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BOSTON IRISH REPORTER

Boston's hometown journal of Irish culture.
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'God have mercy on us'

Boston will be the host city in the United States this May for the fourth official International Commemoration of the Famine. Local events will coincide with Ireland's annual National Famine Commemoration, set to be held in Drogheda, Co. Louth. Today the BIR begins a four-part series on the Great Famine ("An Gorta Mór") of 1845-1852.

By Peter F. Stevens
BIR Staff

In the late summer and early autumn of 1845, the first signs of a cataclysm materialized in parts of Ireland. While many histories of the Great Famine commence with the year 1846, historian Thomas Gallagher writes in his masterful work *Paddy's Lament*, "The year before [1845] had been a near disaster; a disease had attacked the growing [potato] plants without warning and destroyed almost half of them. The people had suffered, but most had been saved by their long apprenticeship to scarcity and want, by salvaging what they could and making that do."

A County Cork farmer noted that same summer: "A mist rose up out of the sea….When the fog lifted, you could begin to see the potato stalks lying over as if the life was gone out of them. And that was the beginning of the great trouble and the famine that destroyed Ireland."

In the spring of 1846, everyone from the richest landowners to the lowly tenant farmers was breathing a collective sigh of relief at the sight of healthy potato stalks blanketing some two million acres with the plant's distinctive dark-green leaves and purple blossoms. The blight that had turned so much of the 1845 crop into a rancid, reeking mess did not reappear in spring 1846. Even when the disease flared in the potato beds of a few Cork farms in early June, it did not appear to spread and caused scant damage.

Still, farmers and gentry alike nervously began

A starving boy and girl in Cork hoping to find a potato.
Illustrated London News - 1847

to inspect the stalks numerous times each day and Irish nerves grew edgier as July unfolded and some of the strangest, most extreme summer weather people had ever seen engulfed the island. The mornings started out dry and mild

(Continued on page 11)

Sen. Kerry seeks halt to US/British probe of BC archive interviews

By Bill Forry and Melissa Tabeek
Boston Irish Reporter

The British government's controversial attempt to seize records from a Boston College oral history collection related to the conflict in Northern Ireland scored another court victory on Tues., Jan. 24, when federal Judge William Young dismissed a lawsuit that sought to block the records' release.

US Senator John Kerry jumped into the fray that same week, urging Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to halt the federal government's cooperation with the British probe.

Kerry, who is the chairman of the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee, warned that the unfolding controversy threatened to undermine the intent of the Good Friday Accords. "It would be a tragedy if this process were to upset the delicate balance that has kept the peace and allowed for so much progress in the last fourteen years," Kerry wrote in a letter dated Jan. 23. "I would urge you to work with the British authorities to reconsider the path they have chosen and revoke their request."

The British government initiated a legal process to gain access to Boston College's files last spring. Acting through an existing treaty agreement between the US and the UK, British prosecutors secured a federal subpoena to compel university officials to turn over specific tapes and transcripts from interviews conducted for the Belfast Project. BC initially fought the subpoena in US courts, but did supply the documents after losing an appeal in December.

Then Judge Young dismissed the lawsuit brought by the two men— Anthony McIntyre and Ed Moloney— who had conducted the interviews on BC's behalf beginning in 2001. Young ruled that neither McIntyre or Moloney had any standing to seek to block the release of the tapes, adding that the treaty provisions required Boston College to comply with the subpoena.

McIntrye's wife, Carrie Twomey, was on hand for the Jan. 24 hearing — which coincidentally was held at Boston College Law School. In an interview later

(Continued on page 11)

Taoiseach is bound for Boston

Ireland's Taoiseach, Enda Kenny will be spending a few days in Boston this month, his first visit to the Hub since his election as prime minister last year.

The Irish leader will address at a forum at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government on Feb. 16, and then make several appearances across the city over the course of the the next day. On Kenny's schedule for the 17th, is an 8 o'clock breakfast at the Boston Harbor Hotel on Feb. 17 that will be hosted by the Irish American Partnership,

ENDA KENNY
Whirlwind tour Feb. 16,17

and an early evening reception hosted by the Irish Consulate, Enterprise Ireland, and Irish Network/Boston at the Seaport Hotel.

From the Famine era to the present-day

Second in a series on the Charitable Irish Society of Boston.

By Catherine B. Shannon

The first two decades after the famine were extremely difficult times for the new immigrants in Boston and indeed for those already resident in the city. The huge influx of 130,00 Irish immigrants in the years between 1846 and 1853 provoked a resurgence of nativist hostility against Boston's Irish population.

The famine immigrants were poorer, less skilled, and often in poor health compared to earlier immigrants, and their presence caused resentment not only among the Boston's native working class, but also among the city's governing elite, who attributed the rising rates of crime, disease, and poor-relief costs to the arrival of the Irish.

It was in this context that the anti-immigrant, anti-Catholic anti-Irish Know-Nothing movement in the form of the American Party swept all the state electoral offices in 1854. No public officials were invited to or attended the society's annual dinners in the 1850s and a few of its wealthier Protestant members left the organization. The society gained only 30 new members in this decade, reaching 130 by 1860. Most famine immigrants were struggling simply to survive the effects of miserable housing, disease, unemployment and poverty, and few joined the organization.

Nonetheless, there were some notable members during this era, including the *Boston Pilot* editor Patrick Donahoe, the future first Catholic mayor of Boston, Hugh O'Brien, and the philanthropist Andrew Carney, whose generosity was crucial to the establishment of Carney Hospital, Boston College, and the construction of the Church of the Immaculate Conception on Harrison Avenue. Donahoe, a fierce critic of the Know-Nothing

The Charitable Irish Society of Boston (CIS), the oldest Irish organization in the Americas, will celebrate its 275th anniversary on March 17 with a gala dinner at the Copley Fairmont Hotel in Boston.

(Continued on page 22)

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The Contract: What's in it for Our Kids?

We need BPS Education Reform Now!

Nothing is more important to a community than the quality of its public schools.

The Boston United for Students Coalition represents you by advocating for major reforms in the teachers' contract being negotiated now between the Boston Public Schools and Boston Teachers Union. Talks have been ongoing for 20 months since May 2010.

We are calling for four key reforms in the contract

- More timely and effective teacher evaluations
- Increased school flexibility in hiring and retaining the best teachers
- Greater student and parent involvement in school decision-making
- Extended school day that provides students with enriching activities and academic support

The future of our schools and our children's education are at stake in these negotiations and we want significant reform now.

How can you help?

Please visit the Boston United for Students Facebook page http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Boston-United-for-Students/110585649027505 or contact Charmaine Arthur-Neverson of The Freedom House at (617) 445-2805 or carthur-neverson@freedomhouse.com to see how you can get involved in the most important issue for our community: **a new teacher's contract that improves the quality of all schools and increases academic achievement for all students.**

The Boston United for Students Coalition is a broad-based group of BPS student, parent, children advocate, community, business, civic and faith-based organizations that have joined together to advocate for systemic reform in the teachers' contract to ensure a better education for all BPS students.

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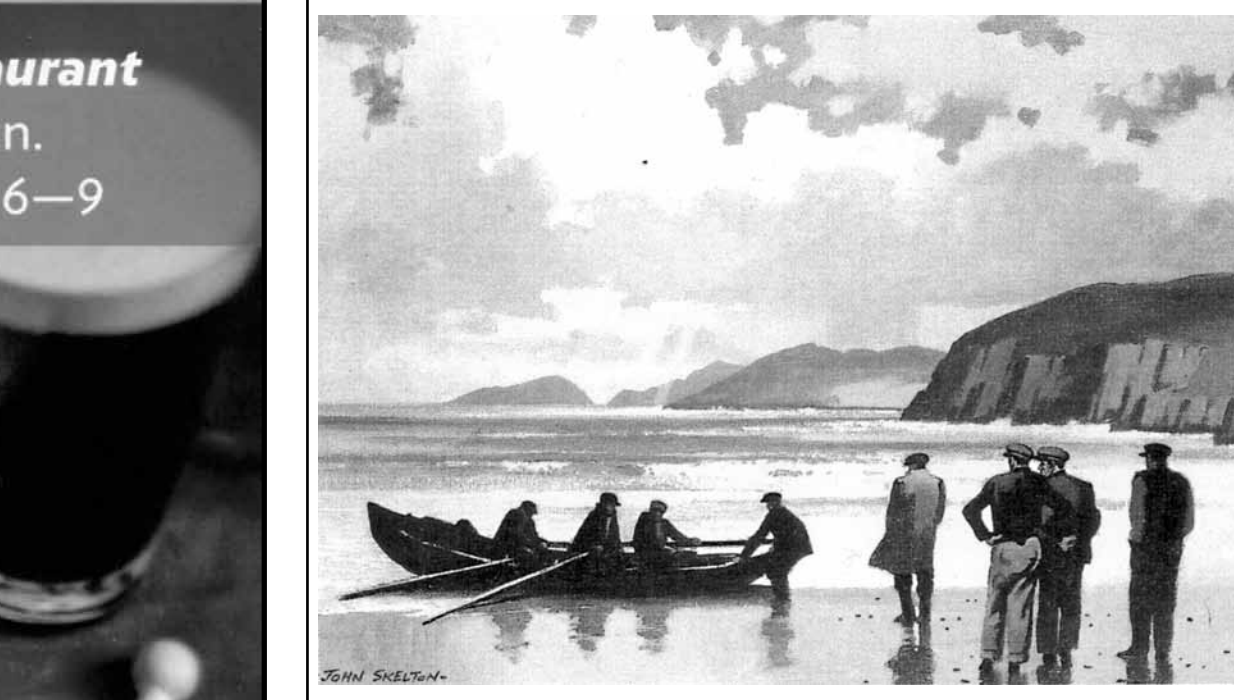

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The brothers Brett: Bill, Jim and Harry

Charitable Irish Society honors the Brett brothers; introduction by Kevin Cullen

"It is an honor to honor the Brett brothers. I think most people in this room know why we are honoring them. Their good works, their good humor, their goodness, is well known and well documented in this community.

When I think of the Brett brothers I think of the one who can't be here with us tonight. That would be Jack, who died 16 months ago. Jack had an intellectual disability, which over time made his entire family more intellectually able to instinctively stick up for the most vulnerable among us.

Mary Ann Brett was from Sligo, and while you can tell a Sligo woman, you can't tell her much. She immigrated to Boston and scrubbed floors. She married Henry Brett and a doctor told her to put her first-born Jack into an institution because surely she couldn't care for him. The doctor also suggested she not have any more children.

Mary Ann Brett had a sixth-grade education, but she was smarter than that doctor. She told him where to get off. She told him Jack would be loved and looked after by the other children she would have, and she went on to have Peggy and Mary and Harry and Billy and Jim, and boy was Mary Ann Brett right.

Everything we know and admire about the three Brett brothers we could have learned in that house on St. Margaret's Street in Dorchester, where their mother's deep faith in her God and in her family, her belief that love and compassion conquers all, made them what they are; where their brother's disability made them judge no one and value everyone.

Each of these three men have distinguished themselves in their chosen fields, Bill and Harry with cameras around their necks, Jim with a career in public service that is very much around his heart. They are the best of us, in part because they care so much about the least of us.

In honoring the Brett boys tonight, we are honoring everything and everyone in that house in Dorchester, especially Mary Ann Brett and her special son Jack, who are together, forever."

Lehane puts on BPL trustee hat

City of Boston officials, in an attempt to get celebrated author Dennis Lehane onto the Boston Public Library's board of trustees, did a simple thing: They asked. "I got the feeling they were circling me for a little bit, but I was mostly living out of state the last couple of years," Lehane told the Reporter after his first meeting of the trustees, where he was introduced to staffers and his fellow board members by Boston Public Library chief Amy Ryan. "And I let it be known when I met Amy that should the question ever be asked of me, I would do anything for the library."

In the basement of the Hyde Park branch of the library system, board chairman Jeffrey Rudman reveled in Lehane's celebrity, introducing him to trustees and staff as the man behind "Shutter Island," "Gone Baby Gone," and "Mystic River," books Lehane wrote that eventually became acclaimed movies.

A Dorchester native, Lehane was a frequent visitor to the Uphams Corner branch library as a child.

"Libraries mean the world to me and in particular the Boston Public library system," he said.

He and his wife Angie split their time between Brookline and Florida, but it's "more Massachusetts now," Lehane said. "We still have a place in Florida and it's pretty hard to tell my wife I want to leave to come to 20 degrees."

Lehane replaces James Carroll, who stepped down from the eight-member board in May. Mayor Thomas Menino tapped Lehane for the post in December.

GINTAUTAS DUMCIUS

Kevin White: Mayor of many moods

By BIR Staff

Kevin Hagan White, a lineal descendant of the politically active Irish families who, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, wrested control of the city of Boston from the direct descendants of the settler Puritans of the 17th century, was a man of many personas – ebullient, moody, haughty, energetic, fretful, intellectual, daring, to name a few ascribed to him during his often-tumultuous mayoral occupancy of Boston City Hall from 1968 through 1983.

White, who died on Fri., Jan. 26, at age 82, took what his immediate predecessors, John B. Hynes and John F. Collins had begun – the rebirth of a Boston that some had come to call decrepit – and added his own imaginative flourishes as the city of the Brahmins regained its long-held place among the nation's and the world's great cities.

But along with those flourishes came great stress and heartache, perhaps most notably the deeply felt unrest in the mid-1970s over the busing of students across neighborhood lines under a federal judge's order aimed at ending the racial imbalance that the court had found entrenched in the city's school system.

To hear former City Councillor Lawrence DiCara tell it, Boston was on its knees when Kevin White strode into City Hall in 1968. "The majority of my contemporaries were bolting from Boston— and this is before the desegregation order," DiCara recalls. "There was a massive exodus of people. We had Time magazine calling us the New Appalachia. And we were being compared to cities like Cleveland and Detroit."

William M. Bulger, the former state Senate President, UMass president and political contemporary of White's from the early 1960s, praised White's devotion to the city and his cheerful nature. "Kevin saw the political life as a noble profession," said Bulger. "I think that he was always conscious of the fact that his own dad, Joe White, had been active in it and Kevin had a very high opinion of his dad. He brought to the task an enthusiasm that inspired many of us who were around him."

Kevin Hagan White. *Photo courtesy City of Boston Archives*

White took Bulger's teasing —often about his roots in leafy West Roxbury— in stride at the annual South Boston St. Patrick's breakfast. "He had a good sense of humor," Bulger recalled. "He would say each year, 'I'm not up to this,' but I'd say, 'I need you. You have to come. He didn't fire back very much and never did he complain thereafter."

A truly 'New' Year for Irish Social Club

Members of the original "Save the Irish Social Club" committee: Jim Calvey, Brendan Adams, Kathleen Adams, Richie Archer, Pat Casey, Mary Mulvey Jacobson. *Sean Folan photo.*

It was a special New Year's Eve for members and friends of the revivified Irish Social Club in West Roxbury as the organization celebrated not only 2012 but their own feelings of accomplishment in resurrecting the club. More than 300 celebrators jammed the club premises for a night of food, music, and dance after being greeted by the newly elected president, Mary Maloney.

The club has several events upcoming, anticipating visits from Fintan Stanley (Feb. 5), Andy Healy (Feb. 19), and Denis Curtin (Feb. 26).

FEBRUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Events may be submitted for publication at our companion website: bostonirish.com

Friday, Feb. 3, 8 p.m., at the Irish Cultural Centre, Canton – Eamon de Valera: The Man Who Was 20th Century Ireland: An Irish Lecture. Back by popular demand and continuing with our Irish lecture series, Professor Matthews will discuss Eamon de Valera. $5 for members and $10 general admission. Tickets only sold at the door.

Saturday, Feb. 4, 3 p.m. at the Irish Pastoral Centre – Celebrate St. Brigid with the IPC. A day for the entire family at Father Lane Hall, St. Brendan Parish, 589 Gallivan Boulevard, Dorchester. St. Brigid of Ireland was born around 453 AD at Faughart, Co Louth, Ireland. She is one of the patron saints of Ireland and is affectionately known as "The Mary of the Gael." Her feast day is Feb. 1, which is also one of the first days of spring in Ireland and the beginning of Imbolc, one of the cornerstones of the Celtic Calendar. Join the IPC for a craft workshop (learn how to make a St. Brigid's Cross), celebration of Mass, and a supper in honor of St. Brigid. 3 p.m. Workshop; 5 p.m. Mass; 6 p.m. Supper, music, and waltzing. Tickets: $15 at the door or $12 in advance for adults, $5.00 each for children, under 5's free. Price covers the costs involved and any proceeds benefit the Pastoral Program at the IPC. For advance tickets, please call the Irish Pastoral Centre at 855-479-2472 or Maureen McNally at 781-871-1247.

Sunday, Feb. 5, 5:30 p.m. at the Irish Cultural Centre–Historical Presentation: Saint Patrick. We welcome back our ever popular Irish Historical presentation, hosted by Seamus Mulligan. Take a look back at the patron Saint of Ireland, Saint Patrick. The evening begins at 5:30 p.m. with lecture, meal, and film. Tickets are $30 and $25 for ICC members. This event typically sells out; please call the ICC to purchase your tickets in advance at 781-821-8291 or purchase online at irishculture.org.

Friday, Feb. 10, 6 p.m. – TIARA (The Irish Ancestral Research Assocation) monthly meeting. Have you found a Forester ancestor? UMass Boston would like to record you giving a brief description of your find! Joanne Riley and a team from UMass will be at Boston College at 6 p.m. – just before our TIARA meeting.

You are invited to bring a photo of your ancestor or an interesting section of your ancestor's Mortuary Record. Joanne will scan your photo or section of your Foresters application and record a 2-3 minute video with you describing your ancestor and your Foresters find. These videos will be shown at the March 14 "Calling the Heart Back Home" event at UMass Boston. Parts of your ancestors record could also appear in an exhibit. Please get in touch with Susan Steele ForestersProject@tiara.ie to schedule your video appointment on Feb. 10th.

Friday, Feb. 17, 5:30 p.m. – Irish Network/Boston Reception for Taoiseach Enda Kenny. Members are invited to meet with Prime Minister Kenny at a reception at the Seaport Hotel. This exclusive event is open to paid-up 2012 members of Irish Network Boston. Please note that security considerations are such that pre-registration is required. If you are already an IN Boston member you may register your interest and receive an invitation by e-mailing the Irish Consulate at bostoncongen@dfa.ie To join IN Boston or to renew your membership for 2012, visit inboston.org . Once your membership renewal is complete, you may e-mail the Irish Consulate for an invitation.

Saturday, March 3, 7 p.m., at Florian Hall, Dorchester – Co. Donegal Association's annual St. Patrick's Day Dinner Dance. Hot and cold buffet will be served. Music provided by Erin's Melody and dancing is 7:30-12:30. Special appearance by the Harney Academy of Irish Step Dancers, and, direct from Donegal, singer and songwriter Shunie Crampsey.

For tickets and information please contact president JP Doherty at 617-605-9878, chairman Michael McCarron at 617-696-1702, or any officer of the Co Donegal Association.

Publisher's Notebook

Recalling a boy named Damien

By Ed Forry

The new year brought sad news for local Hibernians: The death of Damien Brennan, a 24-year-old youth worker who lived and worked in Belfast, N.I.

Damien was five years old in 1992 when he became the victim of a vicious crime: he was attacked at a Portadown playground by three older boys. Calling him "a Fenian bastard," they doused the child with paint thinner and set him on fire. Damien suffered horrible wounds in the savage attack, especially his upper torso, back, and shoulders. He survived but his face was badly disfigured, and treating the wounds would require a lifetime of plastic surgery and medical treatment.

Ed Forry

His father, Jonny Brennan, found help at Boston's Shriners Hospital, and when then-*Boston Globe* columnist Mike Barnicle told his story in a 1996 column, "A child scarred by the madness," Damien became a local celebrity as the Boston Irish community gathered around to provide assistance.

Mike Heffernan and Mary Devlin, owners of a West Roxbury Irish shop took up his cause, joined by scores of local Hibernians. Hundreds turned out at the Irish Social Club for a 1996 fund-raiser to help pay the family's transportation and living expenses.

"He goes through a lot of pain for a few days after the grafts, but his spirit is amazing," Jonny Brennan said in a 1999 interview in the *Irish Echo*. "He loves coming here. Most people here treat him like their own son…It's been tough emotionally and financially for the whole family," Brennan said.

Damien was made an honorary member of the Watertown AOH, and one year he marched in the St. Patrick's Day parade. "When we looked up and saw those banners hanging from the windows and the placards that said, 'Welcome, Damien, to South Boston,' I swear to God it was very touching," Jonny Brennan said.

In an e-mail to the BIR last month, the grieving dad said, "I'm writing to thank the people of Boston for the generous help they gave us throughout the years that we visited Boston. The readers of your paper and so many more people opened their hearts and homes to both Damien and the family.

"Sadly Damien passed away on the 21st of December at the age of 24. He had met so many friends in Boston and, indeed, the USA. I don't think Damien and the family would have got through them difficult years, only for the help and kindness of the people of Boston, especially Michael Heffernan and Mary Devlin, who opened their home to us, the AOH in Watertown, who made him an honorary member, Jack Meehan, Paul Doyle, Kathleen Savage for their help and friendship, and to the doctors and staff at the Shriners Hospital where Damien got his treatment.

"[Those are] only a few out of a long list I wish to thank. We had some lovely memories of Boston, the Irish community who we have met. So from the bottom of our hearts again I would like to thank everyone of them and may god bless you all. "(Damien Brennan 1987-2011. RIP)"

Damien was buried on Christmas Eve in St John's Cemetery, Lylo, following a requiem mass at St Anthony's Church. His Boston friends were heartbroken to learn that his death was at his own hand.

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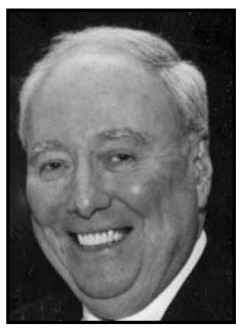
Commentary

Speaking of bargains for tourists, Ireland is hard to beat right now

By Joe Leary
Special to the BIR

Joe Byrne, Tourism Ireland's New York-based executive vice president for North America, is typical of the hard-working Irish men and women who are sent to the United States to represent their country. Enthusiastic, loyal, focused, and extremely bright, his friendly outgoing personality belies a tough, single-minded dedication to improving Ireland's annual visitor count – in the North and in the South – from the United States and Canada.



Joe Leary

I have had the pleasure of knowing Joe Byrne for many years and I recently spent some time with him in a discussion about the great success of Irish tourism in 2011 and the extraordinary events that Ireland's tourist industry is preparing for this year and next.

"For the next two or more years," said Byrne, "both the North and the South of Ireland are creating an intriguing and provocative welcoming party for all its visitors. "Ireland is not simply relying on its electrifying natural beauty or its legendary kind and generous people. Ireland is cleaning, building, and preparing to make every visit comfortable, memorable, and satisfying."

For Americans, now is the time to consider adding Ireland to the list of vacation alternatives.

Byrne and Michael Binchy, of Owenoak International in Connecticut, one of Ireland's premier travel agencies, agree that not only is airfare to Ireland $200-$300 less expensive than the cost of traveling to most other destinations in Europe, but the euro currency is also much cheaper than it was last year (or in the years before).

Hotel prices have fallen, restaurant prices are down, and the famous golf courses are soliciting business at much lower prices.

While Ireland's general economy is suffering from increased taxes, service cuts, and 14.5 percent unemployment as the Irish struggle to escape bank debt run up during the boom years (some say "foolish" years), the tourist industry and some other areas are doing well. Visitor numbers from North America in 2011 were up 11.5 percent over 2010, to more than a million visitors.

Tourism is such a bright spot in the Irish economy that it represents more than seven percent of all economic activity, with one out of every twelve Irish men and women employed in the business. But those are only the basic numbers. As Byrne points out, the tourism industry is "very aggressively continuing its efforts to improve the visitor experience."

In Northern Ireland, for instance, a major new Belfast Museum will be opening in April with a commemoration of the building, launching, and demise of the Titanic.

Joe Byrne

Built at a cost of $100 million, the museum will become a signature landmark in Belfast. The first pictures, or really, artist drawings, are spectacular. And this summer, Northern Ireland will open a $25 million visitor center at the Giants causeway. The causeway is a unique formation of rock structures found on the island's north coast.

The causeway and the Cliffs of Moher are the only two UNESCO Heritage attractions in Ireland.

Queens University in Belfast is having its 50th anniversary Arts Festival late this year. And the city of Derry in the western part of the North has been named the UK City of Culture for 2013 and is looking to an incredibly busy 12-month program.

Since peace arrived in Northern Ireland, it has been said many times, "If you have not visited the North you have not been to Ireland." An exaggeration, perhaps, but a trip there is worth considering.

There is no more excited person than Joe Byrne when he is laying out all these attractions. I'm sure they will make his job somewhat easier, but the success in tourism numbers is a reinforcement and testament to the work he, his veteran staff, and his predecessors have done for many years.

With the U.S. economy getter stronger every day, more and more Americans are deciding to answer Joe's call and plan a vacation in Ireland. One example: the U.S. Naval Academy and Notre Dame will play their annual football game in Dublin this year, on Sat., Sept. 1. Hotel rooms are already scarce.

Says Michael Binchy of Owenoak's: "Our business was quite good last year and this year looks even better. We expect good solid growth this year." The firm's specialty is golf tours, one of Ireland's great natural attractions. With the success of Irish golfers Padraig Harrington, Rory McIlroy, Darren Clarke, and Graeme McDowell, golfers throughout the world are planning trips to Ireland to see if they can catch what it is in the Irish air the makes such incredible golfers. Ireland has more golf courses per capita than any country in the world, and most of them are spectacular experiences.

This year's Irish Open will be played at Royal Portrush on the North Antrim coast at the end of June and international broadcasts from on site will show the virtues of a legendarily tough course as world-class golfers try to make a reasonable score on its linksland. Lucky Americans will be there to see it all for themselves.

So as Joe Byrne says: "We invite you to come and share our wonderful island. You will have a fantastic time, be very happy you were there, and contribute to the economy at the same time."

Cause & effect & all of us

By James W. Dolan
Special to the Reporter

That God is the uncaused cause has long been one of the principal arguments for a supernatural, all-powerful being. Some unexplainable, mysterious force must have begun the creative process, otherwise there would be nothing, or so the argument goes.

To use a CSI analogy: The immediate cause of the victim's death was a head wound caused by a projectile that was fired from a weapon in the hands of an assailant, the proximate cause, who was paid by the victim's business partner who discovered the victim was having an affair with his wife.

The string of remote cause spins out endlessly, each one further removed from the murder but each necessary for the crime itself. The confluence of all those events that ended in the murder was the existence of the persons involved, their relationships, their psychological profiles, values and motivations, to identify a few.

So, too, with science, as the web of life and the objects that surround us are better understood. With each discovery, a door is opened to a new mystery, a revelation that upon exploration and analysis leads to new and even more complicated discoveries, linked one to another.

As our knowledge deepens, we discover a vast ocean of cause and effect. Each new cause we discover is itself an effect caused by something else. Where does this great unraveling take us?

Some say science will eventually be able to explain it all; others say there is no explanation. Most believe that effects must have a cause. If the world and its creatures had a more direct and immediate cause – the Genesis description – the source would be more apparent.

However, it is now obvious that creation was an extended process occurring over billions of years. But who or what started the process and who or what sustains it? Does the fact it was so remote render the idea of a creator obsolete?

I would argue that time itself is an effect and thus caused by a force outside of time. Thus, what we see as an extended process measured over time may be different apart from time. That may sound like so much science fiction but it is a plausible, albeit not provable, explanation for evolution.

I do not see existence as an infinite series of incoherent coincidences. That hypothesis, in my view, would be more preposterous than belief in an Intelligent Being that created and in some mysterious way guides it. Without that belief, we are the product of some cataclysmic accident that by chance set the process in motion. Reducing it to those bare essentials gives rise to the question: Where did the "stuff" that generated the cataclysmic accident come from?

Religion and revelation are vehicles by which we reach out to the unknowable. There are believers, frustrated with the obvious failings of religions, who prefer to deal direct. There are others who believe it is all a fantasy.

At least for me, religion provides a more satisfactory answer to who what and why we are. The acceptance of an Almighty also provides a foundation that supports belief in truth, justice, and love as absolutes that transcend man's capacity to distort them.

God exists at the end of causes -- the unexplainable and unknowable source. It all comes down to a leap of faith. Believers leap toward God; atheists leap toward science; and agnostics are reluctant to leap.

While acknowledging the deficiencies in all the worlds' great religions, including my own, I need the sense of purpose, structure, guidance, and comfort that my faith provides on this journey. I am not strong enough to travel this road without it.

James W. Dolan is a retired Dorchester District Court judge who now practices law.

POINT OF VIEW / PETER F. STEVENS

Is New Jersey Hall of Fame into rewarding bigotry?

Thomas Nast, creator of lasting images of Santa Claus and Uncle Sam, treated the immigrant Irish of his era with contempt

By Peter F. Stevens
BIR Staff

Should bigotry be rewarded? Even if that bigotry occurred some 150 years ago and was part, but hardly all, of the work of the man rightfully acclaimed as the "Father of the Modern Political Cartoon?" Even if the benevolent, bewhiskered Santa Claus image we all know sprang from the gifted pen and artistry of that cartoonist, Thomas Nast?

Thomas Nast

In New Jersey, the Ancient Order of Hibernians and many other people are fighting to make sure that the anti-Irish, anti-Catholic Thomas Nast is not awarded enshrinement in the New Jersey Hall of Fame. In Boston in the mid-to-late 19th century, Nast's cartoons were must-viewing for those who loathed all things Irish and Catholic, and they stoked the resentment of Boston Irish whether they had arrived from the old sod before, during, or after the Famine.

That Thomas Nast was a brilliant artist, let alone caricaturist, is beyond dispute. A Harper's Magazine retrospective of his work noted: "Like van Gogh, Nast's pictorial effects derived from a solid knowledge of Dutch landscape, French academicism and realism, as well as the work of... Leech, Tenniel, Doré, and Daumier."

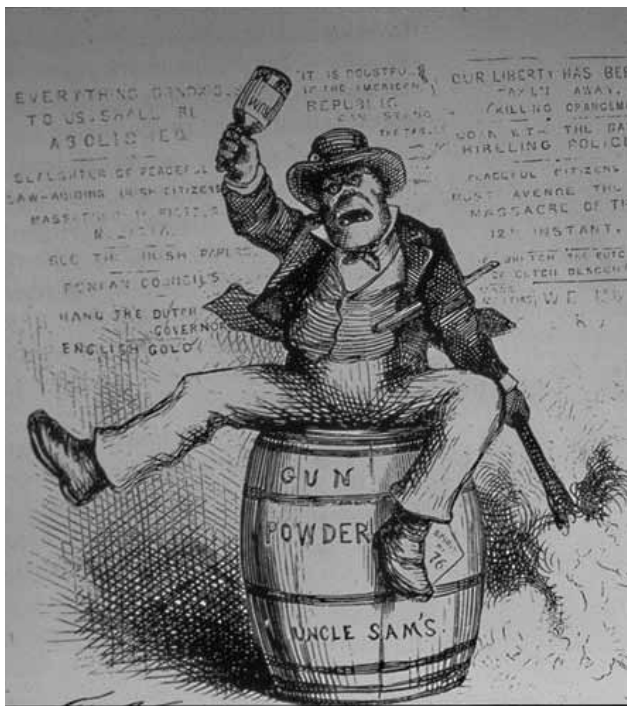
Nast not only gave America the beloved visage of a genial Santa Claus, but also the image of Uncle Sam, the donkey symbol of the Democratic Party, and the elephant of the GOP. The cartoonist's biting images also helped bring down Boss Tweed of Tammany Hall. But another set of images colored Nast's career. For the pages of Harper's Weekly, he crafted the image of a man who glowered beneath his battered hat, unshaven, his face jutting ape-like beneath a filthy brim. In his ragged, swallow-tailed coat and patched breeches and stockings and his square-toed, menacing "brogans," he appeared a creature who lurked in alleys and shadowy doorways in search of prey. His frequent companion, her equally simian features glaring beneath a frayed bonnet, radiated her own brand of malevolence. They were "Paddy and Bridget" – as much a part of Nast's work as similarly cutting caricatures of African Americans. Even today, long after the artist vented his last bold-stroked prejudice against the Irish, the images, no matter how skillfully rendered, are offensive.

For the Boston Irish and the Irish of New York, Philadelphia, and other points of entry for immigrants, damning stereotypes clotted America's newspapers, magazines, and broadsides in the decades before Nast left his own stamp on the abuse. During the 1830s and 1840s, telegraph inventor Samuel F.B. Morse helped unleash a movement against Irish Catholics when he penned a bestselling book warning "native-born" Americans that the Irish were the "foot soldiers" of a papal plot to take over the United States. As Nativism and later the Know-Nothing movement gained steam, fueling violence such as the bloody anti-Irish riots in Philadelphia in 1844, sketches crude and refined depicted simian-like Irish men, women, and children "infecting" America with savagery, drunkenness, and sloth. Throughout the 19th century and into the 20th, no matter the civic, social, military, artistic, and cultural contributions of the Irish to American life, the pointed slurs stuck and continued to run in articles, columns, books, and, of course, cartoons. Yankee Boston proved one of the most fertile landscapes for Nast's work.

Nast, himself a German immigrant, began to bash the Irish when his first Harper's cartoons appeared in 1860. His images of Paddy and Bridget mirrored the written lines of his fellow New Yorker, George Templeton Strong, a famed attorney, diarist, and social commentator: "…England is right about the lower class of Irish. They are brutal, base, cruel cowards… and as insolent as base….my own theory is that St. Patrick's campaign against the snakes is a Popish delusion. They perished of biting the Irish people."

Marching in lock-step with such editorial venom were Nast's pen-and-brush slurs, which were imitated but rarely so skillfully drawn as Nast's scenes of two-fisted, hard-drinking, brutish Paddy. Historian William D. Griffin notes, "Prevailing racial theories held that the 'Celt' was a breed inferior to the 'Anglo-Saxon,' with a distorted, simian physique that corresponded to his mental and moral shortcomings." With Nast in the vanguard, such virulent prejudice radiated from editorial cartoons and, later, comic strips alike.

The vile turf turned so expertly by Nast inspired the likes of cartoonist Fred Opper, who, a few years before Nast's death, in 1902, began to pen a wildly popular comic strip entitled "The Doings of Happy Hooligan." Like Nast, Opper perpetuated the hateful stereotype of the "deviant Irish." As if the lead character's surname, "Hooligan," was not enough to outrage Irish Americans, the ragged, scarlet-nosed, low-browed appearance of "Happy" embodied the traditional smears from Morse and Nast to Opper and his ilk. And how did Opper's "Irishman" and his inked friends comport themselves? They blundered from one buffoonish scheme to the next, their chief concern staying out of their "home away from home" – a jail cell. Opper's anti-Irish strip ran for more than three decades.



Thomas Nast and the publishers he worked with out of New York in the mid-to-late19th century left little to the imagination when they meant to show how they felt about the immigrant Irish. The cartoon above, entitled "The Usual Irish Way of Doing Things," ran in the September 9, 1871, edition of Harper's Weekly. The writings on the wall include, "Everything obnoxious to us shall be abolished." … "Our liberty has been taken away (killing Orangemen)." … "We must rule." The caption on the barrel says, "Uncle Sam's Gun Powder."

This graphic and caption information comes courtesy of the University of California at Davis from its collection, The History Project.

Slowly, in the years after World War I, blatantly anti-Irish stereotypes began to ebb in print; nonetheless, vicious images of Paddy and Bridget simmered and flared intermittently even in such mainstream publications as Life magazine. When Al Smith ran for president in 1928, anti-Irish and anti-Catholic articles and cartoons ran rampant nationwide, but the era of unchecked editorial prejudice against Irish Americans had waned by World War II and then the 1960 presidential election that vaulted John F. Kennedy to the White House.

Today, the hateful stereotypes that tormented the Boston Irish and Irish Americans reside in history's backwaters. Still, the furor over Nast's nomination for a place in New Jersey's Hall of Fame has roiled those waters. While Nast's place in the pantheon of notable Americans cannot be denied, neither can the other, darker side of his legacy, the vicious caricature of the Irish as a subspecies unworthy of American equality.

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From Gallivan Blvd. to 'GBH, Quinn has finger on the pulse

Cristina Quinn: News reporter at WGBH

By Jackie Gentile
Special to the Reporter

Whether she is anchoring the weekend edition radio show, reporting from the field or publishing a story online, WGBH's Cristina Quinn loves her work.

"I'm so glad that I'm doing what I'm doing. I'm doing what I love," she says. "I'm producing radio and stories and telling these stories to a wide audience."

A Dorchester native, Quinn graduated from Boston Latin Academy and UMass Amherst with a journalism degree. A self-proclaimed NPR junkie in her college days, she would tune in while getting ready for class. Before attending Emerson College's media arts graduate program, she participated in the JET program and lived in Aizu in Japan's Fukushima prefecture where she "got bit by the radio bug," she says.

On a weekly 15-minute radio show called "Let's English," Quinn, as the station managers instructed, reported the civic news in English "unnaturally slowly" to an audience of mostly Japanese speakers. Though Aizu is a small city, its university attracts many foreigners. To help non-English-speaking natives and students, Quinn suggested that she speak at a more natural pace and the managers agreed.

Speaking more quickly allowed Quinn some airtime to create a segment of the show where she read essays and shared stories of being a foreigner in Japan. She called it "Word Up."

"I was kickin' it the '90s way," she laughs.

Before leaving for Japan, Quinn got her first reporter gig writing a story for the Reporter about the owners of the P&J Bait Shop retiring and selling the establishment.

Upon coming back to the States, Quinn worked full-time and attended grad school part-time where she got an internship at WGBH.

"Because I was a journalism major [at UMass], there's always that interest in telling stories," she says. "I just kept my foot in the door."

Quinn was the weekend edition anchor for a year and, for the past two months, has been a field reporter.

"What I set out to do in radio is to have those 'Aha!' moments or those 'I've never thought of it that way' moments for the listener," she says. "That's pretty cool. That's like yeah! Got you thinking, didn't I? Got you thinking."

News stories often take an afternoon or a one-day turnaround called a "cut and copy" or a "wrap" in the business. With stories requiring Quinn to visit various locations, interview people or record natural sound, about a day is needed for a completed story that will be aired the next day. Feature pieces that are not as news-heavy take about a week. For a four- to four-and-a-half minute feature, anywhere from a 24-hour turnaround to a week is needed, depending on the urgency of the story.

"What I really like about radio is that there's more intimacy there. There's an intimate relationship between the listener and the producer, whoever's on the other end, whoever's in the studio, the voice," she says.

Her job as a general assignment reporter at 'GBH requires that Quinn be ready to write about just about anything. In recent weeks, she has reported about daily life in the town of Burlington, reaction to the Occupy movement in suburbia, and the dangers of texting while walking,

Quinn and her husband live in Dorchester, just two units down from her brother, Kenji, who lives next to her in-laws, the owners of the property. Because of the close proximity, the family calls it "The Compound." Quinn's mother, Toshiko, lives on Gallivan Blvd., just a ten-minute walk away.

"If I'm feeling motivated, I could walk to Mom's, usually I drive," she laughs.

"My mom's Japanese and so you don't leave your parents, you sort of stick around and take care of them," she says. "It's sort of a deeply rooted value there in staying close to home when it comes to the Japanese tradition, but I guess it's pretty worldwide."

Quinn and her brother grew up in St. Gregory's, where they attended the parish grammar school and church. Her father, Joe, was originally from Savin Hill and World War II veteran who came to be known as the of St. Gregory's. His deep, baritone voice led the congregation in song for many years. He passed away in 2009.

Considering herself geeky, Quinn did her homework as soon as she got home from school and earned extra Girl Scout badges on her own time.

"I've made lifelong friends here. There are people with strong values and it's a great neighborhood," Quinn said.

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THE IRISH AMERICAN PARTNERSHIP

Welcome to Boston, Taoiseach Enda Kenny

On behalf of the Board of Dirctors of The Irish American Partnership, we are very pleased to invite members of the Boston Irish community to a special breakfast in honor of the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) of Ireland, Mr. Enda Kenny.

The breakfast will be held at the Boston Harbor Hotel, Wharf Room, on Friday, February 17, at 8 o'clock.

The Taoiseach is on a short visit to Boston and we are delighted to introduce him to our friends and contributors who have given so much to Ireland. Mr. Kenny will provide a report on current conditions in Ireland and affirm the importance of the role of Irish America.

Mr. Kenny is a native of County Mayo, a region in which the Partnership has made a significant contribution to education programs. At the breakfast, the Partnership will present a gift of $7,500 to the Taoiseach for five additional schools in Mayo.

We would be most appreciative of your support for this important event. You may purchase individual tickets, half a table, or a full table. Please RSVP to the Partnership at 617-723-2707.

We look forward to seeing you at the breakfast.

Sincerely,

Joseph F. Leary, Jr.
President

Mary Sugrue McAleer
Executive Director

Schools Receiving Support in 2011/2012

Mayo Science
St. Joseph's, Killaser, Co. Mayo
Bekan National School Claremorris, Co. Mayo
Knock National School, Claremorris, Co. Mayo
Barnacogue National School, Swinford, Co. Mayo
Kinaffee, National School, Swinford, Co. Mayo
Culleens, National School, Meelick, Swinford, Co. Mayo
Culmore National School, Swinford, Co. Mayo

Galway Science
Milltown National School, Milltown, Tuam, Co. Galway
St. Brendan's National School, Belmont, Milltown, Co. Galway
Carnageehy National School, Ballyglass, Milltown, Co. Galway
Sylane National School, Sylane, Tuam, Co. Galway
Kilconly National School, Kilconly, Tuam, Co. Galway

Donegal Science
Scoil Roisin, Dungloe, Co. Donegal
Meenagowan National School, Meenagowan, Co. Donegal
SN an Aingil Choimeadai, Keadue, Co. Donegal
Scoil Chroine, Dungloe, Co. Donegal
SN Mhuire, Belcruit, Co. Donegal

Mayo Taoisach Visit
Cornanool National School (St. Patrick's) Islandeady, Castlebar Co. Mayo
*Taoiseach's school
Leitir National School (St. Joseph's) Islandeady, Castlebar, Co. Mayo
Clogernagh National School (St. Paul's) Islandeady, Castlebar, Co. Mayo
Cogaula National School (St. Columbus) Islandeady, Castlebar, Co. Mayo
Glenisland National School, Islandeady, Castlebar, Co. Mayo

Northern Ireland
St. Mary's Christian Brothers, Belfast, Co. Antrim
Tullycarnet Primary School, Belfast, Co. Antrim
Avoneil Primary School, Belfast, Co. Antrim
Colaiste Feirste, Belfast, Co. Antrim
Grogarty Integrated Primary School, Derry. Co. Derry
Ballycastle, Integrated Primary School, Ballycastle, Co. Antrim
Round Tower Integrated Primary School, Belfast, Co. Antrim
Blackwater Integrated College, Downpatrick, Co. Down

Raffle Schools
SN Eoin Pol II, Inis Mor, Arainn, Co. Galway
SN Caomhain, Inis Oirthir, Arainn, Co. Galway
St. Patrick's National School Drumshanbo, Co. Leitrim
Roxboro National School, Ballinrobe, Co. Mayo
St. Mary's Primary School, Mullaghbawn, Co. Armagh
Kilcrohan National School Durrus, Bantry, Co. Cork
Millstreet Convent National School, Millstreet, Co. Cork
Knocknagree National School, Duhallow, Co. Cork
Rooskey National School, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Roscommon
St. Clare's National School, Kenmare, Co. Kerry

Others
Annaduff National School, Aughamore, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim

Total 41

The list of schools below represents those who have received funding or support from The Irish American Partnership during the past several months. The schools have received funding through the Primary School Library Program, the Primary School Science Program and the support of Integrated Education.

St. Mary's Christian Brothers, Belfast, Co. Antrim
Tullycarnet Primary School, Belfast, Co. Antrim
Avoneil Primary School, Belfast, Co. Antrim
Colaiste Feirste, Belfast, Co. Antrim
Ballycastle, Integrated Primary School, Ballycastle, Co. Antrim
Round Tower Integrated Primary School, Belfast, Co. Antrim
St. Mary's Primary School, Mullaghbawn, Co. Armagh
Kilcrohan National School Durrus, Bantry, Co. Cork
Millstreet Convent National School, Millstreet, Co. Cork
Knocknagree National School, Duhallow, Co. Cork
Grogarty Integrated Primary School, Derry. Co. Derry
Scoil Roisin, Dungloe, Co. Donegal
Meenagowan National School, Meenagowan, Co. Donegal
SN an Aingil Choimeadai, Keadue, Co. Donegal
Scoil Chroine, Dungloe, Co. Donegal
SN Mhuire, Belcruit, Co. Donegal
Blackwater Integrated College, Downpatrick, Co. Down
Milltown National School, Milltown, Tuam, Co. Galway
St. Brendan's National School, Belmont, Milltown, Co. Galway
Carnageehy National School, Ballyglass, Milltown, Co. Galway
Sylane National School, Sylane, Tuam, Co. Galway
Kilconly National School, Kilconly, Tuam, Co. Galway
SN Eoin Pol II, Inis Mor, Arainn, Co. Galway
SN Caomhain, Inis Oirthir, Arainn, Co. Galway
St. Clare's National School, Kenmare, Co. Kerry
St. Patrick's National School, Drunshanbo. Co. Leitrim
Annaduff National School, Aughamore, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim
St. Joseph's, Killaser, Co. Mayo
Bekan National School Claremorris, Co. Mayo
Knock National School, Claremorris, Co. Mayo
Barnacogue National School, Swinford, Co. Mayo
Kinaffee, National School, Swinford, Co. Mayo
Culleens, National School, Meelick, Swinford, Co. Mayo
Culmore National School, Swinford, Co. Mayo
Cornanool National School (St. Patrick's) Islandeady, Castlebar Co. Mayo
Leitir National School (St. Joseph's) Islandeady, Castlebar, Co. Mayo
Clogernagh National School (St. Paul's) Islandeady, Castlebar, Co. Mayo
Cogaula National School (St. Columbus) Islandeady, Castlebar, Co. Mayo
Glenisland National School, Islandeady, Castlebar, Co. Mayo
Roxboro National School, Ballinrobe, Co. Mayo
Rooskey National School, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Roscommon

BIR Profile

That voice you hear is probably Mike McNally's

By Greg O'Brien
Special to the BIR

Ask Francis Michael McNally for a resume, and he tosses out a self-effacing one-pager that reads like a photo caption and doesn't even begin to tell the story of this man of many voices. His education essentials are to the point: bachelor of science in finance from Boston College's Carroll School of Management; master's in Broadcast Journalism from Boston University's College of Communications; participation in BC's doctoral program in Educational Administration. His employment record is equally succinct: teacher, Boston Public Schools; administrative assistant to the Dorchester High School headmaster; administrative assistant to the deputy superintendent of the Boston Public Schools; media liaison officer/intergovernmental affairs.

Then comes the denouement at the bottom of the page: voiceover artist specializing in radio, television, and documentary narrations. The reference is about as innocent as George Bailey losing a wad of dough in the classic *It's a Wonderful Life*.

Mike McNally, born in Quincy and raised in Dorchester, has recorded more voiceovers than perhaps anyone in America—by count, in excess of 10,000 radio and television commercials and documentaries over the last 30 years, relying on 50-to-100 distinct voices, among them Jimmy Stewart, Jack Nicholson, the Kennedy brothers, Elvis, Gregory Peck, Dean Martin, Peter Falk and Telly Savalas. Who loves ya, baby?

We all do in that at one time or another, we've all heard McNally's out-of-body narrations. His veiled voice has entertained, edified, and informed millions of viewers and listeners on radio and TV ads for prominent banks, institutions and products, like the trademark Colombo yogurt commercials he did years ago. McNally has made a lucrative living from all this. I hate to bother you, but could you pass me the check!

McNally also is known for his biting satirical political commentaries, distinguished PBS documentaries on Frontline and the American Experience, and, early on, for his on stage dalliance at Boston's old Playboy Club where he performed as a callow 20 year old who was not old enough to be admitted.

His range of talent and voices is enough to render one artistically schizophrenic, or as the dictionary defines the word, "characterized by foolish mannerisms, delusions, and regressive behavior." Great work, if you can get it! McNally still relishes the thought of making a career out of pretending to be someone he isn't, so much so that one wonders if he truly knows who he is.

To an observer, the cacophony of voices on a gray January mid-afternoon is numbing in the snug living room of McNally's Marina Bay condominium in Quincy, high above the horizon. The temptation to hear more is intoxicating. In a flash, McNally obliges with a flush of other voices.

"Nicholson never seems to take a breath when he talks," McNally says. Then in his best mimic of Col. Nathan R. Jessup in *A Few Good Men*, he declares, "May I ask you a question? The way I got this thing figured, there ain't no one who knows why I never have to breathe…and I can't handle what's going on here…"

Quicker than you can say *To Kill A Mockingbird*, McNally transitions to Gregory Peck, dropping his Adam's apple deep into his chest for the baritone. On a roll, he engages in conversation with the Kennedy brothers, each accent wholly on target.

Mike McNally: Voicemeister

McNally has a knack for studying voices, a gift he discerned as a kid—one reinforced with a delighted audience in the school playground. Explaining the Kennedy idiom, he remarks, "Many people, particularly out-of-towners, think all Kennedys sound alike. That's not true. Jack always sounded like he was yelling; he had a lazy "L," and sounded like he was in a phone booth. He didn't seem happy, like he just got Jackie's bill for her clothes. He was always serious. Bobby was much higher-pitched. Even though he was supposed to be the tough guy, his voice was meek. Teddy sounded a bit like Jack, but younger and more nasal. His voice was more formal, as if he was trying to live up to the accent."

For decades, McNally has been living up to the billing that he's a class act and on cue can talk his way in and out of any thing. The first voice he ever did in grammar school was Snagglepuss, the pink anthropomorphic cartoon mountain lion, best known for the catchphrase, "Heavens to Murgatroyd!"

"I just imagine the character or the person, and let it happen," McNally explains. "You channel them, if you will. You have to have a good ear, a liquid voice, and the ability to change tone, pitch, and range. You glide into it. Often you exaggerate without over exaggerating. It's not a parody; it's an impression."

First rule of thumb, he says, is: Find a unique voice. McNally found his own voice through the mentoring of his late father, Francis, a Belfast-born sales manager for John Hancock Insurance Company, a guy who know how to close a deal, particularly with his son. The irony is that his father always wanted McNally to go to law school, and thus pushed—no shoved—him in that direction.

"I remember when I was in seventh grade at St. Ann's in Neponset, and struggling with some of my school work," McNally says. "My dad took me aside one day and boldly told me, 'Son, you're going to study at BC High, then you're going to Boston College, then Boston College Law School, and then you're going to become a judge."

Period. End of sentence.

Adding an exclamation point, his father immediately drove him to see Boston College, and then took him to BC High. McNally was suitably impressed. His dad instructed him, as if whacking his son with a piece of granite between the ears to make a point: "To get to Boston College, you have to get to BC High. To get to BC High, you have to have much better marks at St. Ann's."

The moment was a turning point for McNally, not that it set him on fire for the bar, but because it instilled in him the need for a vision in life and a passion for what one pursues.

Growing up in Dorchester on working-class Chickatawbut Street, McNally was schooled on street smarts. While his dad was the disciplinarian, his mother Elizabeth (McLaughlin), with family roots in Sligo and throughout County Mayo, was more tender. The combination produced an artist with the drive of a fullback.

Both McNally and his younger brother Brian, who died years ago after a long illness, had after-school jobs for the discipline of it and for the security of some walking around money. McNally worked at Supreme Market bagging groceries and at Berry's Hardware, selling marine equipment, a job retained during his college years and his early stage days.

Following the bearing set by his father, McNally enrolled at Boston College as a pre-law student in finance after graduating from BC High. At the Heights, the course of his life changed direction with an introduction to Ed Forry, one of the luminaries at BC's radio station, WVBC, and now publisher of this newspaper, the *Boston Irish Reporter*. Forry gave him an audition, then his own show—"The Voices of Shannon"—for impersonations, commentaries, and playing music. "I didn't write scripts, I just ad- libbed," McNally recalls. "I did mock interviews with David Brinkley and people like Bobby Kennedy and Sen. Everett Dirksen. I had Walter Brennan as a member of the White House cabinet."

The howls throughout Fulton Hall propelled McNally away from the legal beat. Through his connection with the BC station, he was introduced to Boston radio personality Jess Cain, who took an immediate liking to him. "Jess was a mentor and gave me my first opportunity in a big market," he says.

McNally was an immediate hit, so much so that Cain one day—shortly before Bobby Kennedy announced his presidential bid—told his student to go on air and "give it anything you got." When the red light came on in the booth, McNally launched into his Kennedy impersonation in a monologue that stunned Boston. "I would just like to announce that as of this moment, I'm a candidate for president of the United States."

Cain flipped out. "Cut, cut, cut!" he yelled. The phones in the studio rang like church bells. "No, no," the station manager assured callers time and again. "Kennedy has not announced! That was just that lunatic from Boston College."

The shocking experience didn't sour Cain on McNally. The broadcaster continued offering him opportunities, though not live spots, and persuaded him to pursue a graduate degree in broadcasting, rather than more gigs at the Playboy Club. In the interim, McNally began substitute teaching at Dorchester High where he caught the eye of the headmaster who walked by the classroom one day and was amazed at McNally's control over otherwise unruly students.

"It was a carrot-and-stick approach," McNally says. "If the students cooperated in class, they were entertained later with voices." It was a quid pro quo that no adolescent could pass up.

McNally was then offered a full time position teaching economic geography and business math, filling the vacancy left, interestingly, by John Connolly, who had joined the FBI and would later enter into a fateful association with Whitey Bulger.

For a while, it looked as if McNally would be a professional educator—short of his dad's vision for law school, but something indeed more serious than making fun of others. Time to put the big-boy pants on.

Well, not yet! After a stint of teaching and tenures as an administrative assistant to the headmaster and deputy school superintendent, the lure of the microphone remained enticing; it was the passion, the vision thing. McNally not only had the voice, but "the look" for both radio and television. Tall, thin, and handsome, with a velvet voice.

"It was kind of creepy when you answered a cattle call for a casting session in New York or Boston, and everyone looked like you," he recalls.

While McNally has appeared many times on camera, his sense of his true calling along with his pragmatic zeal ("thank you, Dad") for making a good living kept him in the recording studio. "I wasn't a trained actor, and it took all day or two days to cut a TV commercial on a flat pay rate. I soon realized that I could make more money doing voiceovers. You can do 15 voiceovers in an hour, if you're focused."

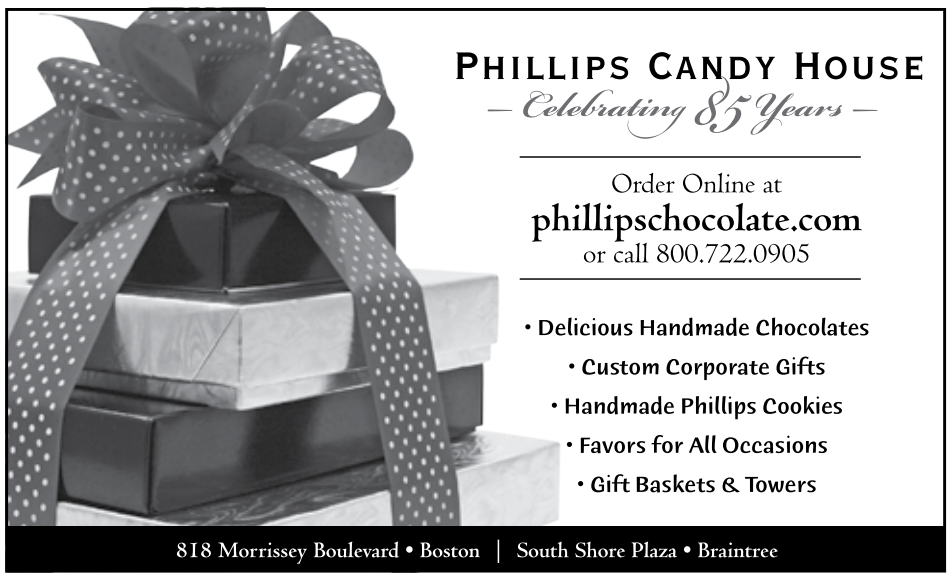
Now in his mid-60s, McNally is still focused on his trade, doing ten recording sessions a month. He spends as much down time as possible these days with his wife, Claire, a broker for Coldwell Banker. The couple has no children.

So what does Mike McNally want to do when he grows up? "I'm not growing up," he says, indicating the big-boy pants are still in the closet. "I love what I do."

There's no question things can seem bewildering with all those voices around the house and in recording studios. For example, in one PBS documentary, McNally recorded seven voices for a Frontline piece about Panama and its then military governor Manuel Noriega. In the piece, McNally did voices for Noriega, his generals, and a newscaster.

Still, there's no chance that McNally suffers from an identity crisis. He will always be able to distinguish his own voice, instilled through his father. "I've been blessed," he says. "I know my voice and will always follow it. I still can't believe I get paid for doing this."

Greg O'Brien is president of Stony Brook Group, a publishing and political/communications consulting company based on Cape Cod. He is a regular contributor to the Boston Irish Reporter, the editor/author of several books, and contributes to various regional and national publications.



Boston Irish Reporter's Here & There

By Bill O'Donnell

Vatican Embassy Closing Spurs Criticism – The recent decision by the Irish government to shut down its embassy in Rome is meeting with widespread public disapproval. Although the closing was characterized as an economy move at the time, there is a feeling among many of the country's punters that it was a retaliatory back-of-the-hand to Rome. The current reading of the public discontent is a resounding 93 percent opposed to the closing, while Taoiseach **Enda Kenny's** denunciation of the Vatican over its passive stance on clerical child abuse was broadly hailed by the same public last July. Critics of the embassy closing have targeted Tanaiste and Foreign Affairs Minister **Eamon Gilmore** as a principal architect behind the move to shut the embassy, alleging Gilmore with a "raw hatred" of the Catholic Church.

Bill O'Donnell

However, there have been indications that both the government and the Vatican would like to reduce the heat generated by the Dublin-Rome imbroglio. The rhetoric on both sides has been toned down and relations have gradually improved. A new papal nuncio has been named, an Irish American with a solid Vatican pedigree, **Monsignor Charles Brown.** Early last month the new envoy, in a positive Vatican move, was made an archbishop by **Pope Benedict**.

Yet all the news is not serene between the Rome and Dublin. The pope recently named 22 new cardinals but seemed to snub Archbishop **Diarmuid Martin**, head of the Dublin archdiocese, who was not included. Also two Irish bishops whom Archbishop Martin wanted resignations from, remain at their posts in Ireland with Vatican support. Martin was sent by the Vatican to stem the growing church crisis in Dublin but many in Rome now believe that he was too outspoken, becoming more a man of the people and less a creature of the Vatican.

West Of Ireland Hit by Emigration – The so-called Live Register, which tracks the unemployed in Ireland, has been going down in recent months but officials there point to what they call mass emigration in recent years as the driving force, not new job creation. "We have just gone back to the 1950s. We are exporting our young people all over the world," said county official **Michael Kilcoyne.** The newly elected chairman of the Kerry Gaelic Athletic Association, **Patrick O'Sullivan,** sees emigration as the greatest challenges facing the GAA now. "It's a serious problem in the west of Ireland," O'Sullivan said. "I don't think our people realize that the west of Ireland is being cleaned out, with all the young people leaving. The clubs are the face of the parish; if they disappear, then the parish loses its identity."

Voting Machines Looking For A Home – The cost of the machines when purchased was $75 million but in a bureaucratic nightmare —one of many authored during the lengthy Fianna Fail tenure —they are now virtually worthless for anything but scrap metal. **Bertie Ahern's** brainchild, meant to modernize electronic voting in the Republic, fell somewhat short of expectations. The machines were ordered, paid for, then soon after the purchase it was discovered that they "didn't do the job." Plain and simple. The voting machines were initially tried on a pilot basis in the 2002 general election, but the plug was pulled before the 2004 election as the flawed jump into the new millennium came to a grinding halt. Most of the machines are stored in the Gormanstown army camp (the annual storage fee is around $200,000) available for sale with few if any takers on the horizon.

Finance Minister **Michael Noonan**, with a curious bent for unearthing silver linings and a sense of humor to match, suggested that the voting machines might find new homes in Irish pubs around the world where emigrants would have a chance to vent their electoral anger on the useless units. Good one, Michael!

History Made On Aran Isle– History of a sort was made recently when an Inish Mor driver received the first ever traffic ticket on the Aran Isles. The ticket written for parking in a restricted area at Kilronan Harbor was the first since the new legislation went into effect in the new year. The number of motor vehicles on Inish Mor is estimated today at 400, a far cry from the tiny number of cars forty years earlier. But then, there have been other changes as well on the isles.

Back in the summer of 1972 my wife Jean (seven months pregnant) and I spent several days on Inish Mor, quietly exploring the island while we luxuriated in the twin flow of music —the playful musical pub sessions and the pervasive lilt of Gaelic that happily surrounded us. One morning at the Kilronan pier, a young man and his older friend invited the two O'Donnells for a short sail, but Jean's stomach said no, so off I went and boarded with my new companions. I enjoyed the sail in the choppy harbor and later that night we went to the nearby dance hall for a traditional ceili, the scene of the action, so to speak.

Our young host, who introduced himself as Bobby, warned us that the lights went off at ten o'clock but following the ceili he would guide us back to the B&B where we all were staying. We walked through the darkness, guided only be Bobby's flashlight and once "home" we all, (except the mother-to-be) had a bracing nightcap. In the morning over breakfast, Bobby and I had a lengthy political discussion, and it was only then that I learned that the bright, articulate young man was the former mayor of Galway, a Dail deputy, and a cabinet minister in the Fianna Fail government.

It seemed that when Galway got too hectic, **Robert "Bobby" Molloy** had a habit of jumping into his small boat with his friend and rowing from the Galway pier to Kilronan Harbor in the Arans. Bobby has long since retired from active politics, but I always remember that interlude forty years ago and the boyish, likable Irishman who made our first Aran Isle visit one to remember.

Northern 'Peace Walls' Targeted, Update – A while back in this space I noted that a solution to the contentious so-called Peace Walls had gathered some momentum and a growing citizen consensus seemed to support that goal. Well, a fresh dynamic is coming into view and it is being shaped by the International Fund for Ireland. Its purpose is to hear proposals relative to dismantling the walls and how that can be accomplished using cross-community relationships to centralize the effort. The IFI believes that there is growing support for tearing down the walls, but it needs to be "bolstered and intensified." by a concerned citizenry.

Across the six counties there are today some 60 walls, gates, or fences that separate the nationalist/Catholic community from its unionist/Protestant neighbors. Since the 1994 ceasefire, the number of barriers has grown. They remain despite the fact that the Good Friday agreement is 14 years old. Yet, the removal of the walls, many at critical interfaces, is a sensitive subject where there is "still fear in many communities about them coming down too quickly."

A count in 2012 shows that in Belfast there are 42 walls or barriers. There are 11 in Derry, 5 in Portadown, one in Lurgan, and two others that are open periodically.

The IFI has launched a $3 million fund that can be used to dismantle the walls, and also consider funding projects such as shared community space where walls have come down.

Vatican Envoys Agree On Romney, Traditional Marriage – It's a small club with sumptuous offices and homes, and, of course, the fabled ambience of the Eternal City itself. The role of America's ambassador to the Holy See is a grand presidential appointment, a key listening post amidst the legion of diplomats who call Rome home and reside there in regal splendor for four years or so.

Former Boston Mayor **Ray Flynn** can talk eloquently about his days in Rome during the papacy of **John Paul II.** And so can a host of former Republican party bigwigs, save for **Lindy Boggs** (1997-2001) and the aforementioned Flynn (1993-1997), who are both Democrats. (I probably should note that Jean and I enjoyed a delightful dinner and the hospitality of the former Boston mayor at his US embassy residence in Rome one night during his tenure).

In any event that is all prelude to the announcement early last month from five of the US Ambassadors to the Vatican over a recent 20-year period that as a group they are endorsing Republican candidate **Mitt Romney** for president. No, nothing doing for **Barack Obama**, nor from Lindy Boggs who succeeded Ray Flynn in Rome and is not among the envoy endorsees signing on.

The common thread for the ambassadorial endorsers, it seems, is their commitment to "traditional values" shared by the Mittser aka/Willard, and "his outstanding record in defense of marriage and the family." There's more, but you get the idea. No same-sex marriages! Got it?

When the group trumpets marriage and the family they don't mean newlyweds Jack and Sid, or Brianna and Alice.

Bertie Brings Down Old Colleagues– The *Irish Times* reports that the entitlement of former Irish PMs to a range of perks has come to a crashing halt —a austerity move that will hardly be noticed (except in anger) by other former Taoiseachs, yet will constitute a body blow to that royalish retiree, Bertie Ahern. His Bertieship racked up nearly $500,000 in the 36 months between 2008 and 2011 just for "secretarial services." You don't want to ask about the car and driver (gone, blessedly) nor the royal ransom, oops, pension. And still a free man! Isn't Ireland grand?

No matter how you slice the salami, $14,000 a month for, ahem, secretarial services, is several large salon rooms full of appointment books, shorthand notes and correspondence files, and maybe even a secretary or two.

Giving Has Many Definitions – What does one get for a grandson who seems to have most all that he needs? How many soccer balls or Gap shirts or new age electronic gadgets does an eight-year-old boy need? I didn't have a good answer to that question but I thought about it, remembered the 1960s heritage surge, the Roots phenomenon that followed on the heels of the Gaels' strong seanachie tradition. I decided that I would try to leave something that a grown grandson might just enjoy (or tolerate) when he's an adult and I'm long gone, gone from Saturday morning breakfasts, and dopey jokes, and chilling out at soccer matches. In so many words, I guess, I look for something that I can leave, something tangible, perhaps, that will tell him about his now slow-moving "Papa" and what his life was like before he was here. A bit of me, maybe.

Enough already with the musings. I have begun writing, slowly, page by page (oral histories: tensing and talking to a recorder's click doesn't work for me) my "**Letters to Aidan**," a simple, straightforward narrative that lays aside the lectures and lessons and bromides to hopefully remember a life well-lived and (even better) well-remembered: The frustrations, the exciting events, the triumphs, the trials, the good people, the rogues, and the generous hearts I have blissfully encountered on this journey. And, of course, the mistakes (without sorrow or explanation). Let him figure out if I am recounting anything that is worth saving or thinking about. He's a bright boy. He'll get it.

I do my "Letter to Aidan" on the computer's word processing and I do a hard copy and save one in my PC documents, and it's not for Aidan until he is a young adult. It will not be read by anyone while I'm here and it will not be novelistic nor anything anyone can label "literature." Thank God.

But it will be from me and for Aidan when he's ready. I believe it's one of my better decisions. And so far, I would recommend the process for anyone who might not be around when a grandchild approaches adulthood and might want to (painlessly) leave something of themselves. You could do a lot worse in the gift-giving department.

Irish On Top As Givers – I have bought this up on several occasions, maybe even too often, but I think it's important because it goes directly to character. The World Giving Index recently came out and verified what many of us have known for donkey years: Ireland is at the top of the ratings when it comes to giving. While Ireland has struggled from the halcyon era of the Celtic Tiger into the recession and soldiered on, it has never as a people and a country backed off from looking outward with a keen charitable eye and giving to worthwhile causes around the world. It's in the DNA.

The latest ratings by the Charitable Aid Foundation on giving for 2011 show that the Irish people are the most charitable nation in Europe. Among some 153 nations vetted for their giving (volunteered time, helping strangers, and donations to charity) Ireland comes in second to only one country, the United States, and that just by a single percentage point.

As I said earlier, it goes to character.

The News Isn't All Bumpy– Two firsts for Ireland in two widely divergent areas. To begin, the IDA, the Irish Development Authority, secured a record number of investments last year. The IDA reported that (even in difficult times like now) 148 new investments, new companies' operations were now open and operating in Ireland. Of those there was a 30 percent increase in the number of companies investing for the first time. The new investments accounted for 13,000 new jobs in 2011, up 20 percent from the previous year. The number of people employed by IDA client companies is nearly 146,000.

Far from the executive suite, but intriguing for those folks who look towards the sea, is the report from one of the world's top big wave surfers claiming that in Ireland he has discovered two areas, in the west coast of Donegal and off County Antrim, that are superb and ready for championship surfing. **Al Mennie,** who is on an international search for the largest wave areas for surfers, believes that Ireland is the equal of Hawaii, considered among the best surfing terrain anywhere.

RANDOM CLIPPINGS

Watching **Luke Russert** of NBC, son of late newsman **Tim Russert**, reporting from the halls of Congress provides a warm feeling and gives nepotism a good name. … Bruins goalie **Tim Whatshisname** had a perfect right to go viral on Obama, but it all made sense when I read he was part of the **Glen Beck** looney mob. …Good for the Charitable Irish for honoring three good men of accomplishment and character, the Brett Brothers, **Jim, Harry, and Bill**. … Shame on Galway for blocking home sales there because of petty, in-house rules, although things are looking up nationally for over-mortgaged Irish homeowners. … A gaggle of Dublin transport officials drove across country to Galway to discuss public transport options when they should have used the trains or buses they are paid to promote. … About time: Following link successes by the North's **Rory McIlroy and Darren Clarke**, it has been announced that Royal Portrush on the Causeway Coast will host the Irish Open.

Is there anyone out there pining away for former Massachusetts state treasurer **Tim Cahill** to make a comeback? … Boston will have a big role in the International Great Famine commemoration later this year. … **Daniel O'Donnell** (no relation) has taken some time off but will soon be singing at a venue near you. … The new TV series "Titanic, Blood & Steel" in production now will be on BBC television this year after filming in Belfast and the Dublin area. … Did you know that Sinn Fein is the second most popular political party in the Republic behind coalition leader Fine Gael. … They love **Padre Pio** in Ireland (canonized in 2002 by John Paul II) but an Italian historian is claiming that he used carbolic acid to fake his stigmata.

Please join us for the Taste of Ireland at Cape Cod Village

Event set for Sunday, Feb. 12

Sample the finest offerings from local Cape restaurants while enjoying music, dance, and a lot of games to guarantee both parents and children and afternoon of friendly fun. When: Sun., Feb. 12, @1p.m. Where: The Cape Cod Irish Village, 822 Main St., Route 28, So. Yarmouth, MA 02664. Telephone: 508-771-0100.; Cost: $15. The event is being hosted by the Cape Cod Irish Village and the IIIC.

In addition, the IIIC will offer a free immigration and citizenship workshop from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

IIIC Program Updates -- Free Immigration Legal Clinics: Tues., Feb. 7, 4 p.m. at IIIC, 100 Franklin Street, Boston; Mon., Feb. 13, 6:30 p.m., at The Green Briar Pub, 304 Washington St., Brighton.

Job Posting: IIIC is looking to hire a Citizenship Outreach Worker to recruit and assist immigrants (primarily targeting but not exclusively Irish immigrants) who have Lawful Permanent Residence (LPR) become US citizens. The position will involve organizing outreach campaigns, attending community events to encourage LPRs to attend a citizenship group processing workshop (sponsored by the Greater Boston Citizenship Initiative), and directing LPRs to meet with the IIIC Citizenship Specialist or to attend one of our free weekly legal services clinics for pre-screening consultation. The position is part-time (24 hours/week) for a 10- month period, which could be extended for a longer period depending on future funding support for which there is no present commitment. Please see iiicenter.org for the full job description.

Families Needed for Wider Horizons Program -- The Wider Horizons program brings young Irish men and women to Boston for six week internships in community-based organizations. The experience provides a great opportunity for personal and professional growth for these young adults. They provide a tremendous contribution to the local Boston community with over 1,000 hours of service to local organizations in 2011 and return to Ireland with new skills and confidence which allows many to become future community leaders, youth workers, care providers, and more. Please consider supporting this program by opening your home to one or two of these young adults for their six week stay! IIIC Staff supports all host families throughout the six week stay and compensation is provided. For more information, contact Ann-Marie Byrne at 617-542-7654, Ext. 16.

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IRISH INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRANT CENTER

Citizenship Class

Are you interested in becoming a U.S. Citizen?
If you need to begin your application for citizenship, our Immigration and Citizenship Services Staff can also help you through the whole process.

If you are interested, please join us at the Irish International Immigrant Center for Citizenship Classes to **prepare for the citizenship exam** starting in March.

Choose Between Two Class Times
Thursday Afternoons
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM
or
Thursday Evenings
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
March 8, 2012 - April 12, 2012

*For more information, please contact **Chris Tegmo** at the Irish International Immigrant Center at **(617) 542-7654 ext. 41***
To register, please visit our office during normal business hours.

Irish International Immigrant Center
Enter at 60 Arch
100 Franklin St, LL 1
Boston, MA 02110
www.iiicenter.org

TOGETHER FOR ALL.

IRISH INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRANT CENTER
An agency accredited by US Department of Justice
100 Franklin Street, Boston, MA 02110
Telephone (617) 542-7654 Fax (617) 542-7655
Website:iiicenter.org Email: immigration@iiicenter.org

A Warm Welcome from a Resilient People

By Sister Lena Deevy
IIIC Executive Director

In many ways, these long January evenings are a blessing in disguise, a time when life slows down just enough to allow us a chance to reflect on our experiences. I was fortunate enough to spend Christmas back in Ireland, but it is only now that I find myself able to process all that I saw and heard on my visit. Ireland has featured in some gloomy news headlines over the past couple of years. The country is held up as a cautionary tale, an example of how fast things can go terribly wrong; a destroyed economy, rising unemployment, rising emigration, and the wide-scale loss of public confidence in those in power, and much uncertainty about the future of the Euro, and our role in Europe.

And yet, if I had to describe the general mood of people I met there I would have to say that, even in the midst of times in which the temptation is surely toward negativity and despair, they were remarkably positive. Nowhere was this more evident than in Donegal, where I began my visit. I was there to participate in the second segment of a community development exchange program that saw a group of Donegal community leaders travel to Boston in September 2010. The welcome extended to us exceeded all of our expectations, and I can tell you that despite the difficulties posed by the economy, people in Donegal continue to be defined by their enormous generosity and hospitality.

The region is still one where traditions are important and yet one of the things that impressed us was the ways in which Donegal is proving a leader when it comes to embracing change and diversity. The county is fortunate to have such an impressive leaders such as Mayor John Boyle, Councillor Dessie Larkin, Chair of Donegal CDB Peace and Reconciliation Partnership, Seamus Neely, County Manager, and Michael Heaney, Director of Service. I was delighted to return again to the Port Na Failte Welcome Center in Letterkenny, and to the Regional Cultural Centre, where we saw evidence of great compassion, creativity, and enterprise in the face of significant economic and social. Everywhere we went in Donegal we saw a love of music, the Irish language, and the arts and the innovative ways in which the people have used these things to contribute to the economy and particularly, to appeal to tourists (especially those among the Diaspora).

Mayor John Boyle, Councillor Dessie Larkin, Chair of Donegal CDB Peace and Reconciliation Partnership, Seamus Neely, County Manager, and Michael Heaney, Director of Service.

Donegal, as most readers will know, has a long history of emigration by necessity. Sadly, Ireland's current economic troubles have once again seen many area young people and whole families have to leave in search of employment. There was short-lived joy while I was there because some of these young people were going to be able to return home for Christmas, but that joy will seem a distant thing now as January turns to February and separation once again becomes a reality. I noticed something however. Whereas in the past, many emigrants feared that they had been forgotten by those at home, there is now a very clear determination that Donegal's emigrants be kept at the top of the agenda. This was evidenced by one of the local Councilors, Michael McMahon, who talked about the plight of the undocumented and the sadness and grief of those who could not return home. This concern for Ireland's emigrants was very noticeable and very widespread. Radio personalities like Pat Kenny, Joe Duffy, and Marian Finucane all featured stories and phone-ins with the Irish overseas, both recent emigrants and those that left many years ago. Some of the stories people told were heartbreaking, but there were also the inspirational and hopeful stories. People acknowledged the new ways to stay connected and spoke of the importance of the Diaspora in terms of the community, the economy, and tourism.

There is no question that Ireland faces huge challenges at the moment. Everywhere I went, people told me that they feel let down by the politicians and disgusted by the greed and the fast-dealing of the banks. I heard stories of friends and family losing their jobs and in some cases, their homes. In fact, some of the non-profits I met with told me that they are bracing for a significant increase in homelessness as families struggle to pay the mortgage. And yet, for all of the hardship, many ordinary people are still willing to dig deep and to pitch in to help. This generosity has always been an important value in Ireland, but it is so heartening to see it still being practiced in a time when almost everyone is feeling the pinch. Brother Kevin at the Capuchin Friary in Dublin spoke of an unprecedented response to his appeal and of the many who called offering donations of time and money in assistance to struggling families and the homeless. I saw an increased interest in community gardens, local job creating ventures, 'buying Irish', and I saw true compassion for those who had lost homes, jobs etc.

I couldn't finish this reflection without mentioning what a special treat it was to have the chance to catch up with two old friends while in Donegal. Many of you will remember Denise McCool who worked with us years ago (and who is responsible for the beautiful quilt that still adorns our lobby). Denise, her husband Finbar, and their two children are now living back in Donegal. I had a lovely time visiting also with Cahal Stephens, the talented architect overseeing the Center's renovations. Cahal now divides his time between Boston and Donegal.

Matters Of Substance

New Year's Resolutions – Again

By Danielle Owen

It's that time of the year again. The time when you decide to change all your bad habits at once. No more cookies, ice-cream, or candy in between meals. No more shopping for clothes you don't need. You are going to give up smoking or try to drink less. No more… no more…no more…!! You pledge to be the healthiest, most efficient person around.

And by the end of January each year it seems that somehow you haven't managed to be as slim, smoke-free, or perfect as your plan had called for. You take a kind of comfort in this, throw up your hands and say, "what's the point anyway?" You swallow the guilt, throw away the list and pledge to try again next year. Some of us are able to replay this routine year after year. But for others, where drink or drugs are a problem, the danger is that there may not be a next year.

Are you concerned about the way you used drink/drugs over Christmas and the New Year? Does it feel like the party is continuing but no one around you is smiling? Or perhaps you are sick and tired of cleaning up the mess after someone close to you, someone with a drinking or drug problem. Maybe you just want some support in dealing with your partner/brother/sister/parent's drinking or drug use? Let us help you help you. We can chat, in confidence, about any concerns you have about your own or someone else's substance abuse problem.

Or, if you do want to quit the smokes, we can help there too. We will have more Smoking Cessation Groups in February. Maybe you are finding it difficult to connect with your children (aged 5-12 yrs) and would like things to be different in 2012. We will be running more Active Parenting Now Groups in Dorchester. We will also be running Free Health screenings, Nutrition on a budget classes, as well as Stress Management courses.

There are lots of ways we can support you in 2012. So, take heart! All those resolutions you have made may not be in your trash can by the beginning of February after all. We are here and looking forward to hearing from you. Let's plan to make 2012 a great, guilt-free year!

Danielle Owen

To call Danielle at the Irish International Immigrant Center: Phone: 617-542-7654, Ext. 14; E-mail: dowen@iicenter.org. Sand check out our website: iiicenter.zippykid.it/what-we-do/wellness-education-services/

Sen. Kerry seeks halt to US/British probe of BC archive

(Continued from page 1)

that afternoon, Twomey said she was not surprised by the court's decision. "I was hopeful going in, but realistic," Twomey told the *Irish Reporter*. "We expected this and we will be appealing it, there's no question about that. But it was emotionally hard. Because this is my life and my family's life. And the life of the people who participated in this project."

Still, Twomey was cheered by the letter released by Senator Kerry, who met with her and with other Irish-American activists concerned by the potential damage this British probe could have on the peace process in the North.

"We're very heartened. I was in D.C. this week and the reaction that we've been getting from Congress is exactly what we need," said Twomey, who lives with McIntyre and their children in Belfast. "They, unlike the court and unlike the lawyers that are fighting this, understand the seriousness of this issue and the implications of American foreign policy and they know that this subpoena is not the right thing and they're working to get it stopped."

Twomey said she expected to return to Boston in March, when a further hearing is expected to be held regarding the release of more tapes from the BC archives. She is fearful that people interviewed by her husband — who did so on the condition that their identities would not be revealed to the public until their deaths — could be in danger of retaliation by extremists on both sides of the political divide in the North. She is also concerned for the safety of her own family.

"I do believe my husband is being set up for assassination."
- Carrie Twomey

"It's affecting us terribly," Twomey said. "I'm here, on my own, on our credit cards. My husband is out of work so I don't know how we're going to pay for this. The stress is unbelievable; I wouldn't wish this on my worst enemy. The constant fear you're living with, it's awful. If the subpoena succeeds and the archives are handed over and used as criminal evidence, we're in danger now that'll just kick it into a whole other level. I do believe my husband is being set up for assassination."

The original subpoena, issued last May and June, sought the records related to two individuals, Brendan Hughes and Dolours Price, both of whom were alleged to be former IRA members. BC has already handed over documents involving Hughes, who died three years ago.

Court documents indicate that the current British investigation focuses on the killing of Jean McConville, a Belfast mother who was abducted from her home in Dec. 1972. Her body was discovered on a beach in County Louth in 2003. She had been shot in the head, allegedly because the IRA believed that she was acting as a spy for British forces, although an independent investigation in 2006 found no evidence of that charge.

Lawyers for BC sought to squash the subpoena, arguing that the archives should be protected from inspection because they were collected and preserved for academic purposes. However, BC's arguments were rejected by Judge Young in a decision last year and the university was ordered to supply the evidence to the court.

Twomey continues to press the case that the release of the Belfast Project tapes and related documents will do more harm than good.

"I came here because I felt that the reality of this was not being paid attention to: academic freedom, the protection of sources, the fact that the British government is raiding academic archives – these are all important issues but the human part of it, the fact that there are people's lives, children's lives, and in mine and my children's case, American lives, are at stake here. I came here to impress upon people the very real dangers that this is posing to very real people. I felt that that was getting lost in the shuffle."

Twomey was joined in her protest of the court decision by a trio of Irish-American organizations that have been outspoken in this case from the beginning: the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Brehon Law Society, and the Irish American Unity Conference. In a joint statement issued Jan. 24, the groups criticized the British use of the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty as "contrary to the Treaty's purpose" and "to American cultural and justice values."

"The request for Attorney General Holder to issue a sealed subpoena for select records held by Boston College is intended to intimidate academic and journalistic freedom of inquiry and to insure that the British version of the conflict in Ireland is unencumbered," read the statement.

Famine lament: 'God have mercy on us'

(Continued from page 1)

beneath blue skies, but in the afternoons, glowering black clouds formed above the fields and unleashed torrents of rain and relentless thunder and lightning. Temperatures dropped thirty degrees or more in mere hours, and from the mountains, clouds of whitish vapor seeped in all directions across the landscape. By twilight, strange pockets of fog shrouded trees and shrubs and swirled across the ground, birds vanishing until wind finally dissipated the mist. The fog left what looked like a light frost on the potato stalks.

In Cork and a few surrounding areas the blight appeared again at the end of July. Panic soon spread as fast as farmers across Ireland went to bed with their plants seemingly healthy, then awoke to a sulfurous, "sewer-like" stench that sent families racing to their potato beds where they gaped and wailed at the sight of brown spots staining the stalks like sores on flesh and quickly turning black.

Desperately, people ripped up the corrupted stalks in hope that the blight had not affected the potatoes themselves. When they dug down into the sodden soil, they found slimy potatoes that crumbled into a malodorous mush at the slightest touch. No one, neither the simplest farmer nor the most brilliant scientist, knew or could have grasped that the blight came directly from the soil itself, not from the growth's stem.

A handful of people who dug up their potatoes immediately and laid them out to dry were able to rescue a fraction of them, but not enough to ward off hunger for long. Later named *Phytophthora infestans*, the lethal fungus had actually arrived in Ireland, as well as other parts of Europe, via American ships, a New World blight about to ravage the Old.

By September 1846, a sickening smell shrouded the roads from Cork to Dublin and virtually everywhere else across Ireland. Father Mathew, the renowned Irish temperance advocate, wrote: "In many places, the wretched people were seated on the fences of their decaying gardens, wringing their hands and wailing bitterly the disaster that had left them foodless."

Ireland's Catholic peasantry, largely dependent upon the potato for sustenance, could only stare at their ruined crop. A Dublin reporter noted, "All [the crop] is now black." Stunned men, women, and children clotted churches large and small, praying for some miraculous deliverance yet wondering, in the words of a farmer (from a letter in the University College, Dublin, Irish Folklore Department) whether "the hand of God was in this," whether "it's a curse that has fallen on the land."

In Fermoy, County Cork, a man lamented that "we can no longer flatter ourselves with even the chance of escape; it [the blight] is north, south, east, and west of us."

As dreadful and frightening as the first few months of the blight were, as instinctively as people across the country grasped that mere survival now superseded all previous concerns, parents looked into their children's terrified eyes and fought to conceal their own fear. They knew only that like the dense fog and vaporous clouds that had enveloped Ireland in what is still known as the "potato fog," an unprecedented disaster had descended upon them all. In the Famine's beginning, most felt that there was nowhere to turn for help except God and the British. "If the English desert us now," a Famine letter at UC, Dublin, relates, "God in his glory they'll never see."

The year to come – "Black '47" – would compel millions of the Irish to believe that both the English and God had indeed deserted them. The words of an Irish peasant in 1846 proved prescient: "God have mercy on us. There will be nothing for us but to lie down and die."

Holding her dead child, a mother begs for enough money to get a coffin.
Illustrated London News - 1847

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Ireland's Weather

Reported Monday, January 30, 2012

It was a mixed week with some miserable weather interspersed with mild sunny days. On Tuesday it rained most of the day, on Wednesday it was wet and windy and Saturday was much like Tuesday. It remained mild for the time of year.

For the coming week the worst of the rain is forecast for the eastern half of the country although here in the west we might see some rain on Monday and Tuesday. On Wednesday it will turn cold and remain cold for at least 48 hours with daytime temperatures of between 2C and 4C, dropping to around -3C at night. What will happen after that isn't too clear.

Latest Temperatures
Day 11C (52F).....Night 6C (43F)

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Saturday, March 24 • 8pm

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Sunday - March 18th
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Afternoon Dance - After the Parade
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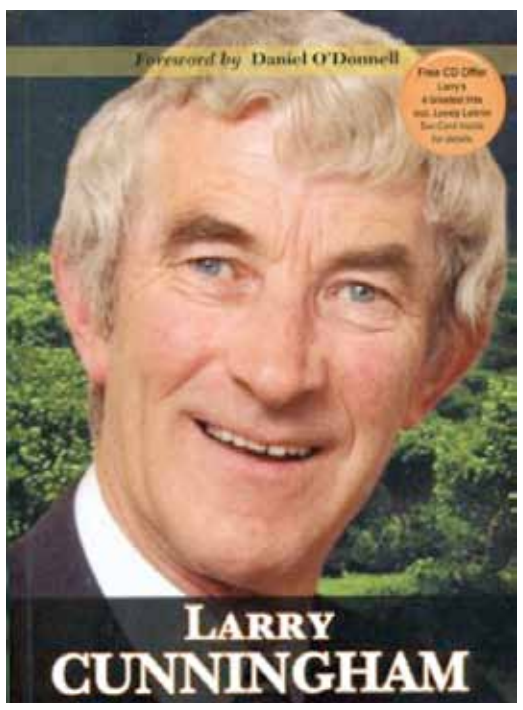

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BOSTON IRISH REPORTER

Boston Irish Arts, Entertainment, Travel & More

Conner's passions: Perform, preserve Great American Music

By R. J. Donovan
Special to the BIR

Baritone, pianist, and conductor Bradford Conner is on a mission. He sincerely hopes you'll love great American music as much as he does. One conversation proves he has a devotion and an insight for it that few others possess.

Classically trained, Brad and partner Benjamin Sears have become the "go-to" guys in terms of impeccable musical research. Together they helped found the critically acclaimed American Classics, "devoted solely to the performance of American music, giving voice to forgotten gems and newly discovered musical treasures." In that vein, they've made history by diligently working to rediscover, reconstruct, preserve, and perform long-lost musical compositions by everyone from George Gershwin to Cole Porter. Having wowed audiences with their cabaret performances from New York to Paris, they're currently completing scholarly writings on Irving Berlin in addition to working on a seven-volume set of Berlin recordings. In March, American Classics will celebrate baseball as well as the 100th birthday of Boston's own Fenway Park with "Fabulous Fenway," a concert program saluting our national pastime. We spoke recently about that concert and more. Here's an edited look at our conversation:

BIR: So what, exactly, is an American Classic?

BC: In the broadest sense of the term, an American Classic is that type of music which helps either shape or pervade American culture to such an extent it influences not only how we think we are as Americans but brings us together in a way that we realize we *are* all Americans. How's that (laughing)?

BIR: So an American Classic is not only a great piece of music, but it can help explain a time and place.

Bradford Conner and Benjamin Sears, musicians and historians, are devoted to preserving and performing the Great American Songbook.

BC: The spirit of American music embodies who we are as the melting pot of America. I find that incredibly interesting because one of my other huge interests is history, and you can actually define or be informed of the history of the world through the Great American Songbook. People like Irving Berlin and Ira Gershwin and Lorenz Hart and Oscar Hammerstein, when they wrote lyrics, they were lyrics of their time. And while for some that may be dating them, for me it means that it's an exciting way to find out what was going on then and discover all the facets that make us American.

BIR: An example?

BC: The Gershwins wrote a show called "Of Thee I Sing." One of the opening numbers is (called) "Wintergreen for President." And the reason Wintergreen should be president (in the lyric) is: "I love the Irish and the Jews." And I said, wow, this is so much fun because it's telling you, not only is the show written for New York, because that's where the greatest population of Irish and Jews were congregated at the time, but they were the ones *going* to the show. Everyone got the joke and they *loved* (having it) pointed out that they were part of that melting pot that (at the time)

(Continued on page 14)

Fiddler Conway learned his music 'pure' – Sligo style

By Sean Smith
Special to the BIR

Brian Conway makes no bones about it: He understands that his particular tutelage in the Irish music tradition was a profoundly rare thing, and he feels very fortunate as a result.

"I think that, in my upbringing, I definitely got the music pure," says Conway, who will bring his widely admired fiddle-playing talents to the Boston area later this month. "I was exposed to the fiddle music of Sligo in a very concentrated form, through people like Martin Wynne and Andy McGann, who were schooled in that tradition. This is an experience most people even in Ireland -- probably more than 90 percent -- haven't had. It's been a major part of my life, and I'm thrilled with it."

Conway, with his mastery of the Sligo style, would seem to be a throwback in an age when regional variations in Irish music tend to be less in evidence, especially on concert stages or professional recordings. And like many of the musicians he regarded as mentors, Conway approaches music as a dearly loved avocation, not a full-time occupation, having fashioned a successful career in criminal justice. But the New York City native is unmistakably a man of his time, able to view his Irish music experience in a wider context and amid changes that, for better or worse, have influenced the tradition over the past few decades.

On Feb. 17, Conway will perform along with another celebrated practitioner of a regional style, Cape Breton

(Continued on page 17)

Conner's passions: Perform, preserve Great American Music

(Continued from page 13)
was New York.

BIR: Music connects both intellectually and emotionally.

BC: Music opens doors that nothing else does. Last night I was listening to something in the car. I'm driving down the road and I'm in a perfectly great mood, but I realized I'm choking up over hearing something. Music has the power to do that instantaneously in a way that almost nothing else does. Certainly great words and poetry (can). But music goes a little deeper. For people who get Alzheimer's, it's the last part that goes. It sticks in there the longest. There's a reason for that.

BIR: Whether you're on the research trail or standing center stage, you're known for being very passionate about your work.

BC: One of my greatest gratifications, whether being a music director at a place like First Parish (Congregation in Bedford), or in the type of concerts that Ben and I do, is helping people discover. The way I look at it, when I'm up on stage, I'm not performing, I'm sharing my passion. That is how I work. And if I'm successful, I share my passion, and those around me catch the bug. That's my goal – to continue to do that and to do it better.

BIR: Tell me a little about the "Fabulous Fenway" concerts.

BC: This goes back a couple of years ago. A retirement community decided that they were going to throw a big party on Opening Day. They had rented Wally, The Green Monster. They called us and said we need someone who can put together a short program of songs that have to do with baseball. And that

Benjamin Sears and Bradford Conner celebrate baseball and the 100th birthday of Fenway Park in "Fabulous Fenway," a salute to our national pasttime.

was the genesis of the show. What's happened now is that it has expanded into a full two-part show . . . it includes three other performers (Cynthia Mork, Caroline Musica, Eric Bronner) besides us, plus (Broadcast Hall of Famer) Dick Flavin, (who'll do "Teddy At The Bat"). As someone in the Red Sox organization said, (Dick's) the poet laureate of the Red Sox.

BIR: Is there a sweet spot in the Fenway concert for you?

BC: The encore, ("Take Me Out To The Ballgame"). Ben sings the verse, then you gesture to the audience and everyone breaks into song . . . As much as I love performing, I love the moment where everybody lets down their barriers and they just sing out. They do it at the ballpark and they do it at our concerts . . . Everyone is going at the top of their lungs and it's really exciting.

BIR: As for your personal heritage, I hear your Irish ancestors actually founded your hometown in West Virginia.

BC: We're talking about the 18th century . . . Essentially, my namesake, Conner – they came from Connaught on the boat like everybody else -- they came down through Virginia . . . and they came to an area which is now Putnam Country, West Virginia. The name of the town is Hurricane, which they pronounced "hurri-ken" . . . There (had been) a huge wind storm that had swept threw the area. There were trees down. And James Conner said, 'It looks like a hurricane has come through this area.' So guess what? The name of my hometown [became] Hurricane. (Laughing) This is how great history is made I suppose.

R. J. Donovan is publisher of OnStageBoston.com.

***

American Classics presents "Fabulous Fenway." March 2, Follen Community Church, Lexington; March 4, Longy School of Music, Cambridge. Tickets: 617-254-1125 or see amclass.org.

Traditional sounds via piano on Feb. 4 at Follen Church

Jacqueline Schwab, whose talents have graced the soundtrack of "The Civil War" and other Ken Burns films, and the multifaceted performer Eric Eid-Reiner will present a concert of solo piano arrangements of traditional Celtic and American music on Sat., Feb. 4, at Follen Church, 755 Massachusetts Ave. in Lexington.

Schwab, who has performed at the White House for President Bill Clinton and on such popular shows as "Late Night with David Letterman" and "A Prairie Home Companion," will play traditional dance tunes, as well as more reflective vintage American "heart songs"—Stephen Foster and Civil War tunes, Scots and Irish fiddle tunes and airs, hymns and spirituals, ragtime, blues, tango and Latin waltzes, and contemporary Celtic music. Her website is jacquelineschwab.com.

Reiner's forte is traditional and contemporary music from New England, Ireland, Scotland, Cape Breton, and French Canada. He has appeared throughout the Northeast at contra dances, concerts, weddings, festivals, and other events, including a "Boston Session" broadcast on WGBH-FM as part of Brian O'Donovan's "A Celtic Sojourn," and as an accompanist for Cape Breton fiddler Ashley MacIsaac and Irish fiddler Tony DeMarco, among others. For more on Reiner, see EricEid-Reiner.com.

Admission at the door is $15 for adults, $10 for children, students and seniors. Follen Church is wheelchair-accessible. Contact Eric Eid-Reiner at Eric.Eid.Reiner@gmail.com or 781-863-0140 for more information.

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•Share tales of your own experiences and misadventures with dear old Flanagan, or simply enjoy the stories
and songs of the locals as they recall life with "Himself."

CD Roundup

By Sean Smith

Litha, "Dancing of the Light" – The whole united-Europe idea may be fraught with political and economic ills, but it certainly seems to be doing well on the folk music front, with cross-continental collaborations such as the Scottish-Scandinavian ensemble Fribo, or Mozaik and its Irish-Eastern European (and American) sound. The latest of these is Litha, which comprises Scotland's Aaron Jones (formerly of Old Blind Dogs) and Claire Mann (who's played with the Northern Irish band Craobh Rua), and Gudrun Walther and Jurgen Treyz, members of the German band Cara that opened eyes and ears here at the 2007 ICONS Festival with its splendid interpretation of Irish traditional music.

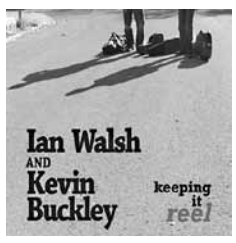
Their debut CD is an unlikely but entertaining, and sometimes compelling, collection of music from Irish and German traditions, settings of German poetry, original compositions, and covers of songs by the likes of Karine Polwart, Anne Lister, and Suzanne Vega. However unwieldy this combination might seem, it sure doesn't sound that way: The album is full of gusto, creativity, and just plain lovely playing and singing.

Litha's melodic strength comes from Mann (fiddle, flute, and whistle) and Walther (fiddle and accordion), who take on both Irish jigs and reels and Bavarian dance tunes with aplomb, and provide similarly first-rate accompaniment for the songs. The guitar and bouzouki backing by Jones and Treyz is masterful, complementary yet colorful. They all four shine on the Irish material, like the reel sets "Rosie's" (including "Jimmy Batty's" by John Carty) and "Archway," which gradually gains strength until it finishes up triumphantly with the traditional "Hare's Paw," and a medley of jigs that includes Charlie Lennon's magnificent "Flying Wheelchair." Mann's savory Bb flute solos on the Galway air "Dark Slender Boy," which leads into Walther's captivating, accordion-driven "New York Waltz."

The singing is of equally high quality, led by Jones and Walther but with graceful harmonies from Mann and Treyz. Jones takes center stage with two songs that both mine optimism and hope from tragedy: Lister's "Icarus," a retelling of the classic Greek myth (marred here only by a curious substitution of pronouns from the original), and Polwart's "Waterlily," based on a true story of a doomed love affair in the former Yugoslavia. Walther captures some of the urban-detachment feel of Vega's "Gypsy," but it's balanced to great effect by the gorgeous group harmonies that bring a glint of tenderness to the chorus. She is at her best on "Nun Will Der Lenz uns Grüssen," a traditional German ode to spring she learned from her mother, with an entrancing accordion-fiddle-whistle motif that conjures up cornflowers budding in Saxony.

Litha wind up the album with the ultra-infectious "Ready for a Jar," a band composition in the "crazy adventures on the road" vein. And whether the jar in question holds Guinness or Sternburg, you'll enjoy the taste.

Ian Walsh and Kevin Buckley, "Keeping it Reel" – Walsh (fiddle, mandolin, vocals) and Buckley (guitar, fiddle, bouzouki, lead vocals) are St. Louis natives, both with a healthy diet of success in Irish music competitions (including an All-Ireland fiddle title for Buckley), who have played together for the better part of 20 years. Their repertoire reflects the cosmopolitanism increasingly found in the folk/Celtic scene, blending Irish tunes and songs with music from Appalachia, French Canada, and even Venezuela, with influences and sources including Frankie Gavin, Paddy Fahy, Liz Carroll, The Clancy Brothers, Kevin Burke as well as Tony Rice, among others.



Their musicianship is just fine, energetic yet polished: The "Mayor Harrison's Fedora/Paddy Fahy's" and "Done Gone/Reel Beatrice" reel sets stand out, as does a hornpipe/set dance combo "Golden Eagle/Blackbird," while their rendering of the Venezuelan waltz "La Partida" is suitably dramatic without seeming mockingly histrionic.

Buckley has a pleasant, endearing kind of singing voice, though you wind up wishing you could hear it given a little more space in which to operate, instead of being harnessed to up-tempo arrangements, as in "The Minstrel Boy." That said, their 6/8 version of "Paddy's Green Shamrock Shore" gives the song a jauntier, more sanguine aspect than in previous incarnations, and "Say Darling Say" takes on an Irish-American character, enlivened by the Uilleann pipes of Tommy Martin and bodhran of Chris Weddle.

The impression one gets is of a duo probably better suited for pub or stage than recording studio, but theirs is an honest, good-natured sound.

"Legacy" – This eight-track (that's the number of tracks, not the sound format; the 1970s are long gone) CD is a family project hatched by Mississippi producer, musician, and writer Steve Young to celebrate his Scots-Irish roots, and "the music of our ancestors" for serving as a reminder of "their joys and sorrows, their love and sacrifice, their determination to make a better life for their children." Noble sentiments, to be sure, but the follow-through is less than satisfying. Except for a medley of jigs and the hymn "Be Thusa 'mo Shuile (Be Thou My Vision)," the material here, instead of being adapted from tradition, has been composed by Young and his collaborators to evoke the aforementioned ancestral music. Not that there's anything wrong with that, but most of the people involved, with the exception of fiddler Deanie Richardson, who has toured with The Chieftains, appear to have pretty limited experience overall with Irish and Scottish music, and it shows. There's also a vocal performance on one track that, frankly, is painful to hear.

Why not take some time to actually learn songs and tunes associated with the parts of Scotland and Ireland whence your ancestors came, and then recruit people who really know the music to help you? That seems like a far better way to honor a legacy.

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BCMFest

The ninth annual BCMFest was blessed with pleasant, unseasonably mild weather, and audiences of all ages who flocked to festival events at venues in Harvard Square. In addition to performances and participatory events such as music sessions and dancing, this year's BCMFest included storytelling, songs, and other activities aimed at children and families, as well as a carnivalesque "Cirque du Celtique" and subsequent parade into the heart of Harvard Square.

The BCMFest Board is grateful to all performers, volunteers and other festival staff for their hard work, and is especially appreciative of the support from all who attended, and from the Greater Boston community.

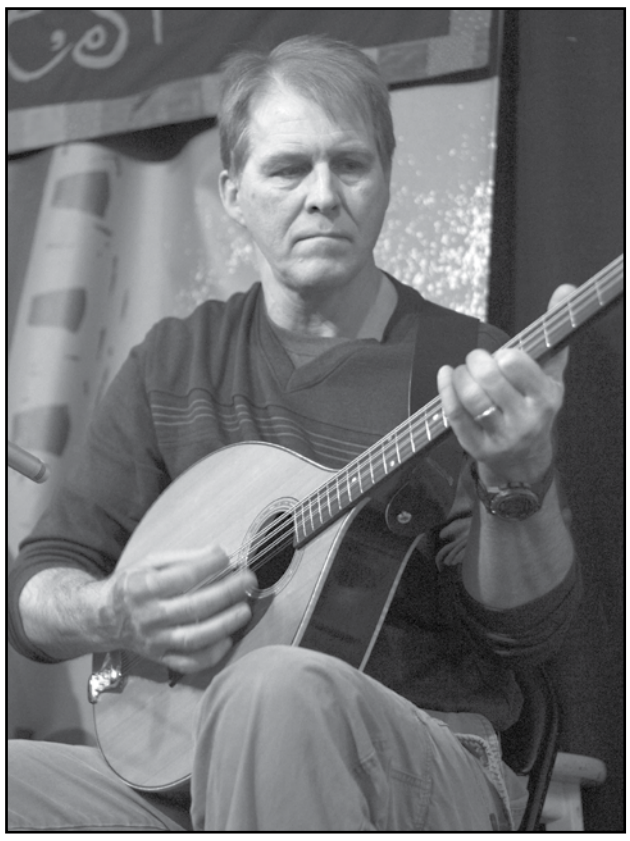
New sounds for "Celtic Music Monday": Following last month's inaugural (and well-attended) BCMFest Session, the monthly BCMFest "Celtic Music Monday" series at Club Passim in Harvard Square shifts back into concert mode on Feb. 13, with an exciting new collaboration headed up by innovative keyboardist Neil Pearlman. He will be joined by bagpiper Elijah Wolcott, guitarist/mandolinist Eric McDonald, and fiddler Jenna Moynihan, along with multi-instrumentalist Hamish Finley, performing Scottish music that sits squarely between traditional and contemporary.

Pearlman is the son of Ed Pearlman and Laura Scott, two people whose impact on Scottish music and dance in the Boston area during the 1980s and 1990s continues to resound. While Neil became involved at a very young age in his family's music and dance activities, during his teens he began to blaze his own trail, infusing his largely traditional Cape Breton-style piano accompaniment with jazz, Latin and other, more contemporary influences.

"The schools in Maine, which is where I grew up, have a good jazz program, so on the one hand I would be playing Scottish music with my family and on the other I'd be playing jazz with my friends," says Pearlman. "When I went to college in New York City, I got exposed to Cuban, Brazilian, and other Latin music, and I found a lot of crossover in the rhythms for Scottish music. If you listen, you can hear that Latin and Celtic music have a similar pulse, and if you work with it, you can do some pretty cool things."

Having moved to the Boston area early last fall, Pearlman has enjoyed his settling-in period and making connections in the area's Celtic music community. "The music scene here is so open, and full of people who are very welcoming and willing to go in new directions. I'm glad to have this opportunity to try out this new collaboration."

Admission to the concert, which begins at 8 p.m., is $12, $6 for members of Passim, WGBH, and WUMB. The event also will be screened over the Web at concertwindow.com.



Terry Weir during the Saturday "Dayfest" portion of BCMFest 2012.

Mike Passarini photo

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Fiddler Conway learned his music 'pure' – Sligo style

(Continued from page 13)

fiddler Kimberley Fraser, and guitarist Mark Simos, at the Unity Somerville Church near Davis Square in Somerville. The event is sponsored by the Notlob Concert Series [sites.google.com/site/notlobmusic]. Fraser, who moved to the Boston area several years ago, is widely acknowledged as one of the most talented young musicians to emerge from Cape Breton, and has appeared at festivals and concerts around the world. Simos, a songwriter whose compositions have been recorded by Alison Kraus and Union Station, among others, is an equally brilliant musician on guitar, piano and fiddle.

"I'm really looking forward to playing with Kimberley," says Conway, who first met Fraser at the Swannoa Gathering, an annual festival of traditional music in North Carolina. "It's going to be a split format: She and Mark will play a set, I'll play a set with Mark, and then we'll all collaborate on a few things.

"It will be interesting to see what we work out -- she's better at Irish than I am at Cape Breton," he adds, with a laugh. "But you always relish the opportunity to play with such excellent musicians like Kimberley and Mark. It enlarges your world.

"And, of course, I'm happy to be going back to Boston, which is one of the epicenters of Irish traditional music along with New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago. I don't play in the pubs or at ceilis much anymore, so I don't get up there as often as I used to. But I certainly am aware of how special a place it is for Irish music."

New York, of course, is a pretty special place for Irish music, and it was there, through the city's Irish population, that Conway came into his own. After an initial introduction from his musician father, Jim, and Limerick-born fiddler Martin Mulvihill, Conway entered under the guidance of Wynne and McGann, who showed him the highly ornamental, triplet-rich style they played back in Sligo -- including McGann's teacher, a gent named Michael Coleman whose more than six dozen 78 recordings were highly influential in 20th century Irish music.

Regional styles like those of Sligo, or Clare, or Donegal, are by no means lost to posterity, says Conway, but in the past couple of decades he has seen what he describes as a general "homogenization" of Irish music. Some of this may be due to societal factors and trends beyond the scope of musical tastes, but Conway also feels that the evolution of Irish music into a performance art -- enhanced by "the ubiquitous tape recorder" -- since the 1960s has had an impact.

"You see a lot of young players who imitate the sound of a popular musician," he explains. "They will mimic the most conspicuous aspects of that musician's playing, rather than explore comprehensively the style he or she represents. And they'll find and emulate aspects of other musicians they become interested in, and instead of one distinctive musical style, they develop an assortment.

"I'm not saying it's bad or good, but this is definitely something that differentiates a lot of the Irish music you hear today from how it sounded in the past."

After earning junior and senior All-Ireland titles, Conway went on to record "The Apple in Winter" with another eminent New York City fiddler, Tony DeMarco, as well as an album in tribute to McGann with Joe Burke and Felix Dolan, and eventually release two of his own CDs, "First Through the Gate" and, in 2008, "Consider the Source." He has performed from one end of the US to the other, and made warmly received visits to Ireland and elsewhere in Europe.

Cape Breton fiddler Kimberley Fraser, along with guitarist Mark Simos, will appear in concert with Conway.

In addition, Conway is a member of The Pride of New York, which could be described as a tribute band for the "New York style" of Irish music: Its other members – accordionist Billy McComiskey, pianist Brendan Dolan, and flute and whistle player Joanie Madden of Cherish the Ladies – are, like Conway, embodiments of distinct styles and legacies within Irish tradition.

"We only play a few times a year, but I enjoy every minute we spend together," says Conway. "They are a great bunch of musicians who all respect the generations before, and who value the connection to the tradition. Although we tend to come from different styles, we mesh very well."

But through it all Conway has stayed true to his primary – not "other" -- career in criminal justice, which has seen him amass a distinguished record of service in the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, where he pursued action on economic crimes, narcotics cases, and the rackets with various district attorney bureaus. He is now deputy chief of the office's Public Integrity Bureau, which prosecutes public officials or others affiliated with the legal system who commit crimes ranging from excessive force to fraud, as well as attorneys who are charged with misconduct.

For him, there was never a question of making a living doing something other than music. "My parents instilled in me the need to have a profession," he says. "My musical role models all had full-time jobs, like Martin Wynne, who worked for the post office. However much I may love it, I didn't want music to be my livelihood. I really felt that would compromise my art form, and just take the enjoyment of it away from me."

Fortunately for Conway, he happens to love his job. "What I like about working for the DA is, we're on the right side ethically. We're helping victims, redressing wrongs, and doing things that play to one's natural sense of fairness."

He doesn't see an overlap between these two areas of life, except perhaps for one thing: "I think I've actually become better in the courtroom since I released my CDs, because that got me used to performing in public."

Conway's primary outlet for his music is through sessions or other informal get-togethers with friends and family members, notably his sister Rose Conway Flanagan -- a founding member of Cherish the Ladies -- and Rose's daughters Maeve and Bernadette, who play with the all-female band Girsa. Much like Boston, according to Conway, the greater New York City area has proved to be a wellspring of young Irish musicians, particularly to the north in the community of Pearl River (the birthplace of Girsa), which seems to send several representatives to the All-Irelands almost every year.

"It's interesting to see what's happened with the music here," says Conway. "For a while, the scene spread out from the city, to the suburbs and surrounding areas. But now I think it's come back around: The five boroughs all have sessions going on, and there are concert series, multiple branches of Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann, and lots of people who make things happen."

Conway has done his part to uphold the tradition in another, perhaps even more vital way: as a teacher and mentor who has aided plenty of aspiring fiddlers. And, thanks to Skype, he's extended his teaching beyond the New York City area – all the way to Alaska, in fact.

"We all seek that balance between work and pleasure in our lives," he says. "I feel lucky in that I have a career that I love and believe in, as well as family and friends who mean the world to me. And on top of that, every so often, I get to go to a place like Boston and play music. I mean, to me that's like getting paid to eat ice cream."

The Feb. 17 concert with Brian Conway, Kimberley Fraser, and Mark Simos begins at 8 p.m. (doors open 7:30 p.m.). There is a suggested donation of $15 ($12 with advance reservation), $10 for students. For reservations, send e-mail to notlobreservations@gmail.com.

* * *

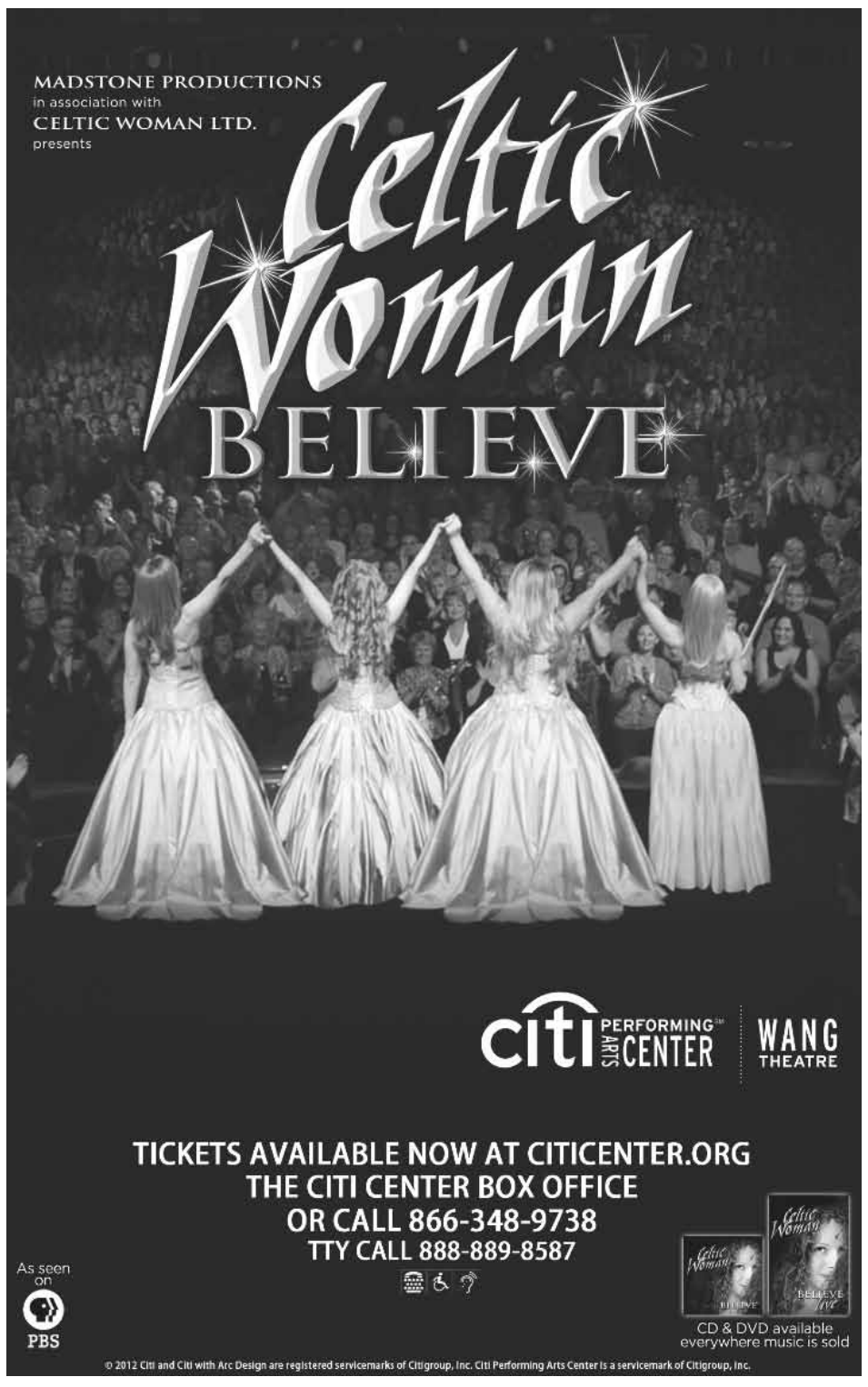
Notlob Concerts will hold two other upcoming events that feature local Celtic musicians: Andy Reiner and Julie Metcalf on February 4, and Katie McNally and Eric McDonald on March 2. Both concerts take place at the Loring-Greenough House, 12 South Street, Jamaica Plain.

Sligo-style fiddler Brian Conway will play a concert in Somerville later this month.

Reiner (fiddle, mandolin), raised in a musical family that embraced a variety of folk music traditions, is known for his work with Blue Moose and the Unbuttoned Zippers, a unique quartet that combines Celtic, Appalachian and Scandinavian styles with wholly original material. Metcalf (fiddle, viola), a founding member of the classical-folk crossover Folk Arts Quartet, has become a regular on the New England contra dance circuit.

McNally and McDonald, who played at the ninth annual Boston's Celtic Music Fest last month, are two highly active members of the area Celtic scene who play powerful arrangements of music culled from the Scottish and Cape Breton traditions. McNally, a New England Scottish fiddle champion, has performed as part of the ensemble Childsplay; McDonald has displayed his guitar and mandolin talents in a number of bands across the folk/acoustic music spectrum, notably the Celtic/contra dance trio Matching Orange.

For information on these and other Notlob events, see sites.google.com/site/notlobmusic.



Traveling People

Why I rent the same house each year in magical Rosturk Woods

Croagh Patrick mountain is visible in the distance across Clew Bay from the house I rent every year in Co. Mayo. *Judy Enright photos*

Freestanding six-bedroom house for rent at Rosturk Woods in Mulranny, Co. Mayo.

By Judy Enright
Special to the BIR

Each traveler has definite likes and dislikes about what makes a trip special. Some are bound by time constraints and can only get away from their "real" lives for a short time; others enjoy spending more time to see as much of a destination as possible.

With this in mind, I wanted to share how much I love renting a house in Ireland and why. There are so many reasons: I am able to invite friends and family to visit—and I have. I can plunk down my suitcase for the duration and actually unpack. In addition, by renting the same house for the past 10 years, I have been fortunate to meet and get to know many wonderful and interesting Mayo residents.

ROSTURK WOODS

I was initially introduced to Louisa and Alan Stoney and Rosturk Woods guest accommodation—in Mulranny, Co. Mayo – 16 years ago when I stopped with my son for a night of bed and breakfast. After that first visit, I stopped by for B&B if I was nearby. Then, in 2001, when I suffered a milestone birthday, I decided to rent a house, invite my family, and celebrate in Ireland. Naturally, I chose Rosturk Woods, which is about two hours by car from Shannon Airport. I have returned there every year since and always in April and May when the weather is somewhat cooperative, although there is definitely a reason why Ireland is green.

I rent a three-bedroom, south-facing modern house with direct, private access to Clew Bay. Alan Stoney meticulously maintains the many plantings, lawns, flowering trees, and bushes on the extensive and beautiful property.

His wife, Louisa, is completely detail-oriented and ensures that renters have every comfort. There are two self-catering units at Rosturk Woods: one is a six-bedroom house, especially suited for families, and the other is a three-bedroom, which is the one I rent.

Both houses have washers, dryers, microwaves, and kitchens large enough to seat eight comfortably around long wooden tables. Every conceivable pot, pan, dish and glass is provided, and Louisa even stocks the house with American measuring cups and spoons because we bring recipes from home.

In the living/dining room there's a large table at one end that becomes my Irish "office" (internet service is provided, of course.) At the other end of the living room, a couch and overstuffed chairs circle a cozy fireplace. Peat, wood, and fire-starters are constantly replenished by Alan. A television, DVD player, and lots of movies are available and there are rental stores in Westport if you don't like the selection.

The bathrooms all have walk-in showers with excellent water pressure, which is not the case everywhere in Ireland. Jumbo, thick towels await on heated towel racks. Bedrooms are spacious and sheets are the finest that Louisa can find.

The master bedroom affords a brilliant view of Clew Bay and Croagh Patrick—the Holy Mountain—through French doors that open onto a balcony that's small but large enough for several outdoor chairs and potted plants. There are no screens on any windows so opening them at night, with lights on, can result in some interesting winged visitors. I leave them closed.

THE MAGIC

There are so many reasons why I return to Rosturk Woods every spring, but John McKenna probably said it best in the *Bridgestone Irish Food Guide*, when he wrote: "Louisa and Alan Stoney's B&B and self-catering houses are one of those places that, quite simply, have the magic. Magical location, magical ambience, utterly otherworldly..."

There truly is much magic at Rosturk: brilliant sunrises and sunsets, rainbows over Clew Bay after a storm, the bleating of sheep grazing on nearby islands, the bark of a fox as I drift off to sleep, the whirring wings of geese as they lift off the bay in the early morning.

I return for the people, especially the Stoneys, who are not only fun but also brilliant hosts, ever ready to help. They both have a vast knowledge of the area (Alan is actually a native of Mulranny and grew up in Rosturk Castle next door). And, there are many other friends and acquaintances with whom I've had a lot of laughs and good times over the years.

I also return for the great shopping and dining, for the beauty of the area, for the opportunity to photograph the ever-changing weather and skies in the West of Ireland, and for the sheep.

GREAT WESTERN GREENWAY

A new plus for visitors to this area is the immensely popular Great Western Greenway, the longest off-road walking, running, and cycling trail in Ireland, which crosses the hills just across the road from Rosturk Woods.

The 28-mile long Greenway was built on a long-abandoned railroad bed and is a tribute to the many farmers and other landowners who gave pieces of their property to enable the project. The first stage opened in 2010 and the entire route, from Westport to Achill Sound, officially opened last summer. The Greenway has spawned a number of bike-hire businesses along the route and boosted the local economy.

The Greenway, Mulranny Park Hotel, the Loop Walk, and Mulranny Causeway competed for and won a European Destination of Excellence (EDEN) award last year for "sustainable tourism."

For information about renting at Rosturk Woods, contact Louisa Stoney at stoney@iol.ie or visit the website rosturk-woods.com

SELF-CATERING

Self-catering options are available all over Ireland and you can rent everything from a castle to a cottage for varying prices and lengths of time. Many accommodation organizations, such as The Hidden Ireland (hiddenireland.com,) offer self-catering properties, as do most travel books and the internet.

Tourism Ireland also lists self-catering accommodations as well as all kinds of seasonal happenings in Ireland at their informative website: discoverireland.com.

GET READY

St. Patrick is honored on March 17 and plans are well underway for the usual spectacular St. Patrick's Festival in Dublin, which this year runs from March 16-19. There are also festivals and activities all across the country including Cork City, where their festival happens from Sat., March 17, to Mon., March 19. You can scarcely find a spot in Ireland that doesn't do some kind of event to honor the patron saint. It's a fun time to be in Ireland and get into the spirit.

One interesting and different celebration is on Achill Island, Co. Mayo, where there is a long-standing tradition of pipe bands. The St. Patrick's Day Band Festival starts with a 6 a.m. reveille, followed by attendance at several Masses, performances, and marches through the villages for much of the day. That evening, traditional and modern entertainment is offered in many local hotels and pubs.

And, don't miss the Titanic Experience that opens in a specially-designed building in Belfast on March 31. Visit titanicbelfast.com for more information.

If a February or March trip to Ireland is in the cards for you, be sure to check out the Tourist Board's website, discoverireland.com, and the Northern Ireland tourist board's site, discovernorthernireland.com, for all the events going on in the Republic or in Northern Ireland.

The County Donegal Association, Boston

St. Patrick's Day Dinner Dance
Saturday, March 3, 2012, 7:00 p.m.

Florian Hall
55 Hallet St., Dorchester
Hot & Cold Buffet

Entertainment by Erin's Melody
Harney Academy of Irish Stepdance
Special Guest, Direct from Donegal:
Singer/Songwriter Shunie Crampsey

Tickets $40.00 per person *Hope to see you all there!*

For tickets and info:
President JP Doherty, 617-605-9878 or
Chairman Michael McCarron, 617-696-1702
Or any officer of the County Donegal Association

Irish educators discuss woes with Boston officials

By Gintautas Dumcius
Reporter Staff

Boston Public School administrators met earlier this month with a group of Irish education officials who quizzed their American counterparts about such things as closing buildings and dealing with vacant seats in Irish classrooms -- about 80,000 of them.

The Irish team, comprising officials from the public and private education sectors of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, sat down with Superintendent Carol Johnson in between meetings with state Education Secretary Paul Reville and Brookline school officials. The group also visited the Codman Academy Public Charter School before heading to the Boston School Department's Court Street headquarters to talk with Johnson.

The visit was part of a 10-day trip to Boston and Indianapolis, which was hosted by the Irish Institute at Boston College, with help from the U.S. State Department. Johnson said BPS officials and the visiting group agreed to communicate and share best practices, through technology and exchanges.

"The truth is, I think that a lot of the challenges we face are very parallel to what they're going through, maybe on a larger scale in some cases," Johnson said after the meeting, pointing to 80,000 empty seats in the Irish educational system.

Johnson and other school department officials sought the closure of some schools and the merger of others in an effort to close a budget gap and cut down on 5,600 vacant seats in the school system.

"Eighty thousand seats is a lot of seats," Johnson said. "We think we have a lot of seats. I think we've probably moved faster to close schools, it sounds like. I think they're still wrestling with it."

Added Michael O'Neill, a school committee member who helped shepherd the group, "They're starting to look hard and they simply cannot sustain the programs that they have been used to."

Boston School Superintendent Carol Johnson, center, and Boston School Committee member Michael O'Neill, far left, met with educators from Ireland on Jan. 12. *Photo by Gintautas Dumcius*

O'Neill said group members also had questions about how charter schools interact with public and parochial systems.

They were also curious about contracts with principals. "I think that they may have been a little surprised that we have one, two or three-year contracts with school leaders," Johnson said.

The group included officials like Paul Bell, principal of the Botanic Primary School in Belfast; Malachy Crudden, education advisor at the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, which oversees 500 Catholic primary and post-primary schools in Northern Ireland; Anna Kelly, director of access and lifelong learning at the University College Dublin, the largest university in Ireland; Pamela Crum, principal at a primary school in County Armagh; and Michael Mulvey, director of academic affairs and registrar at the Dublin Institute of Technology.

"I think it was interesting that they're facing some of the same challenges we are, some around leadership and teacher evaluation, others around facilities and maximizing the use of facilities that they have, and, I think, figuring out how to distribute resources in equitable ways," said Johnson.

Dublin tot, family find hope at Children's Hospital

Elie Madden: In Boston for life-saving care.

After nearly a year-and-a-half spent in hospitals, operating rooms, and recovery units, a Dublin family's lengthy struggle to secure a healthy future for their ailing daughter may finally come to a happy end here in Boston.

Fourteen-month-old Elie Madden was born weighing less than four pounds and suffering from esophageal atresia – a rare disorder in which her esophagus is too short to reach her stomach – and has spent much of her young life dependent on machinery to keep her fed and breathing.

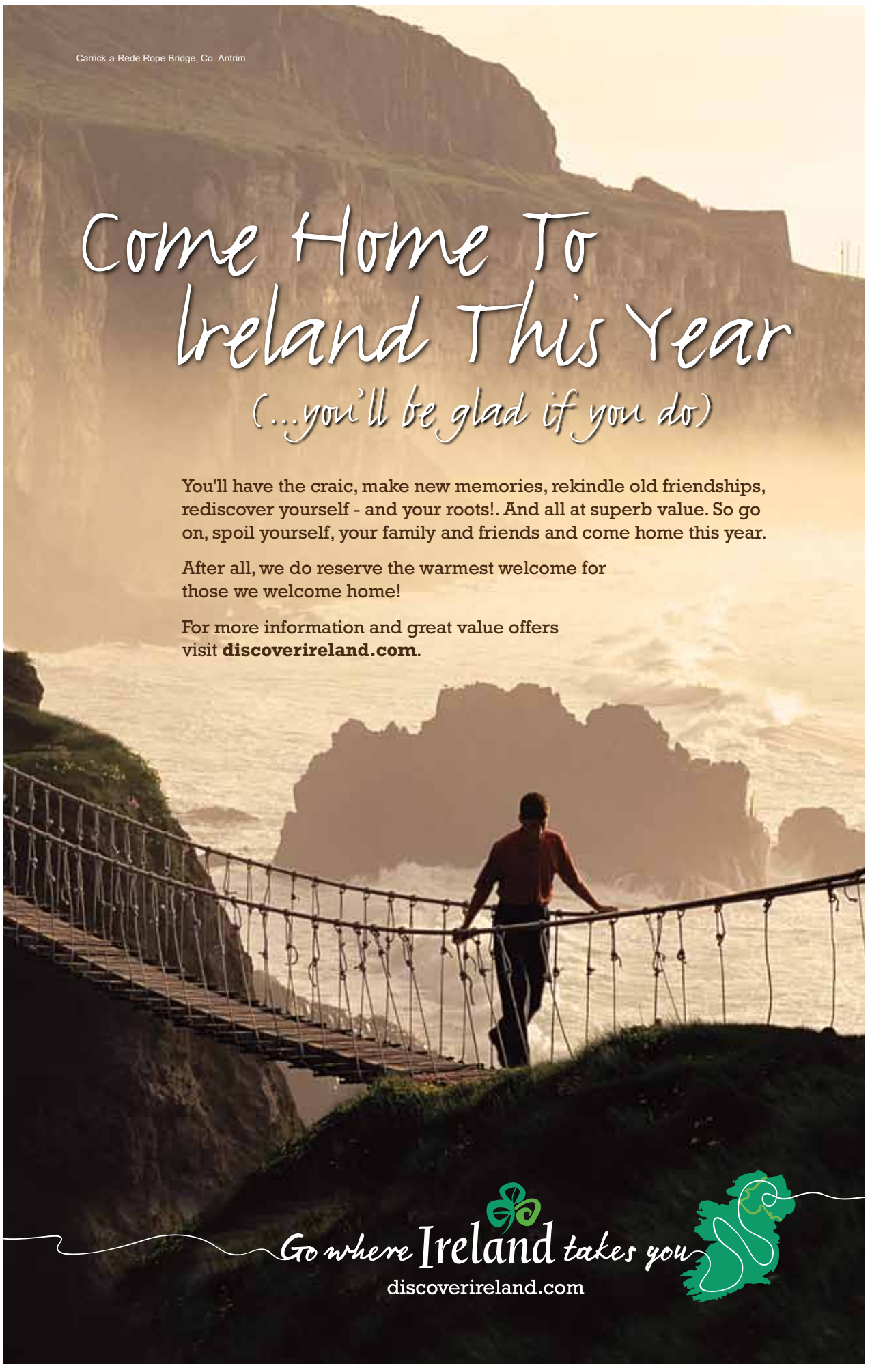
But thanks to a tireless fundraising campaign by parents Eddie and Esti and an outpouring of support in Ireland, Elie is now at Boston's Children's Hospital where she is receiving treatment that could give her a chance at a normal, healthy childhood.

Etsi, Elie, and her twin sister Emie flew to Boston in November after learning that Children's Hospital doctors John Foker and Russell Jennings had developed a procedure tailor-made to help small children with their daughter's condition. The family was joined by dad Eddie just in time for Christmas, marking the second year in a row the family has spent the holiday in a hospital room.

Since their arrival, Elie has undergone four operations to gradually lengthen her esophagus using a series of sutures. One Monday morning last month, she awoke from a month-long induced coma. While the family says Elie is in good spirits, they are still unsure how long they may have to stay in Boston while doctors work to repair the girl's voice box and prevent future heart complications associated with her low birth weight.

For more information or to donate, visit eliemadden.com. For updates on Elie's condition, visit their Facebook page "Operation Elie"

PAT TARANTINO



BRETT'S BOSTON

By Harry Brett

Exclusive photos of Boston Irish people & events

When Marine Corporal Michael Arki called his mother on her birthday, Dec. 30 to say he and his buddy, Marine Sergeant Ryan Pugsley were safely back in the United States after a combat tour in Afghanistan, Beverly Gilmore says "it was the best birthday present I ever had." Their families embraced the men with a "welcome home" party Jan. 14 at the Braintree K of C Hall. In the photos are: 1.) Seated, Kathy Pugsley (mother), Ryan Pugsley, USMC, Steve Pugsley (dad) . Standing: Nicole, Sophia, Greg Craven; Steve Jr.; Dylan; Katie; and Jaclyn Pugsley. 2.) Sam Auciello; Mike Arki, USMC; Beverly Gilmore (mother); Nicholas and Olivia. Standing: Mandy Downing; Jacqualyn Arki; Patty Gilmore; Carolyn Arki; Ryley Comerford. 3.) Erin and mom Gavin Joyce, Braintree; 4.) Kevin McGarty and John Folan, Braintree; 5.) Ed Bulger and John Tanguay, Braintree; 6.) Dylyn Pugsley and cousin Dennis Muldoon, Weymouth; 7.) Tom Gilmore, Dorchester; Carolyn Arki, Braintree; Kevin and Julie Brown, Braintree; 8.) Mike Arki, USMC; Mayor Joe Sullivan; Ryan Pugsley, USMC; all of Braintree; 9.) Frank Reidy, Pauline Height; Robin McFarland, all of Braintree; 10.) Sean, Nora and Carly Dolan, Kennebunk, Me.; 11.) Donna Muldoon, Weymouth; Hayley and Helen Johnson, Dorchester.

Ryan Pugsley is on leave as a Braintree firefighter, and Mike Arki is a school teacher who hopes to become a police officer.

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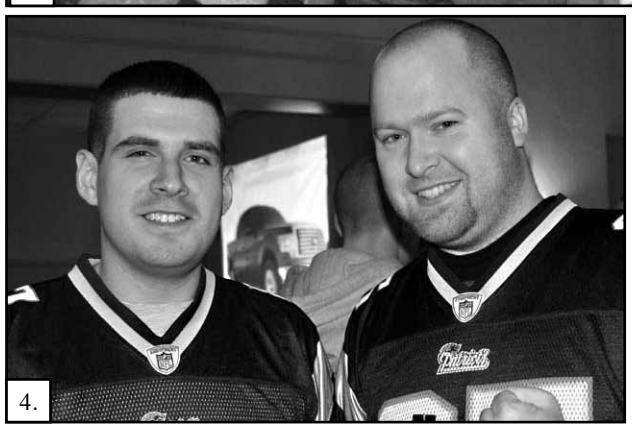
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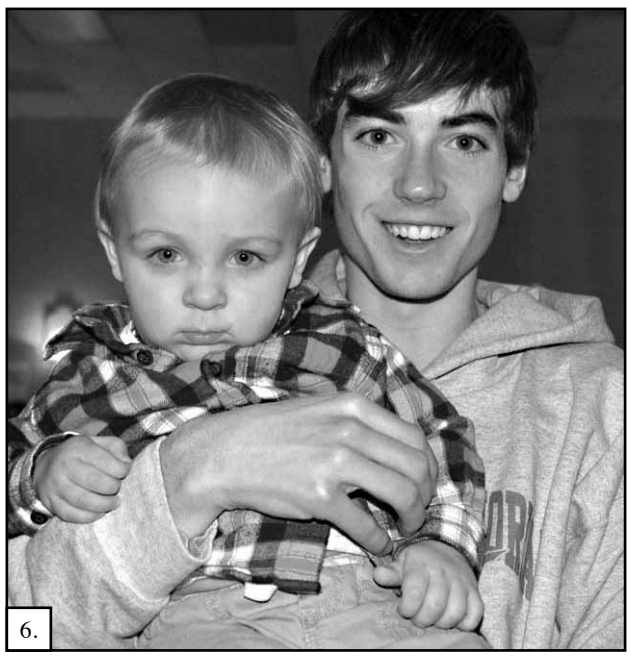
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The Irish Language
by Philip Mac AnGhabhann

As we began the New Year, **An Blian Úr**, we reviewed the **Habitual Present**, **Habitual Past**, and **Definite Past** tenses of "Class I" verbs – those regular verbs of a single syllable. This month we will continue our review with the **Future** tense and then move on to "Class II" verbs – those of two syllables. Recall that Irish has no words of more than two syllables.

Longer words are viewed as "compound words", made up of two-word combinations or with prefixes such as **có** /koh/ "with". This is similar to English "co-ordinate", Irish **có** plus **maith** "good" is **cómhaith** / KOH-wah/ or /KOH-vah/, "equal" or "parallel." In Irish **có** and other prefixes are not hyphenated and often require that the following word be lenited ("aspirated").

The Irish "**Future Tense**" is similar to the **Definite Past** in that it has only a single set of endings except for the "we", **muid**, form. For "Class I" verbs in the **Future Tense** these "endings" are **–f(a)idh** and **–f(a)imid**. **–f(a)idh** is pronounced /uh/ and **–f(a)imid** is /uh-muhj/. The ***f*** in the middle of a word is always "silent."

Cuirfidh sí rósóg. /KOOR-uh shee ROS-ok/
"She will plant a rose bush."

Glanfaidh siad a seomra. /GLAHN-uh sheet uh SHOM-ruh/
"They will clean their room."

Glanfaimid ár seomra.
/GLAHN-uh-muhj ahr SHOM-ruh/
"We will clean our room."

The **Future** is dissimilar from the **Past** tenses in that the initial consonant or vowel is not lenited.

Cuirfidh mé rós.	"I will plant (a) rose."
Chuir mé rós.	"I planted (a) rose."
Duinfidh mé an doras.	"I will close the door."
Dhuin mé an doras.	"I shut the door."

There is no need to remind you that there is no indefinite article, "a", in Irish. However, it is necessary to translate it into English.

Now let us begin to looking at regular "Class II" verbs, those of two syllables. For these we will use **céangail** /KAHN-guhl/ "tie" and **osgail** /OS-guhl/ "open".

The first thing to do with "Class II" verbs, in every tense, is to "telescope" the final syllable. Since vowels are "syllable centers", this is easily accomplished by simply removing the last vowel(s). The final consonant is moved over to become part of the "root" word. This helps to maintain the meaning.

However, there are still two syllables, the first one and the "telescoped" second one to which the verbal endings are attached.

For example, the "root" of **céangail** drops the **–ai-** and becomes **céangl-**, **céan** is the first syllable and **–gl + person/tense** ending is the second.

Oscail drops the **–ai-** to become **oscl-. Os-** is the first syllable and **–cl + person/tense** ending is the second.

Most two-syllable verbs end in **–(a)igh**. These endings (**–igh** and **–aigh)** are pronounced like a vowel / ee/. In this case the entire ending is dropped. **Salaigh** /SAHL-ee/ "to soil" or "make dirty" becomes **sal-**.

There are three "Person" endings in the **Habitual Present** for two-syllable verbs -- "I", **-(a)ím** /eem/, "we" **-(a)ímid** /ee-muhj/, and **-** – "you, he, she, you-all, they" are all **–(a)íonn** /een/. The vowel in parentheses is "silent", simply there to fulfill the Irish vowel rule for "balance", "Broad to broad and slender to slender."

The first two endings, for "I" and "we" are the same for both one-syllable and two- syllable verbs in the **Present Habitual** tense **– (a)im** and **-(a)imid**. The ending for all other persons is different, **-(e)ann** / uhn/ for one syllable and **–a)ionn** /een/ for two syllable verbs.

Here are some examples of our "model" two syllable verbs:

Céanglaím mo bhóg gach lá. /KAN-gleem moh VROHK gahk lah/ "I tie my shoe every day."

Céanglaímid ar brogaí gach lá. /KAN-glee-muhj ahr BROK-ee gahk lah/ "We tie our shoes every day"

Céanglaionn sé a bhróg gach lá. /KAN-gleen shey uh VROHK gahk lah/ "He ties his shoe every day."

Oscail an doras! /AWS-kuhl uhn DOR-uhs/ "Shut the door!"

Osclaím an doras seo gach lá. /AWS-kleem uhn DOR-uhs shah gahk lah/ "I close this door every day."

Osclaimid an doras seo gach lá. /AWS-klee-muhj uhn DOR-uhs shaw gahk lah/ "We close this door every day."

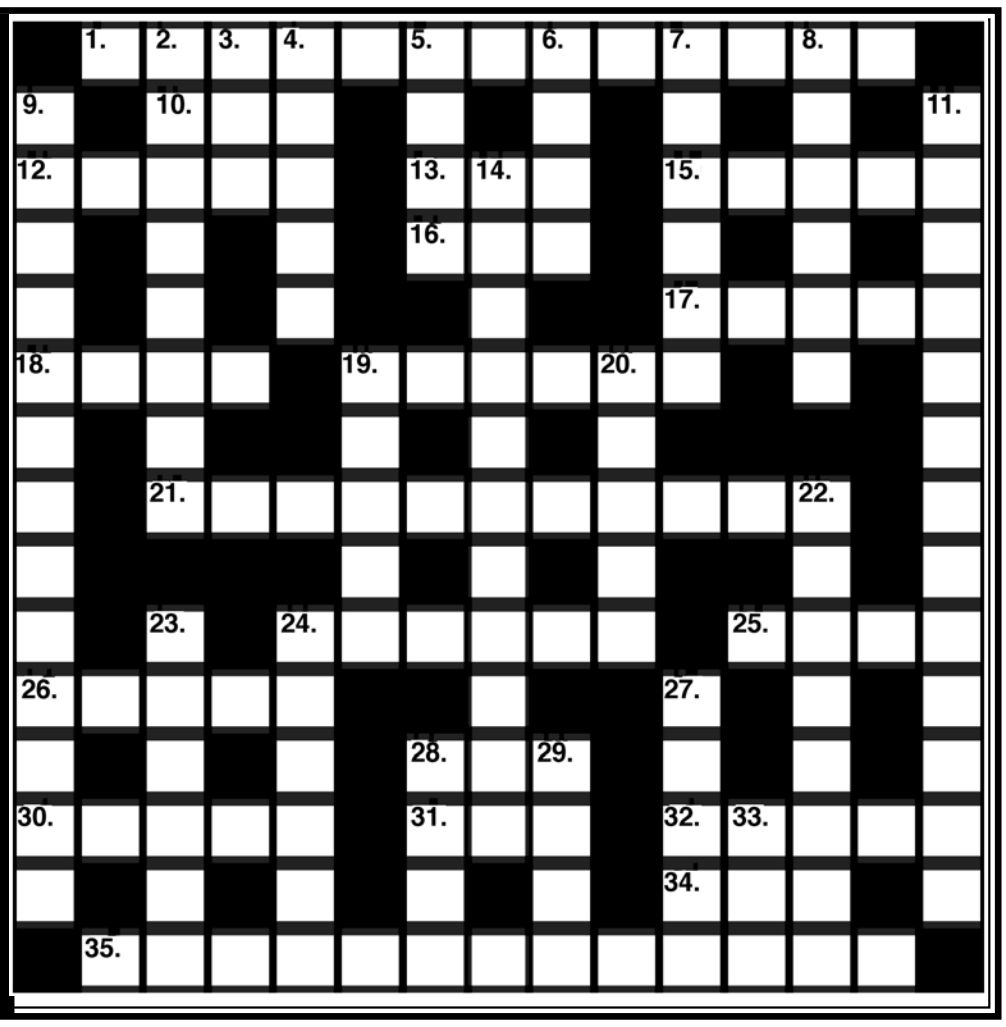
Osclaionn siad an doras seo gach lá.
/AWS-leen SHEE-uht uhn DOR-uhs shaw gahk lah/ "They close this door every day."

Now see if you can "telescope" these two-syllable verbs into "roots": 1.) **tomhais** "measure" 2.) **tóraigh** "look for" 3.) **socraigh** "arrange" 4.) **seachain** "avoid" 5.) **coisin** "defend" 6.) **cuidigh** "to help" 7.) **foghlaim** "learn" 8.) **fuagair** "announce" 9.) **eitigh** "refuse" 10.) **iompair** "carry".

Answers: 1.) **tomhs-** 2.) **tór-** 3.) **socr-** 4.) **seachn-** 5.) **coisn-** 6.) **cuid-** 7.) **foghlm-** 8.) **fuagr-** 9.) **eit-** 10.) **iompr-**.

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. Melon clan's joy. (anag.) Scottish leader of the Irish Citizen Army during the Easter Rising of 1916. (5,8)
10. "Surely mortal — is a broomstick!" Swift (3)
12. Ed, she is confused, but pays attention. (5)
13. On edge right before 999. (3)
15. Wear this in the kitchen or pan will tip over. (5)
16. Poetic before being included in Clogher edition. (3)
17. Having had an inclination in a Rathkeale antechamber. (5)
18. By all means sway about. (3)
19. Nice P.R. about the heir to the throne. (6)
21. He gets skill to turn to the Kerry rocky islands 9 miles off Valentia with an old monastic settlement. (3,8)
24. These boxes would be for Plato's mentor if so prefixed. (6)
25. Golfer's shout in secluded Westmeath village near Castlepollard, with numerous ancient crosses. (4)
26. Second class stream yields a first rate sea fish! (5)
28. "Satire is a sort of glass, wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their —." Swift. (3)
30. Get a tender back in Thurles running. (5)
31. Large ox-antelope appears when gun is broken. (3)
32. Is pan enough to take to the country? (5)
34. Old hated irregular in Ireland got his out in the sun. (3)
35. Seal led saints over to the offshore Wexford bird sanctuary where Bagenal Harvey was captured. (6,7)

\

2. Purple quartz found in mast they dismantled. (8)
3. "We are all born —. Some remain so." Beckett. (3)
4. "Eschew evil and do good: seek peace and —— it." Psalm 34 verse 13 (5)
5. See you apparently in the matter of the way to treat bacon. (4)
6. "Yet malice never was his aim; He lashed the vice but spared the ——."
Swift (his own epitaph) (4)
7. Guru seen in Kincora clearly. (6)
8. Run lag out of large Armagh linen town near Lough Neagh where George Russell, (AE), was born. (6)
9. We've lent Beth's version to Connemara's high dozen. (3,6,4)
11. Lad ride in tune about the Republican aspiration for 32 altogether. (6,7)
14. Wives torn in bits in Fermanagh agricultural centre where Necarne castle is. (11)
19. Question: did the ropes get tangled back in Killure so perfectly? (5)
20. "Better build schoolrooms for the boy than —— and gibbets for the man." Eliza Cook. (5)
22. Lots dance out east about Ireland's nearest neighbour. (8)
23. I.e. lark about in Derry angling centre in the Bann valley. (6)
24. Customer puts in fifty one to an American penny. (6)
27. Pat's a mess when it comes to foreign food. (5)
28. Fierce man-eating giant, therefore Roman retreats from Mayo green environment. (4)
29. Apparently, colonels give a clue to what General McAuliffe said in reply to the Germans who demanded his surrender in 1944. (4)

CROSSWORD SOLUTION ON PAGE 22

Irish Sayings

"Youth does not mind where it sets its foot."
"Both your friend and your enemy think you will never die."
"The well fed does not understand the lean."
"He who comes with a story to you brings two away from you"
"Quiet people are well able to look after themselves."
"A friends eye is a good mirror."
"It is the good horse that draws its own cart."
"A lock is better than suspicion."
"Two thirds of the work is the semblance."
"He who gets a name for early rising can stay in bed until midday."
"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."

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From the Famine era to the present day

(Continued from page 1)

movement, served as society president in l851 and l854 while O'Brien led the organization in l860-61. Despite the hostile anti-Irish atmosphere and its small membership, the society continued its work and gave $766 in aid to approximately 660 people between l848 and1854

The Civil War was a turning point in the society's history because many of its members proved beyond doubt that the Boston Irish could be patriotic Americans while simultaneously taking pride in their Irish roots. At the war's outbreak in 1861, CIS President O'Brien, who had come to Boston as a child in l832, called on his fellow Irish Bostonians to support the Union cause, as did Patrick Donahoe, so the 9th Massachusetts Regiment was predominantly Irish. Indeed, Donahoe provided a good deal of the funds for this new force. Society member and native of Queen's County Colonel Thomas Cass led the Massachusetts 9th until he was wounded fatally at the Battle of Malvern Hill in July 1862. Lieutenant Colonel Patrick R. Guiney, a Tipperary native and also a CIS member, succeeded Cass and led the regiment in a number of other battles. Statues of Cass and Guiney today sit in the Boston Public Garden and on the Commonwealth Avenue Mall. The society's prestige and reputation rose considerably as a result of the heroism of the officers and enlisted men of the Massachusetts 9th.

Upward Mobility, 1870 to 1914

By l870, some upwardly mobile famine immigrants and many of their sons had joined the society. These included Cork native Patrick A. Collins, who came to Boston in l844, joined the society in l870, and served as its president in l876-77.

He had a distinguished political career as a Massachusetts legislator, Congressman and, finally, as mayor of Boston from l902 to 1905. Former President Hugh O'Brien made history when he was elected as the first Catholic mayor of Boston in 1885 and served four consecutive terms through l888. O'Brien oversaw many important initiatives that improved the quality of life in the city, including sanitation and street widening projects, the building of the Boston Public Library at Copley Square, and the start of Frederick Law Olmsted's Emerald Necklace, which has provided beautiful natural vistas and oaseis for Bostonians down to the present day.

Another distinguished Bostonian who joined the society at this time was John Boyle O'Reilly, who took over the editorship and ownership of the *Pilot* from Patrick Donahoe soon after his arrival in Boston. O'Reilly was an eloquent champion of the Irish community, constantly exposing instances of discrimination against the Irish in employment, in the public schools, and in public life. A believer in the equality of all men, O'Reilly used his writing talents to expose racial and economic injustice wherever he saw it, whether in the post-bellum South or in the urban factories of the Northeast. A gifted orator, O'Reilly was the keynote speaker at the Charitable Irish Society's 150th Anniversary Dinner in 1887 and he composed a poem for the occasion. It is to O'Reilly's wife that the society owes the custom of having bowls of shamrocks on the tables at the annual St. Patrick's Day Dinner. In l889, in his book on the Boston Irish, Bernard Cullen showed that among its increased membership of Irish birth or ancestry, the Charitable Irish Society included fifteen prominent lawyers, twenty-seven politicians and public servants, six physicians, and five journalists.

By the century's end, other influential politicians and businessmen had been enrolled in the society, including Patrick J. Kennedy and John F. "Honey" Fitzgerald. In the next dozen years, Cardinal William O'Connell was among those who joined. By 1912 the society had grown so dramatically that it capped its membership at 1,200. The 175th anniversary dinner that year was addressed by President William Howard Taft and attended by 1000 people.

From the l890s to the l930s, the society's charitable giving consisted of annual donations to organizations like the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the Home for Destitute Catholic Children, whose boards and staff included various society members. It did not ignore the plight of newly arrived immigrants, however, and between 1890 and l930 the society paid for an agent at the docks to assist Irish immigrants, especially women, in finding their relatives or suitable housing and employment.

The Eagle shown here adorns the opening page of the 1810 Constitution of the Charitable Irish Society, which is preserved in the society archives at the Massachusetts Historical Society. The eagle, symbol of the United States of America, is shown with a lyre or harp on its shield representing Ireland. A French bonnet also appears, a nod to the affinity of the Society to the ideals of the French Revolution.

Ireland's National Struggle

Given the bitter memories held by famine immigrants and their children, it is not surprising that the society gave consistent support to Irish nationalist movements down to 1921. In 1880, when a potato crop failure in the west of Ireland raised the specter of another famine, the society followed the precedent of l847 by canceling its annual March dinner and donating $1,000 to the Irish Land League, which was then led by Home Rule leader Charles Stewart Parnell. It gave vocal support for Home Rule in l886, and when, after the defeat of the first Home Rule Bill, Parnell's enemies tried to implicate him in the infamous Phoenix Park murders of l882, the society contributed $209 to the Parnell Defense Fund. Parnell was made an honorary member of the society on St. Patrick's Day, 1889.

In l887, the society refused to send a message of congratulations to Queen Victoria on the occasion of her Jubilee because it "…saw no action of Queen Victoria affecting the Irish people which can be commended, and many that were

Inimical to them." As a result of the suspension of the implementation of the Home Rule Act during World War I, the society petitioned President Woodrow Wilson in l9l8 to push the cause of Irish self-determination at the upcoming Paris Peace Conference. Many society members were at Fenway Park when Irish Republican leader Eamon de Valera, then on the run from British authorities, spoke there in l920 during the Irish War of Independence.

Given its early history and the inclusive nature of its membership, many Charitable Irish Society members took a keen interest in the developments associated with the outbreak of the Northern Irish troubles. In the l970s the society funded summer visits to Cape Cod by both Catholic and Protestant children from the north. During the l980s and l990s the society provided a local platform at its annual dinners for northern politicians dedicated to resolving the Northern Irish conflict through dialogue and constitutional means. Nobel Peace Laureate John Hume of the Social Democratic and Labor Party and Monica McWilliams, a founder and leader of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition, were among those northern politicians who addressed the membership. Between l982 and l985 the society also made financial contributions to support three conferences held in Boston and Virginia where representatives of the various northern and southern parties (with the exception of Sinn Fein) and Irish and British government officials explored possible peaceful ways forward prior to the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement of November 1985.

The society also supported the l994 Reaching Common Ground Conference at Boston University where Catholic and Protestant women from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland gathered to discuss their political roles and aspirations in relation to the emerging Irish peace process.

Twentieth Century Highlights

Irish immigration decreased significantly in the middle decades of the twentieth century, leading the society to focus more on social and cultural endeavors that spread awareness of Irish history and culture. One of the most significant developments was the contribution of $41,000 to endow a chair of Celtic Studies at Harvard University, and amount equivalent to about $1.25 million today. Henry L. Shattuck, a society member with a distinguished Brahmin pedigree, anonymously provided these funds after meeting Irish President Douglas Hyde and discussing with him the need to spread knowledge of Gaelic art, literature, and culture in the United States. Graduates of this program now teach in Irish studies programs throughout the United States.

In more recent decades, the society made a major contribution to enable the Burns Library at Boston College to purchase one of a few facsimile copies of the Book of Kells and also gave a significant contribution toward the cost of the Irish Famine Memorial on School Street in Boston.

By the 1960s and l970s, the second and third generation descendants of the 19th and early 20th century immigrants were moving into positions of power and influence in the city's business, legal, and educational sectors. However, this upward mobility and assimilation into American suburban life was not without its cost in terms of a diminished sense of Irish identity and an informed awareness of the political and economic conditions in their ancestral homeland.

In that vein, the society took on a rather "cut-glass Irish" character, focusing more on social events than on its traditional humanitarian mission. Meanwhile, this distancing from Ireland was exacerbated as Irish immigration to Massachusetts virtually ceased by the early 1970s.

The society's 250th anniversary celebration in l987 was a gala affair that filled the ballroom of the Park Plaza Hotel. The program centered on honoring individuals who had made major contributions to Irish culture in Ireland and the United States. Honorees included Irish dramatist Brian Friel, Northern Irish poet Michael Longley, Professors John V. Kelleher of Harvard University and Eoin McKiernan of the Irish American Cultural Institute. This decade also witnessed the opening up of full membership to women with the result that women now constitute almost half of the board of directors. Catherine B. Shannon became the first woman president in 1990 and has been followed in that position by A. Maureen Murphy, Paula Carroll, and Kelly A. Kassa.

Renewing Our Tradition

The renewal of large-scale immigration of young Irish people to Boston in the mid-1980s caught the Boston Irish establishment unawares. Many of these immigrants had no close relatives in the area to provide help or advice on housing and employment. As many were "undocumented," they were reluctant to reach out to the older established Irish community and remained isolated in poor sections of the city. After newspaper accounts detailed exploitation of these young Irish by employers and their difficulties in securing adequate housing and health care, in l989 a small group of Charitable Irish Society members, inspired by the society's past record of assistance and their own family experience of immigration, determined it was time to reaffirm the society's original mission. A program of in-kind assistance and advice was developed in consultation with the Irish Pastoral Centre. A series of workshops were held where the young new Irish were provided with information on how to access housing, education and health care, and most importantly how to apply for the newly announced Donnelly visas. Over 1,000 attended these workshops in l989 and this helped to re-establish a bond between society members and new arrivals that had been waning. The society also began to make annual donations to the Irish Pastoral Center as well as to the Irish Immigration Center. In September 1992, the society held a large reception honoring Congressmen Brian Donnelly and the $12,000 it raised was split between the Irish Pastoral Centre and the Irish Immigration Center. Meanwhile, individual society members remained active in assisting recent immigrants to navigate the complicated citizen application process. On March l7, 1997, one hundred of these young people were sworn in as United States citizens in historic Faneuil Hall where 150 years earlier the Jamestown project was launched by CIS member Captain Robert Bennet Forbes and his colleagues on the New England Relief Committee.

In 1997 the society instituted the Annual Silver Key Award as a way to demonstrate and institutionalize its historic mission to help Irish immigrants. Honorees are typically high profile members of the business and professional community noted for their generosity to Irish immigrants as well as the unsung individuals who work quietly at the grass-roots level to provide needed services to the immigrant community. The Silver Key reception, which is usually held in the autumn, is the society's main annual fund-raiser and typically yields between $7,000 and $10,000. These funds are used exclusively to provide timely assistance to individual immigrants referred by the Irish and British consulates as well as by the Irish Pastoral Centre and the Irish International Immigration Center. Thus the society provides a virtual safety net for Irish immigrants as often their requests are of an emergency nature and cannot be fulfilled by these other organizations. Using Silver Key funds we have provided assistance to families made homeless by fires and personal financial crisis. We have paid airfares enabling immigrants to return to Ireland when relatives there were serious ill or had passed away. We have helped numerous Irish immigrants through the naturalization and citizenship process by paying the fees associated with their applications.

As the society enters its 275th year, it remains firmly committed to its core missions: to help immigrants, to nurture unity and harmony among all Irish people, and to advance their social, moral and civic interests on both sides of the Atlantic. .

Catherine B. Shannon is a professor emerita of history at Westfield State University. She was the first woman president of the Charitable Irish Society, serving in 1990 and 1991.

NEXT: Focusing on the speeches that four United States presidents gave at Charitable Irish Society events over the years.

PUZZLE SOLUTION FROM PAGE 21

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