

# ATLANTA ST. PATRICK'S PARADE AND FESTIVAL

## The Atlanta St. Patrick's Parade Committee Announces

### "The Meaning of St. Patrick's Day"

2012 Essay Contest for Georgia High School Students

\$1000 Prize

St. Patrick's Day, celebrated on March 17<sup>th</sup>, is the only American ethnic celebration that has become a national holiday. Held in honor of Ireland's national saint, St. Patrick's Day honors the cultural traditions of the Irish but also the historic American commitment to embrace the multifaceted traditions of all immigrant peoples who have come to our shores.

Here in Atlanta, the first annual St. Patrick's Day Celebration was held in 1858 by the Hibernian Benevolent Society of Atlanta. Savannah's St. Patrick's Day Parade is even older, dating back to 1813 and is the second largest in the country. Thousands of people march in both parades to the skirl of brilliant pipes and drums, while revelers line the streets and enjoy the festive air. But sometimes people forget that a holiday such as this originally came out of dire and compelling circumstances: the horror of famine and religious persecution, the sorrow of leaving one's homeland, family and friends, the terror of ocean voyages in crowded, disease-ridden boats, and the challenge of building new homes in a foreign land.

This St. Patrick's Day, honoring all Americans who have come to our country in hopes of finding new opportunity, the Atlanta St. Patrick's Parade Committee is pleased to announce its annual contest for high school students. **With a prize of \$1000 for the first place winner for a 1000-word essay on "The Meaning of St. Patrick's Day,"** the contest will be adjudicated by a committee headed by Dr. James W. Flannery, Director of the W. B. Yeats Foundation and a member of the Irish Studies program of Emory University.

All entries submitted become the property of Atlanta St. Patrick's Parade, Inc. **Students are encouraged to look at the meaning of St. Patrick's Day from any number of perspectives: historical, religious, sociologic, folkloric, cultural or multicultural.** We encourage students to share their familial or community histories, stories and customs with us, whether or not they happen to be Irish. Another approach might be to look at the life and values of St. Patrick: a slave himself, he was a fierce opponent of slavery. This year the Atlanta Parade will feature special guests from the Scots-Irish community, and we would especially welcome papers that deal with their unique history as well as their extraordinary contributions to American culture. The only criterion is that, in some way, the essay should shed a fresh light on the continued meaning of St. Patrick's Day.

**The postmark & email deadline for submissions is Monday, March 3, 2012. Please do not send submissions via USPS special delivery as such packages are delayed in Emory's campus mail system!**

**Mail to:**

Dr. James Flannery  
Director, W. B. Yeats Foundation  
Winship Professor of the Arts and Humanities  
Emory University  
1655 North Decatur Road, Room 105  
Atlanta GA 30322

**or**

**Email to:**

flannery@wbyeatsfoundation.org

**Announcement of the winner will be made by March 12<sup>th</sup> and the winner will be an honored guest at the 130<sup>th</sup> Atlanta St. Patrick's Parade held on Saturday, March 17, 2012 and at the Sponsor & Dignitary Breakfast preceding the Parade.**