

## The Formation of the New York State Troopers Emerald Society

By Gary Lewis (Trooper, Troop L) and  
Kenneth Gein (Trooper, Troop L)

During the spring of 2009, two Troopers working a "2" shift at SP Valley Stream in Troop L were completing administrative duties and began talking. These two Troopers were not only colleagues and partners on the job, but also friends. They spoke about their common ancestries, their shared Irish heritage and a love of Celtic music and culture. One of them said, "I wish we had an Emerald Society on our job, you know, something to be a part of."

What followed was simply the idea to make this happen. From that idea of forming a New York State Troopers Emerald Society, Troopers Edward Gillespie and Gary Lewis started to formulate a plan. They researched what an Emerald Society actually does, how it operates and what was necessary to start one. They also discovered that this particular endeavor had been attempted in the past by other members (several times!) only to fall by the wayside for one reason or another. Trooper Gillespie and Trooper Lewis were determined that their goal of establishing an Emerald Society for the New York State Troopers would come to fruition.

Using their resources, personal time, money and fortitude, Trooper Gillespie and Trooper Lewis were on the path to founding the "New York State Troopers Emerald Society Inc." Edward Gillespie took up the position of President while Gary Lewis assumed the First Vice President's role. Together these pioneers of Celtic bloodlines got the ball rolling.

Setting up such an organization was overwhelming, and the founding President and First Vice President needed help. They called their colleague and friend, Trooper Kenneth Gein, who is another of Ireland's sons. Trooper Kenny Gein, applying his life experience, took on the vital role of Treasurer and became the third founding member. Also answering the call were Investigator Michael Franz, who became the Second Vice President, Investigator Michael O'Sullivan, who became the Sergeant-at-Arms, and Investigator Robert Swansen, who accepted the position of Secretary. Thus, the New York State Troopers Emerald Society Inc. Board of Directors was established.

Once the New York State Troopers Emerald Society Inc. had its leadership in place, it was back to work. The Emerald Society was in need of - and short on - funds. Members from all over the state - sworn, civilian, active and



The NYSP Pipe Band marches in the NYC St. Patrick's Day Parade



Gary Lewis, Michael O'Sullivan, and Kenny Gein working the door at PJ Clarke's in NYC on St. Patrick's Day

retired - sent contributions for this newly-formed fraternal organization. As donations were collected the board set out to raise funds by selling T-shirts, along with putting (more than) a few of their own dollars into the pot. Life was being breathed into the Emerald Society.

As the month of March approached, the board set their gaze on St. Patrick's Day in New York City and decided to hold the first New York State Troopers Emerald Society Inc. St. Patrick's Day celebration. The event was held at PJ Clarke's on 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and Broadway in Manhattan following the marching of Troopers in the city's grandest parade.

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*The NYSTES Executive Committee: Gary Lewis, Michael O'Sullivan, Ed Gillespie and Kenny Gein*

At the celebration, members along with family and friends enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere and fellowship with their Irish brethren. Celtic folk music was played on the stereo system, food and drinks were served, and all in attendance had plenty. There was a great sense of pride and jubilation throughout the festive event.

The New York State Police Pipes and Drums, led by Pipe Major Senior Investigator Terry Mullen, made a much-anticipated appearance. Spirits soared and smiles widened to the sound of Gaelic tunes played on the bagpipes and the beating drums by the kilt-wearing Troopers of the New York State Police Pipes and Drums. A 50/50 raffle was held and a basket of cheer was a raffle prize. President Edward Gillespie called for moment of silence to remember those who could not join the affair because they were defending our freedom, and for those who did not or may not come home to share it with us again. Following the somber reminder that freedom does have a cost, a few words of welcome and thanks were given.

As the cheerfulness commenced it was enhanced by the resounding call of the bagpipes as the New York State Police Pipes and Drums took the center stage once again. This time



*Robbie Swansen and Kenny Gein conducting treasury work at PJ Clarke's in NYC on St. Patrick's Day*

they were accompanied by the Westchester County Police Pipes and Drums. As the two bands converged into one, a powerful and awe-inspiring music blew through PJ Clarke's and lifted the audience in attendance. The playing of the two bands truly touched all at the celebration. Once the celebration came to a close it was back to all regions of the state of New York for the members and attendees, and back to work for the Emerald Society's Board of Directors.

The New York State Troopers Emerald Society web site, at [www.nystes.org](http://www.nystes.org), features an area where potential members can print a registration form and submit it to become a member of the organization. Further networking is being conducted by the Board of Directors in completing the full development and direction of this Emerald Society.

Anyone can join, and there are different classifications of membership as set forth in the bylaws. The NYSTES was formed to establish fellowship and camaraderie among Celtic Americans and to further their shared culture through charity, service and celebration. For information about the New York State Troopers Emerald Society Inc., please visit the web site at [www.nystes.org](http://www.nystes.org), or contact the Emerald Society via e-mail at [nyspemerald1917@gmail.com](mailto:nyspemerald1917@gmail.com). ☐



*The Westchester County Police Emerald Society Pipe Band at PJ Clarke's in NYC on St. Patrick's Day*



*The New York State Troopers Pipe Band and the Westchester County Police Emerald Society Pipe Band play at PJ Clarke's in NYC on St. Patrick's Day*