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HANGING OUT IN BOSTON, Day by Day in Photographs, April 2007-April 2008



Jan. 1, 2008: More than five hundred brave souls took part in the L Street Brownies annual plunge in Boston Harbor. One of Boston's best-known rituals, the New Year's Day dip was the 104th such outing for the South

Boston organization, which also uses the day's events to raise money for local scholarships. Swimmers, who were photographed from a Boston police boat in the harbor, caught a bit of a break: the temperature hit

a high of 38 before snow and rain arrived midday. **Photo copyright Bill Brett 2008. More photographs from his new book, "Boston: A Year in the Life," Pages 16 and 17.**

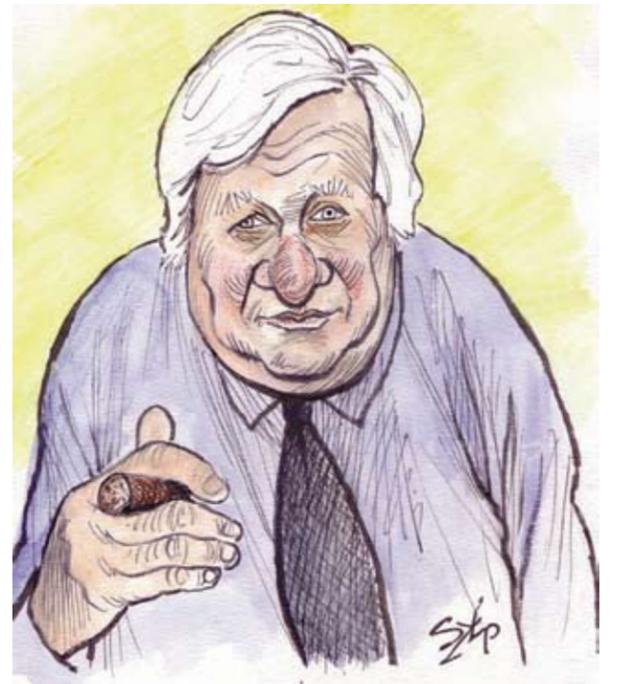


Fall Time is Fair Time

This was the scene at last year's Maam Cross Fair, a one-day event held at the Maam Cross crossroads in Connemara. This year's festival will take place on Oct. 28. See Traveling People column, Page 26. *Photo by Judy Enright.*

'According to Tip' is Coming Back

The critically acclaimed "According to Tip," written by Boston political commentator Dick Flavin, makes its return to the stage for a limited engagement at the Stuart Street Playhouse in Boston beginning Thurs., Oct. 9. Starring Tony and Emmy Award winning actor Ken Howard, at right, in the role of Tip, and directed by Rick Lombardo, "According to Tip" follows the historically unforgettable career of Cambridge's own Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, whose last position in a long career in public service was as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives for seven of President Reagan's eight years in office. Story, Page 14.



Harry and Patty Lynch: The Newman School Is Their Life's Work

Profile, Page 4

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 Aonghus Buggie (Laois) - Banjo
 Mary O'Reilly (Laois) - Accordion
 Peter Staunton (Dublin) - Accordion
 Ryan Murphy (Cork) - Flute

James Mahon (Dublin) - Pipes
 Kylie Moynagh (Dublin) - Concertina
 Cathy Potter (Antrim) - Harp
 Zelda O'Brien (Dublin) - Dancer/Concertina
 Theresa Donohoe (Westmeath) - Dancer

Emmett McMorro (Leitrim) - Dancer
 Aidan McLoughlin (Lietrim) - Dancer
 James Mounsey (Tipperary) - Dancer
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ON THE TOWN WITH THE BIR

Commentary

Irish Culture Wins out At ICONS Festival

By STEVE MORSE
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Irish music and its many offshoots from folk-rock to pop to country were enjoyed to the hilt at last month's 2008 ICONS Festival at the Irish Cultural Center in Canton. If you wanted legends, you had them in troubadours Liam Clancy and Luka Bloom. If you wanted younger blood, you had the boundary-breaking Crooked Still, the jazzy Alison Brown, and the ethereal Cara Dillon. If you liked all-female bands, you had the amazing Liadan and the mind-blowing Acadians, Gadelle. And if you hungered for a bit of storytelling, you found it in the unique Shay Duffin, who drew big crowds to his one-man show on Brendan Behan.

ICONS had a traditional bent this year, but there was room for everyone. The festival has indeed become a sort of Celtic Bonnaroo with its multiple-tent stages and eager audiences that love to soak up the various sounds, while traversing the grounds of the ICC all day and night to catch them.

"I think this is the best festival in the world," Solas singer Mairead Phelan said very graciously. "I can't believe the lineup."

Suffice it to say my legs were hurting after a weekend of running around, but my ears offered no complaints. And how could they? The acts were invigorated by the lush, woodsy setting and they offered their very best. The event became a great "hang" for fans and artists alike. Many braved misty conditions on the last night to hear a spectacular concluding set by elder statesman Liam Clancy, who is still robust, vital – and funny -- at 73 years old.

"One thing about turning 73 is that you can't die young," quipped Clancy, who opened in a trio format doing the classic anti-war song, "And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda," before more musicians joined him for new songs by Paul Brady and the Pogues' Shane MacGowan, written especially for him. Look for a new album including these to come out by Christmas, said Liam, who coaxed crowd singalongs and praised the evening's mist as, of course, being an "Irish mist." Not enough can be said about how great he was – so great that many of the younger musicians, too, inched closer to the stage to glimpse the man who helped put Irish musical tradition on the map in America.

Clancy was the climax, but there was so much more to see over the three days. The large Compass stage on which Clancy played was particularly alive on Saturday afternoon when Cambridge radio station WGBH-FM (where ICONS director Brian O'Donovan also has a weekly program on Celtic music) broadcast many acts live on the air. If the sound was as pristine in radioland as it was in person, the listeners got a treat. Martin Hayes and Dennis Cahill led off the broadcast, followed by the galvanizing Liadan and the high-energy Crooked Still, featuring charismatic singer Aoife O'Donovan and banjo master Greg Liszt, who had been plucked by Bruce Springsteen to play on the latter's "Seeger Sessions" tour in 2007. The ICONS stars also did an excellent treatment of Gillian Welch's "Orphan Girl."

The broadcast peaked with the Alison Brown Quartet, anchored by Brown's own banjo skills. She had attended Harvard before moving to Nashville, where she has fashioned a strong career as an instrumentalist adept at so many different styles that she's like a soul sister to Bela Fleck.

On Saturday night at the Compass stage – following the radio broadcast but by no means secondary to it – was the astonishingly talented Lunasa. They're another instrumental outfit taking Irish music to new places. No group was better all weekend and member Trevor Hutchinson (formerly of the Waterboys) deserves a special nod for his nimble creativity on upright bass.

Solas headlined the Compass stage on Saturday with its usual fiery intensity (fiddler Winifred Horan is a force of nature), but it was a day to celebrate the other, smaller stages as well. The Point stage boasted the Scots-infused energy of the Tannahill Weavers, the locomotive tempos of the David Munnely Band ("wild and free" as they were aptly described in the ICONS event program), the kinetically charged Sean Keane, the history-steeped Clancy Legacy band (featuring three cousins focusing on sweet ballads), and the conscience-driven tunesmith, Luka Bloom. Luka opened with his mesmerizing, utopian "I'm Not at War With Anyone." It was a levitating performance and Luka repeated it the next day on this same Point stage, though he added more dance tunes in a sign of levity.

Other tents were busy, too. A steady stream of dancers enlivened the Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann stage and the WROL Marquee stage, where Fenian Sons and Erin's Melody induced parents and children to shake it on the dance floor.

The Burren stage, located in a clubby, hipster tent where the Guinness flowed liberally, was the scene of a dynamic set from the all-women Gadelle, plus various jam-session events anchored by the likes of Chulrua, Alison Brown (part of a banjo jam), and Liadan.

The more tranquil Harpapalooza stage touched hearts with the multi-member Next Generation and the solo beauty of Peter Macaulay. The Abbey stage cooked with Shay Duffin doing his Brendan Behan route (complete with a few pints by his side, though he later admitted they were a customized blend of Coca Cola with some Guinness on top!). The Cottage stage had an ensemble playing tunes for young children who were also given dance instruction. Other tents had activities ranging from the care and grooming of Irish wolfhounds and setters, to investigating one's genealogy. There were also Irish crafts on sale, an expanded amusement park with carnival rides, and a tent devoted to a headliner from last year – the Dropkick Murphys, where merchandise and CDs were on sale.

The big winner, though, was Irish culture in general. It's hard to imagine ICONS ever doing a better job of presenting Irish culture than it did this year. This is a rare festival that educates and entertains at the same time. I can't wait until next year.

Related stories, Page 14.



Members of the Irish team included Kathy O'Toole, Garda Det. Pat Hanlon and Ted McCarthy. (Photo by Steve DeCorta)

Birdies Fly, Irish Team Wins in 'Cops For Kids With Cancer' Event

By MEGHAN O'TOOLE
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

An enthusiastic contingent of law enforcement officers and friends from the Boston area travelled to Ireland last month to participate in the seventh annual Cops For Kids With Cancer charity event. Representatives from the Boston Police, Massachusetts State Police, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Massachusetts spent a week meeting, touring, and golfing with their counterparts from the Irish police.

They wrapped up their journey in Cork with an official two-day charity golf competition to benefit young cancer victims. Eighteen American golfers went head to head with members of An Garda Síochána in a Ryder Cup style tournament to compete for The Dow Cup, named for the late John V. Dow, former Boston Police captain and Cops for Kids With Cancer co-founder.

After landing at Shannon, the group spent three nights at The Heritage Resort in Portlaoise. In addition to enjoying the facilities there, the golfers also played at The K Club, host to the 2006 Ryder Cup, and the Stackstown Garda Course. An evening reception was held at The Garda Boat Club on the banks of the River Liffey in Dublin. Garda Commissioner Fachtina Murphy was on hand to warmly welcome the group to Ireland. Garda chaplain Father Joe Kennedy arrived just in time to lead a lively singsong accompanied by Garda "piano man" Pat Lee.

From Dublin, the group headed south to Cork. Detective Garda Pat Hanlon, co-founder of Cops for Kids in Ireland, along with Irish team captain Chief Inspector Kathleen O'Toole (former Boston Police Commissioner) led the home team golfers to an impressive overall 13-5 victory.

Representatives from the Cork City Hospital were also in attendance at the closing banquet and graciously accepted a 10,000 euro donation for their pediatric cancer program. In addition to providing financial support to families, the program is aimed at boosting the morale of young victims. A portion of this year's donation will allow ten terminally ill children to travel to Euro Disney in France for the "trip of a lifetime."

The Third Annual Cops For Kids With Cancer "Flights of the Angels" Motorcycle Run was held on Sept. 28 and the John V. Dow Memorial Golf Tournament will be played Oct. 13 at Spring Valley Country Club in Sharon.

For more information about these and other fundraising events, and to inquire about donations, please visit copsforkidswithcancer.org.

Boston Irish Reporter's Calendar

If your club or organization has an item or event for the Boston Irish Reporter calendar, send the necessary details to calendar@BostonIrish.com and please include a daytime contact name and telephone number.

Oct. 1 -- "Secrets of the Sole: Irish Dance Steps and Stories with Kieran Jordan Featuring Kevin Doyle and Aidan Vaughan." In this elegant and entertaining DVD, Kieran interviews and performs with two of her favorite step dancers who have influenced her over the years.

Oct. 2 -- Diversity Visa Lottery Starts – CIIC Warns to Immigrants to beware of scams. The US Department of State has announced that the Diversity Visa (DV) lottery will open for DV-2010 entries on Oct. 2, (noon, EST) and end on Dec. 1, 2008 (noon, EST). Applicants may access the electronic Diversity Visa entry form at dvlottery.state.gov during the registration period. Irish citizens who are interested in working in the USA in the next couple of years should apply for the lottery as it will give them an opportunity to apply for a "green card" This is the only official site.

Oct. 2 -- 6:30-8:30 p.m. Center for Irish Programs, Boston College: Gaelic Roots Music, Song, Dance, Workshop and Lecture Series, Connolly House, Concert: Cape Breton fiddle and piano player Kimberley Fraser showcases the Scottish-influenced traditional music of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia.

Oct. 3 -- ICCUSA New England Fall Breakfast Series. Mark Healy, EVP, Fidelity Investments. Fidelity Center

for Applied Technology 245 Summer Street, Boston. RSVP, 617-350-3046, info@iccusanewengland.com

Oct. 5 – 8 p.m. Sinn Fein East Coast Speaking Tour at The Twelve Bens, 315 Adams St, Dorchester. Guest Speaker is Pat Treanor, former Republican Prisoner and current Chairperson of the County Monaghan Vocational Educational Committee. For more info, contact Cate Murphy at 617-269-3520.

Oct. 9 -- 6:30-8:30 p.m. Center for Irish Programs, Boston College Connolly House Concert and Multimedia Presentation: The Piperlink tour unlocks the secrets of the Irish uilleann pipes, with a concert, multimedia exhibit, and opportunities for audience members to try the pipes. Presented by Na Piobairí Uilleann from Dublin, Piperlink includes pipers Gay McKeon, Tommy Keane, and Sean Donnelly, with singer Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh performing songs associated with the pipes.

Oct. 9 -- "According to Tip" starring Ken Howard and written by Dick Flavin, at the Stuart Street Playhouse. Limited engagement.

Oct. 11-- Echoes of Erin Concert, Waltham High School Waltham, 8 p.m., \$18, 781-899-0911, cceboston.org. Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann annual concert features

Ireland's traditional champions in singing, dancing, storytelling, and music.

Oct. 12-- The All-Ireland Champions Concert. Rogers Center at Merrimack College, North Andover. 2 p.m., \$22. 978-683-9007 Sponsored by The Irish Foundation, The Ancient Order of Hibernians, and the Ladies AOH.

Oct. 16 – 4 p.m., Boston College Connolly House, Robbie Gilligan, School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin, presents "The public child and the reluctant state?" Part of the Childhood and Ireland Lecture Series, co-sponsored by the Graduate School of Social Work.

Oct. 22-- Boston College Connolly House, 6:30-8 p.m. Multimedia Presentation: "The McNulty Family." The music career of the legendary McNulty Family comes to life in a multimedia presentation by Ted McGraw of Rochester, New York. Widely known as the "Royal Family of Irish Entertainers," the McNulty Family and their recordings were in great demand from the 1920s through the 1950s.

Some material in this calendar is published courtesy of Mike and Colette Quinlin, irishmassachusetts.com.

BIR Profile

Harry and Patty Lynch and the Newman School: A Study in Always Moving Forward in Faith

BY GREG O'BRIEN
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

It is early in September, just a few frenzied days before the start of class at The Newman School, an eclectic, private, 9-12 college preparatory school in Boston's Back Bay, and headmaster J. Harry Lynch, son of one of the school's founders, is buried in orderly piles of paperwork on his desk. "I'm not good at putting stuff away," he concedes, noting that "everything I'm working on is on my desk."

From the looks of things, Lynch—born Joseph Harry, III, but called Harry throughout his life—has his work cut out for him. But after 23 years at the ruder of this impressive school on Marlborough Street, operating out of two classic five-story town houses burrowed between the Charles River and Boylston Street, Lynch, an experienced sailor, has maintained a steady course for academic excellence, personal and intellectual growth, and a desire for truth and moral decision-making that would make his father and the school's namesake proud.

Founded in 1945 by Lynch's father, an educator, and a group of Boston College alumni, the school was named after John Henry Cardinal Newman, and dedicated to the celebrated London cleric's Judeo-Christian values, intellectual rigor, and philosophy. Called a "just man made perfect" by the Cork Examiner upon his death, Newman, a convert from the Church of England, devoted his life to assisting those in need no matter their denominations.

The non-denominational school's motto, "Let heart speak to heart," is testimony to Newman's enriching spirit and perspective—"Cor ad cor loquitur," as the universal language states. Like Newman, the school has broken the mold of tradition, with its innovative liberal arts curriculum, chandeliers hung from classroom ceilings, red brick exterior, students from around the world, and access to Boston's finest cultural, educational and sporting amenities that have dubbed the institution "a little university." With 250 students, a majority of them from the Boston area, four administrators, 24 teachers, a closely knit fabric of parents and supporters, and the best of Boston in easy, convenient grasp, The Newman School is truly an "elevated experience," as Lynch states, noting that about 95 percent of graduating seniors attend quality four-year colleges and universities, among them Harvard, Boston College, Tufts, Cornell, Boston University, Brandeis, College of the Holy Cross, Connecticut College, University of Michigan, Purdue, and the University of Southern California.

Some might call this a "just school made perfect," or one striving for perfection.

In all ways, Lynch, with roots in Galway, is as much a part of this family-centered facility as the grout between its ancient bricks. Established initially as a postgraduate school to assist returning World War II vets, among others, to gain acceptance to Boston College, Newman was where Lynch attended seventh and eighth grades when it offered a middle school curriculum. He has since overseen its remarkable transition to a place of great academic challenge and serenity, offering extracurricular and sporting programs that rival schools in its genre. Five of Lynch's six children have attended The Newman School, and his wife, Patty (Coen), whom he met in college, is the Admissions Director. She dons as many Newman hats as her husband.

"Newman is our life," Lynch says in an interview. "We carry it with us," adds his wife.

So much so that it seems impossible to profile Lynch without profiling Patty and The Newman School. The word picture is seamless, and yet there is an unmistakable sense of something to come, something missing from this canvas, beyond the unshakable faith that directs the couple's collective paths.

Indeed, they offer a study of contrasts, not lost on either. Harry, one of six children, was raised in an upper-middle class Wellesley neighborhood, and Patty, one of eight, was reared in working-class Watertown. There's loving tension in the room, an echo of laughs, when the two neighborhoods are discussed. "We al-



J. HARRY AND PATTY LYNCH
"Newman is our life."

ways joke about which one is more family-friendly," says Patty, suggesting its code for Watertown, with its extended family base, being more down-to-earth, grounded in reality.

No doubt both have had ample doses of reality while growing up, handed down from Irish American parents who were appropriately strict, loving, and deep in the faith. "Our lives, like most of the day, were structured, but in that structure there was great freedom. You were always expected to do the right thing, and you always assumed someone was watching," says Lynch.

His father's family initially settled in Haverhill where family members worked in the mills, and then found better opportunities in Boston. Lynch's dad, an educator all his life, was raised in Roslindale; his mother, Helen (Collins) was raised in New Jersey before later moving to the Boston area. After marrying, the couple moved to Wellesley where Lynch's dad pursued his academic interests and his mother tended to the home—caring for Lynch and his sisters Helen (now a retired school teacher), Anne, and Claire (both fulltime mothers) and brothers John (a National Park Service employee in Boston) and Paul (an attorney).

Lynch's father taught geometry at BC High, and worked nights as registrar for Boston College's evening division in the Back Bay before establishing The Newman School, which at its height as a post-high school graduate program enrolled more than 1,000 students. He died at 45 when his son was 11. "I never had an adult conversation with my father," Harry laments. "But I know he loved to teach, and he was an excellent role model."

His parents, in fact, left an indelible impression on him. "Our family values and behavior were shaped by our faith," he says, noting his parents were devout Catholics and involved in parish affairs, as were his wife's parents. Lynch, now 56, attended St. Paul's Elementary School in Wellesley, then Newman for two years, before attending Xavier Catholic High School in Concord and the College of the Holy Cross.

Patty, whose family roots trace back to County Cork, attended elementary and high school in Watertown, then enrolled at Newton College of the Sacred Heart. The couple met their junior year; a friend of Lynch's, a Newman alumnus, introduced them. The two married shortly after graduation.

Always insistent on pursuing a passion in life, Lynch sold construction bond insurance in Boston for nine years after college, and so it was no surprise that he accepted the headmaster job at Newman when it was offered in 1985. Lynch had served on the school's Board of Trustees and had impressed fellow board members with his vision, administrative skills, and institutional knowledge of the school.

Heading up a school like Newman is a bit like juggling at center ring—lots of eyes on the juggler and lots of balls in the air. In addition to what is taught at 245 and 247 Marlborough, Newman's academic and

athletic programs are spread out over the city. Lynch proved skillful in the role, and had the good sense in time to hire his wife for the admissions position. Together at Newman they walk in faith—a firm and common ground.

"One of the key elements of the school is its faith center," Lynch says. "Integral to the human experience is the promise of a relationship with God, even in the depths of great sorrow. I'm not trying to wear my heart on my sleeve, but Patty and I have had to suffer through a few things over the last few years."

He pauses for a minute. Patty is quiet, as well. In running a school of this type for decades and in being foster parents for 15 years, tending to the needs of more than 30 foster children, one of whom they adopted—a special needs child named Alexandria (Allie), nothing could prepare them for the tragedies they have faced recently.

In the last two years, the Lynches have lost two of their six children. Daughter Sheila, who would be 25 today, died in July 2006. A bright, attractive Holy Cross graduate, who was earning a masters degree in plant cell biology at St. Joseph's in Philadelphia, she contracted a serious infection while doing research in a Texas cave. Sheila was rushed home for care, and died in her sleep. "She was a beautiful girl inside out, stunning in every way," her mother says. "We're still in shock."

A year and three months later, their beautiful Allie, who had been with the family since birth and was a daily inspiration to others at The Newman School—died of medical complications last October.

"We know they are together; Sheila was incredibly kind to her younger sister," Patty adds. "It's a consolation knowing they are in Heaven."

Lynch and his wife are reticent to talk in more detail. The pain clearly grips them. And yet they concede that their tragedies may help others cope with death or appreciate what they have in life. Their lives in service to others are living testaments to the foundations of The Newman School. "Our faith has deepened, our marriage has deepened, and our priorities have become more focused," says Lynch, noting the grief. "We never thought we were let down by God."

Lynch remembers his first day back at school after Sheila's death. "I looked at a desk full of work and thought there were two ways to go: I had the choice of not picking up the pen, or opening the computer or working, which would have been destructive; or I could do the thing that promises to be constructive, and throw myself into my work. I could say that the world is a terrible place and that I hate God or God doesn't exist, or I could move forward in faith."

The family has moved forward in faith together—daughters Elizabeth Virginia Southard, 28, newly married and teaching math like her grandfather at BC High; 26-year old Kathleen (Kate), who earned a Bachelor of Arts and a Masters in Education from Harvard where she is now a math researcher; Susanna, a graduate of Holy Cross, who is teaching at Nativity Prep in Worcester; and son, Joseph, a senior at Newman, who volunteered this past summer at the Italian Home for Children in Jamaica Plain where Ally went to special needs school.

These gut losses also have brought the Newman community even closer together. The memories of Sheila and Alexandria permeate the school.

"It is comforting," says Lynch. "Everyone knew our children; they were treasured here. It helps us to move on."

Moving on, however, is still a daily challenge—one only resolved in time. It is later in the day, and Lynch's attention is diverted once again to his desk, overflowing with the promise of a new year. In faith and in true, directed Newman style, he insists, "There's a ton of work still to do here!"

Greg O'Brien is editor and president of the Stony Brook Group, a publishing and political/communications strategy company based in Brewster. He is the author/editor of several books and a regular contributor to regional and national publications

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Murray to lead trade mission

Massachusetts Lt. Governor Timothy Murray will lead a delegation of business leaders and state officials to Ireland in October. The five-day trip will make stops in Galway, Derry, Belfast and Dublin, according to a preliminary itinerary provided to the Reporter by Murray's office.

Murray and the delegation will meet with counterparts in the Republic and Northern Ireland and intend to tour universities and businesses. In Belfast, the group will participate in a plenary session at Ulster University. The subject of the conference is "A Collaboration of Innovation in Technology, Life Sciences, Financial Services and Travel & Tourism." The Irish Chamber of Commerce in the United States of America (ICCUSA) will host a business networking reception in Dublin, where Murray and company will also huddle with Ireland's Minister of Science Technology and Innovation Jimmy Devins and other economic development officers from the Republic.

Murray's office released figures in September that show that total value exports from Massachusetts to Ireland have been rising since 2004, particularly in the pharmaceutical industry. There has been a trade growth rate of 55% from 2006 to 2007, Murray's office claims.

— BILL FORRY

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Irish Americans for Obama/Biden



A group of Bostonians met with Democratic Vice Presidential candidate Joe Biden during his Sept. 10 campaign stop at Boston's Fairmount Copley Plaza Hotel. Pictured are (l-r): John Cullinane, Diddy Cullinane, Michael Quinlin, Sen. Biden, Ed Forry, Mass. State Rep. Linda Dorcena Forry, Joe Leary and Chuck Monahan. (Photo courtesy Obama/Biden campaign.)

In the opinion of many Irish Americans I know, Barack Obama is the only candidate for President who addresses the six key cultural and generational concerns of most Irish Americans, because :

- He's the embodiment of the American dream -- as such he can inspire Irish Americans and their children that they can succeed, too.
- He's walked in their shoes -- His mother has strong Irish roots, and he made it the hard way but never forgot where he came from.
- He's smart and well educated - The Irish respect intelligence and cherish education because it was once denied to them. Barack Obama is very, very smart and is a graduate of both Columbia University and Harvard Law School.

- He's tough -- you can't grow up or work on the South Side of Chicago and survive without being tough.

- He's a man of faith -- Obama is very comfortable with religion and is willing to reach out to traditional Irish Catholics, Scots Irish, as well as others from the Irish tradition, and respect their views on issues of importance to them.

- He has good judgment -- the most important characteristic of any leader is good judgment. It's something one is born with and Barack Obama was, and it shows in his positions on Iraq, Afghanistan, his interest in Irish issues by recruiting Joe Biden as Vice President, someone who will help with the securing of peace in Northern Ireland, immigration, etc.

This is why Obama is the ideal

candidate for those Americans with Irish roots whether Catholic or Protestant, North or South. Those interested in helping the Obama/Biden campaign with the Irish American community, including those with contacts in New Hampshire, a swing state, please forward this message to them. It will be very helpful. For further information, please feel free to contact john@mainmessage.org or call Martha Burnham at 617 494 8894.

This message was created by us, and we approve it.

**John Cullinane, Diddy Cullinane
Rep. Linda Dorcena Forry,
Ed Forry, Joe Leary
Chuck Monahan,
Michael Quinlin**

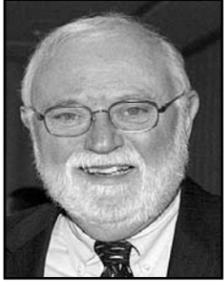


Publisher's Notebook

Boston's Bravest to the Rescue

By ED FORRY
PUBLISHER

One Friday night early last month, around 10:30 p.m., on the way home from a dinner with friends at Gerard's, I found that traffic on Adams Street in Dorchester was impeded by the flashing blue lights of a Boston police car. A few blocks south on Adams, another police car closed off the street at Richmond, forcing a detour.



Curious, I pulled my car over and went on foot along Adams, expecting to find some minor event causing this police activity. But I soon found that the street was closed off by multiple emergency vehicles: four ambulances, a Boston police cruiser, an unmarked police car, and three Boston fire trucks - Ladder 6, Rescue 2 and Engine 18.

I began to realize that it was the scene of a bad automobile accident, and after a few more hesitant steps it came into view: A car was wrapped around a telephone pole, right at the entrance to Dot Park at the field locals call "the bowl". The vehicle with four young people had been heading up Adams from Lower Mills, but somehow had spun out of control and smashed sideways into the utility pole.

The car ended up facing in the opposite direction it had come from, and yet it seemed that all had survived the impact. Three already had been removed by ambulance from the scene, but a fourth young man was trapped in the back of the car, his legs somehow caught up in the wreckage of the car's interior.

It was eleven o'clock, and the accident drew only a little attention, as most people had retired for the night. One neighbor told me he had slept through the crash, but was awakened by the sirens of the many first responders. With him, I watched the rescue attempts, and I marveled at what I saw: There was a full-pressure rescue underway, and from the three fire trucks there had emerged as many as 15 firefighters. The "Jakes" surrounded the destroyed vehicle, each of them working in unison as a team, urgently seeking to extricate the victim and save his life.

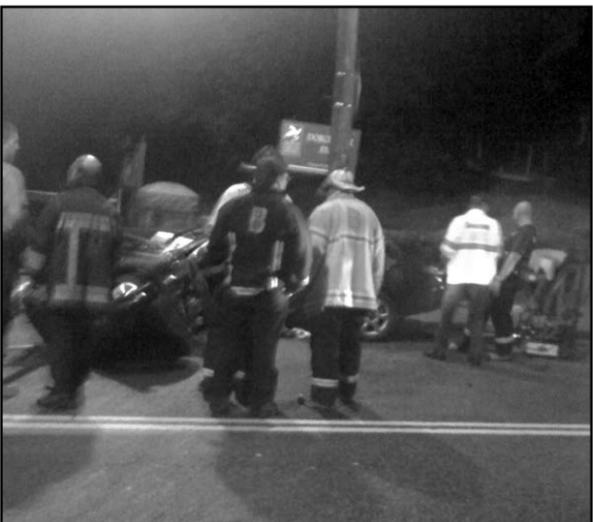
One burly firefighter sat on the car's trunk, his arms wrapped under the arms and around the chest of the trapped man, holding him upright and keeping him calm; two others worked the jaws of life, cutting away the damaged front seat; others used a crow bar to pry open the hood and disconnect the battery; two others manned hose lines, to prevent any gasoline leaks from catching fire. As one firefighter worked an electrical generator, another cast a power light's beam onto the scene.

A blood pressure device had been placed on the young man's arm to monitor his vital signs, and an EMT had placed an oxygen mask over his mouth. All the while, the district fire chief leaned in and orchestrated the teamwork.

When at last the front seat was cut away, eight of these rescuers men rushed to carefully slide the victim onto a board and then a gurney, and they quickly moved him to a waiting ambulance. It was perhaps an everyday occurrence for these sturdy first responders, but for me it was a remarkable event, one of unquestioned compassion by these rescuers.

Sadly, I learned later that one victim did not survive. An 18 year-old recent graduate of Milton High School who just began his college studies, died from his injuries in the hospital several days later. The tragic loss of life left me devastated. I didn't know this young man, but having watched our remarkable public safety professionals work so hard to save a life, it was crushing news to hear of the fatality. Our prayers go out to his family and friends.

Having seen them in action, it needs to be said about these public safety people- the police, the Boston EMS, and especially these Boston firefighters- they deserve our lasting thanks and admiration. They worked long and hard to save a life, and it is all part of what they are called upon to do, everyday.



This cellphone image shows Boston firefighters working to save a life. (Photo by Ed Forry)

Commentary

Survivor Families Perplexed, Frustrated By Latest News on '98 Omagh Bombing

By ROBERT P. CONNOLLY
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Just two months ago, the relatives of the victims of the Omagh bombing observed the 10th anniversary of the worst attack in the history of the Northern Ireland Troubles, speaking of their grief and of the disappointment they felt about none of the perpetrators being brought to justice. They spoke of their thirst for truth and the need for closure.

Then last month, a new sense of outrage entered the frame, when it was revealed that security officials may have tracked the bombers for more than 90 minutes on the day of the tragedy, as they drove from the Republic of Ireland, across the border and then northwest to Omagh, but didn't use the information to stop the attack. Additionally, the information doesn't seem to have been employed in the effort to catch the bombers and put them in jail.

All of which leaves relatives and maimed survivors bewildered, infuriated, and

looking for answers.

"It is totally shattering," said Michael Gallagher, the leader of the Omagh relatives support group. "The possibility that the people who were plotting the bomb in Omagh could have been caught in the act, stopped, and apprehended is a very sobering thought for the families."

Gallagher said the tapes of the intercepted calls should be turned over to the relatives who are now pursuing a civil action against some of the alleged perpetrators.

At issue are the things that happened, and those things that didn't happen, on a late summer Saturday afternoon in 1998, as shoppers filled the narrow streets of the County Tyrone market town of Omagh.

According to a report broadcast last month on the BBC television program Panorama, it is now known that a British telephone monitoring agency picked up cell phone chatter as two cars drove north in tandem: a scout car in the lead and a car carrying a 500-pound bomb following close behind.

Authorities at the ultra-sophisticated eavesdropping center, which reportedly had the ability to monitor and tape any cell phone or landline call made in Northern

Ireland, had been asked to pay particular attention to a cell phone being used in one of the cars because the phone had been connected to bombers who narrowly missed causing a disaster in the Northern Ireland town of Banbridge two weeks previously.

It was August 15, 1998, and authorities at the phone-monitoring agency known as GCHQ were listening in as the cars headed toward the Irish border.

At 1:30, about an hour and a half before the blast, someone using the suspicious cell phone called to say, "We're crossing the line," meaning that the cars were passing from the Republic of Ireland into Northern Ireland, entering the North at the border town of Aghnacloy.

Then, 50 minutes later, at 2:20, another call, this time from Omagh, and the message was, "The bricks are in the wall," a sentence that had popped up in previous paramilitary missions and was understood to mean that a bomb was in place. A little more than 40 minutes later, shortly after 3 p.m., the bomb detonated, claiming 31 lives, counting two unborn twins, and leaving more than 300 injured.

At 3:30, as the town and many lives lay in ruins, a final call was placed, and the voice of the person placing the call is believed to be that of Seamus Daly, one of the five men now being sued by the relatives of the Omagh victims. The men are alleged to be members of the Real IRA, the group that claimed responsibility for the Omagh attack.

Why the information was not used to apprehend the bombers before they struck, or used to arrest the men after the fact, continues to be unclear. "We missed it," a former Northern Ireland police official said when he appeared on the BBC program.

Northern Ireland's former police ombudsman, who was very critical of the police investigation that followed the bombing, told the British newspaper the Guardian that the new information indicates that the bombing could have been prevented. "There are a very limited number of access routes to Omagh town," former ombudsman Nuala O'Loan said. "And if they [police] came to the view that that was where a device was being taken, it would seem to me there could have been roadblocks set up. They [the bombers] would have seen this and would have just abandoned the bombs by the roadside."

For reasons that may never be clear, the information did not receive the attention it deserved, and name Omagh took its place alongside so many other names that join together to form the tragedy of the Troubles.

Commentary

Whom Do I Make the Check Out To?

By JIM O'SULLIVAN
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

My mother's Verizon bill last month included an additional land line assessment of \$5.73. The small print explained a "shortfall" surcharge of \$5 on top of the principal charge, levied because she had failed to make \$5 worth of long-distance calls from her phone. Presumably, as more people turn to cell phones (at 28, I haven't used a land line in my residence and know few people my age who have) for phone calls, including long-distance ones, many are facing the "shortfall" charge. On top of the \$5 was the 73-cent tax, calculated based on the \$5 shortfall, the bill explained.

To summarize: She was being charged \$5.73 not only for phone calls she did not make, but also *because* she had not made them.

This came at the end of a week during which average Americans read the newspapers and watched the news and wondered what the hell was going on. Wall Street was imploding - the New York Post reported by Sunday that the Dow was 500 trades away from a 22-percent plunge on Thursday morning - and it seemed one of the few remaining personal investment management decisions safe enough to try was the under-the-mattress strategy.

The telephone bill relates to the markets this way: Smart people feel that the decisions that affect how tough the car payment is to make or how much the college savings deposit is every month or whether the long-desired vacation is taken are largely made in their absence. The scope and sweep of these decisions is so daunting that the sense of impotence becomes unfocused, pervasive.

So, too, does the assigning of blame defy clear explanation. In Wall Street's week of bedlam, it was enough to watch the two men who would be the most powerful man in the world realize that. It was the politicians' fault, said McCain, who is one of them. It was Wall Street's fault, said Obama, who has benefited from the Street's largesse in its political philanthropy.

Who's the culprit for the phantom phone charge? Is it the lobbyists, whom both McCain and Obama love

to excoriate? For sure, the telecom lobby is immense. Here in Massachusetts, for instance, telecommunications firms have been exempted from property taxes since 1915, when the state was trying to nurture the young industry. The firms say the poles and wires should remain untaxed as the build-outs of broadband and cable continue.

The "powerful forces conspiring against you" phenomenon is not new in American politics - William Jennings Bryan had a go at it with his "Cross of Gold" speech and Al Gore used it to little, humorless avail in 2000.

What is new, and growing, is the sense of complexity people confront when what they'd really like to do is till their own garden. Know what Twitter is? It's an online messaging tool used for personal and, increasingly, mass communication, and a Rocky Mountain News reporter used it last week to furnish virtually real-time reporting to the paper's website from the funeral of a three-year-old killed when a pickup truck hit an ice cream shop.

Is there a more stomach-turning thought than that of a reporter banging out text messages to a group of office workers on the edges of their seats, pressing "refresh" to get the blow-by-blow of a toddler's funeral? On the other hand, as the rabbi who performed the service argued, why shouldn't the grief be shared?

Phone bills, collapsing banks, and tech-fueled media transgressions seem like an odd collection of clues to use in trying to make judgments about what will happen Nov. 4 in the presidential election, or in Massachusetts politics going forward as Gov. Patrick tries to launch a major education makeover and his would-be successors strain for hints of the path ahead.

Does Obama or McCain benefit from a country in the thrall of a costly war but preoccupied by an uncertain economy? Is the nation safer now than it was in the second half of September 2001? Can the economy withstand an expected holiday season slowdown, or reel further into job losses and flunking housing market?

No idea. Somebody else is making those decisions.

Commentary

Rough Waters In Northern Ireland Intense Bickering Slows New Government

BY JOE LEARY
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Orderly democratic government in Northern Ireland still requires the careful monitoring and watchful eye of British and Irish senior leadership. And recent events have proved that their attention is vital to preserving peaceful progress in the North.

Since the confident, iconic Ian Paisley retired a few months ago, the new leadership of Northern Ireland's largest political party, The Democratic Unionists (DUP), has refused any substantive compromise with



Joe Leary

opposing Nationalist politicians. As a result, in protest, the leading Nationalist party, Sinn Fein, has responded by absenting itself from the Assembly Executive meetings, thereby bringing government to a halt.

As a result, the Northern Ireland self-governing government set up by the famous "Good Friday" agreement is powerless — there has been no meeting since last June.

Paisley's replacement as the new leader of the DUP, Peter Robinson, must convince his membership's more radical elements that he is deserving of their respect and support, which is nearly every new leader's problem. He is doing this by going back to the uncooperative, aggressive relationship that the DUP has had with Sinn Fein in years past.

Sinn Fein was given to understand that if it endorsed the new policing arrangements set up by the "Good Friday" agreement, responsibility for security and justice would become part of the Northern Ireland Assembly's job. The word used is "devolved," to indicate a transfer of power from London to Belfast. All other government functions except Foreign Affairs and National defense had already been "devolved" under the "Good Friday agreement."

Robinson and other DUP politicians have resisted the policing power transfer by demanding, among other things, that before they consider such a move, the IRA's Army Council be disbanded forever. The highly respected International Monitoring Commission, set up to decide such disputes, responded by issuing a report clearly and decisively saying the IRA Army Council was defunct, without power, and devoting itself to peaceful means.

The DUP was furious, and Robinson refused to bend.

Gordon Brown, the British prime minister, made a special trip to Northern Ireland to visit with Robinson and other leaders and issued the following statement: "It is now time for all the political parties to work together to complete the final stages of the peace process — to complete the devolution of policing and justice." The DUP was again furious, and unmoved.

Brown went even further in another statement: "So now, leaders here in Northern Ireland must reach agreement between themselves and set the date for the transfer of policing and justice from London to a Minister in and of Northern Ireland."

Brown asked how the Assembly could tackle common criminality, low level crime and youth disorder "when you are responsible for only some of the levers for change and when you have responsibility for edu-

cation and health and social development but have to rely on London for policing and Justice."

Brown was clearly supporting Sinn Fein's view of the situation.

Irish Minister of Foreign Affairs Micheal Martin also travelled north to Belfast and met with Martin McGuinness of Sinn Fein, Jeffery Donaldson of the DUP, and SDLP leader Mark Durkan. Martin urged political parties in the North to ensure a resolution to avoid a possible crisis in the power-sharing Executive. He did not take sides in the dispute but said that Dublin stood ready to provide whatever help it could.

The Belfast Telegraph of September 15 published an article under the headline "Survey shows population backs devolution." The article said, "New Polling shows 58 percent (of the people of Northern Ireland) backed handing down security powers from Westminster."

All of this had little effect on the leaders of the DUP. On the one hand, their intransigence appears to be a sign of courage to their supporters; on the other hand, their stance is a red flag, warning that all is not well in Northern Ireland.

A crucial meeting of the Assembly Executive was set for Sept. 18 at Stormont House. Sinn Fein leaders warned that unless some progress was made on policing, they would not be there. This was countered by another threat from the DUP saying that if Sinn Fein blocked another meeting they would deliberately trigger a political crisis. The use of the word "trigger" was interesting. Robinson also threatened there would be "serious consequences" if the meeting was not held. Well, the meeting was not held, and the recrimination started immediately.

The powerful voice of Northern Ireland's chief constable, Sir Hugh Orde, was one of the first to be heard: "The failure to provide political stability left a vacuum which dissidents were trying to exploit with attacks on police." First Minister Robinson warned of political gridlock after Deputy First Minister McGuinness, speaking for the Sinn Fein, refused to lift the Sinn Fein veto on executive meetings.

McGuinness added that the DUP clearly was in default of the St. Andrews Agreement in not moving on issues such as policing and justice. He was quoted by the Irish Times as saying, "The issue of the Executive meeting has to be on the basis of partnership and equality and there are people in the DUP who are opposed to partnership and equality and they are the tail who are trying to wag the dog. The dog needs to be taken control of."

Robinson responded by saying that without a properly functioning Executive, there can be no official Assembly business. He canceled several scheduled North-South Ministerial Council meetings, a concept created by the Good Friday Agreement through the efforts of the British and Irish governments to promote understanding across the border. They have never been popular with the hard-line unionists in the DUP and Robinson probably canceled them with a certain amount of enthusiasm.

There is much more of this story ahead of us since the issue must be solved. If it is not, and government does not begin to function again, all the great work to bring Northern Ireland to peace will be jeopardized. That is why the British and Irish governments — and those Americans who remain interested in Northern Ireland — must continue to watch these events carefully.

For the Island, an Economic Tale of Woes

FROM THE IRISH EMIGRANT

GALWAY -- The latest exchequer returns, published Sept. 2, show the economy to be in even more serious trouble than had been acknowledged to date. Tax income in August was 20 percent lower than anticipated, leading to a 2.8-billion euro shortfall for the year to date. Reduced consumer spending resulted in VAT showing the biggest deficit — it is currently 1.177-billion euro short of the Budget forecast. Slower property sales left stamp duty 480-million euro short of the desired figure and capital gains tax was down by 436 million. Only income tax came close to achieving the target announced in last December's Budget but it, too, was down by 150-million euro. The accelerating decline in tax income is now expected to result in a full year shortfall of some 5-billion euro. Two months ago the revised Government prediction was 3 billion.

The Cabinet met on Sept. 3 for the first time since the summer break and the exchequer returns were the main topic of discussion. Afterwards, in a Government statement, it was announced that the Minister for Finance will present his Budget for 2009 on October 14, some seven weeks earlier than usual. This, it was claimed, "will reflect the necessary prioritization of expenditures in the light of expected tax revenues" and will aim to "give clarity and confidence to investors and taxpayers alike, and provide a sound basis for economic recovery."

Tax decisions announced on October 14 will take effect on January 1 in the same way that they would had they been announced in December. The only exception will be adjustments to excise duties; these normally apply from midnight on the day that they are announced.

More bad news came on Sept. 3 when the Central Statistics Office published the latest Live Register data. This showed that the number of people out of work took

another jump upwards in August with an additional 9,144 signing on. The total number unemployed now stands at 247,384, an increase of 73,178 over August of 2007. There was no shortage of doomsayers reminding us that this was the biggest annual increase since records began 41 years ago and that the number claiming benefit was at its highest in more than ten years. Few of them bothered to put the statistics in context by also reminding us that the number of people at work is more than two million, a figure that no one would have believed possible ten years ago.

The standardized unemployment rate is now estimated at 6.1 percent. Once again those signing on for the first time in August were mostly males — 81 percent. The August increase was, however, not quite as big as the increases in June and July.

IRA Army Council "serves no function" -- There had been much speculation as to the findings of the International Monitoring Commission in relation to the status of the IRA army council. The Irish and British Governments had requested a report on the matter in the hope of easing the alleged fears of the DUP, which has made the standing down of the IRA controlling body as a pre-requisite for devolving policing and justice to Stormont.

The IMC's report, when it was published on Sept. 3, turned out to be somewhat more emphatic than had been speculated in the media. It said that the IRA army council no longer operates and serves no function. In explaining this, a member of the IMC, Lord Alderdice, acknowledged that it hadn't formally stood down. He also acknowledged that its members were still alive, that at least some of them were active in Sinn Féin and that no doubt they would bump into each other in bars and other places from time to time. They did not, he insisted, convene as a body for any purpose.

Off the Bench

And Now a Word From the Dempubcan Party

BY JAMES W. DOLAN

"Ladies and gentlemen I'm honored to accept your nomination as the party's candidate for president of the United States.

"I am also pleased to accept the vice presidential nomination on behalf of my son, 'Tripper,' who wanted to be here today but is finishing his last two weeks at summer camp. He looks forward to his election and assuming his new duties after he completes his last year of high school.

"To those who have been critical of his candidacy, remember 'nepotism begins at home.' It's simply another example of our party's commitment to family values. If we don't take care of our relatives, how can we truly claim to value our families?"

"At the outset, I'd like to introduce my current wife, 'Trixie.' This is my fourth marriage and she's the best looking and youngest of the lot. Hell, I trade in my Mercedes every three years and who says a wife isn't as important as a car.

"Some criticize my lack of experience. They say my service as an elected sewer commissioner in a small Midwestern community does not qualify me for national office. But they've never had to answer the hotline at night when a major backup threatens to engulf the mall. Unless you've been there, you don't know pressure.

"I've made the hard decisions and at times manned the plunger that averted catastrophe.

"Talk about experience; after four wives and four honeymoons abroad, I'm an expert in foreign relations and am ready to be the leader of the free world.

"My opponent talks about eliminating special interests. I say hell no! Sure we gotta set priorities but are we gonna favor ordinary interests? That makes no sense. Special interests wouldn't be 'special' if we didn't protect them.

"If any interests have to go, I'll make sure they're the ordinary ones — the ones without lobbyists.

"If elected, I intend to reach across party lines to coerce my opponents to pass my legislative program. I'm as fed up as anyone with the petty bipartisan bickering that has almost brought our government to a standstill.

"As a proud lifetime member of the NRA, I'm gonna see that all our legislators carry guns. A few threats with the artillery to back it up should break the legislative logjam a lot faster than the 'warm and fuzzies'.

"As for 'earmarks,' I'm in favor of them. How're we gonna keep score of who's doing what for who at the taxpayers' expense without earmarks. Hell, if you're gonna make things happen for the folks at home; you gotta get your nose in the trough. Competition — it's the American way.

"As always, I intend to be on all sides of every issue. Our party's flexible platform discourages narrow adherence to basic principles. Instead, we stand comfortably uncommitted. Some may call it 'flip-flopping' but we consider it being open minded and responsive.

"Our opponents savagely attack us but I say what's wrong with putting lipstick on a pig. After all, the pig looks better, likes the attention and it doesn't do them any harm. That smear won't work on us. We're for improving the appearance of our animal friends.

"You can count on us for change. We'll provide more change than our opposition. We're the party of big change. While throwing the insiders out, decreasing taxes, increasing spending, cutting programs and protecting this great nation, I'll order the National Mint to double the production of nickels, dimes, quarters and half dollars.

"As for a new clean energy policy, I'm for steam. It worked in the 19th century and could work again. It only requires water and fire — two things we have in abundance. To those who say 'drill baby drill,' I say 'percolate baby percolate.'"

"Thank you and remember to vote Dempub!"
James W. Dolan is a retired Dorchester District Court judge who now practices law.

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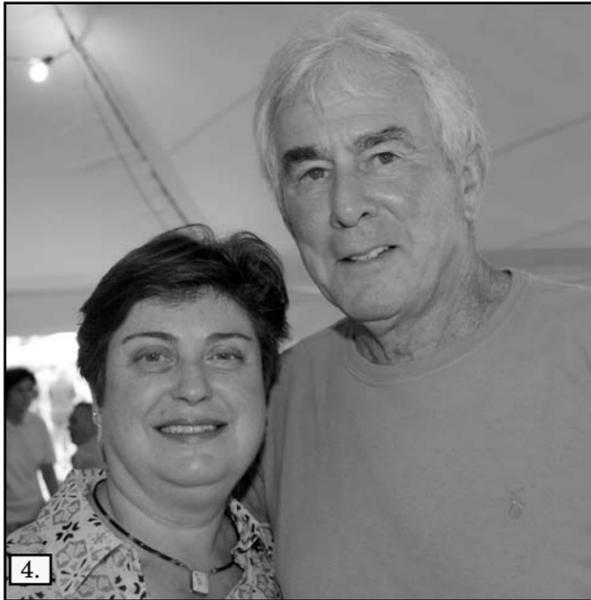
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BRETT'S BOSTON

By Harry Brett

Exclusive photos of Boston Irish people & events

The Irish Cultural Centre of New England (ICCNE) hosted a festival of Irish music, dance, sports and culture at the centre's 46 acre Canton campus on September 12-14. The three day event drew delighted crowds, despite some inclement weather on Friday night and Sunday morning. The BIR's Harry Brett was on hand to capture some of the scenes there on Saturday afternoon, Sept. 13. Pictured are: 1.) Kathy Schnick, Newton with Ozzy, Irish wolfhound; 2.) IBEW/103 bagpipers; 3.) Justin Comeau, Abington, Madison MacPherson, Randolph; 4.) Kathy & John Carlisle, Cambridge; 5.) Jeanne & Sean Grant, Ex. Dir., I.C.C.; 6.) Dan & Jean Needham, Norwood, Jim Harrington, Linda Grant, Norwood; 7.) Stephanie, Aiden, 5, and Bill Brett, Braintree; 8.) Marie Feely, Weymouth, Diane Anderson, Stoughton, Scott Roach, Stoughton (rear), Kristin Feely, Stoughton, Anne Feely, Stoughton, Denise & Paul Doherty, Dorchester; 9.) Maryanne Riordan Ridge & Bob Ridge, Hanover, Mike Torney & Beth Foley, Raynham; 10.) Joe Griffin, Pembroke, Jeanne Gallagher, Rockland, Judy Griffin, Pembroke, Bob Gallagher, Rockland; 11.) Katie & Liam Pero, Hyde Park, with Murphy the dog.



Boston Irish Reporter's Here & There

By **BILL O'DONNELL**

New Disclosures Fuel Omagh Inquiry -- The Omagh bombing — the worst atrocity of the Troubles — killed 29 people, including a woman expecting twins, ten years ago this last August. Nobody has been brought to justice for this carnage but new disclosures about cell



Bill O'Donnell

phone surveillance by British intelligence agents on the day of the bombing has finally prompted Prime Minister **Gordon Brown** to call for an official inquiry. Families of the Omagh victims have been urging a public investigation for the past six years to no avail; it took a BBC-TV documentary on the bombing to change some minds in Whitehall, and start things on the path to justice.

The television report on the Panorama program alleges that phone calls between the bombers, widely believed to be dissident members of the so-called Real IRA, were monitored and recorded on the day of the bombing by security forces, but that the taped conversations have never been released by the RUC/PSNI.

Relatives of the victims have been encouraged by the new revelations and the welcome words from the former Northern Ireland police ombudsman, **Nuala O'Loan**, who said that with information on the bomb's target in Omagh, British forces could have easily intercepted the attack before it happened. A damning indictment of the security forces if true.

The spokesman for the Omagh families, **Michael Gallagher**, called the BBC report "earth-shattering" and questioned why the recordings were not made available earlier or used to indict the bombers. The inquiry, the prime minister's office said, has a three-month deadline to report its findings. Here's a hope that the findings will reach 10 Downing before its current occupant, the beleaguered Mr. Brown, is forced out by his ravenous Labour Party colleagues.

Crunching The Crisis Numbers -- If I have managed to keep all those floating billions involved in the Lehman Brothers' bankruptcy filing straight, the bottom line seems to say that the estimable Lehman colossus has accumulated debts (as stated in their court filing) of \$613 billion, the largest debt by far of any Chapter 11 filing in US history.

What could be done with that kind of money? Let's see. It would fund a totally tax-free Massachusetts for 22 years; it would pay for state government operations in California for 11 years; it would underwrite the cost of government operations in Ireland for 8 years; it would equal the total revenues for the 30 major league baseball teams between now and 2020. That \$613 billion represents ten times **Bill Gates's** net worth (\$57 billion), and 12 times **Warren Buffett's** total worth (\$51 billion).

Boston City Council Tightens The Screws -- This is another one of those brouhahas that arise when otherwise decent people feel dissed and have way too much time on their hands. I'm talking, of course, about the under-appreciated, forward-looking Boston City Council — at least some of its members --- who want to renegotiate the First Amendment while ensuring that pesky citizens are kept at a fairly lengthy arm's distance from the heady but public business of the council. After all, as one councilor noted, the open meeting law is "confusing and presents challenges."

The basis for going secret is an 80-page report, generated by Council President **Maureen Feeney**, that seeks an exemption from the open meeting law that in the future could mean little or no citizen input. It also could prevent, as a vested right, attendance at council meetings, or even the ability to know what's in council meeting minutes. It all sounds like something out of a Kim Jong-Il fantasy flick.

Truth be told, most municipal officials,

selectmen, councilors, et al, would love to operate without putting up with a messy and inquisitive citizenry asking nagging questions and forgetting that elected officials know what they're doing and we don't. Democracy is sloppy and time consuming and the lesson here for the well-paid city fathers and mothers in the Hall is: Remember whom you work for.

Maynooth, Home Of The Clergy And The McMansions -- Maynooth in Co. Kildare has long been identified as the place where young Catholic men go to become priests at the national seminary. It's a sleepy town where students from St Patrick's and the nearby National University blend comfortably into the countryside. This year there will be eleven new priests graduating and hundreds more students attending the university. Not the halcyon days of yore for St. Patrick's, but it has been worse.

These early fall days, even as the housing markets in urban Ireland and elsewhere have taken a hit, there is a bustling development in Kildare, Temple Wood, on the grounds of the Earl of Kildare's Carton House, an elegant manse with a storied history. The architects of the new homes going up on the Carton estate are tres pricey (and inspired, the builders swear, by **Frank Lloyd Wright**) but they include a **Mark O'Meara**-designed golf course and lush homes that begin (yes, start) at \$4.2 million. But keep in mind that the price includes membership in the golf course, and the houses are heated with pumped under-floor systems. And not a sub prime crisis in sight!

Did You Know... that during last year 23.2 million people used the Dublin Airport, and that in 1997 airport traffic at Dublin was less than half that, at 10 million? Predictions are that by 2020, 30 million passengers a year could be using the airport. Large scale renovations and new terminals are currently under construction at the Dublin facility with completion "scheduled" for April 2010.

Tales From The Boorish -- Let me confess upfront that two of my least favorite people are **Donald Trump** and **Fox's Bill O'Reilly**. They share several blackboard chalk-grating personality traits: insufferable egos and an elemental insecurity that each tries to mask by his need to be alternately loved and to be on stage in a star role. I once thought it might be envy that had hardened my distaste for the duo but I have long ago come to a standoff with middle class anonymity.

Anyway, **Bobby Kennedy's** seventh child, daughter **Kerry**, 49, has written a thoughtful and sometimes painful-to-read book on what it means today to be a Catholic. In it she interviewed well-known people, including cable television's O'Reilly. He tells Kennedy in her book, "**Cardinal Law** is a villain. I got him removed from office in Boston." That's a quote.

Now there were many who grew disenchanted or worse with the cardinal and hastened his departure to a plush Vatican refuge. They range from the Pulitzer Prize-winning **Boston Globe** to litigious lawyers and victims of clerical abuse to organizations devoted to church reform or jailing offending priests, but the absurd claim from the sad, attention-seeking O'Reilly that he got Cardinal Law "removed from office" is so risible and absurd that it almost defies a reply. What an out-of-control ego!

And just for the record, Billy Boo Boo, the king of faux facts despite a gaggle of researchers at his network's beck and call, said recently that he would like a "younger Clint Eastwood" to play him on screen. As my late uncle Timmy, would say, "God Love Ya, Billy."

Donald Trump, who makes **John Kerry**, with his longstanding romance with the camera, seem like an agoraphobe, was on CNN's **Larry King Live** in mid-September. He told King, "I've known **John McCain** for a long time and I'm with him. And I'm with him based on the fact that I have great knowledge of John McCain. It looks to me as if McCain is probably winning...you have to understand I've known him. ..." Did you get that? Mr. Trump knows McCain! You got that? Say it again, Donald.

What Do You Get if All Goes Well -- Galway is a favorite sight for sore eyes. It's a great town from the Druid Theatre Company to the Promenade, you can't beat it, but they have had a couple of rugged years back to back that have not been exactly municipally rewarding. Worst of all was the water crisis that left Galwegians for six months with no tap water. None! Before that it was the costly and much delayed Eire Square reconstruction, and then there was the city's South Park, which was closed to the public because of soil contamination. Not a stellar litany of success stories from City Hall, by any measure.

However, that was then and this is now. Six city council officials have received over \$100,000 in bonuses, or roughly \$16,000 in "performance awards" each, for meritorious service to the city. A peeved mayor **Patrick Conneely** has called for a review. And the mayor is likely to be asking what size awards to pass out when the good times roll?

Derry Tour Buses Under Assault -- Dublin-based Liberty Tours, which regularly brings tourists in coaches from the south into Derry to see the town and likely spend a few bob there, is seriously considering discontinuing bringing visitors to the walled town on the Foyle. While similar assaults in Belfast have occurred, they have been sectarian in nature and less frequent; the Derry incidents, involving smashed windows and attempts to set coaches on fire, are attributed to mindless vandalism. No way for Derry to treat paying customers, it says here.

Did You Know ... that the tallest building in Ireland is not in Dublin but rather in Cork City? The recently completed \$215 million Elysian tower-block complex next to Cork city hall is 17 stories high (280 feet) and offers luxury apartments ranging in price from \$500,000 to \$3 million. The tallest buildings before the Elysian were Dublin's Liberty Hall and Cork's County Hall. The tallest proposed building is a 35-story mixed use upscale development on the site of the old Jury's Hotel in Ballsbridge, Dublin, which has failed thus far to receive planning permission.

John Carroll A WBUR Addition -- Dan Kennedy's Media Nation blog informs us that **John Carroll**, a veteran commentator on WGBH TV's Greater Boston, has moved to WBUR radio (90.9 FM) as a senior media analyst. He will comment on electoral media during the presidential race and after November will dissect issues relating to advertising, politics, and culture. Carroll is an award-winning analyst and served as a columnist for the *Globe* and *Adweek* magazine. He is currently an assistant professor of Mass Communication at Boston University, a consummate pro who is arguably the most knowledgeable guy in Boston when it comes to reporting on the inner workings of the media. No schedule as yet for John at 'BUR but it should be up soon. Good move, **Paul LaCamera**.

Mormons Baptizing Dead Catholics -- I couldn't make this up and neither could the Kerryman newspaper, which carried the story early last month, but friends tell me it's true and happening. The Bishop of Kerry, **Bill Murphy**, is battling to protect parish records and keep them out of the hands of Mormons who are baptizing departed Catholics. Murphy and other bishops have contacted Ireland's National Library about handing over church records to "all comers." The bishops' concern is that church records are being used by members of the Church of Jesus Christ and Latter Day Saints to posthumously baptize dead Catholics in the Mormon faith as part of a so-called "proxy baptism service." A senior Catholic Church source said that there is now a fear among senior Irish churchmen that having the records freely available will "encourage Mormons to baptize dead Irish Catholics en masse." The Vatican earlier had warned bishops' conferences about Mormons accessing diocesan and parish registers.

A spokesperson for the Mormon Church said that posthumous baptisms by proxy have been common practice for the Mormons for more than a century, so that they may be baptized "into the faith" and they may then be united in the after life. Does anybody understand that?

Lt. Governor Tim Murray Leads Irish Trade Mission -- You will read about the Oct. 5-11 trade mission out of Boston to major Irish cities in the Republic and the North in greater detail in the news pages of this newspaper. (See Page 3). The focus of the trade mission will be on life sciences, information technology, and travel and tourism. Working together to organize the mission to Derry, Belfast, Dublin, and Galway are Lieutenant Governor **Tim Murray**, ICCUSA, Senate President **Therese Murray**, and leaders from the related business sectors in Massachusetts.

These are important efforts by the Bay State's business and political leaders and they take on a distinctly crucial meaning now when we see the chaos in the financial markets and the impact those upheavals can have on American businesses in Ireland and Irish firms located in Massachusetts. A stark reminder of that is the grim news that two American firms with strong manufacturing roots in Ireland are downsizing plants and staff.

Computer maker **Dell** has operations employing 3,000 in Limerick and, as I write this, the plant there is threatened with closure and massive loss of jobs in a city that can ill afford any loss of employment. In a related story, **Hewlett Packard**, a major manufacturer that employs 4,000 in Ireland, has announced a 24,000 job slash worldwide. Some 3,000 jobs are at stake in HP facilities in Leixlip, Co. Kildare. These are perilous times in the Irish-US business nexus.

Heart On Sleeve For All To See -- As you read this, there is roughly a month remaining before we go to the polls to elect a president to succeed **George W. Bush**. I have made it abundantly clear that Senator **Barack Obama** of Illinois is my choice for president. His judgment, patience, civility, mind, and strength will help restore America's vision and send a clear signal to our friends (and enemies) across the world that the shameful, incompetent, dishonest Bush era is over and world leaders can look anew toward America with hope, inspiration, and a fresh beginning.

What follows is a brief and admittedly biased view of recent weeks in this increasingly brutal and uncivil war called the 2008 election: **John McCain**, in my opinion, is singularly unqualified by mind, disposition and temperament to sit in the Oval Office. His errors on the platform (Iraq and Iran sharing a border!!!) expose a man who is easily confused and misspeaks and is prone to anger tantrums and edgy frustration played out in public. His forays with the disgraced Keating Five taught him nothing; up until very recently his campaign command staff (those closest to him) comprised career lobbyists. **Charles Black**, his lead campaign strategist and a former lobbyist for Russia, continues to have a major ongoing interest in a prominent lobbying firm as he serves on McCain's inner brain trust. Shameful!

McCain strongly supported President Bush in his call to put a large part of Social Security funds into the stock market. One wonders if McCain (or Georgie) has had any second thoughts as we watch 400-point dagger drops in the Dow Jones? McCain's 20 years in the U.S. Senate have been characterized by a McCain mantra that found all regulations of financial markets unacceptable. His sad, out-of-touch reiteration that the "fundamentals of [America's] economy are strong" is pathetic, and patently untrue as the words left his mouth. His reliance on former Senator **Phil Gramm** (likely earmarked as a McCain Secretary of the Treasury) would be a total disaster. See Enron and UBS. This is a bad man who tells the financially-challenged McCain what end is up. Gramm's "whiners" remark has hopefully removed the ethically-challenged, money-grubbing multi-millionaire Gramm from consideration for a seat at the national table. Thank goodness.

McCain has lied repeatedly about Sen. Obama and despite Fact Check criticisms and McClatchey Newspaper ad reviews flaying McCain-**Sarah Palin** for untruths that are never corrected, McCain tries to identify himself as an honorable man. Maybe, just maybe that was the case in 2000 when I might have voted for him, but surely not today. Not by a long shot.

NOTES FROM THE IRISH IMMIGRATION CENTER



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59 Temple Place, Suite 1010, Boston, MA 02111

Telephone (617) 542-7654 Fax (617) 542-7655

Website: iicenter.org Email: immigration@iicenter.org

Get Your Tickets – Solas 2008 on Nov. 10

Our highly anticipated social event, Solas 2008, is the must-go event of the season. See our article on Solas 2008 on Page 11 in this month's paper for details.

Blood pressure? Sore teeth? -- Who likes going to the doctor? No one! So we're offering an alternative – a free health screening on Oct. 21 from 10:30am to 12:30am! Come by our Downtown office (59 Temple Place, 10th floor) to check your blood sugar, dental hygiene, and blood pressure. There will be a health care representative on-site to answer health-related questions. We also offer free massage therapy sessions. Walk-ins are welcome, but time fills up fast! Make an appointment to secure a spot! Contact Alyssa at 617-542-7654, Ext. 10.

Redesigned USCIS Citizenship Test – Effective October 1, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will present a multi-year redesign of the naturalization test.

If you are applying, check the date of your application (N-400) and your initial exam date to verify which test you will be taking. Call John at 617-542-7524, Ext. 15, for help. See related Q&A in this section.

DV Lottery Program Starts Now! -- The stars might align for you, you never know unless you shoot for them! The dates for the DV-2010 Lottery have been announced – they run from noon on Oct. 2, until noon, on Dec. 1. We will soon be opening special appointment slots to help you apply. Call for more information.

Reception Well Received -- Last month we opened our doors to you, our donors and supporters, for a night of exploration and information; we have come a long way thanks to your kindness! Thanks to those who dropped by, and a welcome those who weren't able to attend to come by in the future and meet the faces of the IIC!

IIC at the Irish Cultural Festival -- We began the autumnal season with an Irish bang at the ICONS Irish festival in Canton. Thank you for meeting us, chatting with us, and taking the time to visit our tables. A special thank you to those who signed the Welcoming Massachusetts petition.

We continue, with your support, to uphold a fair, compassionate, and equal environment for immigrants and citizens alike. Your encouragement is a gift and a positive reminder to us to continue to champion for immigrant rights. If you missed us this year, call 617-542-7654 or visit iicenter.org to learn more.

And The Silver Key Goes To... Neil Hurley! -- On Oct. 30, one of our longest serving volunteers will be awarded the annual Silver Key Award by the Charitable Irish Society. A steadfast captain in the mission to help new immigrants become new citizens, Neil's relentless work, dedication, and easy-going nature have made him a well known and much liked figure in the Irish community. We applaud this

well-merited tribute. The Charitable Irish Society is the oldest Irish Society in the Americas and quietly supports many Irish families through financial hardship every year.

Bring Home the Prodigal in Dorchester -- Do you know someone who's stumbling down the road towards substance abuse? Do you want to help, but don't know how? Join our own Danielle Owen's Community Education and Support Group from Oct. 2 to Nov. 13. Meetings are held on Thursdays from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the Lower Mills Library (27 Richmond Street, Dorchester). Light meals and refreshments will be served! Contact Danielle at 617-542-7654, Ext. 14, for details.

Free Legal Clinics This Month

With the approaching winds of autumn come pumpkins, cinnamon, and our regular schedule of legal clinics. We are back to our usual times this month, holding clinics in Allston-Brighton on Tues., Oct. 14 at 6:30 p.m. (The Kells Bar and Restaurant, 161 Brighton Ave, Allston, 02143) and in South Boston on Tues., Oct. 28, at 6:30 p.m. (The Labourer Center, 247 West Broadway, South Boston, 02127) to address your employment-based immigration concerns. As per our regular schedule, we will also hold free legal clinics at our office in Downtown Boston every Thursday from 4 to 7 p.m. for assistance with family-based immigration, citizenship, or any other issue.

IMMIGRATION Q & A

Citizenship test has a new look

Q. I have heard that soon the government will be using a new test for citizenship applicants. When is this going to happen?

A. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will begin to use its redesigned citizenship test this month, on Oct. 1. Applicants who file for naturalization on or after that date will take the new test. Those who file their applications and are interviewed before that date will take the old test. And those who file before that date but are interviewed after it (but before Oct. 1, 2009) will have the option of taking either test. Anyone who fails the test on the first try will be retested using whichever version was used initially.

As before, there are 100 possible questions, of which the applicant will be asked ten. USCIS states that the new test "will help strengthen assimilation efforts by emphasizing fundamental concepts of American democracy, basic U.S. history, and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship." Some of the questions will allow for a broader range of possible correct answers than before. For example, if asked "What is one right or freedom under the First Amendment?" the answer could be speech, religion, assembly, press, or the right to petition the government.

In general, however, the new test is not really all that different from the old one. USCIS has posted both versions of the test plus much additional information about the naturalization process on its website at uscis.gov; follow the link headed "Learn about US Citizenship." IIC can help applicants in all phases of the naturalization process. For a confidential consultation about this or any other aspect of immigration law, visit one of our legal clinics.

Disclaimer: These articles are published to inform, not to advise. Areas of law are rapidly changing. US Citizenship and Immigration Services and US Department of State regularly amend regulations and alter processing and filing procedures. For legal advice seek the assistance of an IIC immigration specialist or an immigration attorney.



Irish Immigration Center
59 Temple Place, Room 1010, Boston MA 02111
(Downtown Crossing or Park St on the T)
617.542.7654 • www.iicenter.org

Downtown 'Drop-In' Center:
Tuesday & Thursday, 4 - 7 PM
at our downtown office, 59 Temple Place, Room 1010

Community Legal Clinics:
Brighton • Dorchester • South Boston
Check www.iicenter.org or call 617-542-7654 for dates, times, & details.

Attorneys will be present during drop-in hours and at all legal clinics. For appointments at other times, please call Caitlin on 617-542-7654 x12.

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Matters Of Substance

What's Affecting Your Sleep?

By DANIELLE OWEN
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

At our recent Health Screening in June (Next one is October 21st!), some there indicated that they were having sleeping problems. We thought it might be helpful this week to explore how caffeine, alcohol, anxieties, and smoking can affect our sleep, what you can do about it and how the IIC can help! According to the National Sleep Foundation, sleeping problems or "Insomnia... (can)... have far-reaching effects: a negative impact on concentration, productivity and mood". Fortunately, we can do something about it, and, as the NSF suggests, our "first step requires some detective work." It suggests that by examining your diet, exercise patterns, sleeping environment, personal habits, lifestyle and current concerns/anxieties, you could find out which one or ones is affecting your sleep.

• Coffee contains caffeine, as do many teas, chocolate and cola drinks. Caffeine, a stimulant, keeps us awake! For some, caffeine can impact us up to 10-12 hours after drinking it! How does it affect you? If you cut out caffeinated food and drink, after lunch say, for a couple of



Danielle Owen

weeks, see if you are sleeping better?

• For smokers, cigarettes also have a stimulant effect, like caffeine. When smokers go to sleep, they experience nicotine withdrawal. Research suggests that nicotine is linked to difficulty falling asleep and problems waking up. Smokers may also experience more nightmares. Of course, anyone who has given up smoking before will tell you, quitting may cause more sleep problems at first, but the long-term effect on sleep and health is much better. So do yourself a favor and get help to quit!

• Alcohol, as we have mentioned often in this column, is often thought of as relaxant. However,

while alcohol may let us fall asleep quickly, it actually increases the number of times you awaken in the later half of the night. If your sleep isn't restful, alcohol (beer, wine, hard liquor) may be the cause. Skip the nightcap or wine at dinner and see the results! If, however, this proves to be a harder challenge than you expected, give the IIC's Community Counseling Services a call.

So, to summarize, if you want a better night's sleep, try the following:

- Consume less or no caffeine
- Avoid nicotine.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Keep a sleep diary before and after you try these tips.

(See NSF Sleep Diary & other sleeping tips on sleepfoundation.org.)

If the quality of your sleep does not improve, share this diary with your doctor. There can be other physical causes of chronic insomnia. Change is always possible but we sometimes might need added support, especially if current worries, depression, or anxiety appear to be causing our sleeping problem.

The IIC can help with this too! If you would like to chat about any of your concerns, call Danielle, in confidence and without judgment, at the Irish Immigration Center. Phone: 617-542-7654, Ext. 14 or send an e-mail to dowen@iicenter.org.

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It's All Black And White -- And Green

BY THOMAS KEOWN
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

When Mark Twain described it as "a good walk spoiled," he could never have envisioned the enduring impact that a 1999 game of golf in Boston would have on the city, and on the lives of two ambitious business men with very different stories.

Tom Stemberg is the founder of office supplies giant Staples. If you work in a room with a water cooler, or have ever bought a post-it in an emergency downtown, then you'll know his red boxes with white writing. The company he gave birth to in 1986 became one of only seven in U.S. history to make sales of \$3 billion inside ten years.

Archie Williams was the African-American entrepreneur behind a small ink toner cartridge distributor in Roxbury.

By the 18th hole, both men had stopped scribbling scores and were buried in business speak. That day they struck up a partnership that saw Roxbury Technology Corporation's sales shoot up eightfold as it began to supply Staples, and which made the Stemberg-Williams relationship a tangible symbol of the powerful impact of "Black and White Boston" in a city then blighted by racial segregation in business. Under the leadership of the late Archie's daughter Beth, RTC revenues today exceed \$14 million annually and the company is a socially responsible economic gem in a neighborhood that needs it. Beth has brought to pass the vision of her father.

On Nov. 10, The Irish Immigration Center will present both Stemberg and Williams with its Solas Award as the manifesta-

Solas Awards to Honor Remarkable Relationship

tion of Diddy Cullinane's Black and White Boston. Established in 1989 - the same year as IIC -- Black and Boston aimed to do something that today seems strangely unnecessary; get black and white businesspeople talking in the same room.

"We didn't start out with any grand design," says the self-effacing Cullinane, who was busy at the time organizing a fundraiser for Catholic Charities headlined by Bill Cosby. "But it was a time of racial unrest and the fallout of busing and I decided to have as many black as white faces on the committee. In the end we had 44."

The first committee meeting was tense, with the black and white mem-

bers voluntarily sitting on different sides of the room. But, as time passed, a rapport developed to such a degree that Cullinane was afterwards asked to carry on this process of engagement. Black and White Boston was begat. Starting as a dinner, it evolved into a luncheon before becoming a recognized nonprofit raising funds for events and broader programming. Once such event was the "Black and White on Green" golf tournament that brought Archie Williams and Tom Stemberg together.

"The races just didn't get together socially before," recalls Cullinane. "But since then we have done breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The numbers grew

and we became well known and respected."

Archie died suddenly in 2002 but the relationship with Tom Stemberg was sustained by his daughter. Stemberg's commitment included sending Ms. Williams, a graduate of Brown University, to the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth. She still meets regularly with Staples executives and has made RTC the second-fastest growing inner city company in America.

"The IIC does exactly what we did," summarized Cullinane. "They bring people together. We were in the city but they are global. Sister Deevy is remarkable in the true sense of the word. The work she does at IIC blows me away and it is so timely with immigrants having to tread difficult waters today."

Black and White wound down its operations in 2005

with race relations in he city, although still with work to do, in a much better place than when Bill Cosby showed up. The 2009 Solas Awards will bring down the curtain on an organization that played a part in Boston becoming ready for adult black-and white relationships. "The city has matured," said Cullinane. "It's much more natural now. We didn't change race in Boston, but we made a chink in the armor."

N.B. - Cathal Stephens of Einhorn Yaffee Prescott will receive an appreciation award at Solas 2009. Look for full profiles of Cahill, Tom Stemberg, and Beth Williams in the November BIR.

Solas tickets are available now from IIC (617-542-7654 or iicenter.org for \$250. The gala is Nov. 10 at the Fairmont Copley Plaza in Boston.

IRISH PASTORAL CENTRE NOTEBOOK

Alzheimer's: All Looking for Answers

BY CORA FLOOD
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

In the course of my work over the last few years running the Senior Program at the Irish Pastoral Centre and in my part time work in home health care, I have had the privilege to meet and spend significant time with many Irish families caring for and learning to live with loved ones who have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease. Not an easy realization to have to come to terms with, the sadness of knowing that a honey, a sister, your dad, or a partner, won't be the same again. The associated stages of grief and coming to terms with all the changes in lifestyle, perhaps in dreams of how retirement was going to be, can take a toll on even the most organized, patient, caring person around. One can get tired trying to keep it all together.

I learned that there are more than 140,000

people in Massachusetts with Alzheimer's disease and related disorders, so I set about trying to see what kind of practical help there is for people who are just new to the situation or perhaps "suspect" something is going on with a loved one as was the case with two callers to the IPC this past month.

I unearthed a wealth of information by calling the Alzheimer's Association. Their staff was very informative, pleasant, and prompt to call me back when I needed further information. We are in the process of arranging two educational sessions for our Irish community members who have an interest in learning more about the disease and about the help that is available to people living in the Greater Boston Area.

In the meantime I suggest that anyone with a question or a concern call the Alzheimer's As-

sociation at 1-800-272-3900 and ask for a "care consultation," which is a confidential individualized service. It is for individuals and families who are facing many decisions and challenges associated with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. Each care consultant has expertise in the field of dementia and is available to provide in depth, person-to-person assessment, education and support.

The goal is for each family to develop a better understanding of the disease, make a plan to secure needed care and develop strategies for the best possible symptom management and communication. The Care Consultation program also assists with issues

related to long distance care giving and other complicated situations.

Feel free to be in touch with us at the Irish Pastoral Centre if you have more questions or are nervous calling a helpline. We can take it step by step.

Cara Club -- Afternoon Teatime weekly at the Veronica Smith Center, 20 Chestnut Hill Ave, Brighton. Mondays from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.; **Quincy Coffee Mornings** at Irish Pastoral Centre, 953 Hancock Street, Quincy. Wednesdays from 9:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m.; **Mass and Social outing** to Irish Cultural Centre, Canton, Thurs., Oct. 23. All are welcome to attend. Call Cora at 617-479-7404, Ext. 13, for more details.

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Reflections

About God's Silent But Continuing Answer

By Msgr. Thomas J. McDonnell

Sometimes it seems that heaven has soundproof walls. For example, pain on any level – physical, psychic, or spiritual – hurts. When one feels battered about, it is almost instinctive that we shout to God for help. But so often the answer we receive is silence.



Msgr. Thomas J. McDonnell

Modern atheists have looked at suffering in our world and have constructed their "proofs" that there is no God. And although we may not come to such a radical conclusion, the problem of pain and suffering can affect our spiritual strivings.

Unfortunately for some, it can lead to bitterness and alienation from the

faith.

Despite the fact that the finest minds throughout the centuries have turned their attention to this problem, there is not a definitive explanation. What follows, then, may be seen as the thoughts of a fellow struggler which I hope may be helpful to others.

The problem of God's goodness and human suffering is not new. Its roots can be traced to the Book of Job in the Old Testament. And in that work we can find Job – an innocent sufferer – expressing many of our own feelings.

He believed that God in His heaven is too far removed from human pain and suffering. He thus cannot relate to our experience:

I will speak for the bitterness of my soul ...

I will say to God ...
Have you eyes of flesh?
Do you see as man sees?

Are your days as the days of mortals? (10, 2-5)

Again and again, he expresses his pain vis-à-vis God's dealing with man. He speaks of Him as the Almighty "who has made bitter my soul" (27, 3). And he strongly proclaims his innocence.

It is only toward the end of the Book when God speaks but never seems to address Job's complaints. He reveals His Personhood or Being but does not seem (and I emphasize seem) to zero in on Job's objections.

Such is puzzling. Moreover, it contradicts the idea that God, as Isaiah notes, holds each one of us in His hand. Thus God's "response" demands further reflection.

I would begin by noting that God's speech reveals Himself as a Person. This needs to be emphasized. Somehow, albeit mysteriously, God's response – His apology, as it were – somehow revolves around His Personhood. And I will go further. It is in His Person-made-flesh that we begin to find strength, support and, under grace, acceptance of the problem of innocent suffering.

As our faith teaches, Jesus was and is the Innocent One. In His flesh, moreover, He experienced pain and weakness. As we concentrate on the figure of Christ on the Cross, we realize that on one level Job's complaint has been answered. Our God is not divorced or separated from our suffering and pain. Indeed, He sees with human eyes and mysteriously absorbs

this pain into His being: "as long as you did it to these the least of mine, you did it to me ..." (Mt. 25)

St. Augustine advises us to hear the voice of Christ when praying the Psalms. And there are some lines and verses which I have found helpful. In Psalm 88, we read:

As for me, Lord, I call to you for help;
in the morning my prayer comes before you.

Lord why do you reject me?
Why do you hide your face?

In these lines, we see that Christ can identify with our hurt and confusion. And as we reflect upon these verses, we realize that it is all right to be hurt and to complain to God. While maybe not answering my questions, this truth somehow makes it easier to bear.

If Augustine is correct, there are other feelings with which we can identify:

I conclude, my sorrow is this,
The right hand of the Most High has left us (Ps. 77, 4)

But there are also Psalms of trust and confidence. And sadness and sorrow must never have the last word. God's love toward us is faithful and everlasting. We can, even in our confusion, place our trust in Him.

The Lord is my light and salvation
Whom do I fear?

Basically, God responded in a mysterious way to Job, a response found in the mystery of the Cross.



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Reflections: When Cancer is a Constant Companion

By Rev. Msgr. Thomas J. McDonnell

I: The Genesis of These Reflections

First in a series

There are four reasons that have led me to write these reflections. On August 15, 2007, a CAT scan revealed a "small" spot on my good lung. (I had a lobe removed on my right lung eleven years earlier.) Eventually, this tumor proved to be inoperable.

In the course of my treatments (radiation and chemo), a priest classmate visited me a number of times. On one occasion he remarked how "well" I was handling the reality of having a stage IV inoperable tumor. He suggested that I might be able to share the insights I have gained (along with the insights of others), with the idea of offering some support to others who are struggling with the same disease.

Later, while watching TV, I saw a news clip reporting on what was called the "unfinished" area of cancer treatment – anxiety, fear, and the like. Theirs was a highly psychological approach. On the other hand, I feel that many of these concerns spill over into our spiritual strivings, and these should be addressed in this context.

That most gentle of spiritual writers, St. Francis de Sales, notes in one of his works that perfection is never finished. While we are alive, each moment is an invitation to grow into intimacy with the Lord. In this wider context, I believe that illness is a grace from God – a grace whose meaning we must personally decode for ourselves. On a purely natural level, the psychologist Viktor Frankl ("The Doctor of the Soul") has some words that are germane to our reflection, and which we should baptize.

But even a man who feels himself in the greatest distress, in which neither activity nor creativity can bring values to life, nor experience give meaning to it – even such a man can still give his life a meaning by the way he faces his fate, his distress.

By taking his unavoidable suffering upon himself, he may yet realize values.

Thus life as a meaning to the last breath. For the possibility of realizing values by the very attitude with which we face our unchangeable suffering – the possibility exists to the very last moment ... The right kind of suffering – facing your fate without flinching ... is the highest achievement that has been granted human beings.

Such remarkable words were written by a man who was intimately acquainted with suffering – a Holocaust survivor.

I would add that it might help if we make our search a prayer. Again, in this we are following St. Francis de Sales, who encourages us to make "illness a prayer."

Two diverse pieces of literature led me to a further reflection. The first was a short story by Tolstoy, "The Death of Ivan Illych." It is an attempt to show us how dealing with death in the abstract radically differs from actually experiencing it – its inevitability and closeness. Its proximity unleashes many feelings and emotions.

In a similar way, when we are faced with cancer, it is no longer an abstraction that we calmly discuss. It is a visceral reality that must be addressed. On the road to Emmaus, Jesus asks His disciples what is on their minds – in a way, trying to have them disclose their deepest feelings. In one sense, cancer is the Lord's way of asking us to dialogue with Him about our hurts and frustrations. We move beyond formality, opening ourselves to share our puzzling disappointments with him. (Only as we place before Him the areas of our psychic pain do we have the opportunity to be healed.)

On another level, I believe that our illness is an invitation to embrace the Cross – to, as St. Paul writes, make up in our own bodies the sufferings lacking in the sufferings of Christ, for the sake of His Body, the Church (Col 1:24).

Finally, in *Paradise Lost*, Milton writes: "Evil be thou my good." With due adaptation, I pray that for myself and others, cancer (as well as other illnesses) may "be thou my good."

Hidden in Sacred Scripture is another interpretation of the meaning of God's greatness. Through a complex linguistic development the word "glory" came to mean divinity itself – with all that concept entails. Ezekiel saw God's glory removed from the Temple. But he prophesied its return. The Gospel of John notes that, at the miracle of Cana, when Jesus changed water into wine, His disciples first glimpsed His "glory."

In a beautiful way, John is telling us about the greatness of our God. He is seized by our concerns, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant compared to the rest of the miracles in the New Testament, the fact that the family ran out of wine pales into insignificance. Yet this is the precise point: our God is One who cares about every aspect of our lives. Because God is attentive to our needs, we must be attentive to the needs of others, especially the poor. Such is an essential characteristic of bringing Christ (who remains with us) to birth in our world.

II: Why Me

Images have an explosive force. And oftentimes they are buried in our unconscious. Some of the images in my mind would remind one of Dante's images of the Inferno: for example, the scenes of starvation, from



By Rev. Msgr. Thomas J. McDonnell

Biafra to Darfur. In a true paradox, if one lingers long enough over them, one can almost smell the stench of dying flesh.

On the other hand, one of the images that is impressed upon us, consciously or unconsciously, because of its ubiquitous presence, is of the statue of Justice outside the Supreme Court (which is often reproduced elsewhere). Lady Justice stands blindfolded, balancing the scales. In this context, we are led to view justice on a horizontal level: I have been good. I have lived as a true Christian. How can this cancer happen to me? Thus, when it is revealed that we have this disease, and we realize how it may affect our lives, we ask ourselves: "Why me? How can a just God do this to me?" It is an age-old question – think of Job, for example – and one to which we can offer no definitive answer.

But perhaps we should not always be seeking answers. At any rate, I believe that there are times when one should follow the advice of St. Bonaventure. In his *Journey of the Soul of God*, he notes that one should not always be seeking Christ the Teacher, looking for answer. Rather, there are times when one should turn one's attention, in love, to Christ the Bridegroom of the soul, knowing and uniting oneself to Him who has gone in such dark places before us. This may prove difficult – yet rewarding.

On the other hand, we are a questioning people. We have been conditioned by our technological society to seek answers. And from the questioning Job, we glance at the directions our "answers" may take.

The confused and suffering Job questions God: "Do you see as men see?" To his mind, God seems far removed from his suffering. And he must wonder whether God truly cares for the struggles of one individual.

No matter how far advanced we may seem to be in the spiritual life, similar questions spontaneously arise in our own "earthly" life. We wonder whether God really understands what our illness might mean to us and our family. At the very least, our dreams of the future are put on hold. But there is more: "How will my wife [husband] cope with my loss? What financial burdens will my sickness bring? What will it mean for my children?" In other vocations, analogous questions arise. Because we have time, and because our sickness often leads to a self-absorption, these questions seem to be inevitable. As his sufferings continue, Job becomes angry at God. Toward the end of his speeches, he cries out: As his sufferings continue, Job becomes angry at God. Toward the end of his speeches, he cries out:

"Oh, that I had one to hear me!

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(Here is my signature! Let the Almighty answer me!)

Oh, that I had the indictment written by my adversary!

Surely I would carry it on my shoulder;

I would bind it on me as a crown;

I would give him an account of all my steps; like a prince I would approach him."

(Job 31:35-37)

As one reads the Book of Job and its conclusions, one is surprised that God never directly answers Job. Rather He reveals His Person. And by concentrating upon the Person of God made Incarnate in Jesus Christ, I believe that we can gain insight into our own questions.

First of all, since the coming of Christ, we can never accuse God of not seeing and feeling as we do. One of the great insights of the Letter to the Hebrews is that "we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses" (Heb 4:15). Quite simply, He understands our hurt and feelings. And we should be willing to talk about our questions and confusions – indeed, everything – with Him in prayer. And all this would include even addressing our feelings of anger to Him.

Initially, because of our training, we may hesitate to bring such feelings to the Lord. But the people of the Old Testament never hesitated to express their raw feelings to God. Because of the Covenant, they believed that He was compelled to listen to them. And Psalm 137 is an example of what we might call a prayer of anger. The people are in exile in Babylon. They are taunted by their captors to sing joyful songs about Jerusalem. Such sarcasm stirred up deep feelings within them – so much so that the psalm (a prayer) ends with these words:

O daughter of Babylon, you devastator!

Happy shall he be who repays you

with what you have done to us!

Happy shall he be who takes your little ones and dashes them against the rock! (Ps 137:8-9)

Such words are a reminder, once again, that unless we open even the most shadowy part of our being to God, we shall never be healed.

Note how Christ as the Servant identified Himself with us: "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows" (Is 53:4). This is mysteriously but mystically true. Thus, the Lord has felt what we are going through. Again, He invites us to share our feelings with Him. He will not turn away.

It is sometimes forgotten that prayer is a dialogue. Sometimes, in our need, we almost seem to be addressing God with such urgency that we do not make room for Him to respond. Moreover, as Pope Paul VI reminded us at International Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia, in 1976, ours is a personal religion in which Christ speaks on a personal level to us in the deepest part of our deepest selves. For this, an inner stillness or peace is needed. And as always, we should pray for this grace.

While there may be variations in Christ's whispers of support, care, and concern, I believe that His words will reflect His thoughts uttered long ago:

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Mt 11:28-30)

In our urbanized world, so far removed from the scenes of the Holy Land two thousand years ago, we must reflect upon the simple meaning of the phrase "my yoke." It is best understood in terms of how two oxen are "yoked" together, as they carry their burdens or weights. The sharing, although difficult, makes it easier to bear. In the same way, Christ has attached Himself to us at Baptism ("I will be with you all days") – and by our turning to Him, He will give us the strength to carry the burden of cancer, a burden which He shares with us.

I have found in the words of St. Thérèse of Lisieux some consoling thoughts on this point:

"Jesus gives me at every moment what I am able to bear and nothing more. If in the next moments, he increases my suffering, he also increases my strength."

While we will never definitively answer the question "Why me?" in this life, I would add two further thoughts that may help us live with the question. The first is from the same Thérèse, the Little Flower. She was no stranger to suffering. And from her own suffering, she gained this insight:

It is suffering which makes us resemble Jesus. He wants to give us such a beautiful recompense, and his ambitions for us are very great. This is the only means of preparing us to know him as he knows himself and to become Gods ourselves. What a destiny!

The poet T.S. Eliot once asked this question:

"Has the Church failed us, or have we failed the Church?"

I mention this because in our busy lives, we often fail to appreciate our vocation to the Church. Moreover, we might wonder what we can do when our strength is sapped, our energy level is low, and we feel hemmed in by four walls. Yet God has given us a gift – time. And we can use this time in an ecclesial manner. When Pope Paul VI introduced the renewed Rite of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, he observed that we are, through Baptism, involved in a bond of "supernatural solidarity." Concretely, this means, as he pointed out, that our growth in holiness or intimacy with Christ can strengthen the weaker members of the Body of Christ. In this way, our pains, prayers, and frustrations are not useless. They can be placed in the context of the salvation of others.

BOSTON IRISH REPORTER

BOSTON IRISH ARTS,
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Chatting Up Sean Keane and Cara Dillon A Fetching Blend of Contrasts, Similarities

Last month's ICONS Festival at the Irish Cultural Centre of New England in Canton included two of Ireland's leading singers, Sean Keane and Cara Dillon, who together represent a beguiling blend of contrasts and similarities. Galway native Keane scarcely needs an introduction to American audiences.

Born in 1961 to a family with solid roots in the Irish music tradition, Keane had won an impressive 13 All-Ireland medals in Fleadh Ceoil singing competitions by the time he was in teens. A founding member of Arcady, whose

ranks also included Sharon Shannon and Frances Black, Keane in 1993 began a hugely successful solo career that saw him branch out into other kinds of music, including country, blues and pop.

Dillon, born in 1975 in County Derry, is a more recent phenomenon in Irish music circles. Like Keane, she grew up steeped in traditional music and was an All-Ireland winner herself, at age 14. And like Keane, she went on to explore other, more contemporary musical genres

— such as the intelligent folk-rock stylings of the band Equation, where she met her husband-to-be Sam Lakeman. Since then, she has released three well-received solo albums, which have included original songs by her and Lakeman, and earlier this year, her first DVD, "The Redcastle Sessions."

While their paths have occasionally crossed on the concert and festival trail, Keane and Dillon have never worked together. But come December that will change, as both will be heading to Boston to take

part in the annual "Christmas Celtic Sojourn" show produced by WGBH radio host Brian O'Donovan.

The Boston Irish Reporter's Sean Smith caught up with Keane and Dillon during the ICONS Festival: Keane as he relaxed in the Compass Stage "green room," greeting members of Lunasa arriving for their set; Dillon as she checked on her 20-month-old twin sons Colm and Noah — both wearing identical red T-shirts, one emblazoned with "Thing 1," the other with "Thing 2."

SEAN KEANE

Q. Sean, the other night before you sang "There Were Roses," you described it as a song about "a different Ireland," one that is gradually receding into history. It just struck me as interesting because, at a certain point during The Troubles, you had people who felt the "rebel" songs that glorified fighting weren't what they wanted to express about Ireland — and so "There Were Roses" offered this new paradigm. How do you deal with a song whose meaning and context has changed, and in such a relatively short period of time?

Keane: It's something I've thought about very deeply. The first time I did "There Were Roses" was in South Armagh, and afterwards a lady comes up to me and says, "You're after singing about my nephew" — he was one of the lads in the song who was killed. She would write to me quite frequently, and I got to know more about them and the story behind the song. That experience really brought the whole situation to life for me, and what it must be like to rear a family in a setting like that. I think it's a comfort zone for people from my neck of the woods or further south to do the rebel songs and the like, because they didn't have to wake up each morning with an army outside their door, or have someone pulling them out of bed in the night. From that point of view, I always considered myself more of a humanitarian, although as a good Irishman, I suppose, I would like to see Ireland as Ireland. But nevertheless, when people see the things they see in a war — yeah, it's songs



Sean Keane: "I'm more of a humanitarian."

like "There Were Roses" I need to be singing, not the rebel songs. Certainly, I'm glad to see things are put right, and that things should be put right, although there are still those blooming ridiculous barriers between the various communities. Unfortunately, it's easier to put those barriers up than it is to take them down. So, to me, "Roses" definitely still has its relevance.

Q. Your repertoire covers such a wide territory, from traditional to contemporary. Do you have a particular philosophy in how you approach your singing, and your choice of songs?

(Continued on page 18)

CARA DILLON

Q. You know, the first question I was going to ask you was, "How are the twins doing?" I didn't actually expect you'd have them with you.

Dillon: This is the first time we've ever taken them on tour with us. It's pretty good for them — they're at an age where we thought we'd like to have them get a little taste for what we've experienced. And they love music: The other night we were having a sound check, and Colm went straight up to the mic and started singing "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star." I think he's going to be a rock star.

Q. In what ways do you find being a mother has influenced your career, whether it's the songs you sing or just how you approach the whole business of being a musician?

Dillon: Well, I think up until I had the boys I was kind of selfish, you know, going on tour for myself. And I think with the songs we wrote, we were influenced by being with a record company. But we have a new album coming out in January, and the process of putting it together has been very relaxed, very laid-back. The boys were really the cause of that — with them, you realize what's important in life, you put things in perspective, and you realize how much music is there to be enjoyed. We had an 18-month break after they were born, and so now working is all fresh and exciting to us again, and that's even extended to the kind of music we're doing. In fact, the new album is about 98 percent traditional.



Cara Dillon: "Back to my roots, big time."

Having the boys kind of made me go back to my roots, big time.

Q. Talk a little about your roots: You came from a musical family, and you participated in the singing competitions as a young girl, right?

Dillon: Well, my sister Mary — who's 10 years older than me — was in the group Deanta, and she was a big influence on me. She would be off doing gigs with the band and I was at an age when I was just taking that all in, and sometimes I'd sit and watch while they were having rehearsals. So I was absorbing everything that was

(Continued on page 18)

"According to Tip" is Back; Opens Oct. 9 at Stuart Street Playhouse

The critically acclaimed "According to Tip," written by Boston political commentator Dick Flavin, makes its return to the stage for a limited engagement at the Stuart Street Playhouse in Boston beginning Thurs., Oct. 9.

Starring Tony and Emmy Award

winning actor Ken Howard in the role of Tip, and directed by Rick Lombardo, "According to Tip" follows the historically unforgettable career of Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, who served as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives for seven of President Reagan's eight years in office. In this touching play

filled with humor, music, and beguiling Irish wit, audiences go back in time with Tip from his life growing up in Cambridge where he entered local politics, to the Massachusetts State House, and, eventually, to Washington.

Performances are Tuesday through Saturday evenings at 7:30 p.m., with

matinees on Saturdays at 2 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m.

Tickets, priced at \$49.50 for all performances, are available at the Stuart Street Playhouse Box Office, at telecharge.com, and by calling Telecharge.com at (800) 447-7400.

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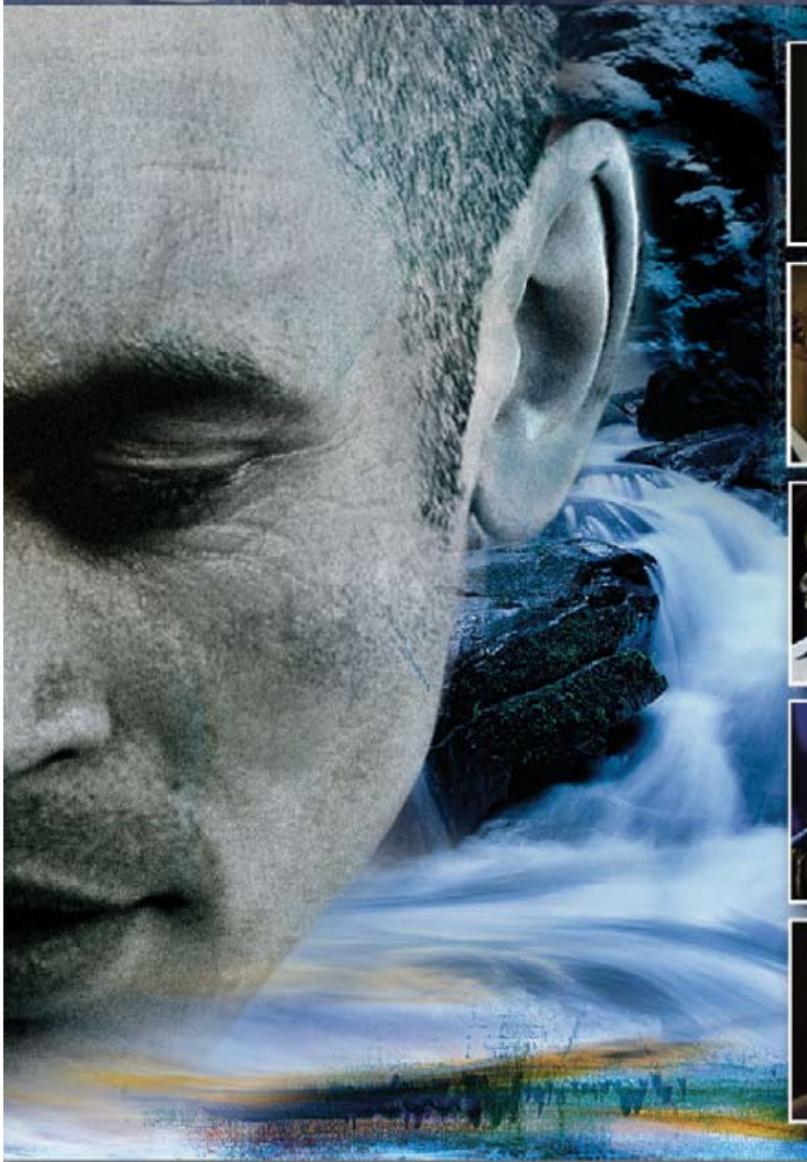
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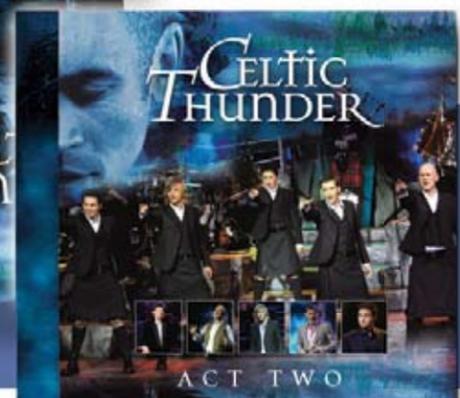
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GOINGS-ON IN BOSTON

From Bill Brett's "Boston: A Year in the Life"

May 5, 2008: Glass might have separated Morgan Hurley, top left, from Kimani, one of the lowland gorillas at the Franklin Park Zoo, but these two didn't seem to have any trouble sizing one another up. When Kimani wandered off to check out some other visitor, Morgan did her best to get the young gorilla's attention.

Feb. 4, 2008: Supporters thronged the Seaport World Trade Center, top right, as some of the biggest names in the Bay State's Democratic Party delegation turned out to support presidential hopeful Barack Obama. Among those giving the Illinois senator their backing were senator Edward M. Kennedy and his wife Victoria; Caroline Kennedy; governor Deval Patrick and his wife, Diane; senator John Kerry and his wife, Teresa Heinz Kerry; and Lisa Wong, mayor of Fitchburg.

Feb 15, 2008: Skifter Kellici, middle right, peered out from the Jos. A. Banks Clothiers on State Street in the heart of Boston's financial district.

April 18, 2008: Bottom right, for more than fifty years Sullivan's restaurant and hot dog stand at the end of Day Boulevard at Castle Island in South Boston has opened each March through November. But you know the weather has finally warmed when the lines start to stretch out to the parking lot.



The photographs and captions on these pages and on Page One are taken from "Boston: A Year in the Life," copyright 2008 by Bill Brett.



May 24, 2007: Eighty-two men and women were welcomed into the ranks of the Boston Police Department, above, at a midday ceremony held at the Jubilee Christian Church on Blue Hill Avenue in Mattapan. The graduation, presided over by superintendent Robert Harrington, was Boston police commissioner Edward F. Davis's first swearing-in ceremony and the last official ceremony for superintendent-in-chief Al Goslin, who retired after forty years of service.

July 11, 2007: They are the self-proclaimed Liars Club and they meet on Wednesdays at the Long Island Firehouse, middle left. There's only one thing needed for admission to the club: you must be retired from the Boston Fire Department. It was estimated that the former jakes gathered on this day represented more than five hundred combined years of service to the department. On that point, they swore they weren't lying.



August 17, 2007: Eight of the famed O'Neil sisters, ten young women from Jamaica Plain, who graced the covers of magazines around the world in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and who marched in the New York's Easter Parade and appeared on the "Ed Sullivan Show," gathered once again. The siblings returned to their old neighborhood for a birthday celebration at Doyle's Café to mark sister Jane Deery's seventy-fifth birthday. Pictured clockwise from left are Maureen Cloonan, Julie O'Neil, Diane Nesar, Danielle McGreal, Evelyn Kiley, Fran Cummings, Ginny O'Neil, and Deery. Behind them is a watercolor of the sisters as young girls with their two brothers Lawrence, the oldest, and Danny, the baby of the family.

Chatting Up Sean Keane and Cara Dillon

Continued from page 14)

Keane: If I'm doing a traditional song or a sean-nos song, that's the way I do it. I don't want to ham it up or change the melody or try to make it hip or new – I don't like to do that, because I think the song was the song as it was originally sung, and it has a certain essence about it, a soul that needs to be cherished, and needs to be delivered that way. You have to get into the spirit, and tell the story, because that's the most important thing about the traditional song. But if I'm doing a song by Guy Clark or John Prine, or "Blackbird" by The Beatles, then I'll get into what those songs are about, even if they're not traditional, and why not? I feel if God gave me a voice, who am I to say I should only sing this or that kind of song, when I love all kinds of music?

Q. Do you see yourself as perhaps giving a "traditional voice" to non-traditional songs? **Keane:** No, I don't really do it that way at all. What I do is, I take in the song – it has to hit me, I have to really want to sing it. And then I'll do what I can to make it work, like with a Johnny Clegg song I sing ["The Crossing"]; he's from South Africa, you know, so I had to learn to sing in Zulu, but the words were so strong and I said, "I have to sing this." I like to take on challenges, keep it interesting and fresh for myself.

Q. As you got into singing, as you went from the traditional to the contemporary, were there any particular role models or sources of inspiration?

Keane: Well, first and foremost, my inspiration would be the traditional singers or the older people who'd take me to the singing sessions as a child, which would last four or five hours. But I was very attracted to country music, too. I think it's a subconscious thing, because it's the same music, it's my music as well. Hearing the likes of Dolly Parton sing a song, the ornamentation sounds similar to what I would use, and she has that soul about her singing – I'd stand in snow to hear her sing.

Q. Now, you're involved in a new musical production about the various travels of Irish people around the world that sounds very interesting, "The Scattering," which goes on tour next month, I believe. Can you tell us about it, where the idea came from?

Keane: It came about from songs I was singing from a very early age, like "Paddy's Green Shamrock Shore." The thing is, when I was growing up no one wanted to hear the traditional songs in the pubs, because it was just old hat. There were only a few pubs in Galway where you could go for a session; if you wanted that,

you'd go to someone's house. And I'm not an old man by any means – this was not all that long ago.

So now it's cool to do Irish music, and every child is playing an instrument or singing or is doing the dancing, and that's great that they have an appreciation. But these young kids, they can go at it from a technical point of view, and take the music to a whole new level, but as long as they have with them the spirit of the older people, the generations before them. You need to have an understanding of the heart and the soul of the music, not just know how to play it. That's the sort of the main idea of "The Scattering," and it's something that has been inspired by my travels and by coming to places like Boston, where of course the Irish have been such a big presence. I mean, everywhere I go, I can see I'm – like the cliché says – walking in another man's footsteps.

Q. And of course, those footsteps are found in lots of other places besides America.

Keane: Oh, yeah. You go up to Toronto, say, or to Mexico, or to Australia, and there's so many stories. I went to this town in western Australia, Kalgoorlie, a gold mining town, and the gold was originally found by a man from Clare named Paddy Hannan. You drive from Perth through the desert, and you can see a pipeline along the road that brought the water to the mining towns – the water inside was actually worth more than the gold – and it was another thing set up by an Irishman. Go further back in time, and think of the Irish monks from the 6th century, and all the scholarly work they produced, and what kind of effect they had on civilization. "The Scattering" doesn't really dwell on the bad times in Ireland, or why people left. It's more a celebration of what the Irish did and where they went. If Ireland didn't have its history, what would it be like? And what would the rest of the world be like? For a tiny little island out in the Atlantic, it's had such a big impact in so many places and on so many lives.



Continued from page 14)

going on in her life, and getting a sense of what it was like to play music full-time.

Also, in Dungiven, where I'm from, music is such a big part of life. Even my nieces and nephews, who are going through primary school now, they're playing the fiddle or whistle, or dancing and singing. The tradition is very strong there, and I'd say that where I'm from has been the biggest influence for me.

Q. So, at a certain point, you went from singing traditional material to exploring other kinds of songs. Who were some of the major influences for you? What singers or songwriters made an impression on you?

Dillon: When I was growing up, I listened to singers like Dolores Keane and Mary Black, and "A Woman's Heart" [an album which included singers like Keane, Black, Maura O'Connell and Eleanor McEvoy] had come out, which had a major impact on Irish music, and Irish females. But in my teenage years, I became fascinated by Paul Brady, and the stuff he did in the 1970s – his phrasing, his ability to tell a story has always just blown my mind. And him being from Strabane, just down the road from me, well, that made me really proud of where I came from, because the style, the ornamentation he used was very localized. I totally got it when I first heard him. Donal Lunny, too, was a big influence. I mean, anybody who was anybody played with Donal, or Donal discovered them.

Q. Now, how did you and Sam get together? It was in the context of performing with Equation, right?

Dillon: I was very aware of Sam and his brothers, because they were doing lots of festivals where I was performing, as a member of the group Oige. We were all teenagers then, so I didn't know them but I certainly knew who they were. And then they rang up and asked if I would be interested in joining this band they had – they were hoping to get a record deal but they needed a singer. So I flew over to England and met them, and recorded a demo with them and sent it off, and then almost immediately we had a label that wanted to sign us. It was very, very exciting – we were both about 19 then. It's been fantastic ever since for myself and Sam. You know, there were seven of us in Equation, and Sam and I were only in it for about a year before we left, but it wound up giving life to lots of different artists, really – like Kate Rusby, or Sam's brother Seth, who's had a very successful career himself. It was a good starting point for people to discover what they really wanted to do.

Q. Now, your most recent proj-



ect was the DVD "The Redcastle Sessions." How did that come about, and what kind of experience was it for you?

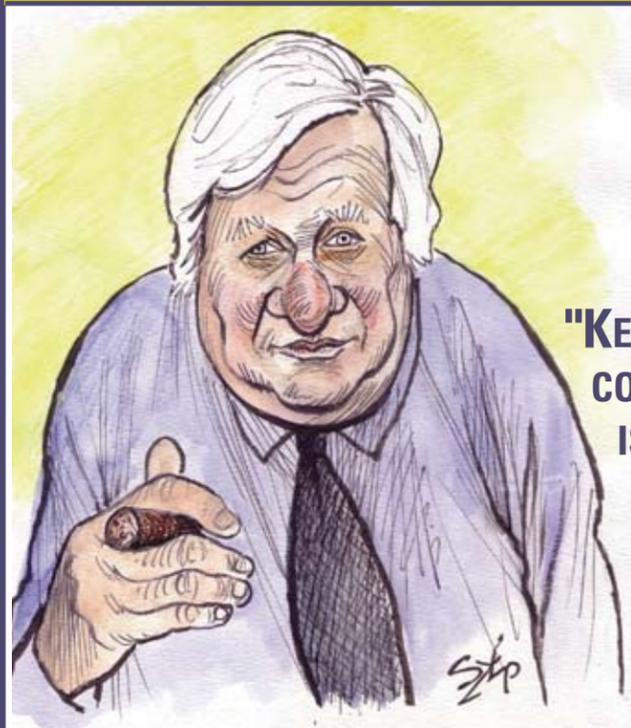
Dillon: Well, we'd been approached

before by different companies who said "We'd like to make a DVD of you," and I'd always think that it was a bit of a cop-out, really: They just come to your concert, they film it, and then they sell it. So, our feeling was, if we're going to do a DVD, it should be something where the audience gets something different. So we decided we would pick a location and bring lots of fantastic musicians there. We chose Donegal, which is a very important place for me, and a friend of ours had a house by Lough Boyle, right on the water. The location was just stunning. And our friend left his house for a week so we could use it. The experience was a lot of fun. It was really intimate. I never found the cameras intrusive. We would just have a laugh, and sing songs, and eat some delicious sea food, then go have a drink and come back to do some more tunes and songs. The whole thing was magical, and we just really loved the whole package. I've had people come up and ask things like, "What's it like where you're from? How are you inspired to sing the songs that you sing?" So with the DVD I'm able to show what my home territory is like, and the things that were, and are, important to me.

Q. You'll be back this way in a few months for "Christmas Celtic Sojourn." What got you interested in participating?

Dillon: It actually started when we played at ICONS last year. We were just so impressed with Brian and Lindsay [O'Donovan]; they're lovely, genuine, sincere people. So when they invited us to come do "Christmas Celtic Sojourn" for this year, we were obviously very keen, because we knew what they were like and that the show must be something really good if they're involved with it. They sent us a DVD of the show, and we thought it was fantastic. It's just a great opportunity to work with some wonderful people, and we're quite looking forward to it.

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Strategic Review

During his recent inaugural visit to the United States in July, the Taoiseach, Mr Brian Cowen, TD, recalled the exceptionally close historical and current ties between Ireland and the United States. He said that in the context of peace in Northern Ireland and Ireland's economic development he foresaw new opportunities to further develop this relationship and partnership into the future. In pursuit of this, he announced that Ambassador Michael Collins would undertake a strategic review of all the relevant issues and report to the Government by the end of the year.

In undertaking this review the Ambassador wishes to consult as widely as possible. He invites and would welcome considered contributions, to be received no later than end October 2008, via the email link on the Embassy's webpage www.embassyofireland.org or by post to Strategic Review, Embassy of Ireland, 2234 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington DC 20008-2849.

The Taoiseach's remarks announcing this initiative are available on the Embassy's webpage.

September 2008

Tickets for the luncheon are competitively priced at \$55 each or tables of ten for \$500. Larger sponsorship packages to include advertisements in our special Irish Echo supplement are also available. For details, contact Mairéad Tully at (212) 482-4818 Ext. 113 or email mtully@irishecho.com.

A terrorist... and his cat?

MCDONAGH

by Martin McDonagh
directed by David R. Gammons

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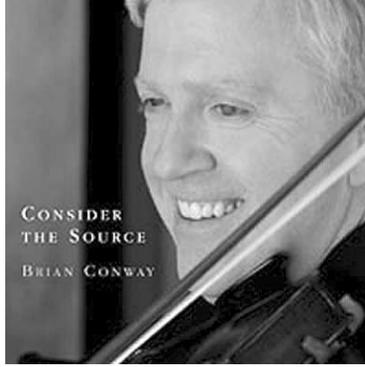
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BIR Music CD ROUNDUP

BY SEAN SMITH

This month's round-up is dominated by instrumental albums, including new releases by two of the leading Irish-American musicians of our time. **Brian Conway, "Consider the Source"**

Hard to believe this is only the second solo album by Conway, who in 2002 released "First Though the Gate," which was proclaimed CD of the Year by the Irish Echo. The Bronx native, born to Irish parents from Co. Tyrone, is one of the foremost players in the Sligo-New York fiddle style originated by the likes of Michael Coleman, Paddy Killoran, and James Morrison -- described by Mick Moloney as featuring "complex and often unpredictable mixtures of triplets, single and double grace notes, and short and long rolls," where fiddlers make "liberal use of double stopping and freely alternate between short and long bowing, emphasizing the latter." The title of this CD, then, conveys Conway's reverence



Coleman's rendition, beginning "Velvet" on the fourth rather than the first part. Guest stars such as Joannie Madden, Brendan and Felix Dolan and Billy McComiskey (more about him later on) show up in various combinations on the album, notably on a snappy, sprightly trio of hornpipes and a tastefully done waltz set. A somewhat surprising bonus is the inclusion of two songs, reflecting Conway's belief that accompanying vocalists should be part of a fiddler's skill set (a topic that's been known to generate fervent discussions on the session.org). Dan Milner takes the lead on "Matt Hyland," with Conway and fellow fiddler Heather Martin Bisler providing suitably romantic but not overwrought backing, along with guitarist Gabe Donahue and double bassist Brad Alberta. Brendan Dolan's keyboards providing an elegiac backdrop on the other song, Robert Burns' "Highland Mary," with Niamh Parsons; Conway bookends the track with his soulful playing of the air associated with the song (the story of which, as related in the liner notes, makes for good reading).

Billy McComiskey, "Outside the Box"

Born one borough away from Conway in Brooklyn, McComiskey has forged a reputation as one of the premier B/C two-row accordion players on either side of the Atlantic, through his work with the Irish Tra-

dition and Trian as well as his session playing and festival appearances (including last year's ICONS Festival). McComiskey waited even longer than Conway to issue a second solo album -- more than 25 years -- but it's been worth the wait: That deft touch, solid grasp of dynamics, and of course, the famed "McComiskey Bass" are all in evidence. It certainly doesn't hurt to have as your producer one John Doyle, who joins him for the reel set "Keogh's/Maggie Lynn's" that opens the album. Mick Moloney, Liz Carroll, Matthew Bell, Athena Tergis, Myron Bertholz, as well as Joanie Madden and Brendan Dolan (who both must have had a pretty busy year, what with also playing on Brian Conway's album) and Billy's son Sean also appear. Some of the more outstanding ensemble pieces include the jigs "Sean McGlynn's/Maura McGlynn's/Connie Scanlon's" (the latter of which is likely to end up on more than a few musicians' "must-learn" list) and later on a big set dance and reel set; Dolan is in particularly fine form on "The Rainy Day/Man of the House." McComiskey is, of course, also a celebrated tune composer, as evidenced by a splendid set of waltzes, "The Diamond/Sleepless Night" -- the latter a tribute to his wife Annie's wee-hours-of-the-morning parenting skills -- and the almost-too-beautiful-to-be-believed lullaby "Grainnes Grace." Like Conway's CD, "Outside the Box" is further enhanced by informative and well-written liner notes. Nothing like getting a little education with your entertainment.



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A Bloody Riot: New Rep's 'The Lieutenant of Inishmore'

By R. J. DONOVAN
SPECIAL TO THE BIR
Playwright Martin McDonagh has a dark, disturbing comedic style that often makes theatergoers shift uncomfortably in their seats. Shocking audiences one minute, he sends them into fits of uncontrollable laughter the next.

Born in London to Irish parents, the award-winning writer is best known for such plays as "The Beauty Queen of Leenane," "A Skull in Connemara," and "The Pillowman." Provocative and controversial, he has been nomi-

nated for four "Best Play" Tony Awards, picked up an Oscar for the Irish comedy short, "The Six Shooter," and earlier this year wrote and directed the film, "In Bruges," starring Colin Farrell and Ralph Fiennes.

Locally, several of his plays have found a home at New Repertory Theatre in Watertown. His black comedy, "The Lieutenant of Inishmore," opens there on Oct. 16 with a cast featuring Colin Hamell, Rory James Kelly, and Karl Baker Olson.

First produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company in 2001, "The Lieu-

tenant" is the middle-third of what's become known as McDonagh's Aran Islands Trilogy of plays set off the west coast of Ireland.

Commenting on the upcoming production, Rick Lombardo, New Rep's Producing Artistic Director, said, "I love Martin McDonagh's writing and I've been very proud that New Rep has been the theater that has done more of his work and introduced him more to the Boston area than any other local theater."

The unapologetic farce offers a gruesome look at the actions of Padraic, the demented leader of a militant terrorist splinter group who trots through life casually attacking people and lobbing explosives with a cavalier "all in a day's work" attitude. However, when someone dares harm his best friend in the world, a little cat by the name of Wee Thomas, all hell breaks loose. Was the cat's mutilation an accident or an execution? Either way, Padraic comes completely unglued at the senseless brutality of the tabby's downfall.

Lombardo explained, "[McDonagh] is dabbling in the same kind of medium as say, Quentin Tarantino... taking violence to this kind of uber-degree in order to make us somehow laugh at the absurdity of it -- the insanity of violence as a solution to any problem, which it's not. I

find him to be a very sharp observer." Lombardo adds that McDonagh looks at life through "a very, clearly focused comedic lens. He's a comic playwright. That's the thing that I think people have to remember."

During the Broadway run (which reportedly used six gallons of fake blood for every performance), The New York Times advised audiences to "turn off your political correctness monitor along with your cell phone." David R. Gammons, who's directing the play at New Rep, said, "What draws people to it as an exciting piece of theater is the tension between just how violent the play is -- gory, horrific even -- and how hilarious [people] find the situations." "The play owes a lot to the absurd. Capital 'A' absurd."

Lombardo agrees. "McDonagh's not doing some kind of kitchen sink realism where he's trying to depict life as it is. He always looks at a situation and takes it to the absurd extreme to mine the comic value within it." Contrasting McDonagh's work with that of award-winning playwright Conor McPherson, Lombardo said, "Conor is much more interested in real people, and exploring real people in much more realistic situations. McDonagh is not about that at all. He

lies as much in the stream of Samuel Becket as in the stream of Irish playwright J. M. Synge, for example (co-founder of the Abbey Theater and author of 'Playboy of the Western World')."

To avoid any misunderstanding, Gammons cautions, "The play is not in any way a documentary about the troubles in Ireland. It's a comedy and a satire... the terrorism (is) a sort of jumping off place. It reflects on the absurdity and the ridiculousness of violence in a larger way. It resonates whether you're thinking about Ireland in particular or what's going on in Darfur or Palestine or wherever you want to point your finger [at] political unrest and strife and struggle among humans."

While past audiences at New Rep will already be familiar with McDonagh's trademark style, Gammons hopes that "Inishmore" will cast a wide net and draw in a host of new theatergoers. "It's wonderful to do this play in the Boston area," he said, because, "there's such a vital and vibrant Irish community within the Boston scene."

The bottom line is that Gammons very clearly understands his role in guiding the play. "It's not my job as a director to decide how the audience will respond," he said. "I do the play, and the audience



Rick Lombardo

gets to choose what they think about it, and what they feel about it, and what they take away from it." That said, he's been quietly amused at people's reactions when he describes the bloody premise of the story. He said audiences are more than accepting when characters die at the end of a Shakespearean tragedy or a Jacobean revenge play. "I've done a lot of plays where everybody dies at the end," he laughed. However, he said, if you tell people that a cat dies in the play, "They're all up in arms."

"What McDonagh is doing, and I think brilliantly, is pointing out that our sympathy as an audience is aroused exponentially for the cat but not necessarily for the humans. I love the audacity of that."

"The Lieutenant of Inishmore," October 26 - November 16 at the Arsenal Center for the Arts, 321 Arsenal Street, Watertown. For information, call 617-923-8487.



Celtic Music Monday: Mixed Musical Pairs, And a Band's Debut

A column of news and updates of the Boston Celtic Music Fest (BCM Fest), which celebrates the Boston area's rich heritage of Irish, Scottish, and Cape Breton music and dance with a grassroots, musician-run, winter music festival and other events during the year.

—SEAN SMITH

Dynamic Double Date, and a Dazzling Debut -- Celtic Music Monday, BCM Fest's monthly series at Club Passim in Harvard Square, will offer a little twist for its Oct. 13 edition. The concert will feature two of the Greater Boston's most noteworthy Celtic music couples, Matt and Shannon Heaton, and Liz Simmons and Flynn Cohen (who also are part of the alt-trad band Annalivia).

But here's the twist: The husbands will pair up with each other for the first part of the evening, while in the second half the wives unveil a brand new musical collaboration. Cohen and Matt Heaton, both regarded far and wide as top-drawer guitarists -- Heaton also excels on bouzouki and bodhran, Cohen on mandolin -- caused a buzz at BCM Fest earlier this year when they recreated the classic 1977 album by Andy Irvine and Paul Brady, considered a milestone in the modern Irish music revival. In addition to some Irvine-Brady selections, their Celtic Music Monday set will showcase some of their more recent repertoire of songs and tunes.

Simmons and Shannon Heaton, meanwhile, will join forces with former Gaelic Storm member Ellery Klein for the debut of their band Long Time Courting. In addition to their individual instrumental prowess -- Heaton on flute and whistle, Simmons on guitar and piano and Klein on fiddle -- all are first-rate vocalists, and the Oct. 13 show will see them demonstrate those talents and more.

The Celtic Music Monday event will be a welcome one for fans of Klein, who left Gaelic Storm in the spring of 2007 to give birth to her son, Lincoln. And Klein is more than a little pleased herself about this new partnership. "We've been having a lot of fun putting the act together these past several months," says Klein. "I love playing the tunes, but I'm really excited about the three-part harmony in the songs we do. It's nice to be doing something a little different."

Although they do plan to play occasionally around New England, Long Time Courting won't be a regular gig, says Klein -- and that's part of its appeal for the trio. "It's not only about the music," she explains. "The three of us are in similar stages of life: We're all married, we have homes, Liz and I are both moms -- face it, we're grown-ups. It means we're pretty much all on the same page, and we have other things to think about than jumping into a tour van. That means it may take longer to develop the band, but we think we have the patience to hopefully put together something really good."

Celtic Music Monday begins at 8 p.m. Club Passim is located at 47 Palmer St. in the heart of Harvard Square. Admission is only \$12, \$6 for members of Passim, WGBH or WUMB. To reserve tickets or for other information, see clubpassim.org or call 617-492-7679.

New Venue for Boston Urban Ceilidh -- The Boston Urban Ceilidh -- Boston's recurring Celtic dance party -- has always been a movable feast, having taken place at the Canadian-American Club in Watertown, Springstep in Medford, Boston College and, most recently, the ICONS Festival. On Nov. 1, the "BUC" will touch down in a brand new venue: Club Passim. That's right. Harvard Square's most famous folk/acoustic music coffeehouse will be the setting for exciting Irish, Scottish, and Cape Breton music and dance, featuring Laura Cortese and the Boston Urban Ceilidh band and other hot Celtic musicians from the Boston area. Details at clubpassim.org or at myspace.com/bostonurbanceilidh.

BIR Music Calendar

Oct. 1, 7-9 p.m. -- Groton Session Workshop w/Tony DeMarco (Irish Fiddle Workshop) For those who play traditional Irish instruments - Stagecoach Inn & Tavern, 128 Main St. Groton, MA., 877-782-4346, 978-448-5614. Info, registration: ashling@verizon.net, TheGrotonSession.com.

Oct. 2, 6:30-8:30 p.m. -- Kimberley Fraser (fiddle, piano) Scottish-influenced trad. music of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. Free. Connolly House, Boston College Campus, 300 Hammond St, Chestnut Hill. 617-552-3938, irish@bc.edu, kimberleyfraser.com.

Oct. 4, 8 p.m. -- Joyce Andersen (trad, classic, and contemporary songs, fiddle tunes). \$15. Beal House, 222 Main St, Kingston MA, Tix & info: 781-871-1052, stephen.milt@verizon.net, htssfmc.org.

Oct. 5, 4 p.m. -- Robbie O'Connell with The Clancy

Legacy. \$20. -The Kinsale Inn, Water Street, Mattapoisett MA. 508-509-2670.

Oct. 5, 2-7 p.m. -- Boston Scottish Fiddle Club w/Anne Hooper, workshops & performance. Pleasant St. Congregational Church, 75 Pleasant St. Arlington. 617-33-TUNES, bsfc.org, 7:30 p.m.

Kevin Burke & Cal Scott. \$15, \$12 members, children, seniors discounts. Woods Hole Folk Music Society, W.H. Community Hall, Water Street, Woods Hole. 508-540-0320, whfms.folk@verizon.net

Oct. 6, 8 p.m. -- Celtic Thunder (all male quintet) \$57.50, \$47.50, \$37.50. The Agganis Arena, 925 Commonwealth Ave, Boston. 617-931-2000.

Oct. 9, 7:30 p.m. -- Malinky - A Music For Robin Concert, Emerson Umbrella, 40 Stow St, Concord, MA. 781-862-7837. Music-For-Robin.org, Malinky.com. 6:30-8:30 p.m.

-- Irish uilleann pipes, with a concert, multimedia exhibit, audience invited to try pipes. Presented by Na P'obair' Uilleann from Dublin. Free. Connolly House, Boston College Campus, 300 Hammond St, Chestnut Hill. 617-552-3938, irish@bc.edu

Oct. 10-13 -- Taunton River Folk Festival, Taunton River Watershed Alliance, 15 School St, Taunton. 508-292-5632, Info@Tauntonfest.org, Tauntonfest.org.

Oct. 11, 8 p.m. -- Echoes of Erin Concert. \$18. Waltham HS Auditorium, 617 Lexington St, Waltham. Irish Trad. Music, Song, Dance. 781-899-0911 or 508-947-8688, ceeboston@verizon.net, ceeboston.org.

Oct. 13, 8 p.m. -- Double Date w/Matt Heaton & Flynn Cohen, Long Time Courting (Shannon Heaton, Liz Simmons, Ellery Klein) \$12, Passim, WGBH, WUMB members: \$6 - BCM Fest Celtic

Music Monday (bcmfest.com), Club Passim, 47 Palmer St, Cambridge. 617-492-7679, clubpassim.org.

Oct. 18, 7 p.m. -- Atwater-Donnelly Duo. \$10 - Pingree's Coffeehouse, First Congregational Church, 100 Winter St., Norwood. pingrees.org.

Oct. 22, 6:30-8 p.m. -- McNulty Family career and recordings, Irish button accordion exhibit, in demand 1920s - 1950s. Free. Connolly House, Boston College Campus, 300 Hammond St, Chestnut Hill. 617-552-3938, irish@bc.edu, tedmcgraw.com.

Oct. 24, 8 p.m. -- Roy Johnstone & Steve Sharratt (Prince Edward Island, fiddle, banjo, viola, mandocello, guitar, dulcimer and mandolin) Adv: \$20; Door: \$25. Worcester Hibernian Cultural Center, 19 Temple St, Worcester.

Thanks to musicforrobin.org for much of this calendar information.

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The County Mayo Association of Boston Celebrates its 100th Birthday This Month

On October 18, the County Mayo Association of Boston will celebrate 100 years with a Centennial Banquet at Moseley's on the Charles in Dedham. At the banquet, the Association will recognize their Mayo Person of the Year, Father Michael Tracey from Killawalla, now pastor of Our Lady of the Gulf Parish, Bay St Louis, Mississippi. Fr. Tracey is being honored for his work in that parish, particularly in the months and years after Hurricane Katrina.

The Centenary Banquet also includes an official delegation from the Mayo County Offices, headquartered in Castlebar, including Des Mahon, County Manager. Also, Éamonn O'Cuiv, Ireland's Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, will be attending, plus representatives from other Mayo Associations in Dublin, Galway, New York, Philadelphia, and Toronto.

Currently, the committee is completing an Anniversary Journal, profiling the history of the County Mayo Association of Boston—and a brief history of the county. The journal also includes some writing from the Mayo Writers (Claremorris) and Daniel Tobin, chair of Emerson College's Writing, Literature and Publishing Department, representing Mayo- and



Left to right, rear: Mary Heneghan, Mary Frazer, Evelyn Fennessy, Eamonn Gardiner, Tom Leetch, Tommy Cremins, Vincent Kerrigan, Jimmy Cremins, John McGuire, Paddy O'Malley, Paul Cannon, Rory Moore, Joe Heneghan, Aine Greaney, Mary Forde. Left to right front: Joyce Cannon, Ann Cremins, Peggy O'Malley, Mary Rohan, Veronica Moore, Maureen Stuart, Mary Gardiner.

Mayo-Diaspora writers, respectively. Businesses and non-profit organizations in the greater Boston area are invited to advertise via the journal.

At the banquet, music will be provided by Noel

Henry's Showband and guest singer Kevin Prendergast from Began, Co. Mayo.

For more info, contact the committee at 617-327-8323 or send an e-mail to GurraneJPMcG@aol.com.

To book advertising in the program booklet, send an e-mail to Mary Forde (mforde4@verizon.net).

Background: In 1908 a group of young Irishmen in Boston chartered the Mayo Men's Benevolent Association to provide intellectual stimulation and social events for their members and "to preserve the memory of the late Michael Davitt." Born in Straide, County Mayo, Michael Davitt (1846-1906) founded the Irish

National Land League, which fought for the rights of Irish tenant farmers and against 19th-century landlordism. Shortly afterward, Mayo women in Boston formed the Mayo Women's Auxiliary, which held grand balls and galas to assist the new Irish state and to collect funds to benefit Irish and American charities and institutions. One event, combining all of the Irish clubs and associations, and hosted by Joseph M.

Thornton, president of the Mayo Association in 1908, raised an astounding (for the time) \$4,000. During the Easter Rising and the War of Independence, Mayo people held huge rallies to protest the execution of Irish patriots, and the proposed execution of American-born Eamonn de Valera. They sold "Victory Bonds" in conjunction with other Irish Associations to raise funds for the Irish cause. After the events of 1916, the Great Depression, and World War II, the focus of both Mayo men and Mayo women was "benevolence," the term used in the original charter in 1908.

In the 1950s, it was proposed to merge the men and women's organizations. But the Mayo women were reluctant to share their funds (they had a larger fund than the men) with their male counterparts. However, the two organizations eventually merged to become the County Mayo Association of Boston. The Association continued to collect funds for organizations, institutions, and individuals - here and in Ireland. Today, the Mayo Association continues to educate members and the community-at-large by sponsoring exhibits from Ireland to remember Michael Davitt, their Mayo hero who founded the Land League in 1879, and they bring numerous Irish individuals, artists and groups to Boston to perform, while still benefiting worthy causes.

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A Bond Of Friendship

One Hundred Years Of The County Donegal Association Of Greater Boston

By **PETER F. STEVENS**
BIR STAFF

The following article, which focuses on the roots of the County Donegal Association of Greater Boston, is excerpted from a soon-to-be-published monograph by Peter F. Stevens that celebrates the association's centennial.

On August 8, 1908, a group of Donegal immigrants to Boston's shores met for a common purpose – "to promote unity" and much more. The men all shared something in common besides their determination to carve out better lives for themselves in their new home than they had found in Ireland. Their shared bond was their deep tie to their birthplace. In a genuine sense, the men – and later women – from that rugged and beautiful county never left their roots behind, those ancestral ties of history, culture, and bloodlines that they carried to "the Golden Door," America.

The Donegal men who gathered, according to the *Boston Pilot*, on a summer night one hundred years ago in "Roughlan Hall, Charlestown," had much in mind. Along with their determination to remember the place where they had come from and to pass down those memories to coming generations, they pledged to aid newcomers from Donegal and extend not only the hand of friendship, but also a financial hand for members "whenever the need arose."

In the first meeting of the County Donegal Benevolent Association, the members proved that the fires of their birthplace still blazed. The gathering pledged that they would give equal effort to aid the creation of a "Thirty-Two County Irish Nation" and "to preserve the principle of American liberty." For one hundred years, the Association has remained true to the tenets of its founders.

Donegal, the land from which those immigrants of 1908 hailed, is the northernmost county of



An Association ball – 1965

Ireland and was one of the last areas of the island to succumb to English rule. Such clans as the O'Neills and the O'Donnells fought fiercely but vainly against the English. Hit hard by the Penal Laws of the 1700s, many Donegal residents began to make their way to the New World, a number turning up in Boston long before the 19th century. The Great Famine, *An Gorta Mor*, would force many more from The Rosses, Cloghaneely, Inishowen, Fanad, Rosguill, the Laggan Valley, the Finn Valley, and other Donegal locales to Boston. The immigrants brought with them their distinctive ways and language, those from the Donegal Gaeltacht speaking a West Ulster dialect, those from Inishowen an East Ulster dialect.

For the Donegal immigrants who started trickling into Boston at the start of the 19th century and whose numbers grew larger and larger with each passing decade, life proved rife with hardships, especially for those who fled to the city during the Great Famine. Protestant Yankee society and economy – as well as anti-Irish bigotry – made the Donegal immigrants feel alien in their new environment. For security and protection

they stuck together in their own communities, crowded at first in Boston's waterfront tenements, particularly the North End. Living conditions in these places were shabby at best, and during the famine period city health inspectors could not find fitting words to describe in their reports the terrible things they had seen. So alien seemed the Irish they were generally treated by native citizens contemptuously as outsiders and outcasts and were particularly resented by the lower and middle class Yankee Protestants. On many fronts they faced discrimination, and in any case, most lacked skills needed for decent jobs. However, they brought with them a particular innate intelligence that had been honed in Donegal and enabled them to not just survive, but also to grab onto a rung in Boston's political life.

As more and more Donegal people became shop proprietors, property owners, businessmen, contractors, government officials and politicians in Boston, they made their mark in the North End, Charlestown, and East Boston. In Boston's voting rolls as the 20th century loomed were many Devers, McDevitts, McEleneyns, McGonagles, O'Donnells, McColgans,

and Dohertys.

Even as families began to enjoy more prosperity, they were determined to hold on to their County Donegal roots. So did those from other counties. Disbursing to other neighborhoods and suburbs, Irish immigrants began to organize county clubs.

On August 9, 1908, in Charlestown, Donegal immigrants formed the County Donegal Benevolent Association, later to be known as the County Donegal Association of Greater Boston. Between 1908 and 1914, 208 members joined. Of this number, 104 members lived in Charlestown, the so-called Inishowen capital of Boston for the first half of the 20th century.

From its inception, the Association served not only as a venue for weekly dances where members met, socialized, and exchanged the latest news from home, but also as an organization that helped its members and their families financially when there was a death, job loss, or any number of the problems that cropped up in daily life.

The man honored to be elected as the first President of the County Donegal Benevolent Association was Neil Harold. In 1910, he led the Association's

efforts in a project that pointed toward the County Donegal Association's many fundraising and charitable works over the next century. That first large-scale venture was the organization's pivotal role in the drive to "raise funds to aid in rebuilding old Clonmany Chapel in County Donegal, Ireland."

When the news of the Easter Rising crackled across the wires and hit Boston's newspapers in 1916, the president and

the patriotic men of the Association would embrace the doomed rebellion. They would come to support the cause, and over the following decades, the Association would stand solidly behind the creation of an Irish Republic.

Women have played a pivotal part in the Association from the earliest days, and at the Donegal dances and other events, many young men and women met and eventually married. Women were first accepted as members of the group in 1919, as women nationwide were finally given the legal right to vote; in 1958, a landmark moment for the Association came with the election of its first female President, Mary Printy, who held the post till 1960 and was reelected in 1974-75.

At the end of the day, any organization is about its membership, and the members of the County Donegal Association were special then and remain special now in their commitment to the group and to each other. The Association has not only stood the test of time, but has also adapted to the times. A century strong and going strong – what began in 1908 will continue.

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Thirty-Two Counties

Antrim: Mark Cleland from Belfast has arrived home from Beijing with a gold medal, but this was no Olympic sport. For the twenty-four-year-old became the world Rock, Paper, Scissors champion. Mark took part in the Irish final of the International Rock, Paper, Scissors Federation Championship in May, beating thirty-one other contestants for a chance to represent Ireland at the finals of the competition. The winners of the qualifying tournaments were rewarded with a visit to Beijing for the Olympic Games and a place in the finals of their chosen sport.

Armagh: The inaugural Gaelic Games Programme Fair took place at the Cardinal Tomas O'Fiaich Memorial Library and Archive in Armagh last month. The idea behind the fair is to bypass the very high prices charged for GAA memorabilia on such sites as eBay, and it was hoped that collectors would in some cases exchange programs with other collectors, or at least purchase them for prices which are not inflated. According to Roddy Hegarty, education officer at the library, the fair was held to enable people to begin or increase their collections; he referred to the fair as "speed-dating for GAA."

Carlow: With only eighty-two pupils in total enrolled at St Abban's National School in Killeen, it is somewhat unusual to have eight of those children as sets of twins. Already attending the school at the beginning of term were Kate and Claire Dunne in sixth class, entering fourth class after moving from Dublin were Daniel and Ciaran Comerford, and Mark and Richard Brennan have just moved into senior infants. Last week the school acquired its fourth set of twins when Kate and Jillian Byrne started in junior infants. According to principal Maura McNally, there were also twins in last year's sixth class who have moved on to secondary school.

Cavan: Some twenty years after he first undertook his campaign against the condition of the county's roads the Pothole Terror, also known as Martin Hannigan, is back at work painting the potholes in the Cavan Road and Bridge Street areas of Cootehill. Careful to operate within the law, this time Martin has erected signs to warn of his activities; the signs read, "Warning, pothole painting ahead." Martin intends to continue with his campaign until those responsible for the county's roads take measures to improve them, and he has received support from many people in the region.

Clare: A rare winter storm in the middle of August had benefit for surfing enthusiasts, who gathered at the Cliffs of Moher to await the arrival of Aileen, the wave that reaches a height of between 20 and 30 feet. According to John McCarthy, who runs the Lahinch Surf School, surfers arrived from England and Northern Ireland after the weather forecast showed that perfect conditions would be created. Aileen remains the preserve of an elite group of surfers and John was among just six or seven who were actually riding the wave.

Cork: Harbour Cat Ferries has been granted planning permission by the county council to construct ferry terminals at Passage West and Monkstown. The company is hoping to revive the harbour ferries which will also serve Cobh, Crosshaven, Little Island, Blackrock, Aghada, and the city. The company also has permission for a terminal and pavilion, with a heritage centre,

at Lynch's Quay in Cobh, but this has been appealed to An Bord Pleanála. No ferries have worked the harbour for some twenty years and the company hopes to be in operation from 2010.

Derry: A Derry woman who lost almost all of her possessions in Hurricane Katrina three years ago had to leave New Orleans again last month but was hoping that the latest hurricane wouldn't be so bad. Mona Lestrade, originally from Elmwood Street in the city, left New Orleans with her daughter Monica, son-in-law, and two grandchildren on the last plane out of the city and stayed in a hotel in Alabama. From there she was able to phone her sister, Peggy O'Donnell, back in Derry to say they were safe. Mona had just completed repairs on her house and had made many of her possessions safe before leaving.

Donegal: The postman delivering letters in the townland of Ballinacor near Killygordon will soon have his delivery time speeded up when each of the houses is given an identifying number. At the moment there are nine families by the name of Carlin in the townland, and four of these include a John Carlin. This has resulted in a number of postal mix-ups and now the Crossroads and Killygordon Enterprise have been asked to come up with a solution. A similar situation arose with the number of Gallen families in nearby Meenreagh and this was addressed by the local development association.

Down: Last month saw the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Ballynahinch railway tracks and the Belfast and County Down Railway Museum Trust organized a special history evening to mark the occasion. Members of the Trust are working towards opening the first part of a heritage railway, beginning with the branch line between Ballynahinch junction and Ballynahinch. In order for the Great Irish Railway Challenge to come to fruition the Trust is on the lookout for a steam or diesel engine to help in the construction and for its operation on completion.

Dublin: With repair work already being carried out on O'Connell Bridge, it has now emerged that Butt Bridge is in an even worse condition. The bridge, which links George's Quay to Beresford Place and the quays at Liberty Hall, at present has plastic barriers in place of missing pillars, though these are not sufficiently robust to prevent an accident. Work on O'Connell Bridge began after comments by the National Conservation and Heritage Group, who have also drawn the attention of the county council to the problems affecting Butt Bridge; the group's members believe high tides are responsible for the damage.

Fermanagh: Oliver Ledwith was a member of a security team working with a construction firm at the Erneside Shopping Centre in Enniskillen when he was told that a woman had entered the water. Without a moment's thought he stripped to his underwear and dived into the water, and managed to pull the woman to safety. She was taken to hospital though unfortunately she did not survive her ordeal. Oliver's prompt action, however, was acknowledged by the presentation of an award for bravery from the Royal Humane Society. The forty-five-year-old was instructed in life-saving by Major Jack Wheeler.

Galway: Funding is to be given by the Heritage Council and Galway City Council for



the restoration of Claddagh-based hookers in time for the arrival of the Volvo Ocean Race next May. Both councils have pledged 10,000 euro and Jim Higgins, heritage officer with the city council, is hoping other bodies will also provide finance. The aim is to have a fleet of traditional craft, including the smaller gleeiteog, lead the Volvo fleet into the docks. The new program for non-Gaeltacht vessels has been developed with Báidoirí na Cladaigh, the Claddagh Boatowners' Association.

Kerry: A ceremony took place recently on Valentia Island to mark the 150th anniversary of the sending of the first cable message from Europe to America. Designed by Irish illustrator Vincent Killowry, the stamp shows an image of HMS Agamemno and USS Niagara, both vessels being involved in the laying of the cable between Trinity Bay in Newfoundland and Knightstown on the island. The first message relayed, in August 1858, was sent by Queen Victoria to President James Buchanan. The August ceremony included the unveiling of a plaque by Valentia native Mick O'Connell.

Kildare: Fianna Fáil Councillor Frank English, who is certainly the longest serving member of a local authority in the county, and possibly in the country, is to stand down after almost 42 years as a member of Athy Town Council. Frank first stood for election in 1967 and has successfully contested six local elections since that time. Married to Mary, principal of Scoil Mhiicil Naofa, with five children and five grandchildren, there is a chance that Frank will be succeeded by his son Conor. The pediatric nurse has put his name forward for selection for the local elections next year.

Kilkenny: Kilkenny now has a Liam McCarthy Cup thanks to the efforts of Thomastown resident Paul Stapleton. For Paul has created a wooden replica of the cup being held aloft by two Kilkenny players and has placed it on the front wall of his house where it elicits cheers and horn blasts from passers-by. The legend at the base of the work reads "We're the Cats, so we should know, in 2008 it's three in a row." A similar piece last year, which he displayed up the road from his house, was stolen.

in Croom, it was the case of playing a double role on the first day of term this year. For not only did he welcome all the new students and their parents to the school, he was also a parent. And unlike most of the other parents he was seeing three of his children arriving in first year, with triplets Roisin, Noel, and Gráinne having their first day in their father's school. Noel, his wife Siobhán, and their family live in Pallaskenry and all three children are members of Ballysteen Comhaltas.

Longford: St Mel's College was the setting for a new world record being set last month when Tony Mangan completed forty-eight hours running non-stop on a treadmill. In doing so the ultra marathon runner broke the world record by almost twenty kilometers. The fifty-one-year-old was cheered on by a large crowd who gathered round to shake his hand at the completion of the feat. Five years ago he held both the twenty-four and forty-eight hour treadmill records, but the latter was taken from him by Suresh Joachim from Sri Lanka. Now Tony has the satisfaction of having regained the title.

Louth: Kate Gaynor from Jenkinstown, now living in Dublin, has just published her first series of books for children on health and social issues. Kate, who has her own publishing company, wrote the books herself in consultation with a number of different agencies and they then had to be reviewed by medical psychologists. The seven books, for children aged four to eight, cover topics including foster care, adoption, childhood cancer, limited mobility, asthma, speech difficulties, and diabetes. Kate is hoping to move back to Dundalk in two years time with her partner, Kieran O'Donoghue from Dromiskin.

Mayo: Not long before the Tipperary Rose, Aoife Kelly, was named as this year's Rose of Tralee, another Aoife Kelly received her own title in her native county. Biomedical science graduate Aoife Kelly was crowned Queen of the Lakes in Ballinrobe last month, a title that automatically puts her forward for the Rose of Mayo contest. A further heat after that could see her progressing to the Rose of Tralee Festival next year, with a chance that the international contest could be won two years in succession by an Aoife Kelly. To date the duties of the Ballinrobe Queen have included cutting the first slice of a roasted pig and being a guest at Ballinrobe Races.

Meath: At the 68th annual Royal Meath Agricultural Show in Trim last month the members of Macra na Feirme vied with

(Continued on page 27)



IRELAND'S
WEATHER
REPORTED MONDAY,
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2008
BY LIAM FERRIE

It was a mostly sunny week until Thursday which started overcast and eventually turned to rain. We still had a light drizzle on Friday morning but that eventually gave way to more sun and we then enjoyed a bright sunny weekend.

The forecasters tell us that we are in for another sunny and mostly dry week. Some rain might reach some parts around about Thursday but the sun will return.

Latest Temperatures:
Day 17C (63F).....Night 9C 48F)

NEWS DIRECT FROM IRELAND

Ireland Today

Deirdre the Bride Gave Us a Gift: She Sang the Psalm at Her Wedding

We were honored recently to have been guests at the wedding of our former webmaster, Deirdre McFadden from Clarinbridge, and Eric van der Zee from Oranmore. The marriage ceremony took place in the Garrison Church in Renmore, Galway, and in a most unusual twist, Deirdre, an accomplished singer, gave a beautiful rendition of the psalm. Her dad Noel was the singer of the other hymns during the Mass. In their time Noel and Deirdre have sung at many wedding ceremonies in and around Galway.

-- LIAM FERRIE

Ireland's politicians received a pay increase last month as the final phase of the previous national pay agreement. For TDs the increase was 2,500 euro, which was enough to bring their salary above 1000,000 euro. Judges, senior civil servants, government ministers, and senators also received the 2.5 percent increase, which for the Taoiseach amounted to 7,000 euro and brought his salary up to 285,582 euro.

Early last month much was made of a story that foreign-owned coaches often tour the Ring of Kerry by traveling in the wrong direction.

There is an unwritten rule that buses and trucks should drive in an anti-clockwise direction so that they do not meet with other large vehicles on what are often very narrow roads. It seems too that the tunnel cut into the rock on the Killarney-Kenmare road is more easily negotiated if approached from the Moll's Gap side. The problem is being blamed on "Sat Navs," which suggest a clockwise direction and the Kerry County Council has been asked to talk with the makers of satellite navigation systems to re-program their units. Councillor Tom Doherty also called for the erection of multilingual signs to inform drivers of the convention.

Ireland is now considered one of the best countries in Europe for recycling newsprint. Latest figures show that 161,000 tons, or 73.8 percent, of newspapers are now being recycled here, up from 28 percent in 2002.

Figures available from the website propertysnake.co.uk have revealed that Belfast and Down have suffered most from falling house prices in the current collapse of the housing market. In one instance the asking price of a house at Grey Point in Co. Down fell from 1.25 million pounds to 995,000 pounds in May, and fell again to 795,000k in August, while the price of a two-bedroom apartment in north Belfast fell by

95,000 pounds (to 135,000) in eight months. The properties in question have still to be sold.

As of early last month new armed Garda Regional Support Units are on duty in Cork and Limerick in a pilot program that could see similar units assigned to each of the five regions outside Dublin. RSUs will patrol as regular uniform Gardaí, performing normal policing functions on a daily basis throughout the region. In the event of a critical incident (eg hostage situation or firearms incident) the RSU officers will change into tactical dress and will have access to firearms.

Gardaí investigating the murder of Paul Quinn on October 22, 2007 have arrested a 50-year-old man in Dundalk. This was the 11th arrest on both sides of the border in recent weeks. The 21-year-old Co. Armagh man was lured to a remote farm building in Co. Monaghan and beaten to death. His family has accused members of the IRA of murdering him.

Belarus has announced that it will no longer allow children suffering from the after effects of the Chernobyl disaster to visit Ireland for a holiday or medical treatment. For many years some 1,000 Irish families have been taking children affected by Chernobyl into their homes for a holiday and many receive treatment in Irish hospitals while here. No reason has been given for

the decision and Adi Roche of the Chernobyl Children's Project, who is appalled at the development, has asked the Government to intervene. The Department of Foreign Affairs says that it already has staff at the Embassy in Moscow talking with the Belarusian officials.

The international Polar Year is being marked with two coins to recognize the achievements of Antarctic explorers Ernest Shackleton and Tom Crean. Irish artist and medallist Thomas Ryan has designed the five-euro silver proof coin and the 100-euro gold proof coin, which depict the two explorers and also have the traditional harp, surrounded by a laurel wreath. The coins will be issued in limited editions, separately and as two-coin sets, for sums far above their face value.

Catherine Clancy, who in 2003 became the first woman to be appointed as assistant commissioner in the Garda Síochána, has announced her retirement from the force five years before she would be required to retire on age grounds. Clancy's retirement follows that of former assistant commissioner Tom King 11 years ago, the last early retirement from this rank.

After drugs were seized by gardaí from the home of 18-year-old Robert Corbett in Ballincurra Weston in Limerick, the gang for whom

he was holding the cannabis demanded and received twice its value in compensation from the youth's family. This emerged in Limerick District Court when Corbett, who suffers from attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, appeared before Judge Tom O'Donnell. The judge requested a probation report and adjourned the case until November 5.

A receiver has been appointed at Cappoquin Chickens, which employs 150 full-time and 100 seasonal workers in west Waterford, and is the main outlet for many poultry breeders in the southeast. The long-established company, owned by the O'Connor family of Cappoquin, is one of the country's largest poultry processors but it is known that it has been experiencing difficulties through higher grain prices and increasing competition from imports. There has since been speculation that new owners were waiting in the wings but so far there is no solid news.

Freightquote, a leading online freight services provider, has established its European headquarters in Sandyford, Dublin, where it will create 100 new positions over 12 months. Freightquote provides a web-based freight management solution that allows clients to access freight carrier options online and book various modes of freight transportation (domestic trucking, parcel, air and ocean freight).

A scheme to raise funds for the Cliffs of Moher visitor centre by allowing people or companies to have their names attached to viewing platforms, in exchange for 500,000 euro has been criticized by Fine Gael councillor Martin Conway. Lesser sums were requested for names to be placed on slabs, on benches, and on facilities in the interpretative centre. Mooted two years ago, the scheme has so far failed to elicit a single benefactor.

According to Forfás, the advisory body on science and enterprise, action is

required if Dublin, Galway, Athlone, and Letterkenny are not to experience water shortages by 2013. As both Athlone and Galway have unlimited sources of water on their doorsteps I presume the answer is to increase the processing capacity. Dublin, it seems, will soon have to resort to desalination or pipe water in from the Shannon, an option which has already met with opposition from angling and boating interests. It's unclear what options are open to Letterkenny.

People living around Cong in Co. Mayo claim that the new owners of Ashford Castle are preventing them from entering the castle grounds, a right they have traditionally enjoyed. Galway company Edward Holdings, owned by property developer Gerry Barrett, is reputed to have paid 50-million euro for the hotel earlier this year. After a community meeting it was agreed to stage a protest at the gates of the castle on Sept. 6. This prompted a statement from Edward Holdings in which it was claimed that the closure of the grounds was necessary under health and safety legislation, while construction work was taking place. It went on to say that a meeting with local residents would be welcome to facilitate discussions on how access could be maintained during the construction phase.

The 33-million euro Opera House in Wexford, built on the site of the old Theatre Royal, was officially opened on Sept. 5 by Taoiseach Brian Cowen. The main auditorium will seat between 780 and 864, depending on whether the orchestra pit is used, while the smaller theatre, named after the late Jerome Hynes, seats 175. Described as the first custom-built opera house in this country, it has all the grandeur expected of such a venue inside but its exterior manages to fit in with the traditional Wexford streetscape. This year's Wexford Festival takes place from October 16 to November 2.

THIRTY-TWO COUNTIES

From Monaghan to Wicklow

(Continued from page 26)

members of the Irish Farmers' Association in a competition of farming skills, among them tractor-driving, fencing skills, and stock-judging. A contest of a different kind was organized by Macra, where entrants were asked to model fashions made from recycled materials, the winner to be selected by MEP Mairead McGuinness. The show took place at Porchfields and one of the highlights was the Leinster Perpetual Provincial Trophy for the best pedigree Aberdeen Angus.

Monaghan: In a cross-border initiative involving bodies in Monaghan and Armagh two new fishing projects have been established. They were both officially opened by singer Big Tom McBride, who first went to Milltown Lake for the opening of the new fishing jetty and stands. One hour later he was at Lough Ross near Crossmaglen where a second fishing jetty was formally declared open. A reception was then held at the Cross Square Hotel in Crossmaglen. Among bodies involved in the two projects are Monaghan Tourism, the CASA community group in Armagh, and Castleblayney Town Council.

Offaly: After less than a year the Bridge House Hotel in Tullamore has changed hands once again. The hotel, which had been owned by Christy Maye for almost 40 years, was

sold for an undisclosed sum in April to Donegal hotelier Brian McGill. The four-star hotel has now been sold by McGill to Pat Lenihan from Armagh and it appears that it will continue as before, with no interruption in the business; staff at the hotel have already met the new owner. The 72-bedroom hotel is a favorite venue in the area for weddings and other events.

Roscommon: A light installation was unveiled on the farm of Martina and Michael Roddy at Grange, Boyle last month, with more than 100 in attendance. The work is a collaboration between Carol Anne Connolly, artist in residence at Mantua Arts Centre, and a local anti-pylon campaign group, and it is located on the site of a proposed pylon at the farm. It is made from recycled materials surrounded by LED lightbulbs and is powered by solar panels. The pylons proposed by the ESB would pass through the Roddy's farmland and would also run close to the homes of seven families in the townland.

Sligo: Last month saw the opening of Shenanigans pub on Bridge Street in Sligo, certainly the greenest pub in the town and possibly in Ireland. Owned by Sean Cunningham, the pub features reclaimed wood, tile, bricks and stonework and has a rainwater harvesting system and solar panels. Head chef at the pub's restaurant is Vicky

Scanlon, and her family already has a connection with the pub's owner. For in the early 1950s, when a car smashed through the front of Sean's parents' shop on Bridge Street, it was Vicky's grandfather, John Scanlon, who carried out the reconstruction.

Tipperary: What was once a cinema is now a newly refurbished theatre in Carrick-on-Suir and home to the local Musical Society. The theatre was purchased from the Butler family five years ago and since that time, with funding from a number of different sources and some raised by the society itself, the building has been totally transformed. The official opening of the venue on Main Street was performed by Minister of State Martin Mansergh and among those attending was Joan Butler, whose late husband Christy built the cinema in the 1970s; their daughter, Alice Hennessy, is now chairwoman of the society.

Tyrone: The successful amalgamation of the three Catholic schools in Strabane, the Convent Grammar, St. Colman's High, and Our Lady of Mercy High, was formally marked last month when Bishop Seamus Hegarty of Derry was the chief celebrant at a Mass in the school. The first reading was given by the principal of Holy Cross College, Sean Bradley, and a number of gifts were brought up. These included a

carving of the Madonna using ebony given to the school by the school in Tanzania where a group of teachers and pupils carried out volunteer work during the summer.

Waterford: Among those descending on Waterford last month for the Terra Madre event were a number of celebrity chefs including Neven Maguire, Richard Corrigan and Rachel Allen. The slow food festival, based on the original event in Turin, was to include a one-day food policy conference, with an address by President Mary McAleese. A food history tour of the city led by Peter Ballagh, demonstrations in beekeeping, curing and butchering, sausage and breadmaking, and a picnic for children in the People's Park were all planned as part of the country's largest-ever slow-food festival.

Westmeath: When Kirsta Kilina began school in Mullingar last month she was introduced to the third language in her short life. Already fluent in Latvian and English, Kirsta will now learn everything through Irish and her mother, Iveta, is confident that she will soon be fluent in that language also. Iveta and her husband run Ziggy Construction in the town and their older daughter, Annija, attends Presentation School. She is already doing well in Irish and Iveta is planning on taking up the language herself soon,

so that she can help Kirsta and her youngest daughter Patricia with their homework.

Wexford: Although it is not many years since it was put in place, the Brendan Corish roundabout at Windmill Hill in Wexford has been causing concern to motorists who claim that it is too high to give a clear view. The roundabout, at the Coolcotts Lane, Windmill Hill/Belvedere Road junction, is constructed in such a way that if someone fell off a bicycle on one side, a motorist approaching from the other side would be unaware of the accident. The local authority has therefore decided to lower the roundabout to minimize the risk of accidents in future.

Wicklow: After a capuchin monkey and greyhounds recently strayed onto the Arklow-Gorey bypass, the latest animal to take a wander onto the road was a cow, but she wasn't so lucky. Unfortunately a motorist came across the stray animal in the dark early last month and the cow did not survive the impact. The accident took place on a Saturday in the southbound lane on the Arklow side of the Kish bridge but it was Monday before the body, which had been dragged to the side of the dual carriageway, was removed by the council. The motorist was unhurt although the car involved was badly damaged.

Traveling People

Yes, the Irish Summer Can Be an Absolute Delight, But Don't Count Out Playtime in the Fall on the Island

By JUDY ENRIGHT
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

If you think there's nothing much to do in Ireland now that summer has ended, please do think again.

The island nation is bursting with fun and interesting events to delight and entertain every age and taste. You can attend a country fair, horse race, walking or jazz festival, find yourself a husband or wife at a matchmaking weekend, run a marathon, enter the conker championship, and so much more.

Ireland is just a fun place to be in the fall when all the summer tourists have departed and life is back to whatever the native Irish might consider "normal."

COUNTRY FAIRS

If you have even the slightest interest in animals and/or human nature, there is almost nothing more fun than an Irish country fair. Our two fall favorites are the Ballinasloe October Horse Fair and Festival in Co. Galway (Oct. 4-12) and the Maam Cross Fair, a one-day event at the Maam Cross crossroads in Connemara, on Tues., Oct. 28.

The Ballinasloe October Fair, off the N6 route between Dublin and Galway, is one of the oldest fairs in Ireland and was once the largest in Europe. The fair is now primarily equestrian, but in its earlier days it served as a major marketplace where farmers from the West of Ireland could sell their cattle and sheep to farmers from other parts of the country.

Equestrian events take place on Sun. and Mon., Oct. 5 and 6, and on Sat., Oct. 11. There will be music on the streets both weekends as well as street entertainers and a traditional "La Gaelach" on Sat., Oct. 11.

The fair annually draws thousands of visitors and is great fun to attend if you are anywhere near Ballinasloe.

The Maam Cross Fair is very horsey, too, with much of the focus on Connemara ponies, but it also draws sellers of all sorts of other animals from ferrets to goats, ducks, pups, chickens, sheep, and more. It's an all-day event that starts literally at the crack of dawn as assorted vendors — mostly farmers — jockey for the best place to tie their horses, donkeys or other animals for sale.

We went to the fair several years ago and stayed at Peacocke's Hotel, which is situated right there at the N59 crossroad and a perfect location for fairgoers. Those not lucky enough to have accommodation nearby have to walk for miles as cars and trucks line every road in every direction.

This year's fair will have trophies and cash prizes for the best filly foal and colt foal of registered parents, along with a cup for the best pony of the fair. Horseshoeing demonstrations and a horseshoe throwing competition will be included in the many attractions.

If you're anywhere near either fair this month, we recommend a visit for a stimulating, old world experience.



Trucks, cars, vans and people stretch as far as the eye can see on all the roads around Maam Cross on the day of the great October fair. (Judy Enright photo)

OTHER EVENTS

There are many other activities, festivals and events all over the country in the autumn;

- Looking for a life partner? Well, you're just in time for the last Lisdoonvarna Matchmaking Weekend of 2008, Sat. and Sun., Oct. 4 and 5. Go to the website at matchmakerireland.com/ to learn more about this time-honored Irish tradition.

- If you're visiting Tipperary, you might want to take in the Dromineer Literary Festival from Oct. 3 to Oct. 5. This festival invites all ages and members of the community to participate in writing competitions, workshops, readings and literary-related events in a weekend of activity in this beautiful lakeside village. For more information, visit the website at dromineerliteraryfestival.ie

- The 32d annual Kinsale Gourmet Festival is held in various restaurants in the Co. Cork waterfront town from Oct. 10 to Oct. 12. For more information and tickets to various events, visit the website: kinsalarestaurants.com/autumn.php

- The more energetic souls in the crowd will enjoy the Carlow Autumn Walking Festival on Oct. 11 and 12. The Autumn Walking Festival gives all levels of walkers the chance to enjoy the challenge of Carlow's mountain treks or the peace of its woodlands and forest parks. Join fellow walkers in the evening to listen to traditional Irish music. For more details, visit the website at carlowtourism.com

- In Clifden, Co. Galway, you can attend the Marconi Commemorative Weekend, from Oct. 17 to Oct. 19, which celebrates Guglielmo Marconi's 1907 transmission of the first transatlantic message to Newfoundland from his station in a bog outside Clifden. Marconi's message effectively launched the concept of telecommunication accessibility for everyone and one can only imagine what he would think today of the advances in communication since 1907. For more information, visit the website at clifden.ie and while you're

in Clifden, take in the five-day Connemara pony sale from Oct. 23 to Oct. 27. For more information, e-mail: info@connemara-ponysales.com

- A Samhain celebration will be held in Clonakilty, Co. Cork, from Oct. 24 to Oct. 28. Samhain is the ancient Celtic festival that celebrates the lives of the ancestors and "the night when the veil between this world and the next is thinnest." In celebration, Clonakilty and West Cork are hosting a four-day gathering with drum, dance and song workshops, and street performances over the Irish bank holiday weekend, culminating in a candle-lit procession and fire celebration on Monday evening. For more information, visit the website at wcie.ie or send an e-mail to info@wcie.ie

- Do you love jazz? If so, why not attend the 27th annual Guinness Jazz Festival in Cork City from Oct. 24 to Oct. 27? Billed as "Ireland's biggest and friendliest jazz festival," the event will attract more than 1,000 musicians from more than 30 countries who will entertain in some 80 venues citywide. For more information, visit the website at corkjazzfestival.com

- Oct. 27 might be almost Halloween to us, but to Dubliners, it's time for the Lifestyle Sports Adidas Dublin Marathon for 2008. This is the 29th year of the Dublin City Marathon, which attracts participants from all over the world to run through the historic streets of the Irish capital. To register and for more information, visit the website at: adidasdublinmarathon.ie and dublincitymarathon.ie

- And now for the conker championship! Called

"bullies" in Australia and "obbylonkers" in the UK, conkers (or *Aesculus hippocastanum*) are the hard fruits/nuts that fall from deciduous horse chestnut trees. The championship will be on Oct. 30 and, after seven years, has grown into a major festival. The Village Green in Freshford, Co. Kilkenny, where the championship is held, has 52 gorgeous horse chestnut trees that yield numerous conkers at this time of year. Game players pull a leather cord from a bag held by the referee. Each cord is attached to a conker, which has a hole drilled in it. You pull the cord and take whatever conker is on the cord. The rules say you must take whichever one you get. The object of the game is to break your partner's conker by smashing it with your own (and without breaking your own conker, of course.) While it sounds somewhat simple, there are many ways to be faulted or disqualified and organizers say it is a game of skill. All funds raised by entry fees benefit local charities. For more information, send an e-mail to: 3crows@eircom.net

TRAVELING

When you decide to visit Ireland, be sure to also visit your favorite travel agent and the Aer Lingus' website (aerlingus.com) for the latest direct flights and best ground deals. Flights and deals are also offered by US Airways (usairways.com) and several other airlines, but usually involve layovers that add several hours to the trip but also cut the cost.

For seasonal happenings, check out Tourism Ireland's website at discoverireland.com and Failte Ireland's site at discoverireland.ie.

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The Irish Language

by Philip Mac AnGhabhann

One of the more complex systems of Irish is the number -- **uimhir**. Many children say, "I can speak X" and then rattle off the numbers "One, two, three." It's really not that easy even in English. We have at least three sets of numbers depending on what you are doing.

Cardinal: "One, two, three, ..." when counting things, giving addresses, etc.

Ordinal: "First, second, third, ..." when listing things in order.

Thirdly, we have a separate set of numbers to describe people: "Single, duo, trio, quartette, quintet, sextet, septet, octet." Irish has all three of these plus some idiomatic usages. You have already learned the **cardinal** numbers. In this column we will review these. We will study other numbers and uses in the next several columns.

In Irish the **cardinal** numbers from one to nineteen are used when counting abstractly as in giving a telephone number, shoe sizes, etc. Notice that the prefix **a** is used in writing but not normally pronounced in speech unless it goes before a vowel (which also prefixes an **h**). The number "two" always causes **lenition** ("aspiration") of the following word(s) and you may see it in several forms, the most common is **dhá** when there is a **noun** following.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. a haon /uh heen/ | 11. a haon déag /uh heen eyg/ |
| 2. a do /doh/ | 12. a dó dhéag /doh geyg/ |
| 3. a trí /tree/ | 13. a trí déag /tree jeyg/ |
| 4. a ceathair /kahr/ | 14. a ceathair déag /kahr jeyg/ |
| 5. a cúig /kooig/ | 15. a cúig déag /kooig jeyg/ |
| 6. a sé /shey/ | 16. a sé déag /shey jeyg/ |
| 7. a seacht /shahkt/ | 17. a seacht déag /shahkt jeyg/ |
| 8. a hocht /uh hawkht/ | 18. a hocht déag /hawkht jeyg/ |
| 9. a naoi /neel/ | 19. a naoi déag /nee jeyg/ |
| 10. a deich /jey/ | 20. fiche /fyee/ |

Did you notice the word **déag** became **dhéag** in the number "twelve"? The number "two", **dó**, always **lenites** ("aspirates") any word following -- **a dó dhéag** "twelve" and **a dó chúpan**, "two cups."

There are five things to remember when counting nouns:

1. It is redundant to say, "One cup - **a haon cúpan**." The Irish will use **amháin** /uh-WAHN/, "only" as in **amháin cúpan**, "only a cup."
2. Nouns are singular when using numbers, not "six cups" but "six cup." You might remember some American dialects still say, "Two ton of coal; fourteen board foot of lumber."
3. The numbers from "one" to "six" **lenite** ("aspirate") the beginning consonant of the noun -- **trí chúpan**.
4. The numbers from "seven" to "nine" **eclipse** the beginning consonant of the noun -- **a hocht gcúpan**.
5. When counting "things" above "ten" -- except people -- the name of the "item", goes between the first and second number. It is always in the singular as if English had to say, "Three cup teen" for "Thirteen cups", **Trí chúpan dhéag**.

There will be a number of special uses of the cardinal numbers, many associated with "Telling time" or **idioms**. We will learn these one or two at a time as we go along.

For example, when counting one to ten "things", Irish puts them before the noun -- **A trí traentacha** "Three trains." However, when referring to "time" the word for "train" becomes **singular** and the number follows.

A trí treantacha "three trains"
Trean a trí "the three (o'clock) train"

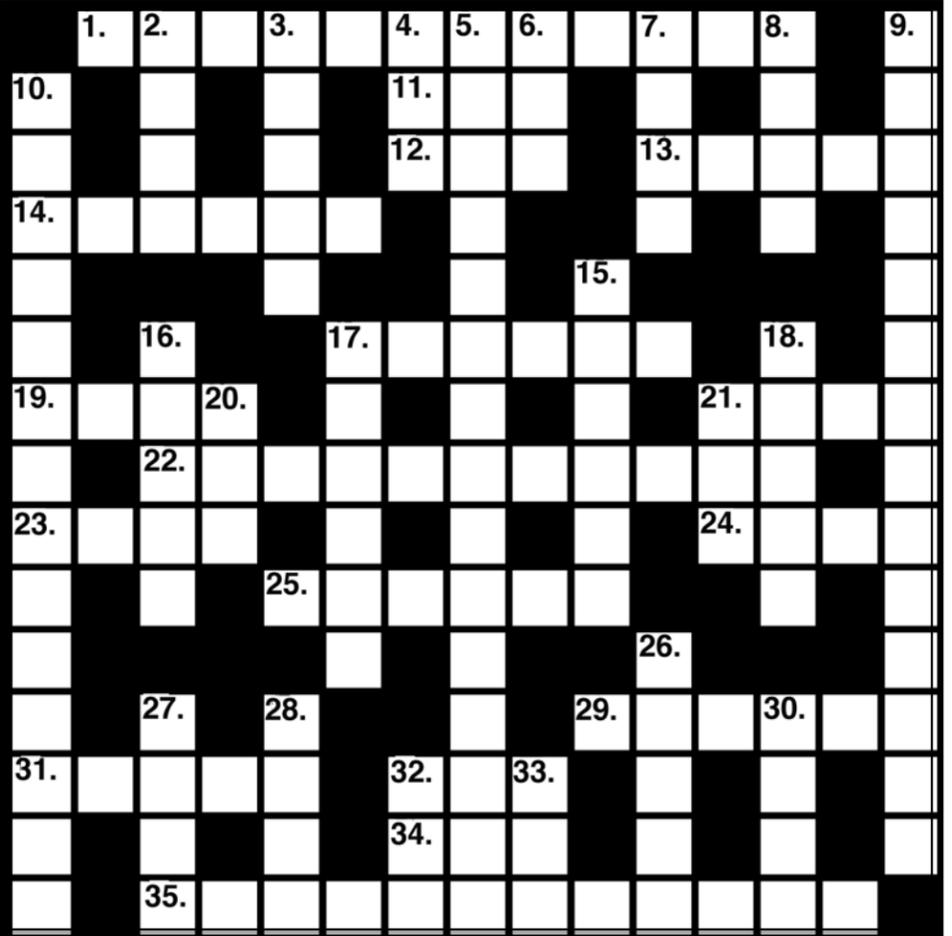
Let's see how well you can apply these rules about numbers as well as reviewing some of the things you have already learned. Translate these sentences in to Irish:

- (1.) "Liam has two boats." (2.) "She drank three cups of tea." (3.) "I'm well, thank you." (4.) "Are there twelve cars outside?" (5.) "Do you have two coats?" (6.) "No. I don't have two coats. I have only one coat." (7.) Sean and Nora will be married on Saturday." (8.) "Here is the 'Five O'clock Train.'" (9.) "Who was there on Thursday." (10.) "Did you see my shoes?" (11.) "This is my son, Liam." (12.) "Didn't you have a cup?" (13.) "I have fourteen cups in the kitchen." (14.) "My number is 'nine, three, one, six, five, eight, four'."

Answers: (1.) **Tá a sé bád ag Liam.** (2.) **D'ól sí trí chúpan tae.** (3.) **Tá mé go maith, go raibh maith agat.** (4.) **An bhfuil a dhá charr dhéag amuigh?** (5.) **An bhfuil a dó chóta agat?** (6.) **Níl. Níl mé a dó chóta agam. Tá cóta amhain agam.** (7.) **Beidh Seán agus Nóra ag pósadh Dé Sathairn.** (8.) **Tá an trean a cúig anseo.** (9.) **Cé bhí ansin Déadaoin?** (10.) **An fhaca tú mo bhrógan?** (11.) **Seo mo mhac, Liam.** (12.) **Nach raibh chúpan agat?** (13.) **Tá ceithre chúpan déag agam sa chistin.** (14.) **Tá mo huimhir "a naoi, a trí, a haon, a sé, a cúig, a hocht, a ceathair."**

CELTIC CROSS WORDS

The Irish crosswords are a service of an Ireland-based website which provides Irish Family Coats of Arms by email. You are invited to visit www.bigwood.com/heraldry



IRELAND IN CROSSWORDS ©-bigwood.com

ACROSS

1. A cell dustbin goes astray in Irish capital stronghold wherein is St. Patrick's Hall used for many state functions. (6,6)
11. Electron deficient learner fails to start jungle king. (3)
12. Conditional return of plant container. (3)
13. Wants to be born a detective sergeant. (5)
14. I moult badly in the last month in beautiful Timoleague. (6)
17. Did the cow sound colourful when the boat was tied up? (6)
19. "You write with ease, to show -- breeding. But easy writing's vile hard reading." Sheridan. (4)
21. Ardferit rekindling involves long migratory march. (4)
22. All one's bail (anag.) Galway horse town with a well-known castle adjoining Garbally park. (11)
23. "There was -- ground where a man might linger, For a week or two for time was not our master." Ewan McColl -The Travelling People. (4)
24. Noble but not quite on time. (4)
25. Cut back and see where the zloty goes round. (6)
29. This do suit, up in workplace. (6)
31. "Where fierce indignation can no longer tear his --." Epitaph of Jonathan Swift. (5)
32. Drunkard returns to south. (3)
34. Soft approach by United Nations initially is a wordy joke. (3)
35. Wants west tor. (anag.) Tyrone village near Coal-island and seat of Viscount Charlemont. (12)

DOWN

2. One nut I cracked. (4)
3. Peruvian pack animal seen coming back through Tuam all alone. (5)
4. Upset trash can to find the means of writing. (3)
5. Oh, R.U.C. tour ban row. (anag.) North Wexford seaside resort near Gorey with a 2 mile sandy beach. (8,7)
6. "Go to the -- thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise." Proverbs Chap. 6 verse 6 (3)
7. Sound of Ireland's first republican? (4)
8. "Nothing is -- done in this world until men are

9. Elf room passkey. (anag.) Galway beauty spot near Letterfrack with 3 lakes and a famous abbey. (4,2,8)
10. No, tough, many can be broken in Ulster region of many lakes, known as the MacMahon country, . (6,8)
15. Engaged in banter seated around. (6)
16. Brute dug up the root crop. (5)
17. Grand let in prosperous Cork town, known as the 'Bath of Ireland' where Thomas Davies was born. (6)
18. "No, there's nothing half so sweet in life As love's young --." Moore. (5)
20. Made haste along in Maghera navigation. (3)
21. Tip of the separate legend! (3)
26. A contrived event will put a stop to growth. (5)
27. Sam's coming over for the celebration. (4)
28. Southern, yet upset about what's causing a pain in the eye. (4)
30. Tie in the back room of the hospital. (4)
32. Sap rising in Kerry resort four miles west of Tralee, with mineral springs. (3)
33. Take us out of 26 down with explosive result initially. (3)

(Puzzle solution on page 31)

Irish Sayings ...

- "People live in each other's shelter."
"The world would not make a racehorse of a donkey."
"You are not a fully fledged sailor unless you have sailed under full sail," "and you have not built a wall unless you have rounded a corner."
"There is no strength without unity."
"You must live with a person to know a person. If you want to know me come and live with me."
"Praise the young and they will blossom"
"The raggy colt often made a powerful horse."
"Age is honorable and youth is noble."
"Youth does not mind where it sets its foot."
"Both your friend and your enemy think you will never die."

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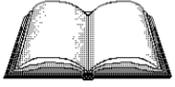
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Boston Irish Reporter Book Review

Whether “Banville” Or “Black,” The Result Is Riveting

In 2005 Booker Prize-Winner John Banville’s Latest Foray – The Lemur -- into the Mystery Genre, Readers with Literary or Popular Tastes Alike Will Find Much to Savor

By PETER F. STEVENS
BIR STAFF

What happens when an immensely talented literary novelist and Booker Prize-winner turns his skills to thrillers/crime novels noir? When that novelist is Ireland’s John Banville, the result is dark and fast-paced prose that still retains every bit of his formidable command of his craft. Of course, if one wants to read these compelling and entertaining novels, he or she will have to ask for author Benjamin Black – Banville’s pseudonym for these books that might never earn the full critical acclaim of *The Sea*, which earned him his 2005 Booker Prize, but that have earned him a new legion of detective-novel aficionados in addition to the serious fiction lovers who already revere his skills.

In 2005, the BIR interviewed Banville shortly after he won the Booker. He described both his elation and shock that he had outpaced a stellar field that included another gifted Irish novelist, Sebastian Barry. Barry has just been shortlisted for the 2008 Booker for his magnificent novel *The Sacred Scripture* (please see BIR interview with him in last month’s issue). Banville told the BIR that all he could think about when his name was announced as the Booker winner was that “every other contender hates me right now.” With the success and acclaim his Benjamin Black novels have garnered, such as a nomination for the prestigious Edgar Award, perhaps Banville should amend his statement to include other writers of mystery and detective novels.

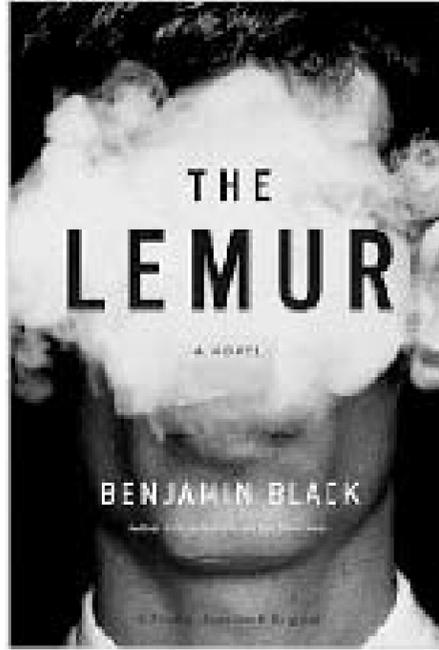
Banville, unlike many esteemed writers who use a pseudonym to cover their tracks in a departure from so-called

“serious” fiction, made no attempt to deny that he is Benjamin Black. He has said stated in numerous public forums that he didn’t want his real name to somehow make it seem as though he was springing some kind of a highbrow prank on unsuspecting lovers of thrillers. He makes no apology for his love of the detective genre and his respect for other gifted practitioners of the mystery novel.

His first mystery, *Christine Falls*, was lauded in this space as a riveting and intricately plotted novel. Since that debut in the genre, which marked readers’ introduction to his fictional 1950s Dublin sleuth, Quirke, Banville has published a second critically praised Quirke novel – *The Silver Swan*. Now, with his new novel, *The Lemur*, Banville/Black introduces readers to modern-day New Yorker John Glass.

On the surface, Glass should be a reasonably contented man. A successful journalist, he takes on the potentially lucrative project of writing the authorized biography of his father-in-law, Big Bill Mulholland, a Murdoch-esque media titan and erstwhile CIA agent. Glass delves into the project inside a spacious and well-appointed office in one of Manhattan’s largest landmarks, Mulholland Tower. Most nights, he leaves the tower and returns home to his wife, Big Bill’s daughter.

Glass sometimes longs for the fast-paced life of his journalistic days, but finds the book interesting enough – until his researcher begins to turn up some unsavory stories about big Bill and his family. Glass fittingly dubs the “shifty” young researcher “The Lemur.” With keen detail and foreshadowing, Ban-



ville/Black describes the first meeting of the pair:

“The researcher was a very tall, very thin young man with a head too small for his frame and an Adam’s apple the size of a golf ball. He wore rimless spectacles the lenses of which were almost invisible, the shine of the glass giving an extra luster to his large, round, slightly bulging black eyes. A spur of blond hair sprouted from his chin, and his brow, high and domed, was pitted with acne scars. His hands were slender and pearly – pale, with long, tapering fingers – a girl’s hands, or at least the hands a girl should have. Even though he was

sitting down, the crotch of his baggy jeans sagged halfway to his knees. His none too clean T-shirt bore the legend *Life Sucks and Then You Die*. He looked about seventeen but must be, John Glass guessed, in his late twenties, at least. With that long neck and little head and those big, shiny eyes, he bore a strong resemblance to one of the more exotic rodents, though for the moment Glass could not think which one.

“His name was Dylan Riley. Of course, Glass thought, he would be a Dylan.

“So,” Riley said, “you’re married to Big Bill’s daughter.”

Soon the the assistant uncovers material that could bring down the Mulholland clan and derail Glass’s own comfortable life, the writer begins to grapple with shifting loyalties, moral questions, and murky truths and lies. Events take a decidedly darker and dangerous turn with the murder of “The Lemur.”

Glass becomes obsessed with finding out everything that the victim had uncovered about Mulholland and his associates, with heading off scandalous secrets before they become public, and with preventing any more bodies from piling up. In *The Lemur*, Banville has put all of his stunning skills to work in crafting an absorbing thriller rife with intrigue, horrific secrets, enough twists and turns to satisfy mystery lovers, and a well-drawn cast of characters. Once again, he has served notice that he is a writer to reckoned with in literary and mystery fiction alike.

The Lemur, by Benjamin Black, Picador, paperback, ISBN 978-0312428082, 144 pages, \$13.

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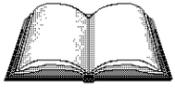
Nibal Harati, MD

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BOSTON IRISH REPORTER BOOK BRIEFS

REVIEWS OF BOOKS RECENTLY PUBLISHED IN IRELAND, EDITED BY PAULINE FERRIE

The Poison Throne By Celine Kiernan



Although written for young adult readers Celine Kiernan's first novel will, I am sure, enjoy a much wider readership. The first of "The Moorehawke Trilogy," it tells the tale of a young girl and her father and their attempts to lead a normal, and safe, life in a fourteenth-century kingdom set somewhere in southern Europe. The characters are few, but they are drawn with such exactitude, with such sympathy for their predicaments, that they linger on in the reader's mind when the final chapter has been read.

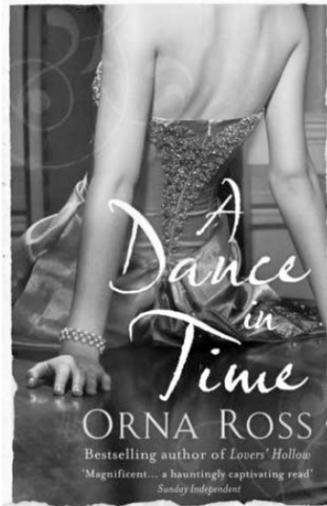
Wynter Moorehawke and her father, Lorcan, both carpenters, have arrived back at the court of King Jonathon to find it a changed place, a place of intrigue and torture. The bond between father and daughter is established with sentiment but without sentimentality, and the detail of the day-to-day lives of the young girl and her ailing father reveal an amount of research on the part of the author. The apprentice system is fully explained not in dry paragraphs but by describing Wynter's first encounter with apprentice carpenters whom she must direct. The food eaten, the clothes and social customs and the hierarchical nature of court life are described so vividly that they become a history lesson of themselves.

However the author has also dwelt at length on the violence inherent in fourteenth-century life, the guilt by association, the terrible tortures and beatings,

but all are slotted into a plot that is almost entirely credible; even the talking cat and the ghosts become perfectly acceptable under Kiernan's treatment. The dichotomy of the king's character, which has seen him almost destroy both of his sons, is the catalyst for the unfolding events, with the heir Alberon having disappeared totally and Razi forced reluctantly into his place. Add the character of Christopher Garron, introduced to the court by Razi and used by both King Jonathon and Razi to secure their own ends, and the mysterious "Bloody Machine", engineered by Lorcan when he was seventeen but now in the hands of the lost heir Alberon, and the stage is set for the continuing development of this most absorbing chronicle. With "The Poison Throne" not due for publication until this month, I trust it will not be too long before Book II, "The Crowded Shadows", becomes available.

O'Brien Press, ISBN 978-1-84717-110-8, 368 pages.

A Dance in Time By Orna Ross



Two sets of mothers and daughters, one real and the other fictional, set almost a century apart form the basis for this second novel by Orna Ross. And at more than 600 pages this is not pool-side book, but a book to be read with attention and savoured. Iseult (Izzy) Mulcahy lives with her daughter Maya, known as Star, in California. A writer who can never seem to find the time for her writing, she is intrigued

by another Iseult, daughter of Maud Gonne McBride, and is attempting to write a book about her. Izzy's fascination with Iseult was fuelled by a visit to her Laragh home in the company of her father, who had been nursed by both Maud and Iseult Gonne during the First World War.

And this is just the start of the very aptly named "Dance in Time", for the story weaves back and forth, and in doing so it examines the complex relationships between both Maud and Iseult, and Izzy and Star. Real figures are introduced into the narrative, as they must be in telling the story of the Gonne mother and daughter, and we learn the details of their relationships with WB Yeats, Major John McBride, and Iseult's father Lucien Millevoye. Izzy's life runs in a strange parallel with that of her namesake; she discovers that she, too, was born out of wedlock. And both women have difficult relationships with their fathers, whether a true father in Izzy's case or both father and stepfather in that of Iseult. But there is a shifting of the generations when it comes to aligning the mothers and daughters with a romantic suitor. For while it is Iseult and her mother who have a common admirer in Yeats, and each is aware of his ardour for the other, for Izzy in the 1980s it comes as a shocking revelation that the love of her life turns out also to be her daughter's soulmate.

The progression of the story can seem a little disjointed; it is not always easy for the reader to switch from late twentieth century California and Ireland to early twentieth century France and England, but the writing is of sufficient quality to encourage a perseverance that is amply rewarded in the final chapters when the true strength of the women emerges. This is an extraordinarily deeply researched novel constructed with some complexity that explores family relationships from an original standpoint.

Penguin Ireland, ISBN 978-1-844-88053-9, 606 pages.

Open-handed By Chris Binchy



This is not a book to approach when one is tired, for identifying the separate characters initially takes some concentration, but once these are established in the reader's mind the book flows and becomes compulsive reading. Chris Binchy has caught the zeitgeist of the dying days of the Celtic Tiger as his characters and scenarios reflect those found regularly in our newspapers over the last few years. Irish people and immigrants, all on the make in their diverse ways, reach conclusions that vary from unimagined riches to apparent loss of life.

The immigrants, Victor, Agnieszka, and Marcin, all have dreams of a better life, with two craving the long-held immigrant desire to return home. Marcin, a graduate, lives in hope of landing a decent job but keeps body and soul together by working as a hotel night porter. Agnieszka falls into the trap experienced by an unknown number of immigrants, that of prostitution, albeit of the high class and discreet variety. And Victor, the least practical of the three, is undone by his inability to control his innate violence. The author sets these three in their diverse dilemmas with a subtle touch, while at the same time achieving rounded characters, as he also does with the two Irishmen, Sylvester and Dessie. These two have a loose, if committed, relationship based on a common problem, and they represent the kind of property deals that are the backbone of the current tribunals. However, the eastern European connection is maintained with a shady property deal in Poland.

Binchy is equally skilled at conveying the physical fabric of Dublin, "the dirty patchwork of the road tattooed with the memories of significant events," as he is the character of those who become involved in public life in Ireland: "He's corrupt, unprincipled, in it for himself..... He's a small-time crook, happy to facilitate the big-time operators, turned on by the idea that they need him."

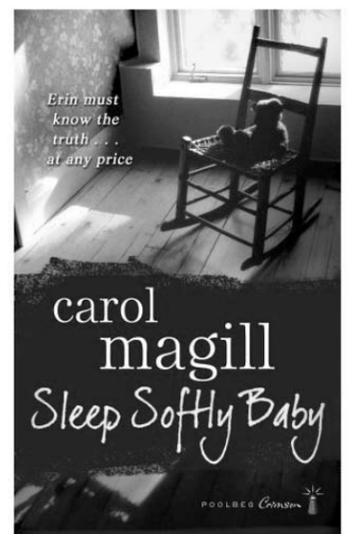
The boom in overseas property, money-laundering, the use of vulnerable people by the strong, not to say bullying, are the themes of this examination of an Ireland that we can all recognize. And the merit of the unfolding story is underlined by the way in which the lives of the five characters intersect. Binchy has caught perfectly Dublin as the good times begin to wane.

Penguin Ireland, ISBN 978-1-844-88172-7, 257 pages.

Sleep Softly Baby By Carol Magill

A most unpromising start almost led me to abandon this book, but what appeared to be a run-of-the-mill story about a girl from the provinces making it big in Dublin turned into a psychological thriller that succeeded in capturing my attention. Erin O'Neill moves from Offaly to Dublin to further her journalistic career, leaving behind not only the provincial life but also her fiancé, the controlling and staid Luke. Things appear to be running very well in her new job and she makes a success of her first assignment, an interview with property tycoon Charlie Kavanagh. But this is just the beginning of a series of life-changing events that become embroiled in the increasingly dark ambience of Belvedere, the Kavanagh home.

Magill's story is woven with such skill, the psychological warfare portrayed with such authenticity, that the reader is left in some doubt as to whether Erin, who has married Charlie's son Harry in Las Vegas, is really being persecuted by someone in the Kavanagh family, or if she is actually suffering a nervous breakdown after the death of her baby. The character of Harry's mother, Caroline, is particularly strongly delineated, a quality not always sustained in many of the others, including Harry himself; overall the female characters are more credible than the male. However the author amply compensates for



this by the detailed descriptions of Erin's thought processes as she rides out the nightmare of bereavement, suspicion, and ultimate confinement in a psychiatric hospital, and the attempts by those closest to her to allay her fears. Both Belvedere, and Harry and Erin's new home, Larchfield, play a significant part in the developing plot, engendering a constant feeling of what might have been if only Erin and Harry had felt able to move to their new house.

The revelations in the final chapters do not come as a total surprise but nonetheless the loose threads are satisfactorily tied. Erin's suspicions are vindicated and, although the story cannot end happily ever after given the fact that she and Harry have lost their daughter, it certainly concludes on an upbeat note.

Poolbeg, ISBN 978-1-84223-359-7, 470 pages.

Na Comharsana Nua -- Éamonn Ó Loingsigh Reviewed by Máire Ní Fhearaigh



In this new novel for learners of Irish, Éamonn Ó Loingsigh tells the story of Liam and Siobhán Ó Maoilmhín, a young couple recently returned home to Galway from America. Now in their dream house, they are living a life they have always wanted. Everything is perfect until their new neighbours, Learaí and Deborah Ó Duíll move in to the area. With their arrival things start to go badly wrong for Siobhán and Liam and life becomes unbearable.

The novel serves as a useful tool for those interested in improving their understanding of the Irish language. The author uses simple and clear language that makes it less daunting for the reader to start and actually complete the book. Any word that the reader may find difficult can be found in the helpful glossary.

The story itself is an easy

(Continued on page 30)

Bestsellers in Ireland

Paperback Fiction

1. No Time for Goodbye, Linwood Barclay - Orion
2. The Deportees, Roddy Doyle - Vintage
3. Goodnight, Beautiful, Dorothy Koomson - Sphere
4. Where the Heart Is, Mairead O'Driscoll - Poolbeg
5. Glitz, Louise Bagshawe - Headline

Paperback Non-fiction

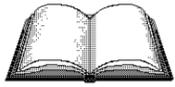
1. Angels in My Hair, Lorna Byrne - Century
2. Eat, Pray, Love, Elizabeth Gilbert - Bloomsbury
3. My Booky Wook, Russell Brand - Hodder
4. Ma, He Sold Me for a Few Cigarettes, Martha Long - Mainstream
5. The Chairman of the Boards: No 1, Eamonn Coughlan - Red Rock

Hardback Fiction

1. Someone Special, Sheila O'Flanagan - Headline
2. Saving Grace, Ciara Geraghty - Hodder Headline Ireland
3. This Charming Man, Marian Keyes - Michael Joseph
4. Do You Want to Know a Secret? Claudia Carroll - Transworld Ireland
5. Between the Sheets, Colette Caddle - Simon & Schuster

Hardback Non-fiction

1. The Secret, Rhonda Byrne - Simon & Schuster
2. Irish History: Minipedia, Seamus MacAnnaid - Parragon
3. Munster: Champions of Europe, Irish Examiner - Gill & Macmillan
4. Your 15th Club, Bob Rotella - Simon & Schuster
5. Life with My Sister Madonna, Christopher Ciccone and Wen Leigh - Simon & Schuster



BOSTON IRISH REPORTER BOOK BRIEFS

REVIEWS OF BOOKS RECENTLY PUBLISHED IN IRELAND, EDITED BY PAULINE FERRIE

(Continued from page 29)

read, which is exactly what a book for learners should be. Although easy, it has enough suspense to keep readers of all ages interested and wondering how Liam and Siobhán are going to escape the impact of this disruptive couple. It's a book that will encourage readers to continue reading books through Irish.

Thaitin an leabhar seo liom agus táim ag tnúth le aon úrscéal nua ón údar seo.

Cló Iar-Chonnachta, ISBN 978-1-905560-28-8.

Hope in New York City By Cynthia G. Neale

Cynthia G. Neale's sequel to "The Irish Dresser" continues to capture the hopes and disappoint-



ments of the McCabe family, who escaped to America from the ravages of the Great Hunger. The reality of life in New York for Irish immigrants, despised by Americans and American-born Irish alike, is vividly portrayed; one can almost smell the dirt and decay in which the McCabes are forced to live. But the determination of Nora to first better their lot and ultimately to return

to her home in Ireland is a central theme.

The narrative portrays the hordes of different nationalities who inhabit the lower echelons of New York society, having so much in common but at that stage in their history having little interaction with each other. But dominating the story is fourteen-year-old Nora McCabe and through her eyes, Neale has drawn a vivid picture of the physical and emotional challenges facing Irish immigrants to America in the nineteenth century.

White Mane Kids, ISBN 978-1-57249-387-2, 170 pages.

Finding Your Chicago Irish By Sharon Shea Bossard

The author of "Finding My Irish," chronicling her search for the story of her



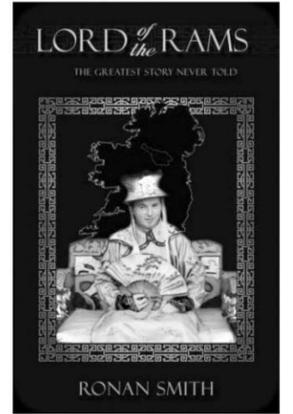
grandparents' emigration from Ireland to America, Sharon Shea Bossard has now acceded to a request from her publisher to write a guide to Irish Chicago. And she has certainly compiled a very comprehensive guide to everything connected with Ireland available to those finding themselves in Chicago, either as residents or visitors. Theatre,

film, restaurants, bars, festivals and even dogs are included. There are at least two references to Mrs. O'Leary's famous animal, with the Chicago Cultural Festival featuring an event entitled "Did the Cow Do It?" and a dinner show at the Milk Pail Restaurant entitled "When Irish Cows Are Smiling." Chapters on citizenship and genealogy will have a particular interest for Stateside readers, but "Finding Your Chicago Irish" as a whole would be a very useful handbook for a visitor to the Windy City.

Lake Claremont Press, ISBN 978-189312137-9, 198 pages.

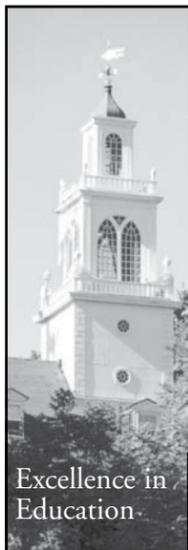
Lord of the Rams By Ronan Smith

Subtitled "The Greatest Story Never Told," this could be a very irritating book if penned by someone less well able to distance himself from his own story. The Rams in question is the author's own nickname and the book tells the potentially mundane story of his growing up in a rural area of Co. Cavan, his journey through primary and



secondary school, years at Waterford Institute of Technology, and in his first job in Dublin. After the formative years the narrative seems to consist of a series of drunken episodes involving Rams and his friends, often leading to violence of a fairly innocent sort, if that is possible, and humorous incidents that tend to rely heavily on bodily functions for their punch lines. Ronan Smith has told the story of the first quarter century of his life in the third person and, while it is a touch self-indulgent, it is written with sufficient verve to hold the attention of the reader to the final philosophical thought.

Trafford, ISBN 1-4251-6484-6, 222 pages.



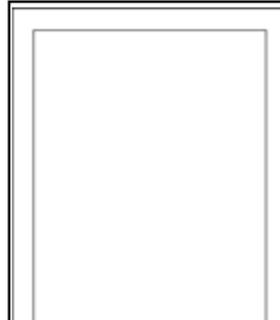
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PUZZLE SOLUTION FROM PAGE 22

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TIARA's Mission Alive and Well on Land and Sea!

BY MARY E. CHOPPA
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

TIARA (The Irish Ancestral Research Association) kicked off its 2008-09 meeting season at the ICONs Festival on Fri., Sept. 12. Despite the rain, there was a decent attendance at the festival that night, with some 60 hearty individuals braving the rain to stop in at the Genealogy Tent. Sean O'Duill of Dublin gave an insightful and humorous talk about death and burial customs in Ireland.

Anniversary Fete -- TIARA celebrated its 25th Anniversary during the summer with a Reunion at Bentley College's LaCava Center. Over 100 members and guests were treated to a day of lectures on Irish history, culture, and of course, genealogy. The speakers for the day included Morgan Lake Adams, Marie Daly, David Mishkin, Brian O'Donovan, and Catherine B. Shannon. Member exhibits were also featured and we were treated to a wonderful luncheon talk by Irish Consul General David Barry.

The occasion also marked the inaugural presentation of an award recognizing the unique contributions by volunteers to TIARA. Five of TIARA's past presidents (Marie Daly, Sheila FitzPatrick, Bernie Couming, Judy Barrett, and Janis Duffy) were honored with the An Capall Ban award. Named for the magical white horse of Irish mythology, the award recognizes the talents and selfless contributions given by volunteers to help others cross the divide between the known and unknown in searching for our Irish ancestors.

BIR Booknotes

The Children's Book Festival 2008 will run throughout this month in Ireland, with more than 1,500 events expected to take place nationwide to celebrate children's books and encourage reading amongst children and teenagers. Now in its eighteenth year, the Festival was to be launched on October 1 in Dublin after which a series of readings, workshops, performances, quizzes and other activities will take place nationwide. This year's program will see a specific focus on connecting with teenage readers, while new initiatives include the participation of Cumann Scribhneoiri Óga is Úra na Gaeilge in writing projects with children from their local area. ... "Women and Words," a six-part series celebrating women writers began airing on RTE Lyric FM in late summer. Already featured on the Saturday afternoon programs have been **Anne Enright and Eavan Boland, and among other writers to be featured are Jennifer Johnston, Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, Maeve Binchy and Marie Jones.**

A new book, "Soupers and Jumpers, The Protestant Missions in Connemara, 1848 to 1937", written by Mayo author **Miriam Moffitt**, was launched by Minister **Eamon Ó Cúiv** in Foyle's Hotel Clifden on September 6. The book outlines the operations of the missions, detailing the establishment of sixty-four bible-schools, four orphanages, and the erection of fourteen Protestant churches throughout Connemara. The book, funded by the Heritage Council, includes an appendix containing the registers of the Church of Ireland parishes in Connemara from 1848 to 1869. Moffitt's book will be launched in Dublin on October 10.

The award was also presented to recently-retired TIARA Newsletter editor, Carlyn Cox. For the past 14 years, Carlyn has created a newsletter that is both a source of information and a forum for members to share their stories of family research successes and failures.

Next meeting: It will take place on Sat., Oct. 25, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at The Chelmsford Public Library. The public is invited to hear two genealogists, Mary Ellen Grogan and George B. Handran, speak on the topic: Solving Problems in Irish Genealogy: Resources and Methods. Mary Ellen Grogan is a professional genealogist based in Boston. She specializes in Massachusetts records and Irish research. As Vice-President of TIARA, she has organized TIARA's annual research trips to Ireland since 2005. George B. Handran makes frequent research trips to Ireland, lectures and writes on Irish subjects. He edited and published "Townlands in Poor Law Unions, A Reprint of the Pamphlets from the General Register Office."

He participated in the development of the index to Griffith's Valuation with Enneclan and the National Library of Ireland.



L to R An Capall Ban winners Marie Daly, Sheila FitzPatrick, Bernie Couming, Carlyn Cox, Judy Barrett, Janis Duffy with TIARA President Mary Choppa

Salt Lake City trip -- Janis Duffy will be leading a trip to Salt Lake City in October that will provide members with the opportunity to fulfill the Irish genealogist's No. 1 rule to live by: Do as much as can at home before crossing the Atlantic.

Last but certainly not least, TIARA's anniversary year will

be capped off in January 2009 with an Irish Family History Cruise. There are a limited number of cabins still available. Only those folks who would enjoy an excellent three-day course on how to do your Irish genealogy while touring the Eastern Caribbean for 7 days/8 nights should look into this!

Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines is offering a special group rate for TIARA but you have to sign up with a specific travel agent. See the website --- tiara.ie. -- for more information on how to get the special rates.

Mary E. Choppa is the president of TIARA.

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