

FESTAS DO ESPÍRITO SANTO

**Sociedade Portuguesa do Divino Espirito Santo Inc, Stonington
Connecticut**

BROTHERHOOD

Brotherhood	Autonomous. Although the Irmandade has a mass held at the church Saint Mary's of Stonington.
Year founded	1926
Current number of members	478 members (participating in Feast). 71 are considered lifetime members. 35 women belong to the "women's auxiliary". 15 are considered "real active," that is who participate in the Sociedade's activities throughout the year. During the Feast, however, this number increases.
Meetings and activities during the year	<p>Only one official Irmandade-wide meeting about the Feast is held per year.</p> <p>Further, the women's auxiliary also holds meetings at the hall in anticipation of the Feast to organize the kitchen, the cooking areas, and to decorate and prepare for the festival weekend.</p> <p>But there are activities during the year:</p> <p><u>The club bar</u></p> <p>The daily operation of the club bar— a well-known community social space—ensures that activities at the Holy Ghost Association in Stonington, take place year-round.</p> <p><u>Fish and Chips dinners</u></p> <p>Beyond running the bar, the club is quite active during the year. The membership holds around 16 fish and chips dinners from mid September until the week before Thanksgiving [in late November], and then again during lent, which are open to the general public. The dinners serve as the primary fundraising activity of the club with sales from the food and the bar bringing in money and are a popular event in Stonington. Starting at noon on Friday and lasting until 8 pm, the busier dinners will serve up to a 1000 covers among a broad swath of residents from Stonington and neighboring towns.</p> <p>Interestingly the women's auxiliary do not much participate in the fish and chips dinners as organizers and workers. Though there are a few</p>

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women who do volunteer.

One key family responsible for cooking during the Holy Ghost Dinner makes up most of the membership of the Women's Auxiliary. Beginning in the late 20's, meal preparation was handled by Fred Sousa's grandmother who was then the chief cook and his grandfather who was the Feast chair. In this period, most of the women who helped cook were neighbors and friends, with their husbands involved in the club as a social organization. During the Feast, women cooked and decorated the hall while the men handled outside activities and organizational details.

The kitchen crew of the current Feast are all granddaughters of the woman who took the Feast over from Sousa's Grandmother on in the mid 1950's.

Scholarships and Donations

The club offers numerous scholarships and donations to at risk children during the year as well. Indeed, the walls of the club display various framed letters from state and municipal organizations thanking the club and its members for their generosity in donating money for various civic causes.

Pig Feast and Clam bakes

Although not directly run by the Holy Ghost club, there are other events held at the Stonington Hall during the year. These events include a pig feast and clam bakes, which are put on by other organizations.

Bowling League

The club sponsors a bowling league.

Bake sales

During the year the women's auxiliary holds two or three bake sales.

Special trips

Although the society used to sponsor more of these kinds of events, they yet organize occasional trips, for instance to sporting events of the Red Sox and Yankee games, and more recently for the Patriots and Giants. (Stonington is part of that part of Connecticut with overlap between team loyalties

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	<p>between Boston and New England and New York city).</p> <p>In the past few years there has been a group that has gone to Atlantic City during Super Bowl weekend.</p> <p><u>Historical events</u></p> <p>Although the society no longer sponsors such events, in the past there used to be a New Year's Eve Party and in the 1940s the society held "Chamarritas".</p>
Hall	The Holy Ghost Society of Stonington Inc. "The Club"

THE FESTA: GENERAL INFORMATION

Year founded	1926
Date	Labor day weekend (first full weekend in September).
Azorean Festa ritual model	São Miguel
Organization of the Festa	<p>The Club/Irmandade Board of Directors organizes the Feast.</p> <p>Various documents date the club's founding to 1926, when the society was officially established. It is through the authority of the 1926 charter with the town and the State of Connecticut that the Espírito Santo Feast is held.</p> <p>There is some coordination between the club's Board of directors and the <i>Mordomo</i>.</p> <p>The vice president of the club and the contact with the ladies auxiliary will organize the <i>sorteio</i> and coordinate with the <i>Mordomo</i> who are given their respective responsibilities.</p>
Mordomo	<p>Previously, the <i>Mordomo</i> would donate the bull, but in the current Feast the <i>Mordomo</i> is largely a symbolic role.</p> <p>The <i>Mordomo</i> is chosen by <i>sorteio</i> / <i>promessa</i> "<u>Three Bolos</u>"</p> <p>There is a unique <i>sorteio</i> held in Stonington to select the <i>Mordomos</i>. What they call the "Three <i>bolos</i> tradition:</p> <p>Anyone can put his or her name into the <i>sorteio</i> to host a <i>Dominga</i>, but a pledge is made that if one's</p>

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	<p>name is not drawn, then they will be required to donate three <i>bolos of massa</i> to be auctioned off at the following year's Feast. The primary auction that takes place at the Feast is the auction of this bread.</p> <p>Previously, if one did not bring their <i>massa</i> in the following year, they would be fined three dollars per <i>bolo</i>. The amount of money proved to be too small of a disincentive, however, and the penalty was raised to 20 dollars. The result is that more people have brought bread to be auctioned off. If one fails to live up to their <i>promessa</i>, and brings neither bread nor money in the following year, they are banned from participating in that <i>sorteio</i>. In older times, the <i>massa</i> auction provided a kind of a potlatch for the women who made the bread, along with their respective families</p> <p>Everyone knew who made the good bread and took notice of whose <i>bolo</i> earned the highest bid. In the 2011 Feast, 180 <i>bolos of massa</i> were auctioned off, and around 125 people put their names into the hat.</p> <p>About 75 names pay the money while about 40 bring bread. Some come from local bakers, and others are purchased from Fall River or East Providence bakeries.</p> <p>Even though there are approximately 120 names in the drawing, that represents about 60 adult families and within that there are really about 15-20 families who are not interconnected by marriage. One previously had to be Portuguese in order to enter one's name into the <i>sorteio</i> but this bylaw was changed around 20 years ago. In any event as a general rule those entering names in the <i>sorteio</i> indeed do have Portuguese ancestry, or some connection to the Portuguese community, while many are actually direct descendants of the Feasts original founders.</p>
Number of workers	There are more than 100 people working at the Feast.
Crowns	<p>The club owns 3 (three) crowns:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>The ladies auxiliary crown</u> This is the oldest crown dating to 1914 and owned by a previous

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	<p>Irmandade that existed prior to the founding of the Stonington club.</p> <p>This crown goes to meetings and is swapped among members of the auxiliary.</p> <p><u>2. A Feast crown from the 1920s.</u> A smaller unique four paneled crown.</p> <p>This is the Festa do Espírito Santo society's primary crown, the one that dates to the origin of the Feast. This crown accompanies each of the 7 <i>domingas</i> and can go to any of the 120 or so people who yearly participate in the drawing. A brutal fire in 1981 almost destroyed the entire Holy Ghost Hall building, necessitating substantial restoration. During the fire, one of the members of the ladies auxiliary was able to save the crown that was then housed yearly in the building.</p> <p><u>3. 1965-6 crown.</u> The big crown.</p> <p>An older Vice-President liked the original Feast crown so much that he commissioned a much larger version of it from a shop in Fall River, including the four panels structure. A problem with this crown soon became apparent, as four support panels was not enough to keep the much larger crown stable, causing the structure of the crown to sway freely from the base. This crown was not practically very useful, and was semi-retired, staying mostly with Fred Sousa. Since around 2000, however, this crown has been rotated among 27 families/people during the year. There is no <i>sorteio</i> but just circulates among a group of volunteers who had entered their names in the drawing but who did not win a <i>dominga</i>.</p>
Flags	<p>There are 2 active flags, although other historical flags.</p> <p>The flags are quite different from other Espírito Santo flags and are relatively small (around 30 inches)</p> <p><u>27 inch flag</u></p> <p>This is a small flag made in Fall River by a woman who owns a millinery store. When Sousa's father died in 1998, he and his mother had it made to accompany the Crown during the 7 <i>domingas</i>. It is also brought to the church on the Feast day.</p>

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	<p><u>1952-3 flag and its replica</u> In 1952-3 Fred Sousa's grandmother (name) made this flag. When it started to deteriorate the flag was taken out of rotation and never traveled again. Sousa had carried the original 1952 flag in the parade when he was five years old and decided to make the replica so that it could travel. Using an old embroidered dove that had been saved from an older flag that he found when he went to clean out his father's personal belongings from the club (he had been club's book keeper for 40 years) Sousa made the replica which is carried by children in the parade and goes to the seventh <i>dominga</i> (although is retained for safe-keeping during the year by Sousa). The flag is about 24 x 30 and is hung on a 3 foot pole. It can have ribbons so that it can be carried by one child with four others holding the ribbons, or just two, or all by itself. The original flag made by his grandmother is in a box of memorabilia,</p> <p><u>Other flags</u> Several flags dating to the 1920s were found dumped in the corner, with Sousa holding onto the doves. His goal is to make two more flags for the two doves he has, already having arranged the fabric and the trims for them. There really isn't a tradition of walking with national flags during the procession, but interestingly, Fred Sousa said that as a result of the questions made by the Festa do Espírito Santo project about flags (an interview that occurred prior to the 2012 Feast), they decided to walk with an Azorean flag this year.</p>
Queens	<p>To some degree, but it is not a primary feature. The crowning at the Feast has historically been the crowning of an "innocent" rather than a Queen. There is a queen but she doesn't usually dress "like a queen"—the way it is done in the other Feasts—with a cape. One year a cape was worn by the queen, but was not donated to the society, nor loaned out to subsequent queens. The tradition of crowning a queen however is not practiced anymore.</p>

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Crowning	<p>The <i>Mordomo</i> decides who will be crowned, but only recently has this been actually done in the church. When it has been done, it is usually with a younger girl or boy but not exclusively. An older woman was selected one year.</p> <p>Many people also bring personally-owned small crowns into the church to get blessed.</p>
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THE FESTA: RITUAL COMPOSITION

Domingas	<p>There are 7 <i>domingas</i></p> <p>Those who have drawn a <i>Dominga</i> have as their primary role carrying the crown in the parade, and the honor of displaying it in their own house for their week.</p> <p>The <i>Domingas</i> consist of picnics and smaller gatherings, at which the rosary is sometimes prayed, but not as a rule.</p>
Pensões	<p>Historically they tried to offer “<i>pensão</i> baskets” but the practice was discontinued because they didn’t sell.</p> <p>There is a straight up membership fee of 50 dollars to belong to the association.</p> <p>The tradition of the 3 <i>bolos</i> is also a kind of <i>pensão</i>, as members pay the 20 dollar fine when they don’t donate any <i>massa</i>.</p> <p>The club itself, as a result of its prodigious fundraising activity throughout the year pays for the band and the bull, fronting the money for the food booth, with the rest of the funds coming from the auction of the <i>sorteio dos bolos</i>.</p>
Musical accompaniment during the Festas	<p>Up until the 1940s the club had its own filarmonica. Although there is no Portuguese filarmonica band performing in the current procession, the high school marching band from Westerly, Rhode Island does perform.</p> <p>Back in the late 1950s, the club had accordion and Portuguese guitar music.</p> <p>The association quickly ended an experiment to revive the tradition of having a filarmonica band play at the Feast—usually one hired from Rhode Island—when it became too expensive and</p>

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	<p>disputes occurred over the band's comportment.</p>
Arraial	<p>There are bands at the Feast. Some local Portuguese music, including area Portuguese rock bands and others of the usual names on the Festas do Espírito Santo circuit including Marc Dennis one year.</p> <p>The Norwalk Continental Band has also performed.</p>
Parades and Processions	<p>Inside the club, flags of Portugal, the Azores and the United States of America are displayed. The <i>cortejo</i> had been traditionally accompanied by the national flags of Portugal and the United States of America.</p> <p>From the point of view how conducting anthropological field research it is interesting to note that questions made by the Festas do Espírito Santo project interviewers about which flags accompanied the procession (in an interview with Fred Sousa that occurred prior to the Feast), the association decided to also include an Azorean flag in the current year's cortejo.</p> <p>Sometimes the priest marches.</p> <p>Sometimes local politicians march, but whether they march in an official capacity or not, prominent local politicians are deeply involved in the Stonington Feast.</p> <p>Notably, the town's First Selectman is himself a dues paying member of the club and one of the other three Selectmen also frequents the club and its activities. Stonington's State Representative is a member and was even on the club's board during his tenure as the town's Borough Warden.</p> <p>Sometimes the North Stonington Representative shows up as well.</p> <p>Stonington has another feast in the town, the Lady of Fatima Association which is a continental Portuguese rooted group. The group marches in the Feast wearing their own distinctive <i>capas</i>.</p> <p>Conversely, the Holy Ghost association's ladies auxiliary also marches in the Lady of Fatima feast (along with other area events including the Portuguese blessing of the fleet procession.</p> <p>The group used to walk in the Westerly Columbus</p>

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	day parade but no longer.) Folklore groups at the Stonington Feast have been rare. A Madeirense group performed once or twice, and only then because it was privately financed by an individual rather than the club.
Holy Ghost soup	The club butchers its own bull (the bull, when dressed, weighs in at around 700 lbs) using the meat for the <i>sopas</i> , as well as outside grill and concession offerings of roast beef, boiled beef and <i>caçoila</i> . Probably the <i>sopas</i> are <i>à moda de São Miguel</i> .
Number of people who participate in the open distribution of Sopas	Used to be 1000 and now only about 300-350.
Other	Currently the <i>Mordomo</i> buys <i>flores</i> and <i>pombinhas</i> to hand out to children and to distribute during the parade.
Number o people who attend the Festa	Conservatively, around 400-600 people come to the whole Feast.

Written by Miguel Moniz (CRIA - Centro em Rede de Investigação em Antropologia, ISCTE, IUL). Information collected by Miguel Moniz in 2012, through observation, informal conversations and an interview with Fred Sousa, co-organizer of the festa. Final edition of the text: Dulcinea Gil.

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