

To Crosslake man, his Irish heritage means family, TOGETHERNESS

By Travis Grimler
Staff Writer

LAKE COUNTRY FACES

With warm weather just around the corner, it's one of Tim Gowen's favorite times of the year.

And with St. Patrick's Day today, March 17, Gowen is proud of his Irish heritage and the traditions he's had passed down to him from the motherland.

Gowen, a resident of Breezy Point and co-owner with his wife, Julie, of Jag Interior Solutions in Crosslake, said he's about 90% Irish. He knows both sides of his family at one time migrated to the United States, though he admits he knows more about his father's side.

He knows his mother's family had settled a couple generations back in Kennebunk Beach in Maine. As for his father's family, he can go much further back.

"I know my great-great-grandparents, both sets (on his father's side) were from an area called Shannon, Ireland," Gowen said. "Our given name in Ireland was spelled 'McGowen.' The 'Mc'

was dropped. I know it was dropped because of religious persecution."

His father's family settled in Sanford, Maine, when they came stateside in the 1700s. The property sold to Lowe's sometime around 2012, but not before Gowen got to visit.

"All the family's been there," he said. "They've been to the farm and met their cousins. It was a very lucrative farm. It was a potato farm where they also raised cows."

Both sides of his family eventually moved to Minnesota.

"Both my mom and my dad's parents moved to Minnesota in the late '30s and my dad's dad was a doctor," Gowen said. "They moved to Minneapolis and started what was known as the Minneapolis Heart Institute, which is now known as the Hennepin County Medical Center."

Gowen was born the youngest of six children, with his eldest sister born 22 years earlier.



Tim and Julie Gowen first met at a Dayton's store. Many years later, they own a business in Crosslake, where they support the annual St. Patrick's Day festivities. Here, they stand outside Jag Interior Solutions, which they decorated for this year's Yardi Pardi Decorating Contest.

Nancy Vogt / Echo Journal

One of his sisters died before he was born, but the remaining family stayed close, though in dynamic ways.

"I asked my mom one time, 'Who are these people?'" Gowen said. "They were like sisters but they were my nieces. We were with them all the time and went to school together. Mom had to draw a family tree to explain it. I was probably 8 years old." Gowen realizes that with such an age gap, his parents likely raised him differently than his older siblings, especially when it comes to his eldest sister who lives in Breezy Point.

"She has different memories than I do," Gowen said. "My parents were having kids when they were still kids. When they had

my brother and I, they were already seasoned veterans of being parents. There's certain things we got away with that when they were kids they didn't."

Regardless, there were certain universal experiences in the Gowen household.

"My parents were very traditional about doing the right thing and being on time for dinner," Gowen said. "Those values were passed to

them by their parents. You discussed everything at the dinner table. I think that was passed on from them to us. That was their tradition in their family. That was when everything came out, at the table. You talked about everything. What was going on in your life and what's going on in school or at work. It was very traditional. We had a lot of Irish dishes."

Gowen was especially

close to his brothers, Mike and Jim. They played sports together in Richfield, including football, hockey and baseball. In addition to spending dinner times together, his family celebrated their Irish heritage.

"St. Patty's Day was a big deal in our house," Gowen said. "The house was decorated St. Patty's Day traditional green

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Community Action of Pequot Lakes
Features
Member Denise Simpson.

After a 20 year career at an insurance agency in Pequot Lakes, Denise Simpson, a longtime member of Community Action of Pequot Lakes, recently joined Baxter Insurance Group, working locally to assist with Home, Auto, Life, Business, and Long Term Care insurance. An active member of the community in addition to CAPL, Denise is President of the Pequot Lakes Breezy Point Lions Club, on the Board of Directors at the Ideal Green Market, and works with the Strive Program at the Pequot Lakes High School. A mother of two sons living in Brainerd, she is the grandmother of one. Being active in our community is the goal of CAPL and its members!

Check out Community Action of Pequot Lakes Facebook Page for upcoming events and community information.



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REMINDERS

Popup pantry

Second Harvest North Central Food Bank will offer free food to anyone in need at a popup pantry from 3:30-4:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 17, at Immaculate Heart Church in Crosslake. Participants, who should stay in their vehicles, will receive one food box per household.

'State of the ERA'

The community is invited to a virtual presentation in honor of Women's History Month called "The State of the ERA" at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 18, featuring Betty Folliard, the founder of ERA Minnesota and former three-term state representative. Register in advance at <https://bit.ly/3pE5ZKU>

Ruby's Pantry

Ruby's Pantry food distribution will be held from 3-6 p.m. Tuesday, March 23, at New Life Community Church (formerly Faith Assembly of God Church) in Pine River. Line up at the Cass County Fairgrounds. Shares are \$20.



Photos by Nancy Vogt / Echo Journal

A group of people playing the Lucky Leprechaun Amazing Race take photos in front of Frandsen Bank & Trust in Crosslake, which was decorated for the Yardi Pardi contest, Friday, March 12.

Left: Les and Kat Mahowald's home won the most enthusiastic award in the residential division of Crosslake's Yardi Pardi to celebrate St. Patrick's Day.

Crosslake goes green for St. Patrick's Day

There was no organized parade for the second year, but Crosslake still celebrated St. Patrick's Day on Friday and Saturday, March 12-13, when the chamber hosted Crosslake St.

Patrick's Day Shenanigans.

Events included the Yardi Pardi business and residential decorating contest and the Lucky Leprechaun Amazing Race.

More than a dozen businesses decorated their buildings' exteriors, with Lake Country Crafts & Cones winning the most enthusiastic award. Three residences signed up for the con-

test, with Les and Kat Mahowald's home taking top honors.

Hundreds of people participated in the Lucky Leprechaun Amazing Race, which was created to give business-

es an economic boost. Participants downloaded an app and traveled around the Crosslake area to locate businesses and landmarks, complete missions and earn points.

Pequot Lakes Library appreciates patrons, volunteers

The Pequot Lakes Library truly appreciates its patrons and volunteers, and thanks them for everything they do.



CLAIRE NAGEL
Pequot Lakes Library

Notes about this and that

The library features artists from around the area. Displays change every two months or seasonally. Painter Gail Burgoyne transitions from winter to spring. Come see her watercolors in March. They'll make you think spring.

Our book display table makes note of Children's Reading Month. And please, if you haven't already done so, take a peek in our Children's Room.

Some might say it's the best room in the library (especially kids). Our boat now has flags and is ready to sail. And in honor of this special month, we have numerous new children's books thanks to a generous donation from a patron family.

The Crow Wing County Resource Guide is available at the library thanks to the Echo Journal newspaper.

Dates to note

Tuesday, March 30, 6 p.m.: Kitchigami Regional Library System offers a free virtual presentation by Minnesota historian William D. Green whose latest book is about Nellie Francis, a speaker, suffragist and pioneer for gender and racial equality. Register on Facebook @ KRLSLegacy or call your local KRLS Library in Brainerd or Pine River.

Thursday, April 1, 10:30 a.m.: First Thursday Book Club meeting at the library.

We will discuss "All the Pretty Horses," by Cormac McCarthy. Next month's book will be, "Caste," by Isabel Wilkerson. The book club is open to anyone interested. There's no need to call ahead.

Library information

Address: 3117 Rasmussen Road, Pequot Lakes, MN 56472
Phone: 218-568-6181.
Website: www.pequotlakeslibrary.org. Log onto our catalog at the website.
Hours: Monday-Wednesday and Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Thursday, 9 a.m.-7 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; closed Sundays and holidays.

The library has six computers equipped with DSL internet service available without charge to the public. Wireless internet is also available.

Claire Nagel is a Pequot Lakes Community Library volunteer.

Hackensack Legion Auxiliary fundraiser breakfast set March 21

Hackensack American Legion Auxiliary Unit 202 will serve breakfast from 8:30-11:30 a.m. Sunday, March 21, at the club.

The menu includes a choice of biscuits and gravy with eggs, or French toast with eggs and bacon. Both include juice and

coffee for \$7. Bring two canned food items for the local food shelf and receive \$1 off breakfast. Break-

fast proceeds will go to support youth scholarships. Masks are required and social distancing will be observed.

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and a lot of orange. There was a traditional dinner of corned beef and cabbage. It was very good. My mom made the best."

It's still one of his favorite foods. He has passed all these traditions on to his own family, which got its start in 1990 in a Dayton's store. He was shopping when he spied a woman named Julie working there. Later, he met her again at a bar, after which they started dating and eventually married and raised three kids together in Breezy Point.

"We had a tradition when the kids were young. We tried to have one sit-down dinner every week the way I grew up," Gowen said. "That was at our house in Breezy Point. It was Saturday night when it was kids night. We made what they wanted for dinner and watched a movie and got to know

what was on their mind and basically check in."

They grew close together, just as Gowen had been raised.

Their two sons and one daughter were all active in sports and recreational activities. Tim, Julie and the kids all supported one another during their years in high school.

"Those are some cherished memories that I'll never forget," Gowen said.

In the meantime, while Gowen was working in manufacturing, they also started Jag Interior Solutions together in 2012. In 2013, they excitedly entered a float in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Crosslake. They have gone to great lengths to keep the tradition going ever since. Gowen seems to enjoy it even more than before.

"What makes it even more fun now is the amount of effort we put into the St. Patty's Day

Parade in Crosslake," he said. "St. Patty's Day could and should be all of us having a great time."

Life is somewhat different now. Gowen now runs Jag Interiors alongside Julie ever since retiring from manufacturing. Their

children have all grown up and gone their own directions. He's still proud of his heritage and all he learned from it, especially now after a rough year.

"Spring is coming, though it doesn't look like it is," he said. "It's a great way to get people

out. They've been cooped up all winter. After everything we've gone through this last year, it makes it more special."

Travis Grimler may be reached at 218-855-5853 or travis.grimler@pineandlakes.com. Follow him on Facebook and on Twitter at www.twitter.com/@PEJ_Travis.