and Air Force Barn provided families with an opportunity to celebrate St. Patrick's Day. Ten large pots of homemade chili were enjoyed by diners, who also sampled seasonal Irish fare, such as cooked cabbage and corned beef.

"We served up 55 pounds of corned beef that we made from scratch," said Stewart, secretary for the Madawaska ANAF, who prepared the food in the Barn's kitchen facilities, along with other volunteers. "It was a great example of the ladies' and men's auxiliary working together to provide a delicious seasonal meal."

As the guests dined, they were treated to a range of fiddle harmonies and traditional Irish folk songs. Three bands headlined, including Maynooth's own Merry Micks, who opened the event. It didn't take long before people got up from their tables to dance.

Kingston-based quintet Turpin's Trail, consisting of Brian Flynn, Steve Kennedy, Jon McLurg, Chris Murphy and Noah St. Amand, brought together a good selection of instruments, playing songs like "The Auld Triangle," which kept the crowd dancing.

Local musicians Scott Stewart, Shane Storey and Phil Hughes, who form the band Tara, also played a selection of Celtic and rock songs.

"All the bands have provided a really good selection of music today," said Jesse Hanna, who worked as the event's sound technician. "The Barn does a good job of researching and hiring musicians."

The Barn's Celtic celebration is an annual undertaking which sees families travelling great distances to participate in the event that is entirely volunteer organized.

"We come here every year from Cambridge to see family," said sisters Addisyn and Kynsee who did pirouettes and spins on the wooden dance floor, in matching green silk dresses.

"The Celtic celebration is our club's biggest fundraiser and we give a lot of our funds to community projects," said Stewart, who is also a volunteer with the Maynooth Snow Skimmers. "And with all the dancing and singing, it is always good fun for families. The whole room was full; it is so great to see this in Maynooth."

The Barn's Celtic celebration was truly intergenerational with many young children livening up the dance floor and young couples cradling babies in their arms and showing them off to extended family members for the first time.

And it was well attended, with 178 people signing in at the door. The Barn plays an integral role in the Maynooth and Hastings Highlands social life and is a member of the area's growing business association.

Over Easter weekend, the Barn will be hosting another well attended spring event, the Good Friday Fish Fry (4 to 7 p.m.) The event sees skillet of fish being prepared for families as local music plays on the stage.

?The fish fry is a very big event for our club and it is also volunteer run,? said Stewart, who will be working with another eager team of cooks and entertainers next week.