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BOSTON IRISH REPORTER

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Canton Fare: A Hearty Feast of Irish Music and Culture



Summer is mostly gone, but fun times aren't over, certainly not with the 17th annual ICONS Festival preparing a cornucopia of outstanding Celtic music and enjoying activities for all ages Sept. 12-14 at the Irish Cultural Centre of New England in Canton. The festival will showcase some of the world's most popular and acclaimed performers in the Irish, Scottish, Cape Breton, French Canadian and other Celtic-based music traditions, including Liam Clancy, top left, Solas, middle left, Cara Dillon, bottom middle, Luka Bloom, middle right, plus a once-in-a-blue-moon pairing of Jerry Holland and John Doyle. A healthy contingent of Boston and New England-based acts also will be on hand: the trio of Seamus Connolly, Joe Derrane and John McGann, along with Annalivia and special guest John Whelan, The Boston Kiltics and the Boston Celtic Music Fest Showcase. If music alone isn't enough for you, there are dance events – not only to watch but also to join in – and celebrations of Irish literature and arts, featuring Shay Duffin as Brendan Behan, bottom left above, and even demonstrations of hurling and Gaelic football presented through the American branch of the Gaelic Athletic Association. Stories, photos, Pages 13-15.

Photo display courtesy of the ICONS Festival.

Mary Joyce Morris Knows How to Connect the Dots

Galway-born and Dorchester-raised Mary Joyce Morris, at right, is a "Boston Guy" whose sense of public relations and marketing and community service has earned her acclaim as a first-class manager of special events and also membership in the hierarchy of Boston's can-do citizens.

Greg O'Brien draws up a profile of Joyce Morris, who says of herself: "I have had a wonderful life. I am blessed." Page 4.



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for Obama/Biden Ticket
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the Irish Economy
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Northern Irish cops assist BPD in crowd control tactics

By BILL FORRY

A pair of high-ranking Northern Irish police officials were in Boston last month to advise the Boston Police Department on crowd control tactics. During their week-long visit, Chief Inspector Andrew Galbraith and Asst. Chief Constable Duncan McCausland consulted with the BPD's command staff in the preparations for securing the annual Caribbean Festival, during the third week of August. Both men are attached to Belfast's Castlereagh station of the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

The timing of the men's visit was coincidental. Boston Police Commissioner Ed Davis told the Reporter that he sought out the Northern Irish perspective in the aftermath of the Boston Celtics championship victory in June. The event was marred by the death of 22-year-old David Woodman, a student who stopped breathing after he was being forcibly detained by Boston Police.

"Because of the incident that occurred, I felt it was very important to reach out," Davis said, who described the Police Service of Northern Ireland as "the single best experts" on crowd control. "We've been able to come up with some really good ideas for this process and for future events."

Galbraith and McCausland attended a pre-parade briefing at Boston Police headquarters on Aug. 22. They met with Davis and other BPD commanders earlier in the week. One of their recommendations, Davis said, was to broaden the department's use of video teams to record possible illegal activity and use it



Two officials from the Police Service of Northern Ireland attended a briefing at Boston Police Headquarters on Friday, Aug. 22. Pictured from left to right are Boston Police Commissioner Edward Davis, Asst. Chief Inspector Andrew Galbraith, Asst. Chief Constable Duncan McCausland and Chuck Wexler from the Police Executive Research Forum. Photo by Bill Forry

for later arrests and prosecutions.

Davis said that Boston Police would deploy their own teams of videographers — and use tapes taken from MBTA cameras mounted inside and outside of

T buses — to look for possible criminal activity.

"There will be legal action taken — and in some cases well after the fact — to anyone who acts out at this event," said

Davis.

The Caribbean festival — which Boston Police worried would be used as a cover for rival gangs to attack one another — was relatively free of incidents.

BIR Business Notes

Mass.-based Company Abiomed Seen Creating 250 Jobs in Athlone -- Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment Mary Coughlan announced last month that Abiomed, a specialist in heart assist technologies, is to establish a global manufacturing facility for its Impella 2.5 cardiac assist device in Athlone, Co. Westmeath. The Danvers, Massachusetts-headquartered company plans to recruit 250 staff over the next 18 months. Abiomed is moving into the facility vacated by Johnson and Johnson subsidiary Conor Medsystems, which announced in May 2007 that it was closing with the loss of 165 jobs.

Pfizer Announces 180 Job Cuts -- The pharmaceutical company Pfizer has announced that it will close a plant on Little Island in Cork by the end of next year, with the loss of 180 jobs. Early last year the company started the search for a buyer for the operation so that it could continue as a going concern. At one stage a potential purchaser appeared on the scene but talks between the two sides broke down last month.

Job Losses in Co. Offaly -- A further 71 job losses have been announced, this time with the closure of timber products company Rationel in Edenderry, Co. Offaly. The Denmark-based company has been in the town for the past 21 years and is due to end manufacturing on November 14. The company will continue to market its products in Ireland from plants in Denmark and Poland and will retain its service and distribution centre in Edenderry.

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ON THE TOWN WITH THE BIR

Massachusetts Lt. Governor **Tim Murray** joined Ireland Consul General **David Barry** and Boston City Councillor **Stephen Murphy** to welcome the European champion Munster Rugby team to Boston last month. The athletes stayed in Boston's Lenox Hotel for several days prior to traveling to Hartford for an Aug. 23 friendly match with the US national team. Congratulations on the success that you have enjoyed," Murray told the players at an informal lunchtime meeting at the hotel. We are interested to see that when you come back for future tours, you're not going to East Hartford, but that we have a facility for you right here in the Greater Boston area. There so much synergy that exists between Massachusetts and Boston and Ireland, and we want to make sure you get a place a little bit closer to home here for your next tour." The city's own rugby team, the Boston Irish Wolfhounds, played host to a charity cocktail reception Aug. 20 at the Boston College Club. The Heineken Cup, emblematic of the European championship, was on display at the event, and the players posed for photos with their Boston fans.

A University of Massachusetts Medical School search committee has recommended that **Michael F. Collins, MD**, become the permanent Chancellor of the University's Medical School campus. Dr. Collins, 53, who currently serves as the University's senior vice president for health sciences and as interim chancellor of the medical school, previously served as Chancellor of the University of Massachusetts Boston and as president and chief executive officer of Caritas Christi Health Care System. The 23-member University of Massachusetts Medical School Search Committee was unanimous in its recommendation, with committee Chairman **Philip W. Johnston** describing Collins as "an experienced and effective leader, a leader with a vision" and as "the clear choice." The committee was established in February to help select a permanent successor to former Chancellor **Aaron Lazare**, who stepped down last year but continues to serve as a professor of medical education and psychiatry at the medical school. Dr. Collins is a 1977 cum laude graduate of the College of the Holy Cross, which he served as chair of the board of trustees from 2002-2008. He is a 1981 graduate of Tufts University School of Medicine. He and his wife, Maryellen, have two children, Michael F. Collins, Jr., and Elizabeth M. Collins.



Ireland's new vice consul, Deirdre Ni Fhalluín, has been joined the staff of the Irish Consulate in Boston. She previously spent a summer here as a J-1 student while a student at Dublin City University.

Boston's newly-appointed Vice Consul, **Deirdre Ni Fhalluín**, joined Ireland Consul General David Barry's staff in mid-August. She replaces **Marianne Bolger**, who returned home to a post with the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin. The new Vice Consul is a native of Leixlip, Co. Kildare, and holds bachelor's and master's degrees from Dublin City University. She and husband, Paul Brandon, are parents of a ten-month-old daughter, Niamh, and they will live in Boston's South End. Pronunciation guide: if you're like most Boston Irish who still struggle to learn the Irish language, be informed that the "Fh" in her last name is silent, thus her last name is pronounced "Nee A-loon."

The **Irish Echo** newspaper will host its Golden Bridges Awards in Boston next month (Oct. 1, noon to 2 p.m.) at the JFK Library in Dorchester. The publication will, in its words, "recognize some of Boston's finest Irish Americans who come from the world of business, culture and community development, most of whom are known for their longstanding commitment to Irish America and Ireland." The guest of honor will be **Sir Reg Empey**, Minister for Employment and Learning in the power-sharing government in the New Northern Ireland and also leader of the Ulster Unionist



Lt. Governor Tim Murray (center) and Ireland Consul General David Barry greeted members of the Munster Rugby team during their recent Boston visit. The squad is the 2008 European champion.

Party. Former U.S. Congressman **Martin Meehan**, now Chancellor at UMass Lowell, will be at the event as a special guest and honoree and he will make an announcement about a new partnership between UMass Lowell and Queen's University Belfast. At the luncheon, which is being sponsored by the Northern Ireland Bureau and Bank of Ireland, the Echo will also honor **Tim Cahill**, the state treasurer of Massachusetts, **Jim O'Brien**, Chairman Emeritus of ICCUSA New England, **Joseph F. Leary Jr.**, President, Irish American Partnership, **John Hynes III**, CEO Gale International, Professor **Anne Donnellon**, Babson College, **Dropkick Murphys**, **Peggy Cloherty**, Cumann na Gaeilge, Boston, **Ed Forry**, Publisher of the Boston Irish Reporter, and **The Irish Cultural Centre of New England/ICONS**.

Local officials are seeking up to \$100 million to build a national institute focused on the U.S. Senate in general and the more than four decades of service to the body by **Sen. Edward M. Kennedy**, who is being treated for a malignant brain tumor. The facility will be located on Columbia Point on a four-acre plot between UMass-Boston and the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum, itself a center for studying the presidency and the administration of the senator's late brother. Tentative plans call for replica of the Senate chamber itself, as well as programs to train new senators and archives of famous Senate speeches. Construction could start next spring, after a fundraising drive aimed at generating \$50 million in seed money and another \$50 million for final construction costs and an endowment. "The U.S. Senate is one of our forefathers' most brilliant democratic inventions," says Kennedy. "To preserve our vibrant democracy for future generations, I believe it is critical to have a place where citizens can go to learn first-hand about the Senate's important roles in our system of government." Kennedy, 76, is the second-longest serving member ever of the Senate, having first been elected in 1962.

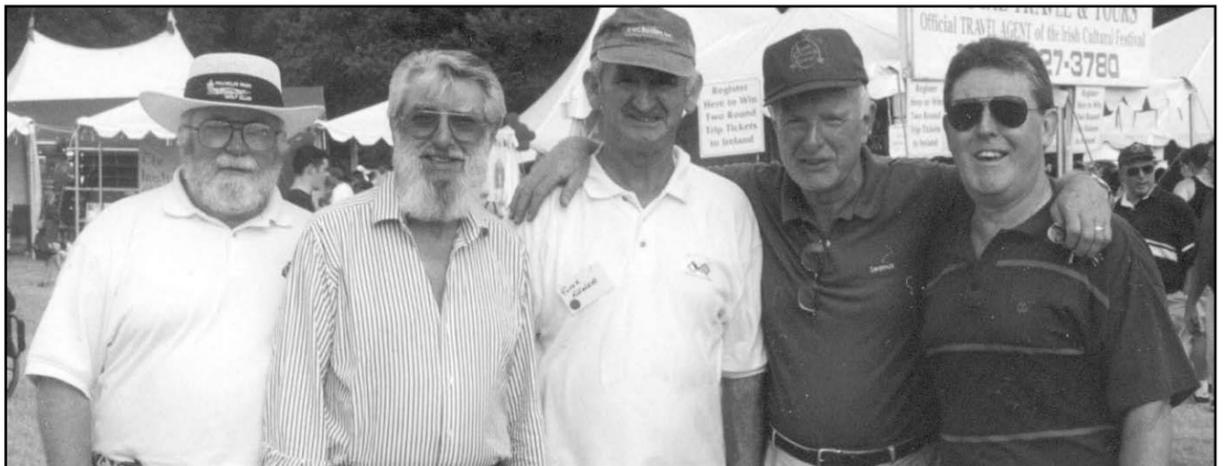
Hundreds of mourners attended the funeral of Irish folk musician Ronnie Drew in County Wicklow on Aug. 20. The founder of **The Dubliners** died on Aug. 16 at the age of 73, having battled ill health for some time. The Pogues' **Shane MacGowan**, U2 manager **Paul McGuinness** and representatives of Irish President **Mary McAleese** and Taoiseach **Brian Cowan** were among the mourners. The service - which at times was more like a tribute concert - opened with a New Orleans-style jazz hymn. A small screen was set up in the parish hall to relay the service to hundreds of people, with many more gathering around the outside of the Church of the Holy Rosary to listen through speakers.

The Dubliners, **Paddy Moloney** of the Chieftains, blues musician **Don Baker**, songwriter **Phil Coulter** and singers **Mary Coughlan** and **Eleanor Shanley** all performed during the ceremony. The congregation erupted into spontaneous applause on several occasions, as prayers and thanksgivings were interspersed with traditional airs, laments, jazz instrumentals as well as performances of folk songs made famous by Drew.

Drew's wife of more than 40 years, Deirdre, died last year. The couple lived in Greystones, County Wicklow. He is survived by his two children and five grandchildren.

Drew will be best remembered for his gravelly-voiced renditions of rabble-raising folk songs, like Finnegan's Wake and Dickey Reilly. In a statement on U2's official website, Bono said Drew has left his earthly tour for one of the heavens. "Music to inspire, to console... an optimism that was contagious... that's what U2 took from The Dubliners," he said. "Ronnie has left his earthly tour for one of the heavens... they need him up there... it's a little too quiet and pious. "God is lonely for a voice louder than His own."

Earlier this year, U2, Sinead O'Connor, Shane MacGowan, Christy Moore and others came together to record a tribute to the singer, called *The Ballad Of Ronnie Drew*. All profits from the release of the single went to the Irish Cancer Society.



The legendary Ronnie Drew appeared at the Irish Festival in Stonehill several years ago. He is pictured (2nd right) with ICCNE members Mike Brodigan, Roger Killalea, Jim Mulligan and an unidentified volunteer. BIR file photo by Ed Forry.

Boston Irish Reporter's Calendar

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

Aug 30- Sept 1 -- Newport Waterfront Irish Festival, 4 Commercial Wharf, Newport. Newportfestivals.org, 401-846-1600.

Aug 30- Sept 1 -- North American GAA finals, hurling and Gaelic Football, Irish Cultural Centre of New England, Canton.

Aug 31 -- Sons of Erin Irish Festival, 22 Williams Street, Westfield. 413-562-5927, sonsoferin.com.

Sept 6- ICCUSA/New England monthly meeting, 6:30 p.m., Algonquin Club of Boston. Guest speaker, Jonathan Houston, coach, Irish baseball team. Info: 617-263-68772.

Sept 11-14 -- "Churchill & Ireland" - 25th International Churchill Conference, Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel, Boston. Info: 617-248-1919, jhern@fhmboston.com, winstonchurchill.org.

Sept 12-14 -- ICONS Festival. The famous three-day

outdoor festival of Irish music and dance has been redesigned and moved to late summer, at the Irish Cultural Centre of New England, 200 New Boston Drive, Canton. 617-610-4951, iconsfestival.com.

Sept 13-14 -- High Kings in Concert, Colonial Theatre, Boylston Street, Boston. Noted for their performances on the PBS network this year, the Irish lads bring their stirring music to Boston. 866-523-7469.

Sept. 13 -- Half Way to St. Patrick's Day Celebration, St. Barbara's Church, Woburn, Music by Fintan Stanley, Step Dancers from McGonagle School. 8 p.m., tickets \$10, 781-933-2845.

Sept 14 -- Lecture and book signing, 1:30 p.m. Dr. William Mahon, author of "Thomas Griffin and the Irish Speaking People of Lawrence," Lawrence Heritage State Park Visitor's Center, Lawrence. Free. Info: 978-683-9007, 978-686-5214, homestead.com/div8aoh.

Sept. 19-21 -- New Hampshire Highland Games, Loon Mountain, Lincoln, NH. 603-229-1975, nhscot.org. A gathering of the Scottish clans.

Sept 26 -- Irish Cultural Centre of New England annual golf tournament.

Oct 11 -- Echoes of Erin Concert, Waltham High School Waltham, 8 p.m., \$18, 781-899-0911, cceboston.org. Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann annual concert features Ireland's traditional champions in singing, dancing, storytelling, and music.

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

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

BIR Profile

Mary Joyce Morris, a 'Daddy's Girl' and a 'Boston Guy,' Knows Well How to Connect the Dots in Her Community

BY GREG O'BRIEN
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Mary Joyce Morris is a Gaelic princess in all ways; even her e-mail address, gaelicprin@aol.com, attests to that. But for a "princess" born in Galway with a pedigree of accomplishments in city politics and community affairs, Joyce Morris is just one of the boys, or Boston Guys.

"The Boston Guys," a Boston-based special events, public relations, and marketing firm that she has successfully run for more than a decade with her politically-astute partner Melissa Graham, is pound-for-pound, "X" chromosome for "X" chromosome, one of the best and most closely-connected special events firms in the city. The firm got its name ten years ago when a focused Hillary Clinton, then First Lady, came to town for an event, met up again with the advance team of Joyce Morris and Graham, then declared, "No need to panic; the Boston Guys are here!"

Since then the Boston Guys have crashed Beantown's good ole boys' political and social networks, and have done some head-turning business—first with the Clintons after an introduction from Graham's connected husband Steve, who had done Clinton advance work earlier, then for premier community and political events, major fundraisers, and for a host of big name Washington and Boston pols from former Secretary of State Madeline Albright to feting the memory of Mary's friend, the late Kevin Fitzgerald of Mission Hill, a former state representative, an advocate for the city's poor and dispossessed, a driving force for the Urban Youth Sports program, now FitzUYS at Northeastern University, and a name once tossed around for mayor of Boston or speaker of the Massachusetts House.

The Boston Guys are helping to organize an Oct. 2 fundraising tribute to Fitzgerald's legacy to benefit Northeastern's Center for the Study of Sport in Society. The \$100-a-ticket, tax-deductible event, complete with a full array of food and festivities, will be held on the floor of the Boston Garden. Tickets are available through sportsociety.org. Click the events button.

Now that's an unadulterated plug, Mary! Another advance press outreach well-executed.

Joyce Morris prides herself on connecting the dots. A former aide for 14 years at the State House to then Attorney General Robert H. Quinn and then House Majority Whip William Q. "Biff" MacLean, Jr, Joyce Morris, the oldest of six children, plied the inside track of Boston politics, the rail of influence. Ultimately, she took her work home with her, marrying James T. Morris, Quinn's law partner in the Boston firm Quinn & Morris.

From birth, tenacious Mary Joyce Morris, raised in Dorchester after arriving here just shy of her second birthday, was shaped and defined by her Irish-born parents, Michael Joyce, a champion boxer in the Irish Army, and Theresa Helebert Joyce, both raised in County Galway. At all of five feet, seven inches, Joyce Morris's father "wasn't the biggest and strongest, but he never gave up," recalls Joyce Morris, seated in her snug Seaport District home in South Boston. From a



MARY JOYCE MORRIS
A passion for life, family, work

family of fishermen, her father came to Boston in 1949, and was given his first job by Mayor James Michael Curley. He was a dishwasher, then waiter and a bartender at Purcell's, which held the city's first liquor license, and was a pint toss from the old City Hall—a spittoon for political talk. Joyce was a dutiful worker, often holding two or three jobs at a time, among them washing courthouse floors at night and working days as an aide on immigration issues at the State House in the House speaker's office from the 1960s until his death in 1989.

The day after his funeral at St. Margaret's, the long-standing Joyce family parish, then-Boston Globe columnist Mike Barnicle wrote of Joyce's influence on others in a column headlined *His Heart Was An Open Door*: "Inside the church were 2,000 people with enough judges, politicians, and priests to win a special election. It was a huge funeral for a big man in a lightweight body—Mike Joyce, who made a career of being nice to others...to Mike Joyce, good news or another's great fortune was an item to be celebrated." In attendance that day, among the political elite, were Senate President Billy Bulger, Mayor Ray Flynn and former House Speaker Tommy McGee, for whom Joyce had worked.

Talking about her father on this August day, Morris has to pause when overcome with emotion. She carries a lot of him with her. "It's still difficult," she says softly. "I miss him terribly!"

As she does her late mother, the other ballast beam and influence in her life. Her mother came from a family of farmers, and in many ways was the disciplinarian of the house, to some degree by proxy because Mike was usually at work and not often home. The family first lived on Spring Garden Street, then Bellflower Street before buying a modest single family home on Willis Street, all within St. Margaret's parish. "The kettle was always on, and the door was always open," Joyce

Morris, at 60, recalls. "Ma did everything for us. My father, God love him, couldn't change a light bulb. Ma would strip furniture, paint, clean, cook, and care for all of us." The siblings - Mary, Christina, Eileen, Tommy, Theresa and Michael, Jr. --- are all hard workers. Many held MBTA jobs or worked at the State House, and most worked, like their mother and father, with their hands. The youngest of the family, Michael, a Mass. Maritime graduate, runs a power plant in Dighton.

To say that Joyce Morris's mother and father had a deep faith is to say nuns receive Communion on Sunday. "Our lives," she says, "were involved with the church and with local politics. My parents loved being around people who were passionate. Politics and participating in the process were so important to my father that he checked himself out of the hospital when he was dying of cancer to vote in an election, explaining to all that it would have been the first time since he had become an American citizen that he hadn't voted." Early on, the Joyce family quickly, although serendipitously, saddled up to one of Boston's noted political tribes the day Christina was born at South Boston's old Carney Hospital, Christmas 1949. The woman in the bed next to her mother was giving birth to Jim Brett, the current New England Council President and CEO who put in good service time in the Massachusetts Legislature, holding a succession of key leadership positions, including the chairmanship of the committees on banking and taxation. Joyce Morris later served as official scheduler for Brett's unsuccessful run for mayor of Boston in 1993 - another circle in her life completed.

Like many Catholic girls in her neighborhood, Joyce Morris attended St. Margaret's Elementary School, then Msgr. Ryan Memorial High School for Girls, which closed years later, then reopened at another site under the name Elizabeth Seton Academy. She recently co-chaired the new school's fifth anniversary party—having been active at her high school in cheerleading, debating, and as a member of the CYO Board. Mostly she babysat, went to BC High school dances on Friday nights, and stayed close to home. Maybe it's the Irish guilt, but she was always reticent to break a rule, noting, "I always knew in the back of my mind that I couldn't cross certain lines."

After graduating from high school in 1965, Joyce Morris took a pass on college, and went to work for United Community Services, an affiliate of United Way, then worked as a bookkeeper for a Boston construction company before heading to the State House. She eventually attended Emerson College and graduated with honors at 41 with a degree in speech. No surprise here.

While focused today on The Boston Guys and her community and charitable work, Joyce Morris's real passion is her husband and two politically-intuitive children, Michael 27, a Bowdoin College graduate studying at Suffolk Law School who has just finished working on a White House legal internship after volunteering last year as an advance man for Sen. Joe Biden's presidential campaign; and Meghan, 25, a University of Colorado graduate who is now on the staff of Congressman Stephen Lynch in Washington. As for her husband, whom she adores as much as the day she fell in love with him, Joyce Morris relishes the story of the day he took her blue-collar father to the venerable Locke-Ober to ask for his daughter's hand in marriage—a contrast of cultures of a high order. The father graciously consented nonetheless, saying he was honored.

Through the years, Joyce Morris herself has been honored with numerous awards and has served on several community boards: she has served on the Board of Directors of Por Cristo, an organization that raises funds to send medical teams to Ecuador; she was vice president of the Kids Fund Board at Boston Medical Center; she was president of the Massachusetts Ace of Clubs, a social charity founded by Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy; she was president of the Boston chapter of Friends of Central Remedial Clinic in Dublin, Ireland, which serves those with special needs; and she was a board member of Halcyon Place in Boston, off-site, family-style housing for young children being treated at Massachusetts General Hospital. She was recently appointed to the Seaport Square Advisory Board.

Joyce Morris recently received the Founders' Award from the Hattie B. Cooper Community Center in Roxbury for her impressive contributions improving child care and after-school programs, and she was honored with a "Gung Ho" community service U.S. Marines award from the Metrowest Detachment of the Marine Corps League.

Asked what she plans to do for an encore, this Boston Guy-sounding like the fictional George Bailey-professes, "I've had a wonderful life. I am blessed. I want to enjoy life with my husband and children more, I want to continue developing my business, and always, always, I want to care about people." But most of all, she wants to establish a memorial to her father. "It's in the works," she says, declining specifics. "Many people have worked on it. I want to see it to fruition."

Duly noted from a woman who is a mirror image of her father and says of him: "He never gave up."

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

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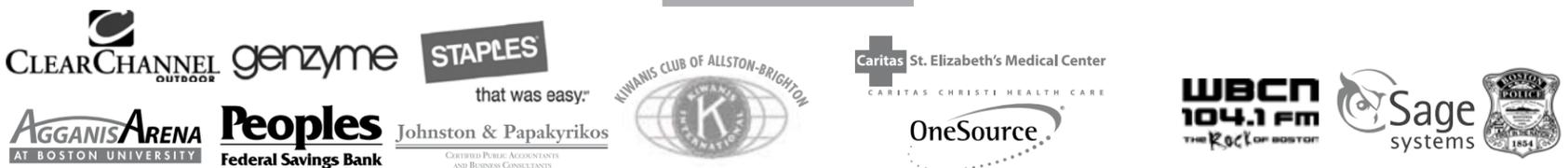
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Publisher's Notebook

Biden choice a ten-strike for Obama, country

By ED FORRY

Senator Barack Obama has made the right decision in his choice of longtime Delaware Senator Joseph Biden as his vice presidential running mate.



Now Americans have a ticket everyone can support: The 47-year-old freshman senator from Illinois with the dynamic message and the powerful oratory skills and a six-term veteran of the Senate with top credentials in foreign affairs. Any perceived experience gaps in the presidential candidate have now been supplemented by the skills and know-how of

a man widely considered the most informed Senate expert in diplomatic matters.

Biden also brings to the ticket a free-wheeling style and an amazing feel for working-class ethnics across the country. He's an Irish American (his mother was a Finnegan) with roots in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and is well liked on both sides of the political divide. Says MSNBC's Chris Matthews about Biden: "He puts the apostrophe in Obama."

But Obama can lay claim to his own Irish roots. He is a descendant of an Irishman who came to America during the Famine, the "Great Hunger." His maternal ancestor, Falmouth Kearney, came to America in 1850 from Moneygall, Co. Offaly, on the famine ship Marmion. Kearney is Obama's great-great-great-grandfather and he joined other Irish relatives in Ohio.

The Obama/Biden ticket is reaching out to the Boston Irish for support, said community leader John Cullinane, a longtime backer of Democratic candidates. "Barack Obama needs the Irish-American vote to win the presidency," Cullinane said. "As a result, he has created a very impressive outreach program to Irish Americans. It even included selecting Joe Biden as Vice President. In addition, his campaign has approached Irish Americans across the country to head up Irish Americans for Obama/Biden."

Cullinane says he is "very enthusiastic" about organizing Obama/Biden efforts in Boston and New England. "In fact, if things work out, my first recruit would be my wife, Diddy, a longtime Obama supporter, to co-chair it," he said. "Irish American means anyone who has any connection to Ireland -- Irish Catholics, Scotch Irish, Republican, Independent or Democrat -- or anyone who has a family member married to someone of Irish descent, or anyone else, for that matter."

"America needs to heal its self-inflicted wounds. It has to get back to policies that created the greatest economic boom in the history of the country as well as solving world problems as it did in Northern Ireland, via diplomacy, not more wars. I feel only an Obama/Biden ticket can do it. Already I have sensed a great enthusiasm for this effort by key Irish Americans I have spoken with. I am very optimistic about the results."

"As the great Tip O'Neill often said, people like to be asked for their vote, they don't like being taken for granted," Cullinane said. "Barack Obama understands this and is asking Irish Americans for their support."

On a personal note, I agree with John Cullinane, and will be vocal in my advocacy of the Democratic ticket. I first wrote of my support for Obama last February, and today I am proud that my daughter-in-law, Rep. Linda Dorcea Forry, is a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in Denver, and in support of Obama.

Backing for the Democratic ticket among Boston Irish will be deep. This is, after all, Kennedy Country, and there is no one who can speak for Irish Americans better than our own Senator Ted Kennedy. His stirring oration in Denver carried a message that has been heard throughout New England, and beyond. It's Obama and Biden for us.

Commentary

Northern Ireland Unlikely to Get Hot-Spot Attention From the Next President, But He'll Be Watching

By ROBERT P. CONNOLLY
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

It is probably safe to assume that the next president of the United States, whether it is John McCain or Barack Obama, will not have to deal with Northern Ireland problems to the extent that his predecessors did.

Certainly Bill Clinton would get more credit for having a Northern Ireland agenda and policy, and Clinton was an active participant in the Northern Ireland peace process, but it can also be said that George W. Bush's administration played its role, particularly in adopting a stern tone toward Irish republicans as attitudes toward the use of political violence hardened in the aftermath of September 11.



Robert P. Connolly

It can be argued that the republicans realized that there would be no welcome at the Bush White House unless the

Irish Republican Army disarmed and stood down and unless Sinn Fein recognized the legitimacy of Northern Ireland's reformed police force. As came to pass.

Clinton and Bush placed their stamps on Ireland and Northern Ireland over the past 16 years, and with Northern Ireland now enjoying peace and strong measure of political stability, it is doubtful that the next inhabitant of the Oval Office will be called upon to break out the presidential carrots and sticks.

Of the two major candidates for president, Obama has probably maintained the higher profile on Irish issues throughout the campaign, although it is clear that neither candidate has targeted the Irish vote in the manner that Bill Clinton did in 1992. But Obama has made an effort to plug into the Northern Ireland issue, and for the most part has shown the capacity to say the right thing at the right time.

Last year, in the aftermath of the election that set the stage for Ian Paisley's eventual decision to share power with Sinn Fein, Obama urged the parties on. "The people of Northern Ireland deserve their own government and the political leaders owe them that. Hope has new momentum. It must not be lost," he said.

This year, on the 10th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, the Illinois senator cogently noted that the North had enjoyed a decade of progress but pointed to areas where more needed to be done, adding: "The essential work of reconciliation must continue so that Northern Ireland's people can live together as neighbors."

Commentary

Delaware's Biden Sits Well with Boston Irish

Barack Obama made the preferred choice of much of the Boston Irish influence structure for his running mate when he tapped Joe Biden, the six-term Delaware senator, to run with him on the Democratic ticket. Biden is thoroughly wired in the Hibernian circles that matter here, and carries with him the grinning, aw-shucks persona that goes a long way among their inhabitants.

Biden's liberal Catholicism jibes with much of the city's power-brokering gang's own ideology. He has been long tied in with the capo di tutti capi of this group, Jack Connors, who has more chairs than a garage sale. He's friendly with Tommy O'Neill and his associate, longtime transportation lobbyist John Cahill, two more who know how to unloosen the faucets of campaign cash.

Chad Gifford, former chair of Bank of America and head of a string of its prior local incarnations, also backed Biden, who has operatives here dating back to his 1988 run, and had in the Legislature a core band of loyal rooters who clustered around him during one of his many fundraising trips to the city.

None of which, of course, was enough to get Biden even a wave of support among the larger electorate. He hit his peak just before the Iowa caucuses last fall. Observers speculated that the regular-guy appeal, even of a career Washington politician, could boost him to a surprise third-place finish. This did not happen, and Biden was out.

Hillary Clinton was the city's most popular candidate among the skyscraper set, even though Obama took the primary in the capital. And Chris Dodd, longtime buddy of Senator Kennedy, had his admirers. Obama was for a long time the edgy candidate, before becoming the party's accepted leader.

The Democrat-laden Hub would have lined up behind Obama, checkbooks and advice (whether solicited or not) at the ready, but the Biden pick will likely a long way toward ginning up the Irish-Catholic base here, for whatever that's worth.

Biden himself may overestimate the pedigree of the Boston-Irish pol. At an October 2007 press conference on the steps of the State House, he stood with a handful of locally elected officeholders, most of them members of the tribe.

This summer, delivering a speech in Berlin that drew the inevitable comparison to John F. Kennedy's famous oration, Obama invoked Northern Ireland, saying: "Not only have walls come down in Berlin, but they've come down in Belfast, where Protestant and Catholic have found a way to live together."

While the Berlin speech sounded good, one might even say Kennedy-esque, the Belfast reference attracted some does-he-have-his-facts-straight criticism, given that none of Belfast's so-called "peace lines," walls that separate Catholics from Protestants in flashpoint areas, have actually been dismantled. As a headline in the British paper The Telegraph put it: "Memo to Barack Obama: no walls have 'come down' in Belfast."

McCain, who was once criticized for an alleged lack of interest in Northern Ireland, has become clearer in recent years about his support for a policy of active presidential engagement in the North. McCain is also clear about his disdain for the IRA, opening eyes at a 2005 American Ireland Fund dinner in Washington by saying: "No one can honestly claim today that the IRA is anything better than an organized crime syndicate that steals and murders to serve its members' personal interests. There is nothing 'republican' about the Irish Republican Army," and by describing the IRA as a band of 'cowards.' "

McCain appears to have had less to say about Ireland and Northern Ireland on the campaign trail, but that could be more a function of his back-from-the-dead campaign having less staff and less ability to be engaged and issue statements on what would have to be considered a peripheral issue.

Just as both candidates do appear to have interest in Ireland and Northern Ireland, both can also point to Irish roots, with genealogists citing merchants in Dublin and County Offaly with the surname of Kearney as Obama ancestors. McCain is generally described as Scots-Irish and English and wrote about his Ulster forebears in his memoir "Faith of My Fathers."

A University College Dublin genealogist recently claimed that one of McCain's ancestors was a captain who rode alongside King William in the Battle of the Boyne, the 1690 epic confrontation that returned the British throne to Protestant hands. In Northern Ireland, Protestants celebrate William's triumph with July 12 marches and bonfires.

Once upon a time, many Irish-Americans would have been worried about the prospect of someone with ties, even distant ties, to King Billy becoming president of the United States, but times and Northern Ireland have changed, and it appears that the next person to occupy the White House will not have to have his eyes fixed on the steeples of Tyrone.

"In a sense, I am happy my parents moved from Boston" when he was three years old, Biden said, looking around at the assembled cast. "Because, looking at the talent here, I would've never made it."

No wonder they like him.

If there was a late-summer blockbuster that you missed, it was probably the donnybrook on the House floor that could unfold twice a week for quite some time. Every two years, the Legislature ends its legislative cycle on July 31, leaving the rest of the year to twice-a-week informal sessions, except in the rare cases where a fiscal or other emergency forces lawmakers to return. During informals, the progress of any single bill can be ground to a halt by the objection of a single legislator. Similarly, a lawmaker who wants very badly for a particular bill to move can gum up the works by objecting to any other piece of legislation, thereby blocking all legislative business in protest.

Those are the rules, some of them anyway, governing the battle over a Westwood liquor license. Wegmans is planning a new supermarket there at a massive new mixed-use development, and Roche Brothers is fighting the approval of a new liquor license, which owners of the smaller chain say would give the new arrival an unfair advantage.

As proxies for the two grocers, enter Rep. Paul McMurtry, in the Wegmans corner, and Rep. Angelo Scaccia, in Roche Brothers'. McMurtry is a freshman; Scaccia has been there since 1973, with a short break between 1978 and 1981.

McMurtry was pushing the bill in the closing hours of the last formal session, at a time when bills can cook through in a hurry. But it only inched forward out of committee, and never got the leadership push needed to cross the line. Since, it has been dangling in legislative purgatory. McMurtry has alleged that Scaccia's ties to lobbyist Maryanne Lewis, who once represented McMurtry's district, play a part in his opposition, which Scaccia has not publicly explained.

It's likely that House Speaker Salvatore DiMasi will step in at some point and ice the flames over the liquor bill. Meantime, it's been good late-summer theater for those left on Beacon Hill.



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Commentary

Danger Signs Increasing As Irish Economy Worsens

By JOE LEARY
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Ireland's meteoric rise to bustling economic prosperity is over. And it may be that the coming potentially deep recession in Ireland will be just as dramatic.

No country in the world is unaffected by today's global economic difficulties. But because of their size and lack of natural resources, small countries like Ireland could suffer more than most. Ireland's new government, with so many young leaders, is facing severe challenges in its efforts to stabilize the economic freefall.



Joe Leary

According to Ireland's Central Statistics Office, unemployment has climbed to 5.7 percent of the total work force. The wave of Polish, Lithuanian, and other eastern Europeans arriving in Ireland has been reversed; immigrants can no longer find work and many are returning home. By next year, government sources say, Ireland will see a return to emigration, with 20,000 of its inhabitants leaving for other countries.

Property values, which had climbed to wondrous and never-anticipated levels, are now plummeting 15 to 18 percent each year, with further reductions forecast for next year. Available funds for new mortgages and business growth opportunities are scarce, and very difficult and expensive to obtain.

The construction industry, a great strength of Ireland's progress, is experiencing a powerful decline. Jobs are down 15 to 20 percent. The Irish Times notes that a used construction machinery company, Robert Craige in Kildare, has reported a 125 percent increase in business, 70 percent of which is due to bank repossessions from collapsed firms. Ironically, there is an active market for this machinery in Eastern Europe, a huge demand in Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Russia. Craige's owner says the machinery is going out to these countries as fast as it comes in.

Ireland's universities are reporting a substantial dropoff in students selecting construction courses. Interest in engineering, architecture, and construction management is far below that in past years. It didn't take long for Ireland's young people to recognize that the construction business was not for them.

Perhaps the most significant index of business activity and the ordinary Irish citizen's purchasing ability is the shortfall in tax revenue. The government announced in August that July revenue was more than \$1.1 billion below forecast and budget. If the trend continues, the annual deficit could be in excess of \$4.5 billion. This may not seem like much, but for Ireland it is a huge amount. One politician in the opposing party called it the worst deterioration in public finances in the history of Ireland.

Ireland's Central Bank has been joined by a large stock brokerage house in making dire forecasts. Warning projections concerning higher unemployment rates, inflation rates, and the falling Gross

National Product index are generally accepted as accurate.

Labor unrest is another threat. For the past 21 years labor unions have agreed to join together with government and business in what is called a "Social Partnership" to stabilize labor relations as part of overall economic growth policy. The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), with 833,000 claimed members, has in the past been able to meet and agree with the leading business organization, The Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC), and the government to limit pay demands and bring peace to negotiations. One central negotiation, rather than discussions with hundreds of companies, was an efficient method of promoting progress.

That agreement process is in great jeopardy as union and business leaders have been meeting with government without success. The unions are calling for individual negotiations and substantial pay raises, which would be a major problem for domestic business as well as foreign investment. Both Prime Minister Cowen and his deputy are spending much time and effort in forcing agreement.

The unions are calling for a \$45 per week (\$2,340 annually) raise for everyone making an annual salary of less than \$57,000. That's 4 percent, but there would be 1.4 million workers affected. The employers, on the other hand, are calling for a one-year moratorium on all increases.

Access to a strong peaceful labor market is a key to luring foreign investment. Strikes, or labor actions, as they are called in Ireland, would be a factor in any company's decision to invest in Ireland and could be a tipping point in a decision to leave Ireland.

Finally, there is tourism, and specifically American tourists traveling to Ireland. While tourism is generally reported as being behind previous years, no hard data will be available for another few months. But in the meantime, there is plenty of anecdotal evidence. One wealthy gentleman golfer we know traveled to Ireland this year with some friends for an eight-day trip to some of Ireland's better courses. The trip cost him slightly over \$10,000. Six years ago, the same trip would have cost \$6,000. The difference came from the rising value of the euro. He may go again, but not anytime soon. He said it was easy to get tee times, and fellow Americans were not nearly as numerous as in previous years. Waterville Golf Club in South Kerry reports that it had 45 percent fewer Americans playing the course this year. Hoteliers in Killarney are saying Americans are few and far between this year. It is hard to quantify the tourism problem except to say there is no American who travels to Ireland these days who does not comment on the very high prices as compared to the United States.

The Irish Tourist Board reports that Americans are the best spenders in Ireland; without them, tourist revenue will fall everywhere.

However, we have seen the strength and ingenuity of the Irish character build a robust healthy economy over the past twenty years and there is no reason to believe that success won't return once more. In the short term, though, it appears there may be difficulties ahead.

Off the Bench

The Gunslinger

By JAMES W. DOLAN

Arizona, Senator John McCain's home state, would still be part of Mexico as would the entire southwest and California, if, in 1846, the United States did not invade Mexico ostensibly in support of Texans who wanted independence.

Given that history, it's ironic to hear McCain berate Russia for invading Georgia on behalf of the citizens of two breakaway provinces who would prefer to be aligned with Russia. The Russian incursion was modest compared to that of the United States in the 1840s that took Mexico City and toppled the government.

McCain's myopic indignation fails to take into account his strong support of our invasion of Iraq, a country thousands of miles away that we now know presented no immediate threat to us. Tens of thousands have been killed and wounded and billions spent in that ill-conceived enterprise.

Another example was the bungled CIA-sponsored Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961 to overthrow Fidel Castro. Was that really any different than what the Russians did in Georgia? If Cuba was not an island but a country on our southern border, is there any doubt we would have occupied it?

In McCain's eyes what we do is righteous and what are "enemies" do (now including Russia) is evil. Yet he asks us to trust his judgment in such matters. Regrettably, the old warrior is more combative than thoughtful.

When asked at a recent forum how he as president would deal with evil, his immediate response was "defeat it." To him it was a simple choice. He apparently saw no problems in identifying it. Confronting or containing it was not enough. As in Iraq, victory was the only patriotic course of action.

Unfortunately, evil is more complex. It is not easily identified or defeated; particularly when clothed (as it often is) in good intentions. What some see as evil or at least a mistake can be viewed by others as good. So much is in the eyes of the beholder.

While McCain probably feels otherwise, many in this country believe the Vietnam War was a mistake. Others see it as evil. I suspect McCain feels about Vietnam the same as he does about Iraq; that even an ill-conceived war can be salvaged by winning. It's not how or why you got into it but how it ends that determines its merit.

I suspect he believes the heroic sacrifices that he and others made during that war were undermined and dishonored by our failure to win. One can understand the regret he may feel believing it was all in vain. But I fear that sense of loss may cause him to be too aggressive.

The very qualities that made him a great naval aviator may override the calm, prudent judgment the country needs in perilous times. The last thing we need is to be drawn into a new Cold War by isolating and provoking Russia. We need a cautious leader, one capable of seeing the world through the eyes of our adversaries.

McCain's cocky self-assurance has obvious appeal. Many voters want simple answers to complex problems. They see him as strong, decisive, and independent. I'd be more comfortable with him if I knew he at least had some reservations about dropping bombs on Hanoi.

Not that he had any choice but to do his duty. But did he ever ask himself if he was in the right war at the right place fighting the right enemy. I hope he did, particularly if he wins the election. A little self-doubt is essential to wisdom.

McCain was right on the "surge" but wrong on the war in Iraq. Which was more important? What he claims to be his greatest strength -- good judgment on matters of national security -- may turn out to be a major weakness.

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

Ireland's Options After the Lisbon Vote

By SARA VICINZI
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Two months have passed and still there are no answers to the questions raised by the Irish voters' rejection of the Lisbon Treaty in June. Why did the Irish vote no? Will the Lisbon Treaty eventually be passed? How does this affect Ireland's relationship with the EU?

Until the conclusion of the Lisbon campaign in Ireland, when the "No" camp sprinted into the lead, everyone believed that Ireland would approve the treaty. After all, Irish levels of support for the EU are among the highest in Europe, all major Irish political parties supported the treaty, and other key groups including labor unions, the Church, and farmers were in favor.

With the help of millions of EU dollars, Ireland developed its economic infrastructure and then lured significant foreign direct investment into the country. The EU fostered the transformation of Ireland from a poor state into a nation with record economic growth. Stephen Collins of the *Irish Times* noted that, during the Lisbon campaign, foreign journalists "couldn't believe that the Irish people, having gotten so much out of the EU, were even contemplating voting no."

Now, European leaders are asking "is Ireland simply the ungrateful child of Europe?"

But such a view oversimplifies the Irish voter. The Irish appreciate the benefits they have received in the past, yet they focus on the EU's role in their future. They have real concerns regarding the Treaty and are not willing to blindly vote "Yes" on EU legislation.

Also, it seems Irish citizens perceive their relationship with the EU as more distant than might be suspected. The 2007 Fall Eurobarometer reported that 46 percent of Irish felt no attachment to Europe at

all. Without a strong sense connection to Europe, it's not surprising that the Irish are not overly concerned about voting against EU officials' wishes.

David Barry, Ireland's Consul General to Boston, acknowledged that the government and the "Yes" campaign had a more difficult time convincing voters than they anticipated. He attributes this largely to the spread of misinformation and "nonsense issues" and the "No" strategy of playing upon citizens' fears about the future implications of the Treaty.

The "No" campaign was certainly effective at using the treaty's more than 300 pages of nearly incomprehensible legal jargon to raise doubts in the voters' minds about issues such as abortion, neutrality, and the threat of an ever-expanding Brussels bureaucracy.

Though abortion and neutrality are not part of the Lisbon Treaty, the Irish government was put on the defensive and forced to address the concerns for the projected future as best it could. As Barry notes, "It is very hard to say that something will or will not occur in the future. We can tell them what the document means now, but who is to say what will happen 10 or 15 years down the road?"

Government officials support Lisbon because they believe that passing the treaty would help streamline EU governance, making the EU more effective and connected to Europeans. However, with Irish citizens persuaded that the Lisbon reforms could have negative social and economic consequences, the Janus-faced disconnect between the Irish governing elite and the public is becoming more apparent and growing more problematic.

Europe looked for a quick-fix when Ireland rejected the Treaty of Nice in 2001, and it seems that Ireland will again be expected to reverse its decision. French President Nicolas Sarkozy has suggested a second

Irish referendum on the Lisbon Treaty, but without an alteration of the document, a second vote risks fueling the divide between the Irish people and those who govern them.

While the first Irish vote on the Treaty of Nice was regarded as a fluke, this is not true of the Lisbon vote. Irish citizens spoke clearly on June 12, and it seems likely that, if the Treaty were put to a second vote, the Irish would simply reject it again.

And the Irish are not alone in having reservations about the Treaty; the French and the Dutch rejected a similar constitution in 2005 and it's probable that referenda on Lisbon in other member states would have similar results.

Ultimately, the Irish will be held responsible for the viability of the Lisbon Treaty. With 23 of the 27 members having already ratified it, the Irish cannot continue to operate on the assumption that they will force the EU to change course. So where do they go from here?

At the very least, in order for the Irish people and their government to escape the box that the Lisbon vote created, they must first work to redefine their positions and come to a more decisive common standpoint.

The most viable unified position would be to request an additional revision of Lisbon such that each state retained one EU commissioner. Such a compromise would ease public concerns about representation, allow the government to hold another referendum, and allow the EU to effect the needed structural reforms.

Although no compromise will satisfy all parties, this face-saving arrangement would enhance Irish representation, prevent marginalization of Ireland in the EU, and effect EU reform.

Sara Vicinzi is an International Studies major at Stonehill College in Easton, Mass. She has been conducting research this summer with Stonehill Professor Richard B. Finnegan on "The Evolution of Ireland's Membership in the European Union."

BRETT'S BOSTON

By Harry Brett

Exclusive photos of Boston Irish people & events

The Irish Cultural Center of New England (ICCNE) hosted a Lughnasa celebration on August 23 at its Canton campus. Sponsoring groups included: the Irish Immigration Center, the Irish Pastoral Center, CARE (the Association of Caregivers and Confidants from Ireland), the Eire Society, the Charitable Irish Society, Ceol Traidisiúnta na hÉireann and Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann. The BIR's Harry Brett was on hand to record the merrymakers. Pictured are:

1.) Rep. Tom Kennedy, Brockton with Maureen McNally, Rockland; 2.) Irish Vice Council Deidre Ni Fhallúin and Gobnait Conneely, IIC; 3.) Mary and Pat Honan, Allston; 4.) Tom and Barbara Cheney, Quincy; 5.) Dancing at the Hall; 6.) Mary Kate McGowan, Medfield; 7.) Peter and Padraic Slattery, Salem, Mass.; 8.) Irish Vice Council Deidre Ni Fhallúin with 10-month-old daughter Niamh, and husband Paul Brandon; 9.) Suzanne Appleton, Ber- non, Conn., son Ben Appleton and her dad, Jack McCarthy, Milton.



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Boston Irish Reporter's Here & There

By **BILL O'DONNELL**

Changes Coming For Famed Dublin Cemetery – Dublin's venerable **Glasnevin Cemetery** is over 175 years old, and taken together with our own **Arlington National Cemetery** and the star-studded **Pere-Lachaise** burial grounds in Paris, the three are the final resting places for more than a million people in any place else in the world. The celebrated 124-acre graveyard in Dublin, which was opened in 1832 by **Daniel O'Connell**, is in the midst of a 10-year restoration that will celebrate its history in a new heritage centre and other attractions that the Irish government hopes will turn the hallowed grounds into one of the state's biggest tourist attractions.



Bill O'Donnell

Located off Finglas Road in North Dublin, the cemetery is the final home to 1.2 million Irish men and women from all walks of life and for scores of historical figures who have played important roles in the literary, social, and patriotic life of the Irish state. Among those buried at Glasnevin are **Eamon deValera and his wife Sinead, Michael Collins, Charles Stewart Parnell, Brendan Behan, Christy Brown, Roger Casement, Maude Gonne, Countess Markiewicz, John Devoy, Erskine Childers, Sean MacBride, James Larkin and Luke Kelly of the Dubliners**, as well as victims of the **Great Famine** and the **Plague**.

In addition to the heritage centre, there will also be a new public rooms, visitor facilities, and a restaurant. While automobile traffic into the cemetery now will be tightly restricted, Glasnevin will continue to welcome visitors and provide burials and grave sites for the people of Dublin. Work on the cemetery project is ongoing and scheduled to be completed by 2016, the 100th anniversary of the Easter Rising.

Irish-UK Borders To Be Sealed -- Following a recent announcement by Dublin and London, and according to European Union guidelines, the border between Britain and the Republic of Ireland will be check-pointed and some traffic will be subject to searches. For the first time travelers will have to show their passports if going by sea or air between the two countries.

While the British are insisting that the proposed security controls would not mean a return to the former fixed Army checkpoints, the new measures will be the first in 80 years to require passport clearance. The changes will affect the "common travel area" set up in 1925 between the two jurisdictions. The stated purpose of the new travel rules is to monitor and control illegal immigration; however the impact will be intrusive and far reaching for all people traveling between the UK and the Republic. Particularly hard hit will be contiguous jurisdictions such as Derry and Donegal that abut the north.

No matter how you cut it, the new rules are looking more like the old, bad days when few thought that EU membership could mean such a step backwards as this announcement appears to portend.

Did You Know ... that the island of Ireland's population today is six million people but if current demographic trends continue, the island will add two million more inhabitants by 2025, raising the population to at least eight million, a return to pre-famine population?

Irish Poles Flock To See History Made -- It's far too early to predict what the November election here might bring, but for the Irish politician with a flair for history and a taxpayer-paid airline ticket in hand, the Democratic National Convention in Denver is a moment not to be missed. Members of the ruling **Fianna Fail** coalition as well as opposition leaders from **Fine Gael** and **Labour** are slated to be in Denver late in August for

the Obama celebration.

Confirming that they plan to attend are government ministers **Noel Dempsey** and **Mary Hanifin**, and **Fine Gael** leader **Enda Kenny** and **Labour** leader **Eamon Gilmore**. And there will likely be more added to the list. The attendance by Irish political figures, north and south, at Democratic Party conventions is nothing new. **John Hume** and other **SDLP** leaders were familiar faces at the **Clinton** conventions in the 1990s.

Veterans Affairs Department "Bushed" -- Most of us are aware of the notoriously lax treatment veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan have received from the U.S. Veterans Affairs Department — from inadequate patient residences at Walter Reed to lack of treatment for post-traumatic stress victims -- but the latest in a long line of SNAFUs is a disgrace.

The troubled veterans department, led by the latest "reformer," Bush appointee **James Peake**, has issued a directive, notes the **New York Times**, that bans nonpartisan voter registration drives at federally financed nursing homes, rehab centers, and shelters for homeless veterans. The VA under Brother Peake has denied access to department facilities by elections officials, which means that thousands of voter-eligible veterans will be disenfranchised due to the ignorance and perhaps roguish political posturing by elements of the Bush White House. Two reasons for denying access posited by the VA are: (1) voter registration drives are allegedly "disruptive" of patient care and (2) that VA facility employees cannot help patients register to vote because the Hatch Act forbids such partisan activity.

Both reasons are absurd and patently untrue, but it's passing strange that a segment of the electorate (returning veterans) that clearly supports the Democratic nominee would be denied a vote by minions of a lame duck Republican administration. Corrective legislation has been filed but the October 1st deadline looms.

'Nationalists Seek Unity With Britain', Say Loyalists -- A non-by-lined report in the conservative unionist newspaper the **Newsletter** reports that a recent poll found "significant support among nationalists for maintaining the Union." The only problem with this poll is the question of the source, who polled, and what, if any, special pleading it reflected. The poll numbers showed that one of six **Sinn Fein** voters said they would favor the province remaining in the UK. The poll also said that almost a third of **SDLP** supporters would be happy to remain in the UK. And, the poll said, only a minority of their voters (44 percent) wanted a united Ireland. A further look at the originators of the poll disclosed that the "man bites dog" public opinion survey was commissioned by the **Ulster Unionists** and **Conservative Party** as part of a research project. Not exactly an unbiased agent.

On another loyalist front: The main body of loyalist paramilitaries has not decommissioned (disarmed) but that hasn't stopped its members from demanding the abolition of the **IRA Army Council**, despite the fact that most objective observers contend the army council is kaput, consigned to history. If the remarks by a "senior loyalist" last month are at all credible, then it could be wary decades before Protestant paramilitaries disarm. The senior loyalist claimed that his paramilitary leadership would be "overthrown" if it pushed for decommissioning. The fast-fading Northern Ireland Office has little leverage but continues to stamp its feet and threaten sanctions as the loyalist love affair with their weapons continues uninterrupted.

Did You Know ... that twenty-five years ago this month, September 25, 1983, the H-Block of Maze Prison suffered the largest break-out ever when 38 republican prisoners hijacked a British truck and smashed their way out of the bleak north Belfast lockup? Nineteen were soon recaptured and the other half remained at large. The razed prison is now being seriously considered as the locale of a new super sports stadium. The prison hospital and part of the H-Blocks are currently listed as historic sites. **Sinn Fein** has been lobbying to include

at the prison-stadium site a "Conflict Transformation Centre" but unionist elected officials representing the **DUP** have opposed the concept.

AROUND & ABOUT

Was Ireland's Celtic Tiger economy the making of **Bertie Ahern** or vice versa? ... the **Rupert Murdoch** stamp on the **Wall Street Journal** seems to be in evidence in a story there about **Barack Obama's** "skinnyess"! ... I was beginning to think the **NYTimes** op-ed columnist **Maureen Dowd** was losing it with her **Jane Austen** political analogies until her recent on-target piece on **Hillary**. ... You couldn't have got me to the recently concluded Olympics in Beijing in chains with a designer gas mask and a free air ticket. ... Watching the pathetic, puerile campaign ads by **John McCain** got me looking in the dictionary for the definition of "Campaign Malfeasance." ... **Bill Clinton's** bitter non-endorsement of fellow Democrat **Barack Obama** made his **Monica Lewinsky** excesses pale. ... If the Republican capitalists didn't have **Wal-Mart** (of voter education fame) they would have had to invent the company.

Is the Celtic Tiger and newbie Prime Minister **Brian Cowen** still roaring as they look at the country's \$7 billion revenue shortfall? ... One of the unspoken traditions of the riotous and raucous **Galway Race Week** is the prevailing **NWA** password, **No Wives Allowed**. ... Nobody yet has an explanation why Northern Ireland's chief police constable, **Sir Hugh Orde**, was talking with loyalist paramilitary leaders in a recent private meeting. ... The next time you want to find fault with Patriots owner **Bob Kraft**, just remember that neither the city nor the state paid a dime to build **Gillette Stadium**, while in **New York** the Yankee ownership is already deep into **New York** taxpayers for almost a billion dollars and is back looking for an additional \$350 million. ... Remember the date of the **IIC's Solas** dinner, which is November 10, and the solid work they do with immigrants of all nationalities and colors. ... There have been sightings of **Alpacas** in **Clare**. Should we next look for **Dolphins** in **Derry**? ... Under strange stats is the revelation that the suicide rate in the Republic of Ireland is 50 percent higher than that of its beleaguered neighbor to the North. ... British PM **Gordon Brown** could soon shake up his cabinet to get some political breathing room and if he does, we may see the endgame for the increasingly irrelevant Northern Ireland Office and the Secretary of State. ... If **Kinsale** and **Newport, RI**, are sister cities, how come **Kinsale** has all the good restaurants?

Is it surprising to anyone that 12 percent of both Democrats and Republicans believe that Senator Obama is a Muslim when today over one-third of Americans still believe (falsely) that Iraq's **Saddam Hussein** was in cahoots with **Bin Laden** and the 9/11 attack on the U.S. ... Times are sad in parts of the **Inishowen Peninsula** now as Irish grads there are forced by high unemployment and lack of opportunity to seek better lives abroad. ... Irish hotels, along with other Euro currency European markets, are pricey but occupancy rates are way down in Ireland as weak-dollar-Yanks stay home. A tip: Don't accept the Irish hotel rack rate; this is an ideal time to knock it down, negotiate for a cheaper rate for a confirmed stay. ... I don't want to pick on **Tom Menino**, who must be weary after steering the Hub's ship of state for so long, but is it really in anyone's interest to bar the buskers and other street entertainers in the **Faneuil Hall** area. Nobody needs a replay of the Democratic National Convention with cages, etc.; it's just a group of young people bringing life and entertainment to the open areas of Downtown. Maybe by the time you read this, cooler heads, as they say, will have prevailed. ... Unless you want to donate a hefty amount to the **Derry Betterment Society** (AKA the **Derry court system**) do not drive and use a hand-held cell phone there. ... The much-acclaimed **Free Derry** wall was painted over for one day as the **Bogside** community in **Derry** came together to address physical renewal; the famed republican facade was painted back the next day. ... "Don't Cry for **Sinn Fein**" may not be **Sarah Brightman's** favorite anthem, but the

party that speaks for the majority of Catholics/nationalists in the North is the richest party, with income last year of close to \$2 million and they don't need their parliamentary salaries which, like their vote, they abstain from.

To the absolute surprise of nobody, **Waterford Wedgwood** announced losses of \$370 million last year versus \$105-million loss the previous year as the once-proud industry leader completed its round of 522 redundancies. ... I would have done it for much less: the **Belfast City Council** spent \$800,000 and 18 months getting a new logo to represent the city. It's a tilted heart with **Belfast** askew. What do you expect for that kind of money? ... If you saw the 1974 film "Jaws," you would remember **Quint**, or, in real life, **Mayoman Robert Shaw**. The folks in **Tourmakeady** village remember and put up a stone memorial to this fine actor (**The Sting**, **Man For All Seasons**, etc) who died 30 years ago at 51. ... And finally, whatever happened to that Irish television channel that came to Boston, made some promises and ran into turbulent seas here. Am I still on the "to be paid" list if the fairy godmother shines on them? Just asking.

Padraig Captures All Except The Bookies -- In winning the 2008 United States PGA tournament as a follow-up to his back-to-back victories last year and this year in the **British Open**, **Padraig Harrington** has won three of the last six majors and catapulted himself into number three world ranking, nibbling at the heels of **Lefty Phil**. Back at his home course, the **Stackstown Golf Club** in **South County Dublin** where he began playing at age 4, **Harrington** is the toast of the town and all Ireland but not of the Irish bookies who took a bath with the punters. Irish fans backed **Harrington** and his 20-1 odds in the **PGA** and also backed the Irishman when he was 33-1 in last year's **British Open**. The bottom line for Irish bookies is **Harrington** has cost them \$10 million, their biggest loss ever.

Georgia On My Mind -- I couldn't help thinking, as the Russian tanks scampered through **Gori** last month, of the group of seven loud, jousting, laughing men, nobody older than their '30s, and their two young female interpreters as we all sat around a table groaning with pints and half-empty vodka bottles a decade ago ready to do genial battle high up in **Belfast Castle**, drinking toast after toast to each other, and to our homelands and to the fact of being free and alive with new friends on a soft summer night in Ireland's second city. First came a representative of independent **Georgia** cheek to jowl with the **Russian Bear**, but not that night, raising a glass, stampeding us in such a stream of **Georgian** that I had to pause and wait while an interpreter chopped it into concise, digestible English. Then a toast to **Ireland**, **Georgia's** great friend, tested and true and resolute, and then another glass raised by a friend of **Georgia**, a new jet-lagged friend from **America**, untested, but where hope and history, it was thought, could sustain the dreams that a **Georgian** future was made of.

We drank toast after toast that night with the vodka trumping the pints, and fresh, boozy bonds made that were barely understood amidst a fusillade of language as hands, facial expressions and head nods replaced linguistic retelling. I have not forgotten that night. The men were all incredibly young -- **Georgia's** best and brightest -- the core and muscle of a new, still forming government. One young man ran what would become the **Georgian** social security system, another the national welfare agency, yet another the finance department, and on and on. They lived on the cusp of high hope and a quiet bravery. They were the heart of a newly free country and everything was possible that night. As I write this I have no idea if they got to lead or if they survived the **Rose Revolution**, or the various other upheavals that have marked the stormy history of that tiny nation of four million. But whatever happened to those carefree young men and their place in history, I want to believe that they tried to do right for their country. For me, their spirit, their unbridled exuberance during that evening lives on and from my secure, distant redoubt, I wish them and their country better days.

NOTES FROM THE IRISH IMMIGRATION CENTER



An agency accredited by US Department of Justice

59 Temple Place, Suite 1010, Boston, MA 02111

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

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

Free Legal Clinics This Month

We will be returning to our usual schedule this month, holding legal clinics in Allston-Brighton on Tues., Sept. 9, at 6:30 p.m. (The Kells Bar and Restaurant, 161 Brighton Ave, Allston, 02143) and in Dorchester on Tues., Sept. 30, at 6:30 p.m. (St. Mark's Parish School Hall, 1725 Dorchester Ave, Dorchester, 02124) to address your employment-based immigration concerns. And at our Downtown office on Thursdays from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. (59 Temple Place, 10th Floor) for assistance with family-based immigration, citizenship, or any other issue. For questions about our clinics and to get the weekly schedule, call 617-542-7524.

Now Is The Time! To Vote -- All around Boston, pockets of volunteers set up shop with clipboards and card tables, pencils poised to remind passersby of one their basic rights as an American citizen -- the right to vote. On Aug. 9, our very own Gbnait Conneely and Becca Hildreth joined other members of the "Now is the Time" campaign and signed up 50 citizens in Fields Corner to register to vote. "It makes a difference, because people who can vote can make change" said Conneely, who was present with Mayor Thomas Menino for the launch of

the campaign. With the help of voter registration drives such as "Now is the Time", citizens realize that their votes will effect change on a local, state, and national level, and with the addition of the 1,500 voters who registered that morning, many others are eager to make their voices heard. If you have yet to take the first step in making change, please contact us for information about registering. If you wish to influence others in taking initiative contact Gbnait at 617-542-7654, Ext. 34 to volunteer with the 'Now is the Time' campaign.

Solas 2008 Set for November 10

The Irish Immigration Center has announced that the 2008 Solas Awards will be held on Mon., Nov. 10, at a new venue: the Fairmont Copley Plaza hotel in Boston. The IIC's annual gala has become one of the most glamorous fixtures of the local Irish calendar over the last 15 years attracting guests such as President Clinton and former President of Ireland Mary Robinson.

Keep an eye on future BIR's for information about this year's awardees and for ticket and sponsorship information. But for now...keep the night of Nov. 10 free.

Lunasa - A Successful Celebration -- A warm Irish thank you to those who joined us on Aug. 23 for Lunasa, a celebration of the Ancient Feast. There was music and dancing, food, singing, and a good time had by all. Special thanks to the artists and musician up-front for their performance and presence. Be on the lookout for more events to come!

An Irish Fall with Wider Horizons -- Between now and the end of the year, 42 young Irish and Northern Irish folk will arrive in Boston as participants in our Wider Horizons programs. The young men and women will be undergoing unpaid job training and gaining real world experience through internships. And they want to stay in your house...Beyond the invaluable work experience gained through this program, students will have the chance to bridge the gap between their communities and between each other. Participants come from both the Protestant and Catholic communities in N.I. and from both sides of the border. In addition to letting these young people discover their own potential, the Wider Horizons program is a mechanism for sustaining the peace in N. Ireland.

If you would like to house an Irish student for 8 weeks and experience a real-life slice of Ireland for yourself, please contact

AnneMarie Byrne at amariemarie@iicenter.org or call at 617-542-1900, Ext. 26. Financial Compensation is provided.

Cigarettes Too Expensive--Why Not Quit?

-- We will begin our next smoking cessation group on Sept. 16 through Oct. 12. Have you been trying to quit? Finding it tough? Contact Danielle on 617-542-7654 ext14 or e-mail downen@iicenter.org.

Equality and Fairness for Immigrants?

Have you been dismayed by the negative and anti-immigrant tones of some in the immigration debate in recent days? Do you believe that our state should be a welcoming place that treats men, women and families with dignity and respect no matter where they come from? We invite and encourage you to sign the 'Welcoming Massachusetts' pledge to reaffirm the principles of fairness and equality that are the core of our country. Immigrant, community, business, labor and church groups across the state have united to declare our state proud of its immigrant tradition. You join the effort by signing the petition online at welcomingma.org.

Matters Of Substance

A Parent's Nightmare

"My wife and I have worked hard to create a good life here in MA since we moved from Ireland 18 years ago. We've always been able to solve any problems we've had one way or another...until now. My daughter seems to have an alcohol problem and she may be taking drugs as well. We have tried talking to her, we have screamed at her, sometimes both at the same time. She came home drunk from a friend's house about 4 months ago. Even though she promised she wouldn't drink again, we suspect she still is. My wife and I keep trying to talk with her but she warns us to stay out of her life or she will leave. She is only 15 and we are terrified what might happen to her when she is drunk or high. We found an empty prescription bottle, with no label, in her room. How would we know if she was using drugs? Is it too late to help her? What happens when she gets to college? We feel like we can't do anything? How did this happen to us?"



Danielle Owen

at any time. As parents of a 15 year old you might feel like you no longer have a say in what is going on in your child's life. The truth is you do. Your daughter is under 21. It is illegal for her to drink alcohol. It is illegal for her to use medication that has not been prescribed for her. It is hard to know what to do but let me assure you, you and your wife are in the best position to help your daughter understand how serious her situation is. According to new research by the Center for Substance Abuse Research at the University of Maryland, "Parental monitoring can reduce high-school drinking and, as a result, have a protec-

tive effect on students' drinking at college."

There are many tools available for parents to assist them in dealing with this issue. Booklets including "Words Can Work: When Talking About Alcohol" and "Alcohol and Other Drugs: Is Your Teen Using?" can be found at the following websites: wordscanwork.com and maclearinghouse.com.

If your daughter needs treatment, then check out the Institute for Health and Recovery's Youth Central Intake & Care Coordination project (See healthrecovery.org/projects). Change is always possible but parents need support. If you would

like to learn more about Substance Abuse and the Family, please join us for an evening workshop we are giving on Sept. 24 at St. Anthony's Shrine, Downtown Boston. We are also running another Community Education and Support program in Dorchester, starting in October. Call Danielle, in confidence and without judgment, at the Irish Immigration Center for more information about these events or for support, referrals and counseling. Phone: 617-542-7654, Ext. 14 or e-mail: downen@iicenter.org. See also: ma-al-anon-alateen.org or usrecovery.info/Nar-Anon/Massachusetts.html.

IMMIGRATION Q & A

A Fee to Hasten an Application? Special Cases Only

Q. *I'm planning to file an application with US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to adjust my status to that of legal permanent resident, based on my marriage to a U.S. citizen. I understand that this can take a long time, and I heard that there is a way to pay a special fee to get an application on the fast track. Is this true?*

A. Currently USCIS offers what it calls "premium processing" for a \$1,000 fee only with regard to certain employment-based visa petitions. Other applications, such as those to adjust status based on certain family relationships, are processed on a first-come, first-served basis. Processing times vary with the type of application and the particulars of individual cases. Adjustment of status cases based on marriage to a US citizen, for example, has been taking around five months from the date of filing to the adjustment interview in the USCIS Boston regional office. Applications for naturalization are taking a little over a year.

USCIS does offer what it calls "accelerated processing" for no extra fee in cases where its "expedite criteria" have been met. USCIS stresses very strongly that it will expedite processing only when, in its words, "there is a life or death emergency, or some other exceptional emergent need," and it states that requests for accelerated processing will be granted "rarely, if ever." Our experience is that USCIS means what it says about its strict criteria for accelerated processing. Still, cases do arise when the agency will accept an accelerated processing request. If you think you may have such a case, let us know, and we can help you to evaluate your chances.

Here are some other points about case processing: Applicants can track the processing of pending cases with USCIS online at uscis.gov or by calling the agency's customer service center at 1-800-375-5283. When checking case status, have the application receipt number and other documentation from USCIS ready.

Make sure that USCIS has current address information for mailing notices of action. This can now be done online as well. We have seen numerous instances where applicants wonder why they have not heard from USCIS for many months, when it turns out that mail from the agency was returned as undeliverable.

IIC can provide average processing times for different types of applications filed at various USCIS offices and processing centers, so applicants can determine whether their applications are taking longer than usual. Processing information for the types of applications filed with the State Department at U.S. consulates abroad generally can be obtained by telephoning the consulate in question or visiting its web site.

Keep in mind that processing times refer to the amount of time it takes the government agency to get to a particular application that is actionable when filed. This is different from the waiting time, for example, for visa numbers to become available in categories other than immediate relatives of U.S. citizens. The time frame involved in such cases can extend to many years under current law, based on the limited number of visas that Congress provides each year.

If you have questions about this or any other aspect of immigration law, visit one of our legal clinics.

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A New Shield for the Irish Immigration Center

BY LAUREN DARE
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

A new face at the Irish Immigration Center is poised to increase advocacy and immigrant participation in the organization's work. Alexandra Pineros-Shields, newly appointed Director of Immigrant Programs, is a long-time champion of immigrant rights with over two decades of experience in the academic and nonprofit field. And last month she set her sights on serving the local immigrant community by joining the IIC.

"I want to work to empower immigrants and I can do that here," said Pineros Shields, who

first encountered the IIC in 2000 while working alongside former organizers Isaac Hodes and Corey Kurtz as part of the Massachusetts Legalization Coalition. Born in Spain to immigrant parents and now a U.S. citizen, she says she was drawn to IIC by its "uniquely dual mission" of helping immigrants through direct services -- such as legal clinics, health clinics, screenings, and courses -- while simultaneously advocating for change on the local, state, and national level.

"I did not want to do only direct service," said Pineros-Shields. "I want to change the laws that

Pineros-Shields Brings Fresh Vision to Immigrant Community

imprison immigrants in certain lifestyles. Direct service is valuable, but we could do it for the next hundred years--unless we also change policy."

The widely traveled wife of an Irish-American hopes to implement these goals by exercising her expertise and authority as a determined builder of solidarity and collaboration in the immigrant community -- "I think it is wonderful and important

to have an Irish organization at the table," she said of IIC as the only Irish organization to be a member of the MIRA coalition. "As a community the Irish remember and have learned from the experience of oppression and discrimination."

And it is the immigrant experience that Pineros-Shields aims to tap into. At the heart of her new vision for the IIC is a deeper relationship

between immigrants and the organization's decision-making process. She plans to set up regular consultations with clients so that the beneficiaries of IIC services have a stronger role in the direction of the organization. And so that newcomers can be trained to become agents of change. "Immigrants will be real actors in this process, she says. "By seeing how nonprofits work, by learning collaborative skills, and by participating in the democratic process."

"It is fitting that such a dynamic immigration specialist should join the IIC on the eve of our 20th anniversary," said

IIC Executive Director Lena Deevy. "As we continue to grow and adapt to the needs of the Boston immigrant community, people like Alexandra are essential to helping us remain innovative in our approach."

Pineros-Shields comes to the IIC with a long history of advocacy and research in immigrant affairs as both an academic and outreach worker. She holds a Ph.D. from the Heller School of Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University, and has previously worked with Catholic Charities, MIRA, and the Adult Learning Center of New Hampshire.

Digging Up Information on Those Ancestors in Ireland

BY MARY E. CHOPPA
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

We've just returned from Ireland where we hosted folks in Dublin, Belfast, Cork, and Kerry. It was another successful research trip to Ireland for TIARA members!

There are some significant changes in the Dublin repositories to report, namely the National Library of Ireland and the General Registers Office. The National Library is a marvelous building and our hosts were extremely hospitable, making the entire week enjoyable. TIARA hosted a few lectures in honor of our 25th anniversary, and the library staff provided the space, a lovely tea break, and the warmest welcome.

The main change is that they now have a separate microfilm reading room for viewing parish registers. This is one of the main attractions for researchers. The Church of Latter Day Saints had microfilmed scores of Irish parish registers, which the library makes available to researchers. You cannot copy or photograph the registers, but the information that can be gleaned from them is incredible. Only problem...you have to know where to look. That's why it's so important to do as much work as possible at home before you head off to Ireland.

The library has also made improvements to the Genealogy Service room. They have several

computers available with access to some very useful websites, many reference books and finding aids, and an extensive collection of Irish newspapers. Reading old newspapers can give you an incredible insight into your family history. Don't just read the articles; check out the advertisements to get a real feel for their lives and times. Check out the Library's website whether you plan on visiting Ireland or not. nli.ie/en/homepage.aspx.

The General Register Office in Dublin has not only moved to a new location, they've also changed

the way you access records. See. groireland.ie. This facility holds the Vital Records (births, deaths and marriages) for Ireland starting in 1864. For two euro you can search the index books yourself, covering a five-year period. For 20 euro, you can have seven successive hours of access to the index books. Costs for copies of actual entries are additional. The ability to search the index books on your own is a nice change. They've also created a more pleasant working environment.

The GRO's new location is great for another rea-

son...they're very close to the Valuation Office (val-off.ie/). This is the goldmine if you know where your ancestors originated. Griffith's Valuation was completed between 1830 and 1860. A series of maps was created that is fantastic. Combined with modern Ordnance Survey Maps, you can find the plot of land where your ancestors lived. This office also holds the Field Books and Cancellation Books for the Republic of Ireland. The Field Books were the preliminary surveys done for Griffith's. They contain information about the land, soil quality, and

value, but they may also contain some names that may not have made it onto Griffith's Valuation. The Cancellation Books tell how the land has passed down over the centuries! That's right, centuries!

The National Archives of Ireland also proved to be a great resource for many of our attendees. (nationalarchives.ie/). There's more to the archives than

the 1901 and 1911 census records. They also house Church of Ireland parish registers, Will Books and Grant Books, and Probate Records. I had a chance to peruse the Petty Sessions Records this year. I'm hoping the man who stole the corduroy pants is not a relative.

Mary E. Choppa is the president of TIARA. She can be reached at president@tiara.ie.



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

Immigration Concerns

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Immigrant rights and Green cards? Know your rights?
Employer or Landlord Disputes?

Reflections

Faith in God is the Only Answer to Real Questions

By Msgr. Thomas J. McDonnell
There is reading. And then, there is reading.



Msgr. Thomas J. McDonnell

At least that is the conclusion one comes to as one wanders about bookshops this summer. Several books, e.g. How Fiction Works, How Novels Work, try to teach us the way to read novels. I am not sure of these books' ultimate value. But one has to admire the authors' attempts to draw us personally into various works. And they are correct in concluding that too often we fail to insert ourselves into a work – even a classic work.

Somehow, I feel that the latter idea, i.e., of inserting ourselves into a work, learning to dialogue with another, letting phrases linger in our thoughts and minds and letting them lead us, would be helpful as we approach Sacred Scripture.

We might begin by concentrating on

Mary. After being told that she was to be the mother of the Messiah, she uttered the words: "How can this be?" Far from being relegated to static past, I believe the words have a contemporary relevance.

I would note that Mary must have asked this same question many times throughout her life. As she was unable to find hospitality at the inn in Bethlehem and was forced to give birth to her Son in a stable, she must have wondered how could this possibly be?

The reaction of Herod to the birth of the King of Peace and the subsequent slaughter of so many innocents leading to the need for her and the Child to flee to Egypt must have been a cause of consternation. And as she was trudging across the hostile desert sands she must have raised the same question again and again.

Later, she would lose the Child in Jerusalem. Her panic would have been very real. And as she was searching for three days for Him, she must have wondered why.

Finally, after she had shed every tear allotted to a mother on that terrible day on Calvary, one instinctively understands that though her lips never moved, the question "How can this be?"

must have exploded in her mind.

At some time or other, I am sure that in our own faith-journey, we have asked the same question in one way or another. It may be on the occasion of the tragic illness of a loved one; the loss of a family member; sudden unemployment; a substance abuse problem. The causes may be multiple, but the question is constant.

Because I believe this question remained with Mary throughout her life (as it often does with ourselves), I have done a lot of reflection upon this scene – and not just during Advent. And I have read numerous commentaries. What helped me have been the various insights of St. Augustine. He was a prodigious writer. And because of his own faith struggles, he brought his own unique insights to the question.

Above all, he draws attention to the fact that the answer given to Mary by the angels was in reality no answer. The truth of the Trinity, Three Persons in one God, had not yet been revealed. Such would evolve much later.

Concretely, Mary would not have been able to understand about the workings of the Holy Spirit. In Augustine's mind, it would have been a misplaced emphasis to seek knowledge

and understanding. Faith does not admit of such comprehensive solutions. Rather, in his mind, though God speaks to us in many ways, there is only one ultimate question and answer. God says, "Do you love Me?" And if we answer, "yes," He urges us to trust Him and He then draws us deeper into the Mystery. In Mary's case, this led to her heroic acceptance of Calvary.

It is not an abstract trust that we are talking about. Rather, it is a trust in which God is there and willing to support us. We should in our reflection on this dialogue focus on another phrase found on the lips of the angel. He uttered the words "Fear not." This is a constant theme of Sacred Scripture. Actually, it is mentioned 364 times. God urges the heroes and heroines of faith, the prophets and other chosen instruments not to be afraid. And the reason is always the same: "I will be with you." Our God is a God of attachment. And we must never forget that at Baptism, He gave us His irrevocable promise that He would walk with us every step of our earthly pilgrimage. Even now, when we face difficulties in our lives, He is whispering in the depth of our being: "Take courage, trust Me, and fear not."

25th Churchill Conference On Tap in Hub Sept. 11-13

Boston will play host this month to the 25th International Churchill Conference at the Fairmont Copley Plaza from September 11 through the 13th. The site has resonance in that Winston Churchill stayed at the Copley Plaza Hotel as he finished up a lecture tour in the United States in 1932.

The convention program will feature an array of expert presentations on Churchill and the creation of modern Ireland, a venture in which he was a

major player in the parliamentary movement for constitutional change through Home Rule in the years before WWI. The legendary Englishman also was deeply involved in the armed struggle and the negotiations that resulted in Southern Irish independence in the early 1920s.

For more information on the conference, call the Churchill Centre in Chicago (888-WSC-1874) or check the centre's website, winstonchurchill.org.

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The ICONS Festival Offers Fun for All Ages and Types

BY SEAN SMITH
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

So it's September and summer is gone. But that doesn't mean fun times are over – certainly not with the 17th annual ICONS Festival ready to offer a weekend of outstanding Celtic music and enjoying activities for all ages, and at very affordable prices.

ICONS, which takes place Sept. 12-14 at the Irish Cultural Centre of New England in Canton (about 30 minutes south of Boston), will showcase some of the world's most popular and acclaimed performers in the Irish, Scottish, Cape Breton, French Canadian and other Celtic-based music traditions, including Liam Clancy, Solas, Lúnasa, Luka Bloom, The Tanahill Weavers, Martin Hayes & Dennis Cahill, Le Vent du Nord and Crooked Still, plus a once-in-a-blue-moon pairing of Jerry Holland and John Doyle.

A healthy contingent of Boston and New England-based acts also will be on hand, such as the trio of Seamus Connolly, Joe Derrane and John McGann, along with Annalivia and special guest John Whelan, The Boston Kiltics and the Boston Celtic Music Fest Showcase.

If music alone isn't enough for you, there are dance events – not only to watch but also to join in – and celebrations of Irish literature and arts, including actor Shay Duffin's classic portrayal of legendary author and "bad boy" Brendan Behan. You can also enjoy Irish sports, with demonstrations of hurling and Gaelic football presented through the American branch of the Gaelic Athletic Association. Gaelic, one of the world's

oldest and richest languages, will once again be in the spotlight at ICONS, through song, dance and spoken word. And if you want to delve into the increasingly popular field of genealogy, the Irish Cultural Centre, in conjunction with TIARA – an organization dedicated to assisting individuals in genealogical research – will provide workshops on exploring family names and the roots of one's heritage.

Families will find plenty to like about ICONS, especially in the festival's Tir na Nog area. "Tir na Nog" is Gaelic for "Land of the Young," and at ICONS' Tir na Nog children and adults can enjoy events and activities that appeal across the generations:

-- "Sidewalk Sam," the popular street artist, will once again visit ICONS and encourage festival-goers to create spontaneous art that inspires and enriches.

-- Experience the unique charm of marionettes made by professional actor-puppeteer Charlotte Anne Dore, who will use her creations to spin

tales of dragons, kings, princesses, mermaids and ghosts who sing and dance.

-- Magician and author Debbie O'Carroll presents stage magic with a decidedly

Irish flavor, combined with the lively music of Tom O'Carroll and lots of audience participation.

-- Visual storyteller Dean Morrissey, illustrator for children's books such as Ship of Dreams, The Moon Robbers and The Winter King, will share the love he's nurtured for drawing since his Boston childhood days.

-- Michael O'Leary, Kate



Laura Cortese plays with the Boston Urban Ceilidh.

Photo courtesy of ICONS Festival.

Chadbourne, and David de la Barre will give a sampling of their vast repertoire of songs, stories and tunes from the Irish folk tradition, guaranteed to entertain kids and parents alike.

And there'll be carnival rides and step-dancing demonstrations aplenty to keep youthful spirits happy.

The admission price for ICONS are set up to be family-friendly, especially if you buy your tickets by Sept. 6. One day passes are just \$15, and three-day passes only \$35, if purchased in advance; children under 12 are free if accompanied by an adult.

The ICONS Festival Web site -- iconsfestival.com -- has complete details on tickets, performers, events, activities and other details. Log on today and get ready for a memorable weekend – and a great way to kick off your autumn.

Performers with Ties To Boston, New England

Seamus Connolly, Joe Derrane, John McGann -- The list of people John McGann has played guitar and mandolin with is as lengthy as it is distinguished, including David Grisman, Tony Trischka, Johnny Cunningham, Karan Casey, Paddy Keenan

and Cillian Vallely, to name a (very) few. But when your two occasional bandmates are a 10-time national Irish fiddle champion and a National Heritage Foundation Award-winning accordionist, you know you've definitely got something special – and McGann does.

"Playing with Seamus Connolly and Joe Derrane is so wonderful, and on so many levels," says McGann, a former National Flatpicking Champion on mandolin (he's also won regional contests on guitar as well as mandolin) who lives in the Boston area and is on the

(Continued on page 15)

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An Icon at ICONS: Welcome, Liam Clancy

By STEVE MORSE
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

The name Liam Clancy speaks for itself. If there was ever an icon playing the ICONS Festival, it's him. "I'm the last one standing!" he jokes, referring to the Clancy Brothers & Tommy Makem, who put Irish music on the map back in the '60s. This year's ICONS lineup takes a major leap in historical importance, thanks to him.

Liam has performed more than 50 years and has no plans to give it up. "This is not a job. This is a lifestyle -- and you don't stop living," he adds with a wry chuckle.

A feature-length film, with help from the Irish Film Board, is currently being made on his life. Director Alan Ginsenan just taped Liam in concert at New York's Bitter End with guests Shane MacGowan, Odetta, and Tom Paxton. "Shane showed up in all his glory, with all his hangers on," he laughs. "But there was a fantastic vibe off of it. And Odetta is just an incredible person... I hope they got on film what we felt on stage."

Liam also took the film crew to Provincetown, where he resided early on in America (he moved from Ireland in 1955). "I lived in Provincetown and I'm straight," he says. "I lived there in the winter where none of the shenanigans went on."

The Clancys got so big so quickly -- aided by appearances on "The Ed Sullivan Show" -- that they played a concert on Boston Common in front of 45,000 fans in the '60s. "It will forever be etched in my mind," he says. "For one thing, it took two hours to get from the edge of the crowd to the stage... And where do you go to have a pee

under those circumstances? You crawl under the stage and you do the best you can."

The group boasted a jolly sense of theatrics as they mixed everything from drinking songs to protest tunes. But they suffered a backlash in some quarters because of their enormous success.

"There was a big debate raging in Ireland in musical circles after the Clancy Brothers made it big in America," Liam says. "There was a faction that said we ruined Irish music forever. But other people said we opened doors where people didn't know doors existed. When we came along, there was a very localized and parochial cultural scene in Ireland. I suppose with the advent of the Clancy Brothers & Tommy Makem, it took it onto the world stage... It was just one of those happenings."

Liam also befriended Bob Dylan in the Greenwich Village folk days and still hangs out with him. Dylan has called Liam "the best ballad singer I've ever heard in my life."

"The last time I saw him was in Ireland, actually," says Liam. "He did a gig down in Country Waterford and we had a bit of a session then. But the last time I had a real session with him -- a 6 o'clock-in-the-morning one -- was after the Madison Square Garden tribute concert to him (in 1992). We had a great old night with Johnny Cash and Willie Nelson and the boys, and we were sharing the dressing room with Stevie Wonder. Then a whole group of us ended up at Tommy Makem's Irish Pavilion. And, of course, with Dylan, we had sort of come of age together in Greenwich Village, chasing the girls and doing parties. We



Liam Clancy: "This is not a job -- it's a lifestyle." Photo courtesy of ICONS.

used to have a song that we swapped verses on (called "Aileen Aroon"). I'd leave the room and he'd try to sing a verse in my accent, and then I would do a verse a la Bob Dylan." (Liam sings it over the phone and it's hysterical.)

Liam remembers another night with Dylan in Dublin. "Bono of U2 threw a big party at the hotel and we stayed up until dawn. And Dylan and I got into a huddle because we had so many memories and friends and girlfriends in common. Bono was listening in to hear what Dylan and Clancy might be saying to each other. After

about an hour, Bono said, 'I'm getting the [bleep] out of here because everybody you've talked about for the last hour is dead!' He was ticked off by that."

But Liam and Bono remain mates. "I must say, he's really a friendly cuss," says Liam. "An old friend of mine had met him in a bar in London and told him that I was having a problem with my ear and I had to come to Boston to Mass. Eye and Ear to get it fixed. And a couple of days later the phone rings and it's Bono, just to find out if I'm OK and how it is. He was concerned."

Throughout his career, Liam

Clancy has stood up for real folk music -- and that's something he is very proud of.

"It's the soundtrack of our lives and it tells the real story," he says. "I often say that written history is nothing more than the propaganda of the victor. But the history you get in folk songs is the real history of the people who were living through the hardships or living through the great times. So you get a much truer picture of history through folks songs than you do through history books."

And that comes from a true icon of the genre.

Steve Morse can be reached through spmorse@gmail.com.



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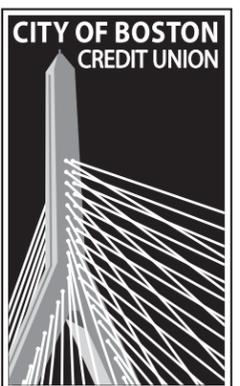
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The ICONS Festival Offers Fun for All Ages and Types

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faculty of the Berklee School of Music. "As an accompanist, sometimes you are up against melody players who simply tolerate you, and they're off in their own little world. The best melody players are the people who genuinely want to work with the accompanist and are sensitive to what you are doing. What makes it even better is that Joe and Seamus are the utmost gentlemen. You run into a lot of egos in the music scene, and these guys just don't have that attitude."

The three of them first started their collaboration about 10 years ago, leading to their 2004 album "The Boston Edge," which drew widespread praise: Irish Music Magazine lauded Connolly's "gorgeous tone and fluid, inventive phrasings," Derrane's "clear, crisp precision and brilliant ornamentation" and McGann's "able and versatile guitar and mandolin accompaniment."

Revered as these three are in Irish traditional music circles, they represent an unlikely, and fascinating, fusion of backgrounds and experience: Derrane, a mainstay of Boston's famed Dudley Street Irish dance halls of the 1940s and '50s; County Clare native Connolly, renowned not only as a musician but as a teacher and organizer, architect of the popular Gaelic Roots summer program of concerts and workshops at BC; McGann, who has played jazz, rock, bluegrass, and American traditional music, created orchestrations and arrangements for The Boston Pops and New Philharmonia Orchestra, and for more than 25 years has owned and operated a music transcription service.

About the only thing wrong with this Connolly-Derrane-McGann partnership, then, is it doesn't happen more often, given family, geography, work and other considerations. So the trio's upcoming performance at ICONS 2008 is that much more of a singular event. "When there's a chemistry between people, and you click personally as well as musically, you don't have to worry quite so much about rehearsing," says McGann. "We always have a lot of fun when we play together, and I think everyone picks up on that — so, hopefully, they have fun, too."

The Boston Kiltics -- It almost doesn't seem right somehow to call The Boston Kiltics "a band." They're more like a group of friends kind enough to share their private enjoyment in a public setting. Whatever tag you apply to them, the Kiltics are undeniably a first-class group of musicians and dancers who embody the Celtic tradition of Nova Scotia, and Cape Breton in particular. The tradition is a close-knit, inherently social one, very much suited to the parlor or kitchen, or perhaps a moderate-sized dance hall such as the Canadian-American Club in Watertown, Mass., which regularly hosts Cape Breton events.

While Celtic instrumental traditions all are rooted in dance to some extent, it's paramount in Nova Scotia-Cape Breton; the highest compliment you can pay a musician there is not "sounds good," but "good to dance to." So there's a delightful kind of "old-fashioned" informality to the Kiltics, who have readily supplemented their ranks with friends, stand-ins and guests — and continue to put on a high-quality show.

"The best case scenario for us," says fiddler Doug Lamey, "is when we do a gig that's half-performance, half-dance. I really like to play for dancing,



The members Crooked Still are set to play a set at The Festival. Photo courtesy ICONS.

because that's what this music is all about. I'd rather see people dance than have them applaud; if they're dancing, then I figure I'm doing my job." Lamey, whose grandfather Bill was a major contributor to the Cape Breton and Scottish music scene in Boston for more than three decades, is one of the more consistent threads running through the Boston Kiltics fabric. Another is guitarist-vocalist-whistle player Cliff McGann, who has played with Lamey as a duo for several years.

The first incarnation of the Kiltics, which played at the 2006 Irish Connections Festival, consisted of Lamey, McGann, fiddler Emerald Rae, and Cape Breton-style step-dancer Peggy Morrison. It was during early 2007 when the Kiltics truly began taking shape, with the additions of pianist Dedo Norris and bagpiper Nathan Silva alongside Lamey, McGann, Campbell and Christine Morrison. And he and McGann also were joined by two other dancers, Morrison's daughter Christine and Christine's longtime cohort Pamela Campbell. All of which led to last year's ICONS Festival, an event Lamey identifies as "a turning point" for the band.

"That was a transforming experience," he explains. "We were up on stage constantly during the weekend, whether by ourselves or with other performers like, say, Uncle Earl or Billy McComiskey. We just really came together, because we had to." To say the Kiltics got a good reception at ICONS, or wherever else they've appeared, is putting it mildly. It's pretty nigh impossible not to feel uplifted by the distinctive Nova Scotia/Cape Breton rhythm, and when you have accomplished musicians like Lamey, Norris, McGann, and Silva (or some combination thereof) holding forth, well, so much the better. Matt Phelps has lately assumed piping chores from Silva, whose work schedule and residence in southeastern Massachusetts can make it difficult to meet musical obligations, says Lamey — although, keeping with the Kiltics' Hotel California persona, he hasn't exactly left the band. For that matter, who knows who might join the band for their stints at ICONS this year; after all, what's a little music among friends?

Laura Cortese -- The word "versatile" is a compliment, but

when applied to Laura Cortese it's almost damning with faint praise. Cortese can take her fiddle in hand and churn out a rugged Scottish strathspey, a foot-stomping Cape Breton reel, a sprightly Irish jig, or a high-octane French-Canadian tune, sometimes throwing in variations and improvisations that may shock strict traditionalists but are dazzling nonetheless.

Or Cortese might sing — in a lustrous voice that can be sultry, disarming, or vulnerable as required — a centuries-old ballad from the British Isles, or a down-home Appalachian love song, or a selection from her ever-growing store of originals, which meld seemingly disparate elements of folk and pop. Covering hits from The Eighties? No problem. After all, she included an acoustic version of The Cure's "Just Like Heaven," complete with fiddle-driven riffs, on her 2006 album "Even the Lost Creek."

Heck, she even played string bass as part of the all-female bluegrass/old-timey band Uncle Earl, including at their 2007 ICONS Festival appearance. And she wound up showing off her hoofing skills in Uncle Earl's "Streak O'Lean, Streak O'Fat" video, an hilarious and inventive production that somehow encompasses Appalachian clogging, "Riverdance," and kung fu movies. (Cortese has her own video, too, based on her song "Bad Year.")

"I am a musician who's on a musical journey, and everything I experience and listen to goes into that journey," says Cortese, a native Californian who's been living in the Boston area for nearly a decade since she enrolled in the Berklee College of Music.

It was during her involvement with progressive fiddle trio Halali that Cortese got her first true taste of songwriting, when she wrote lyrics for a tune supplied by Scottish accordionist John Somerville. The result was "Escape from Alvie," a traditional-style song of romance, night-visiting and an over-zealous father that has deservedly become a Halali audience favorite. Cortese also reworked other traditional songs like "The Knight and the Shepherd's Daughter" and "The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington," the latter of which appeared on her first solo album "Hush." The experience nudged her further along into songwriting. "It's

been an evolution for me," she says. "Working with traditional songs seemed very natural, because they're timeless and universal. They have these great themes and speak to experiences that are relevant and meaningful for people even outside of the folk realm."

Having added songwriting to her list of talents, Cortese is as willing and able to discuss her approach and philosophy to composing songs as, say, assessing a particular fiddle style. "I wouldn't say everything I've written is autobiographical, exactly, but they all have a nugget of something — an emotion, a story — that I can relate to," she explains. "There are very different schools of storytelling. Sometimes it's about craft, for example, or sometimes it's about catharsis. When I'm working on a song, I like to go back to it and listen to what seems universal, rather than just my own feelings at the time. So I'm going inside the emotion, but I'm also on the outside looking in."

[Laura Cortese will play a solo set during the BCMFest (BCMFest) Showcase at ICONS, and also will help lead the Boston Urban Ceilidh Friday night at the festival.]

Annalivia -- The name "Annalivia" summons up a host of interconnected literary and geographical references: Anna Livia Plurabelle, the heroine of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* and a personification of the river Liffey; and more recently, the name of the bronze monument on O'Connell Street, intended to celebrate both quasi-fictional woman and body of water. Annalivia also happens to be the name of a Boston/New England alt-traditional band whose musical current carries along its own impressive set of references — including Appalachian singers Clyde Davenport and Shelia Kay Adams, Cape Breton fiddlers like John Morris Rankin and Jerry Holland, and Irish-British folk revival superstars Bothy Band, Anne Briggs and Richard Thompson, not to mention Boston singer-songwriter Mark Simos. While that may seem like an overflowing, out-of-control torrent of possibilities, Annalivia nonetheless stays within its metaphorical riverbed and sweeps listeners along for a ride that is deceptively powerful, and highly enjoyable.

At the core of Annalivia are guitarist-vocalist Flynn Cohen and vocalist Liz Simmons,

whose backgrounds, interests, and experiences provided a firm basis for the band's sound and vision. Cohen, a former student of legendary English folk guitar whiz John Renbourn, has cultivated a reputation as a versatile rhythm player and flatpicker who is equally adept in the Celtic, bluegrass and old-timey/Appalachian worlds. Simmons, raised in a musical household, began singing at an early age and became interested in Irish and Scottish traditional music, for a while studying with former Solas vocalist Karan Casey. She met Cohen a few years ago at a Boston Celtic Music Fest after-party, and the two began a partnership that extended beyond music (they were married earlier this year). Adding their talents are fiddler Brendan Carey Block, a former member of the Glengarry Bhoys, and string bassist and banjoist Stuart Kenney, a stalwart of the New England contra dance scene with much-revered Wild Asparagus as well as The Sevens.

Earlier this year, Annalivia released its first CD, featuring songs that are rooted in the Appalachian and British Isles traditions, as well as covers of Richard Thompson's "Walking on a Wire" and Mark Simos' "The Wind Is An Angry Friend," and a couple of tune sets to boot. Annalivia recently has added to its already strong resources by welcoming Emerald Rae, who like Block is a former U.S. Scottish fiddle champion and is an accomplished singer and step dancer as well.

[At the ICONS Festival, Annalivia will perform a set with accordionist John Whelan and also will appear as part of the Boston Celtic Music Fest (BCMFest) Showcase.]

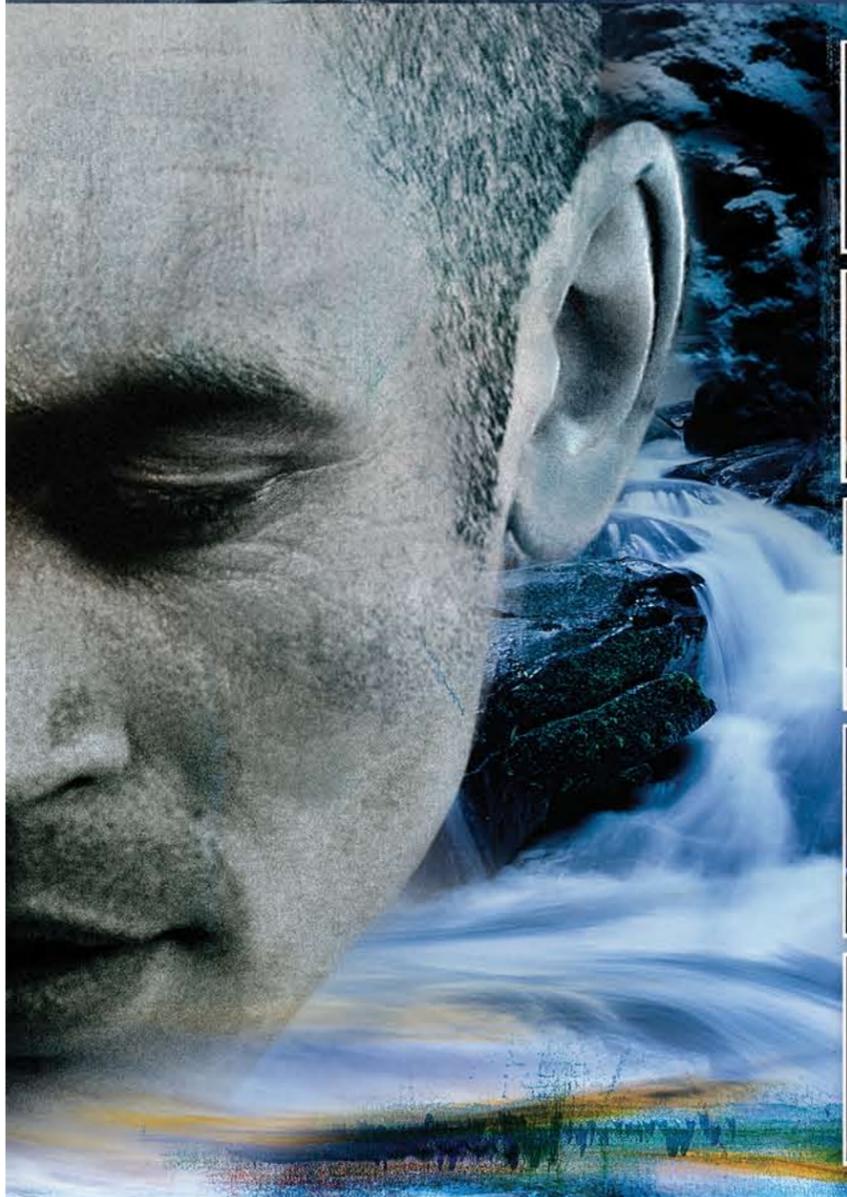
The New Tyme Sisters -- Is biology destiny? Looking at Emerald Rae and Eden Forman, it's hard to believe otherwise. Rae and Forman are sisters by blood — Rae, 23, is the older by five years — and by music: The Gloucester, Mass., residents are two-thirds of The New Tyme Sisters, a trio that brings a fresh, 21st century verve to the old-timey, Appalachian tradition. Both former junior U.S. Scottish fiddle champions, they're also mainstays of the largely youth-driven multiple-influenced movement that has become a hallmark of Boston's Celtic and folk/acoustic music scene. The sisters have learned, formally and informally, from some of the best traditionally-oriented fiddlers around, like Alasdair Frasier, Bruce Molsky, Hanneke Cassel and Laura Cortese, to name a few. Rae, after graduating from Berklee College of Music with a degree in film scoring, pursued a master's thesis in early Scottish fiddle sources through the University of Glasgow; Forman, meanwhile, began her studies at Berklee earlier this year.

What you have with Rae and Forman, then, are two articulate young women who display a pretty good perspective on life, music and each other. And, oh yes, they sing and play fabulously, whether individually or together, or as is increasingly the case, with the third New Tyme: their "adopted sister" Emma Beaton, a Vancouver Island native who plays cello and banjo — as does Forman — and is in Berklee's freshman class this fall; she's often described, say the sisters, as "a little red-headed Nina Simone."

[The New Tyme Sisters will perform as part of the Boston Celtic Music Fest (BCMFest) Showcase at the ICONS Festival. Emerald Rae also will perform with the group Annalivia at ICONS.]

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A Q&A with Celtic Thunder's Ryan Kelly

BY SEAN SMITH
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Next month, Ireland's latest musical extravaganza "Celtic Thunder" will rumble through the Greater Boston area, with shows on Oct. 6 and 28 at the Agganis Arena in Lowell, as part of its first U.S. tour – a two-and-a-half month odyssey that will include stops in New York City, Los Angeles, Denver, Chicago, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, and Houston.

A collaboration between "Celtic Woman" creator-producer Sharon Browne and legendary singer-songwriter Phil Coulter ("The Town I Loved So Well," "The Old Man," "Saturday Night" and many more), "Celtic Thunder" features nearly 30 musical selections – all arranged and conducted by Coulter – ranging from popular hits that include "Nights in White Satin," "Puppy Love," and "Brothers In Arms," traditional Irish songs like "Raggle Taggle Gypsies," "The Mountains of Mourne," and "Come By the Hills," and Coulter's own compositions, some of them written specifically for the show. At the heart, and soul, of "Celtic Thunder" are its five vocalists, who sing solo as well as in various combinations or as a full ensemble. Ranging in age from 15 to 40, the five draw upon a variety of backgrounds and experience, from amateur to professional: Dublin native Paul Byrom; Damian McGinty and Keith Harkin, both from Co. Londonderry; George Donaldson of Glasgow; and Ryan Kelly of Co. Tyrone. Recently, the Boston Irish Reporter's Sean Smith spoke by phone with the 29-year-old Kelly, who was back home in Tyrone preparing for the next chapter in the "Celtic Thunder" story.

Q. Ryan, will this be your first time in the US, and in Boston?

A. Actually, I've been over before, but in a completely different context: I played Gaelic football several years back, and one year I had the opportunity to go on a brief tour in the northeastern U.S.

Q. So you've got sports as well as music in your blood?

A. Yes. In fact, when I came to the US along with the guys earlier this year to make some appearances on PBS during the period "Celtic Thunder" aired, Boston was one of the places I visited. Now, basket-



Celtic Thunder performs "Caledonia."

ball is one of my favorite sports and I'm a big Celtics fan – and my trip to Boston happened to be around the time when the Celtics were playing the Lakers for the NBA championship. Fortunately, I was able to get tickets for Game 6 of the series. I certainly picked the right game to go to!

Q. Talk a little about your musical development, and how you got involved in "Celtic Thunder" – it wasn't perhaps the most conventional route, was it?

A. In terms of music, I guess you could say we were a "typical Irish family" – it was certainly something we valued as a family. My dad loved to sing and play around at the pubs; he'd sing songs like "The Town I Loved So Well." Singing was always a big part of my life from childhood on: I sang in choirs, and I took part in Scór competitions [sponsored by the Gaelic Athletic Association] – I won the singing championship in 2007. I took part in the BBC "Country Cool" competition a few years back and came in second, and had the chance to perform at a televised charity concert. I've been involved in musical theater, too, like "Jesus Christ Superstar." And I also liked doing gigs in pubs. But there really hadn't been that "big opportunity." So, meanwhile, I went through school and wound up tak-

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Ryan Kelly singing a solo during a Celtic Thunder concert.

Movin' On -- From Billy Joel To The High Kings

Darren Holden Returns to Boston on New Concert Tour

BY R. J. DONOVAN
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

The last time Darren Holden was in Boston, he charmed audiences as the dynamic pianist-vocalist in Billy Joel's "Movin' Out." The singer-songwriter-musician is returning to town, this time as a member of "The High Kings." Re-energizing the great Irish ballads, the ensemble group generated tremendous excitement when their live concert aired on PBS stations around the country. They've opened for "Celtic Woman," did a brief tour in Ireland, and are now launching their first full-scale American tour. By phone from his home in Dublin, Darren spoke about his work and the new tour.

BIR: I hear you're a busy guy at the moment. You're in a new house and have a new member of the family.

Darren: I am indeed. We moved back into Dublin city about a month ago. And the following week, our third baby arrived, baby Sophie.

BIR: Are you sleeping at all?

Darren: Not at all. I'm surviving completely on coffee and whatever else I can get my hands on. Josh is three and a half. He's a right little guy. He was on the road with me in "Movin' Out" for two years, so he's been all over the world. And Ava is 11 months. So two girls and a boy now.

BIR: Since you brought up "Movin' Out," tell me a little about that experience.

Darren: It was a great show and I did it for almost four years between Broadway and the tour . . . It never felt like hard work, ever. I was surrounded by fantastic musicians and great friends up there. And of course, the songs speak for themselves.

BIR: Have you stayed in touch with Billy Joel?
Darren: We've chatted on the phone a few of times . . . He sends me the odd e-mail just to see what's going on . . . I told him about "High Kings" and sent him the



Darren Holden

CD and DVD and he absolutely loves it. He's going trying to see us somewhere on the tour.

BIR: How did "The High Kings" come about?

Darren: To make a long story short, the people behind "Celtic Woman" -- I had worked with some of them in "Riverdance" -- gave me a call and said they really wanted to talk to me as soon as possible, and if I wouldn't mind, would I fly home to Ireland for a meeting. And I said of course. Any excuse to come home. So I came home to Dublin in June of last year to meet a gentleman by the name of Dave Kavanagh, who was the driving force behind The Chieftains and Clannad and an early partner in U2, back in the day. Dave said he wanted to put a new ballad group together, sort of based on the style and songs of The Dubliners and The Clancy Brothers, but something for the new millennium -- to let people who saw it the first time around re-live it again while introducing it to a brand new audience of younger people.

He wanted to make it hip and cool and have four guys who sort of had a pedigree in the music industry. They had the four people in mind . . . I think I was the

first that was brought in. The other three were Brian Dunphy, who I had worked with in "Riverdance." Brian's a great vocalist. Then a Clancy nephew, Finbar Clancy. And Finbar Furey's son Martin. We'd known of each other and crossed paths for about ten years, but we had never really sat down and played professionally or anything that like. We just sort of clicked very, very quickly.

BIR: How did "The High Kings" tour in Ireland go in June.

Darren: The concert tour was 11 dates all around the major towns in Ireland and it sold out in two days . . . We were completely floored by this. It was just pandemonium from the word go. The very first night we had to be bundled into a van to get out of the venue. We were just sitting in the van afterwards looking at each other going, "Is this really happening?"

BIR: What can we look forward to in the concerts at The Colonial Theater?

Darren: "The High Kings" show is like two hours of craziness. People are advised to come prepared to sing and stand up and shout and holler and jump up on the seats if they want to. It's all about having fun.

BIR: Do you have a moment in the concert that's a personal favorite?

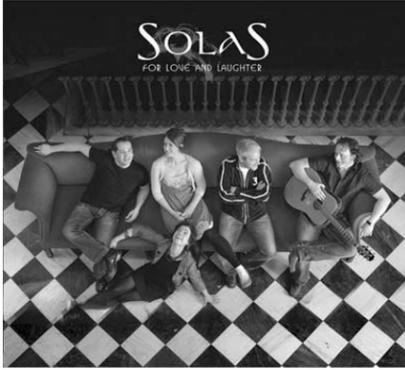
Darren: There's one song that really stood out for me when we were picking tunes for the show. It's called "Galway to Graceland." It was written by an English folk writer name of Richard Thompson -- brilliant writer. I'm a massive, massive Elvis Presley fan and this song is all about an Irish lady who up and leaves her family, her husband and kids, and makes her way to Memphis to meet Elvis, but when she gets there, he has died. Now I'm giving you the very obvious meaning, but its very subtly put in the lyrics of the song. It's a completely a cappella number. One of the reasons "The High Kings" work is the fantastic harmonies that happen when we all sing together. Regardless of what we do individually, when the four voices are there as one unit, something very special happens. For me, it's a very, very special number and it takes people's breath away a lot of the time.

"The High Kings" are at The Colonial Theatre, Sept. 13-14. Tickets and information: 617-931-2787.

CD ROUNDUP

By SEAN SMITH

SOLAS, "For Love and Laughter" -- So here they are again. Having celebrated their 10th anniversary two years ago with a live CD/DVD release – which among other things served as a reminder of their legacy of talent and influence – Solas now fully embarks on their second decade with their first studio album in three years. "For Love and Laughter" finds the group sporting yet another line-up change, with Mairead Phelan replacing Deidre Scanlan as lead vocalist. But the core of Solas remains the same as it has for the past five years – co-founders Seamus Egan and Winifred Horan,



plus Mick McAuley and Eamon McElholm – and so does their virtuosity and sense of purpose. The band definitively establishes its newly reconstituted presence on the first two tracks. The first is a trio of reels played at a rollicking, zesty pace we've come to expect from them, two composed by McAuley (including "Eoin Bear's Reel," which has the feel of one of those dramatic French-Canadian tunes), the other by Horan. Phelan makes her official entrance on "Seven

Curses," identified here as a traditional song, which might elicit strong opinions to the contrary from Bob Dylan fans (and maybe Mr. Z himself?). Buoyed by an abundant percussive foundation laid down by Egan (the one-man orchestra) and John Anthony, and exquisite harmony vocals from Horan, McAuley, and McElholm, Phelan very effectively relates this tragic and chilling turn on the "rescued from the gallows" folk narrative. Phelan overall seems most comfortable with the softer-edged material, such as the lovely "Mollai Na Gcuach Ni Chuilleanain" and in her duet with Horan on "The Gallant Hussar," a traditional ballad in the girl-and-soldier-romance canon that seems particularly poignant in this day and age. She does make an impressive stretch on the cover of Rickie Lee Jones' "Sailor Song," with its spare, unsettling tone ("you trade your life/when something comes for you/and you bury the knife/between the lies and truth"). The vocal talents of McAuley and McElholm also are on display here, especially in their duet on the Dillards' classic "There Is a Time." "For Love and Laughter" is enlivened by the appearance of the Canadian Celtic-bluegrass fusion band The Duhks on two tracks: "Merry Go Round," another excursion by Solas into the repertoire of Antje Duvekot, features joyous vocals by Sarah Dugas and Tania Elizabeth (who also plays fiddle), while Leonard Podolak's five-string banjo spurs the tune set "Vital Mental Medicine/The Pullet." Another notable guest star is Boston-based cellist Natalie Haas, who plays on three tracks, including Horan's "My Dream of You," which closes out the album.

More than 10 years later, Solas shows itself as determined as ever to find a meeting place between traditional and contemporary, Irish and American, vocal and instrumental prowess, and to get there with a generosity of intelligence and confidence. Solas will appear as part of the ICONS Festival Sept. 12-14 at the Irish Cultural Center of New England in Canton, Mass. See iconsfestival.com.



They reunited last year for a gig at Vicar Street in Dublin, an event captured on this CD and a recently released DVD, and have announced plans for regular performances and recordings. It's worth pointing out that this particular incarnation of Moving Hearts represents its all-instrumental era. As one of its original architects, lead singer Christy Moore gave the band an unmistakable sociopolitical dimension with songs like "Hiroshima Nagasaki Russian Roulette," "Irish Ways and Irish Laws," and "No Time for Love." The band's other chief organizer, Moore's former Planxty mate Donal Lunny, helped it fashion a hard-edged, distinctly urban sound that remained after Moore's departure. This aspect is captured very effectively on "Live in Dublin," which comprises all of "The Storm" as well as instrumental pieces from the first two Moving Hearts albums. There's a continual byplay, even occasional artistic tension, between the pipes and low whistle of Davy Spillane and the saxophones of Keith Donald, reflecting the tug between traditional and contemporary influences that characterized the band (perhaps a metaphor for late 20th-century Ireland itself). The evocative title track of "The Storm" for my money is the classic post-Christy Moving Hearts set: Percussionist Noel Eccles lays down a cantering 4/4 rhythm, enhanced by Lunny's masterful bouzouki and Eoghan O'Neill's economical bass line, over which ride Spillane's urgent pipes; Graham Henderson's lush keyboard shifts gears into the second tune and sets up an exciting note-for-note trade-off between Donald and Spillane. The band also excels on "The Lark," four traditional jigs and three others penned by Lunny, building and rebuilding momentum and whisked along by some great flourishes by Donald, Spillane, and fiddler Kevin Glackin, especially during "Old Hag You Have Killed Me." Eccles has summed up the band's reason for reforming as "unfinished business. . . we always felt we hadn't finished exploring the possibilities of our unique lineup." It'll be interesting to see how, having affirmed their past glories with this CD, Moving Hearts will make good on that promise of future achievements.

MOVING HEARTS, "Live in Dublin" -- A few years ago, en route to a gig with a fiddle player less than half my age, I slipped into the car stereo my cassette (!) of the 1985 Moving Hearts album "The Storm." My teenaged colleague listened for a few minutes to the crisp-sounding percussion, slap-style bass and synthesizer washes alongside Uilleann pipes and fiddle, and remarked, "This is so Eighties!" Well, Moving Hearts was definitely a band of its time, a groundbreaking ensemble that managed to merge traditional Irish music with rock, funk and jazz in a way that had never been done before. Now, some 20 years after the members went their separate ways (more or less), they're out to prove they deserve more than an "I Love the '80s"-style tribute.

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U.S. Tour on Tap for 'Celtic Thunder'

(Continued from page 17) ing a job as an accountant at a bank in Monaghan. I was working Monday to Friday, 9-5, and playing in a bar on weekends, kind of living separate lives. Then one day my brother calls me up and tells me about the auditions for this show called "Celtic Thunder" and says I should give it a try. I showed up to the audition in Dublin – the queue went clear out the door – and just tried my best, and sure enough, I got invited back to the next round, and on it went until I was chosen as one of the five finalists. Just an amazing experience.

Q. How did the show come together from your standpoint and of the other four singers? Were you just given a list of songs to sing and told "Learn these"?

A. From the start, Phil [Coulter] was open to ideas and suggestions from us. The message was clear: "We won't make you sing songs you don't feel comfortable or happy with." And that makes sense, because if

you don't really feel good about a song the audience is going to pick up on it. During the show, I sing "Desperado" and "Brothers In Arms," and for me both of them are just outstanding songs. With "Desperado," well, everyone loves the Eagles, so the challenge is you try and make it your own. "Brothers In Arms" is a fascinating song by Mark Knopfler. People often wonder if he's making references to "The Troubles," and perhaps in one sense he is, but it's a song that really transcends time and place. So on the one hand it relates to Ireland, but there's something universal about it.

Q. Is there a misconception about "Celtic Thunder" out there? Are people expecting a male version of "Celtic Woman," or just a bunch of guys singing random songs?

A. "Celtic Thunder" isn't a "boy band" thing, and it's certainly not just some guys walking on and singing. The lighting and staging are top-quality professional, really quite astounding. And there's a

kind of loose story going on in the background, where we each play a character or some aspect of the male: George, being the oldest, is kind of the father figure, for example, and Damian, at 15, is the young fellow. At times I am supposed to be the "dark one." Paul and I have a sort of duel when we sing "That's a Woman." He's saying how wonderful, how beautiful women are, that they're "delicate creatures." And I'm more like, "You can't trust them, treat her like you don't give a damn."

Q. Which is entirely out of character for you, of course.

A. [Laughs] Oh yes, of course. Like I said, I'd done musical theater before, so that was an element they wanted for the show, and I certainly have enjoyed playing the part.

Q. So there is more to "Celtic Thunder" than perhaps meets the ear?

A. What "Celtic Thunder" represents is modern Ireland, the "Celtic Tiger" – an Ireland that obviously loves its traditions but is very much in touch with the world at large.



Celtic Thunder - (L-R) Keith Harkin, George Donaldson, Damian McGinty, Ryan Kelly and Paul Byrom.

So even as we'll sing the "old songs," and songs by contemporary Irishmen like Phil or Paul Brady ["The Island"], we'll take songs that are known all over, like "Desperado" or "I Wanna Know What Love Is," and put them in an Irish context. It really makes the point that Ireland has become multinational, with a sophisticated global view.

Q. How do you get along with the other four

singers? Is it just all business, or have you formed friendships?

A. One thing that has surprised a lot of people is finding out we didn't know each other at all before "Celtic Thunder." When we were preparing to record the show soundtrack, there was a two-week period where we were all in a place in Antrim, just staying together constantly. That was a good test to see how things would go.

We certainly all enjoy the craic, and when you get five lads together you know there's going to be some tomfoolery. But it all adds to the mix. Because we're doing so much together, you learn pretty quickly how to get along, and we've gone out to socialize so we can enjoy downtime together. [Laughs] Of course, I may have a different story come December when the tour's over.

BIR Music Calendar

Labor Day weekend- Aug 30- Sept. 1- 11th Annual Newport Waterfront Irish Festival, Black 47 performing Aug 30. Fort Adams State Park, Newport RI 401- 846-1600, Newportfestivals.com/Irish_festival

Sept 12- Icons Festival W/ Liam Clancy, Lunasa, Solas, Luka Bloom, Cara Dillon, Clancy Legacy, David Munnely Band, Le Vent Du Nord, Joe Der-rane, Seamus Connolly & John McGann, Liadan, Chulrua W/Paddy O'Brien, Annalivia/W John Whelan, Gabelle, Grainne Hambly & Billy Jackson, Revels Repertory, Tannahill Weavers, Storytelling, Step Dancing, Literature. Tick-

ets before 8/31: 3-Days \$35, 1 Day \$15 / At The Gate: \$25 - Irish Cultural Center, 200 New Boston Dr, South, Canton, MA, 617-508-931-2000, Iconsfestival.com

Sept 13 Atwater-Donnelly 8pm, \$15. Vanilla Bean Café, Rts 44, 169, 97, Pomfret, CT 860-928-1562 Info@Thevanillabeancafe.com Thevanillabeancafe.com/

Sept 13- Work o' the Weavers, 8pm, \$15, U. U. Meetinghouse, 245 Porter Lake Dr, Springfield, MA 413- 562-3990 <http://uNicoffeehouse.org>

Sept 14- The High Kings, 3pm. Colonial Theatre, 106 Boylston St., Boston, MA

Sept 14- Paddy Keenan,

7pm. Cu Na Mara Restaurant, 11 Hobart S, Route 3a, Bristol, NH 603-744-6336

Sept 18- Solas, 7pm. Iron Horse Music Hall, 20 Center St, Northampton, MA 413-584-0610 Iheg.com

Sept 19- Beoga In Concert 7:30pm \$15-\$2 - East Hartford, Parks & Recreation, 50 Chapman Place, E. Hartford, CT (860)282-8241

Jez Lowe & The Bad Pennies 8:30 - 28 Mugford St. Marblehead (781)631-8987

Findlay Napier & The Bar Room Mountaineers (Formerly Of Back Of The Moon) 8:00 \$10 Adv/\$12 Door - One Longfellow Sq, 181 State St., Portland, Me, (207) 239-1855



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The Irish Language

by Philip Mac AnGhabhann

As you can see by now, Irish has a large number of **adverbs** – some of “when” or “time”, some of “how” or “manner”, and some of “where” or “place”.

Coimrigh, “To sum up”, you have also learned that adverbs of “place” can change, depending on their proximity to the speaker. Ones’ “here” is another person’s “there.” You learned that some adverbs of place differ depending on weather or not the person is stationary or is moving or about to move.

A Nóra, tar isteach! “Nora, come inside!”
Tá Nóra istigh “She is inside.”

Lastly, you learned that the Irish equivalent of English *-ly* is *go*.

'S sé cúramach. /shehy KOOR-uh-mahk/
“He is careful.”

Siúil go cúramach! /SHOOL goh KOOR-uh-mahk/
“Walk carefully!”

Go can also be prefixed to a number of other **nouns** and/or **adjectives** to form **adverbial phrases** that do not have the equivalent *-ly* in English:

Go bráth “Forever” (“until the end of time”)

Go leor “Many, a lot” – the source of English “galore”

Recall that the order of **adverbs** in Irish is the same as that in English – **manner, place, and time**. You also learned that with Irish **adjectives** you cannot delete the word for “and” **agus**. You cannot say, “He is tall, dark, and handsome” but must say “He is tall *and* dark and handsome”.

If the following word begins with a **vowel** you can abbreviate **agus** to ‘s.

The same rule applies to **adverbs of manner**. You cannot say, “He ate the soup sloppily, noisily, and haste fully” but must say “He ate the soup sloppily *and* noisily and haste fully.”

This rule does not apply to **adverbs** or **adverbial phrases** of “place” or “time.”

You can say sentences such as,

“A thief came + into the room + through a window + last night + again.”

Tháinig gadi + sa seomra + thrí fhuinneog + aréir + arist.

Almost without exception, what we think of as “Prepositional Phrases” are in reality “Adverbial Phrases”, especially those that refer to “place” or “time”

Sa seomra /sah SHOM-ruh/ “into the room”

Thrí fhuinneog /tree EEN-yok/ “through a window”

There are many **adverbs** or **adverbial phrases** that you will find very useful as you go deeper into Irish. Here are a few that you already have learned or may wish to learn:

“early in the morning” **go moch** /goh mohk/
“ago” **ó shin** /oh heen/
“alone” **as féin** /ahs feyn/
“at all” **ar chor ar bith** /ahr HOR ahr BEE/
“also, too” **freisin** /Freh-sheen/

And the days of the week and related adverbs:

“Sunday” **Dé Domhnaigh**
“yesterday” **inné**
“Monday” **Dé Luain**
“today” **inniu**
“Tuesday” **Dé Máirt**
“tomorrow” **amáireach**
“Wednesday” **Dé Céadaoin**
“morning” **maidin**
“Thursday” **Déaadaoin**
“afternoon/evening” **tráthnóna**
“Friday” **Dé hAoine**
“tonight” **anocht**
“Saturday” **Dé Sathairn**
“last night” **aréir**

Remember, you don’t have to say “on” with the days of the week – just use its name – **Dé Luain** is both “Monday” or “on Monday”.

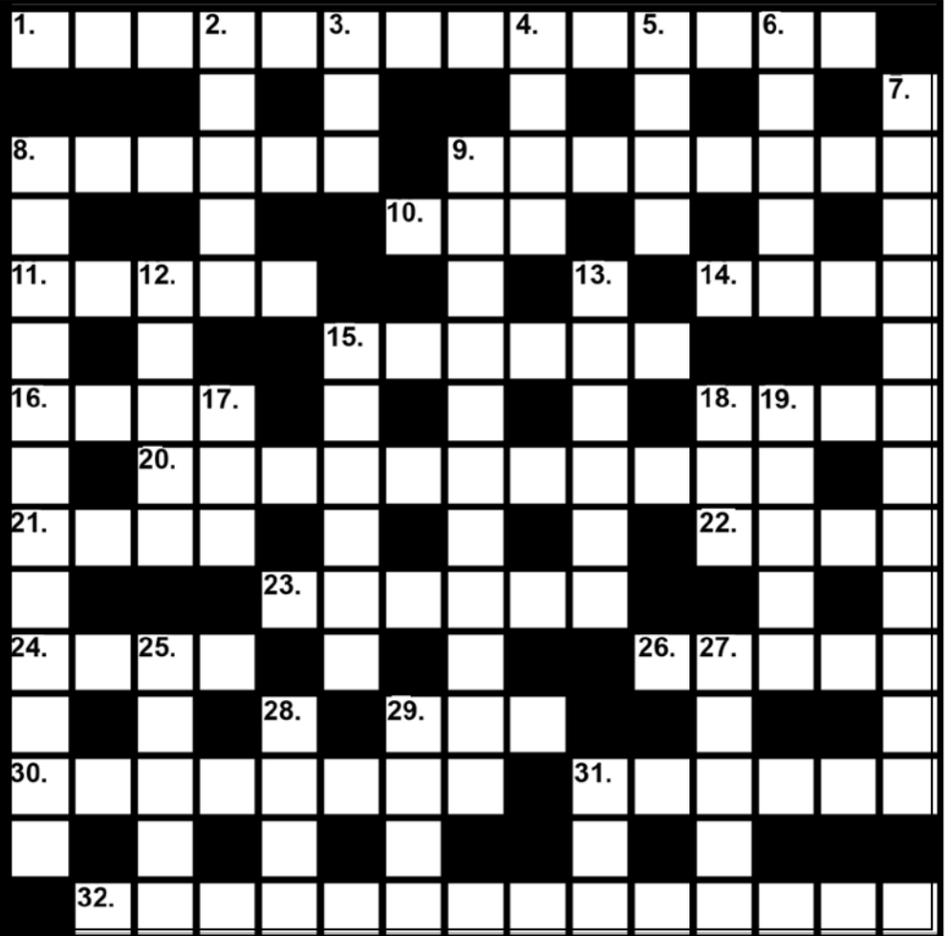
Now, let’s practice – and review – some of the things that you have learned. See if you can put these sentences in to Irish:

1.) She went home early in the morning. 2.) Eamon will go to Cork on Friday again. 3.) She wasn’t in the car at all. 4.) Isn’t Nora alone in the house? 5.) We will go by train on Saturday. 6.) Patrick will come with him, too. 7.) What is this called in Irish? 8.) Put your shirt on! 9.) I saw Bridget twenty years ago. 10.) Mary and I drank tea without sugar or milk. 11.) There will be a lot of food. 12.) John! Play outside! 13.) “Is today Wednesday or Thursday? 14.) “Kate will be dancing tonight.”

Answers: 1.) **Chuaigh sí abaile go moch.** 2.) **Rachaidh Eamann go Corcaigh hAoine arist.** 3.) **Ní raibh sí sa charr ar chor ar bith.** 4.) **Nach bhfuil Nóra as féin sa theach?** 5.) **Rachaimid ar an train Dé Sathairn.** 6.) **Tiocfaidh Pádraig roimhe freisin.** 7.) **Cén t-ainm atá air seo as Gaelge?** 8.) **Cuir do leine ort!** 9.) **Chonaic mé Bríd fiche blain ó shin.** 10.) **D’ól Máire ‘s mé an dtae gun siúca nó bainne.** 11.) **Beidh bia go leor.** 12.) **Seán! Imrigh amach!** 13.) **An bhfuil Dé Céadaoin nó Déaadaoin inniu?** 14.) **Beidh Cáit ag damhsa anocht.**

CELTIC CROSS WORDS

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



IRELAND IN CROSSWORDS ©-bigwood.com

ACROSS

1. A land isn’t alive. (anag.) In offshore Kerry 7 miles by 2 miles, one of the most westerly in Europe. (8,6)
8. Tram comes over before nine for the surrounding rock in which gems are embedded. (6)
9. Had dock been cut down when summoned by gesture? (8)
10. Glengarriff axiomatically includes a means of communication shortly. (3)
11. Drives forward as seen in Clonbur gestures. (5)
14. Up the ante very high in Sicily. (4)
15. C.O. right to take all back in by the throat! (6)
16. Reptile to date. (4)
18. Discover in Corofin diversion. (4)
20. Will lurches about in the heights of north west Roscommon between Boyle and Sligo. (6,5)
21. Regretted rude disorder. (4)
22. Human bone discovered in Anascaul natural environment. (4)
23. A lot of money to be made from the law? (6)
24. Not quite dark, but it’s close. (4)
26. Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos turn the seat over after a loud start. (5)
29. “When I makes —, I makes —, as old mother Grogan said. And when I makes water I makes water.” Joyce. (3)
30. Verse Rob cut out and sent to English newspaper. (8)
31. Rig not assembled in Tyrone village in the Owenkillew River valley not far from Omagh. (6)
32. Mercury to crash. (anag.) Pleasant Cork seaside resort in a sylvan setting near Timoleague Abbey. (14)

DOWN

2. Poetic as ever, that is strange, back in Eire, even (5)
3. Give little thanks to ten for deducting this from your wages. (3)
4. Genus of holly seen in O’Neil example. (4)
5. “Take care of what you —, or you will be forced to — what you get.” Shaw. (4)
6. Mortice partner returns for the musical group, having one over the eight. (5)
7. Draws one card and shuffles for the 1910 northern leader of no surrender, born in Dublin and educated

in T.C.D. (6,6)

8. Round Bann, Tom. (anag.) Kerry height of 3,127 feet near Dingle. (5,6)
9. Later by wall up in Down village in the Ards peninsula, with fine sandy beaches. (11)
12. Note, running competition is not a sin! (5)
13. Give generously to whip six inside. (6)
15. Not so hot when century is not so young. (6)
17. It’s counterfeit, whichever way you look at it. (3)
18. Recuperating from this short illness in Glengarriff luxury? (3)
19. Small offshore piece of land is rented out. (5)
25. Enthusiasm shown by sudden blow over nothing. (5)
27. “Our Garrick’s a salad for in him we see oil, vinegar, sugar and saltiness — —.” Goldsmith. (5)
28. The brother of Joel Chandler Harris’s Uncle Remus. (4)
29. Name used in school time? (4)
31. But this American fuel is liquid! (3)

(Puzzle solution on page 27)

Irish Sayings ...

- “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.”
- “If you do not sow in the spring you will not reap in the autumn.”
- “Put silk on a goat, and it’s still a goat.”
- “Listen to the sound of the river and you will get a trout.”
- “A persons heart is in his feet.”
- “It is a long road that has no turning.”
- “Necessity knows no law.”
- “The wearer best knows where the shoe pinches.”
- “There is no luck except where there is discipline.”
- “The man with the boots does not mind where he places his foot.”

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Carty on Sports

Irish Have Their Olympic Moments 51 Represent Republic at Beijing Showcase



Kayaker Eoin Rheinisch nearly captured a surprise medal for Ireland.

By KEN CARTY SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Sailing standout Ciara Peelo received the dream job for Olympic athletes when she was selected to carry the Irish flag into Beijing's Olympic Stadium during the August 8th Opening Ceremonies. Representing Ireland's record 51 participants, Peelo proudly grinned from ear to ear as she positioned the Irish tricolor among the flags of the other 204 competing nations. During the first 12 days of the Beijing Olympics, Irish athletes had many other opportunities to smile. Unheralded Eoin Rheinisch, 28, nearly copped Ireland's first medal of the games as he finished in 4th overall in men's kayaking. Togo's Benjamin Boukpeti beat Rheinisch's time by 3.5 seconds on his last run to take the bronze ahead of the Dubliner. "Rheinisch was only a whisker away from a medal today, putting in a showing which was way beyond expectations," said Olivia Mitchell, a member of the Irish parliament and Fine Gael's Arts, Sport and Tourism spokesperson. "His performance reminds us that sport can always deliver surprises, and enthusiasm and commitment can compete with the huge investment in preparation available to some countries' athletes."

Other Olympic highlights for the Irish include: -- Trackster Paul Hession of Galway setting an Irish record in the 200 meters with a quarterfinal time of 20.32, advancing the 25-year-old to the event's semifinal. -- After gaining a first-round bye, 21-year-old Paddy Barnes (Belfast) scoring a 14-8 victory over Ecuadorian Jose Luis Meza in his opening bout, advancing him to the light flyweight quarterfinals against Poland's Lukasz Maszczyk. At this writing, Barnes appears to be Ireland's best medal hopeful. -- Andrew Bree - the only Irish swimmer at the games - establishing an Irish record in the 200-meter breaststroke not once but twice. His semifinal time of 2:10.16 broke the record he had set five days earlier. The 27-year-old from County Down, however, failed to qualify for the finals after he finished less than two hundredths of a second behind the top

four qualifiers.

Pats Carry the Flag

St. Patrick's Athletic remain the lone Irish team competing in European soccer competitions. The Pats opened their UEFA Cup competition with a 3-0 aggregate victory over Latvian outfit Olimps. Attempting to become the first Irish team to qualify for the group stages of a major tournament, the Pats opened the next round with a scintillating 2-2 draw away to IF Elfsborg of Sweden. A win or a draw of 1-1 or less in the next leg will advance the North Dublin squad to the UEFA Cup's next qualifying stage, putting them one round away from the money-spinning group stages. Eircom League champion Drogheda United battled well in the Champions League, before being knocked out by Ukrainian Champion Dynamo Kiev. After falling 2-1 in Dublin, the Drogs produced arguably the greatest ever performance by an Irish side in European competition when they battled back from a 2-0 deficit to earn a well-deserved 2-2 draw in Kiev. One more goal would have sent the Irish through on the away-goal rule and the Drogs nearly got it when Shane Robinson's effort from an acute angle was deflected onto the woodwork by keeper Taras Lutsenko before the loose ball trickled agonizingly wide. Drogheda manager Paul Doolin hailed his players' performance. "Before we came out to play Dynamo Kiev, I think a lot of people felt that we would be murdered 5-0," he said. "It was a fantastic display away from home. You hear people talking about the eircom League and saying it's not a good league but we have got quality players."

The Notebook

The Republic of Ireland is scheduled to begin its qualifying campaign for the 2010 World Cup against Georgia in Tbilisi on Sept. 20. The Irish government has asked FIFA, soccer's governing body, to either move the game to a neutral site or postpone the match due to the ongoing violence between Georgia and neighboring Russia. Stay tuned to see how this shakes out as Irish skipper Giovanni Trapattoni is loathe to upset his

team's training preparations. He may have no choice in this matter. The Football Association of Ireland (FAI) announced that it will place "Eire" on the front of their match-day jerseys. Explaining the change, FAI Chief Executive John Delaney said: "We were approached by the government about adding Eire to our senior international jerseys and our board was happy to act on the idea. Irish is the first official language of the State and our players will wear it with pride." Irish middleweight Donny Orr (13-0-0) will be looking to go 3-for-3 in Boston when he returns to The Roxy for a Sept. 6 encounter against an opponent to be determined. Orr, who has already defeated Clarence Taylor and Roberto Valenzuela in the Hub, is looking for another win or two to move into the middleweight's division Top 10 standings. The U.S. women's soccer team will play Ireland in a three-game exhibition series in Philadelphia, New Jersey, and suburban Chicago following the Beijing Olympics. The series starts in Philadelphia on September 13, moves to East Rutherford, N.J., four days later, and finishes Sept. 20 in Bridgeview, Ill. The United States is 5-0 against Ireland dating to 1999. The English Premier League and Scottish Premier League both kicked off their seasons in August.

In England, the big question is Manchester United -- are the Red Devils ready to defend their title or will a rejuvenated Chelsea side crash the party?

And what of Liverpool with new striker Robbie Keane of Ireland -- will they be able to make a serious challenge for the top spot? In Scotland, Celtic are looking to make it four titles in a row and seven in nine years. The Bhoys will also hope to advance beyond the group stages of the Champions League. Domestically, Celtic will have to fend off an expected challenge for crosstown rivals Rangers, who have already been knocked out of the Champions League and will be able to focus all their attention on the SPL.

Harrington Making a Habit Of Winning Golf Majors; This Time It's the PGA

Irish golfing star Pádraig Harrington used his putter and competitive grit in over the final two rounds of the United States Professional Golfers Association at Oakland Hills in Michigan last month to win the third major tournament of his career and his second this year after taking the British Open three weeks earlier in July. Harrington opened the tournament with three birdies but failed to maintain the momentum and finished the first round on one-over, three behind the leaders. Day Two was a difficult day for almost everyone and he lost further ground with a four-off the lead. On Day 3, he steadied himself but when rain brought an end to the day's play he hadn't closed the gap with the top of the

field. When he came out to finish his third round the next day, he again started with three birdies and although he dropped a shot on one of the three remaining holes his four-under 66 left him three shots behind Ben Curtis, who was on two-under.

Half-way through the final round, with two birdies and a bogey on his card, Harrington still had ground to make up. Three more birdies at the 10th, 12th and 13th saw him join Sergio Garcia at the top of the leader board. He then dropped a shot at the 14th but Garcia did likewise at the 16th and at that stage Curtis had joined them in a three-way tie. Wonderful tee shots at the par three 17th gave both Harrington and Garcia chances of birdie and it was Harrington

who took it and Garcia who missed from six feet. With Curtis dropping a shot at the 16th Harrington just had to hold his game together on the 18th to win the tournament, which he did by sinking a 15-foot putt for a par and the trophy.

Ireland's President, Mary McAleese, must have stayed up late to watch the end of the golf and before Harrington had been presented with the trophy she had issued the following statement: "Coming so soon after his brilliant win in the British Open, this was a fantastic achievement by Pádraig. It makes him the first European golfer to win back-to-back majors. Pádraig just goes from strength to strength. The whole country is immensely proud of him."



Ireland's Padraig Harrington loves his 2008 PGA championship trophy. Photo by Brendan Savage, the Flint Journal via AP.

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Thirty-Two Counties

Antrim: Clonard Monastery in west Belfast will be celebrating its centenary in 2011 and before that time hopes to have completed a 2-million pound restoration on the building. Following heavy snowfall last winter leaks in the roof damaged both the electrical system and the floors, while externally new guttering and new lightning protection are required. According to church prefect Father Adrian Egan, the brickwork and the sandstone are crumbling, and a brochure is being handed out during the novena asking people to contribute to the restoration fund.

Armagh: The annual Festival of Traditional and Folk Song in Armagh is this year being held in honor of the late musician and singer Tommy Makem, a native of Keady. An exhibition mounted at the Cardinal O Fiaich Memorial Library in the city includes memorabilia from his early years when he sang with Canon Pentony's choir in Keady in the 1940s and 1950s, his days with the Clippertones showband and the Keady Dramatic Society. It also features, of course, Makem's years with the Clancy brothers and his Aran sweater forms part of the exhibition.

Carlow: The red ribbon to mark the opening of a new slipway in Bagenalstown and the launch of the new Civil Defence boat was ceremoniously cut last month by John Martin, CEO of Waterways Ireland. After its launch the new vessel took on board its first passengers, Councillors Dennis Foley and Derek Mahon. After their short trip on the River Barrow Councillor Mahon, Cathaoirleach of the Muinebheag Town Council, address the gathered crowd, remarking on the enhancement of the area, and the ease and safety of access accorded by the new amenities. He paid special tribute to Waterways Ireland for the work on improving the infrastructure.

Cavan: Last month saw the annual Bailborough Agricultural Show taking place on the grounds of Killinkere Leisure Centre. At the event there was a total prize fund of more than 14,000 euro for shows of cattle, horses and ponies, and sheep. In addition there was a dog show, flower show, cookery demonstration, and garden produce, as well as competitions to find the Bonniest Baby and the most appropriately dressed lady and gentleman. The show was also selected to host the regional final of the Macra na Feirme Farm Tasks competition, involving contestants from seven counties.

Clare: The derelict construction known as the old toilets in Lahinch, which was auctioned in the Old Ground Hotel in Ennis last week, yielded 400,000 euro. The toilet block was bought by John Galvin of Galvin Construction in Ennis, who already owns an adjoining property on the promenade. His new purchase has twenty-three meters of frontage onto the sea and has obvious development potential, according to auctioneer David Costelloe. The money raised will be used by the county council to improve surfing facilities in Lahinch and to upgrade the promenade area.

Cork: What began as a disagreement at a taxi rank in Dublin last month culminated in the marriage of Colette Dineen from Cork and Stuart Sharples from Essex in England at Christ Church in Inishannon. Stuart was on holiday here when he joined the taxi queue behind Colette, who gave him a piece of her mind when she thought he'd upset another girl.

Subsequently Stuart appealed to the Gerry Ryan radio show for the mystery girl to contact him and they met up again in London, where Colette had gone on holiday with her sister. The rest, as they say, is history, and the couple have now settled in Upton.

Derry: An innovative CD has been produced by homeless street drinkers in Derry who have availed of the services of a homeless shelter, Foyle Haven, where they regularly enjoyed sing-a-long sessions. Entitled "John Street Blues," the CD features songs which tell the stories of some of the men and was made with the help of folk and blues singer Bap Kennedy, a brother of Brian Kennedy. At Foyle Haven the staff set up a mobile recording studio and then encouraged some of the service users to write lyrics to songs. All proceeds from the CD will be donated to Alnagelvin Hospital's A&E department as a thank you from the men.

Donegal: For generations, boatloads of Donegal emigrants would return to Moville from Greenock in the west of Scotland for their holidays, sailing up the Foyle on the Laird's Loch. And now Moville Events are endeavoring to renew the contact between the two towns as a means of increasing tourism in the Inishowen town. Last month a representative of the group travelled to Greenock where a meeting had been arranged with the Provost of Greenock, Michael McCormick. The message that the group wants to get across is that the Troubles are now over and they'd like to see the "Scotchies" coming back to Moville on a regular basis.

Down: The young people of Killyleagh have been kept busy recently with a conservation project that involves the cleaning up of the Dibney River. The members of the Dibney River Conservation Trust hope that the project will help the children to have a sense of ownership of their area and its amenities. The clean-up was due to be finished in time for the Fly Festival to be held at the Bridge Centre in mid-August and the project is being led by qualified fly fishing instructor Stephen Kennedy. A number of casting workshops were to take place during the festival.

Dublin: A Viking Festival was held last month to say a farewell to the Sea Stallion from Glendalough, the Viking boat which had been on display at the National Museum for the past year. Among a range of activities were a Farmers Food Market on Essex Street in Temple Bar; a Viking Village at Wood Quay, where there was to be a battle re-enactment and strolling Danish fiddlers; and Celtic/Nordic Mandala Street Art. The Sea Stallion left from Dublin Docklands for the return journey to its home town of Roskilde in Denmark.

Fermanagh: Chosen as this year's Miss Northern Ireland was Judith Wilson, the granddaughter of Gordon Wilson, the hero of the Enniskillen bombing in 1987 in which her aunt Marie died. Judith, from Ballinamallard, will now go forward to the Miss World competition in the autumn. A qualified music teacher, this is the second time the twenty-three-year-old has tried for the title, admitting to not even being placed on her first attempt last year. She received a congratulatory text message from her grandmother, Joan Wilson, when the announcement was made.

Galway: The owner of a hotel in Claregalway has come up with a way to overcome the effect on tourism of the rapidly



increasing price of fuel. Paul Gill, who owns the Claregalway Hotel, is offering prospective clients a voucher worth 50 euro to cover petrol or diesel costs in travelling to the village. In addition, the hotel is offering packages at last year's prices and the twin offers have apparently been an instant hit; recently, the response has far exceeded initial expectations. Gill is chairman of the local branch of the Irish Hotels Federation.

Kerry: It seems that dancer Michael Flatley might soon be a resident of an island in Kenmare Bay, after a planning application was lodged to build a house on Rossmore Island near Rosdohan. Flatley is hoping to be allowed to demolish an existing house on the island to replace it with a new one. The asking price for the 56-acre island is believed to have been more than a million euro and the Flatley family is expected to use it mainly as a holiday home. They already own the Georgian Castlehyde House near Fermoy in Co. Cork on which Michael Flatley has spent millions in refurbishment.

Kildare: The Kildare EU Club, a voluntary organization involving people of a number of different nationalities, met last month for a multicultural chess tournament at the Kill GAA club. These run each Friday night and recently a tournament was held, with Grzegorz Kurasz being named the winner, Ian Verkin in second place and Stanislaw Buczkowski coming third. The winning three received their medals from Richard Farrell of the Kildare Sports Partnership. The chess club has proved so popular that now the activities have expanded to include draughts, dominoes, pool and card games.

Kilkenny: The MTV Super Sweet Sixteen programme, which features lavish sixteenth birthday parties, will soon for only the second time feature an Irish-based event. Nadia, Claudia and Daniela Cardillo, of the Italian Connection restaurants family, are holding their party at Lyrath Estate Hotel. The three sisters, who range in age from fourteen to nineteen, will arrive at the party in a fleet of vintage Bentleys. Such was the demand for media invitations that MTV eventually had to take a decision to ban all members of the media. The Mafia-themed party, with

an estimated price of 100,000 euro, is not due to be screened until some time in January.

Laois: More than 5,000 euro was presented to the Dove House resource centre in Abbeyleix after thirty-two canoeists had taken to the waters of the River Durrow in a fundraising row. The members of the Woodenbridge Paddlers completed a course of twenty-five kilometers that began at Coolrain and finished in Durrow. Although some of the canoeists were experienced, the group also included a number of novices but their colleagues ensured that everyone finished the course, which included a final kilometer paddling back upstream, and against the current, to Durrow village.

Leitrim: The 130-year-old Costello Chapel, situated at the junction of Main Street and Bridge Street in Carrick-on-Shannon, is at present undergoing restoration. The chapel was built by 19th-century merchant Edward Costello following the death of his wife Mary Josephine at the age of forty-seven. She was laid to rest in the floor of the chapel, as was Edward after his death in 1891; the building is just sixteen feet long and twelve feet wide and is the smallest chapel in Ireland and the second smallest in the world. The work is being carried out by the local Heritage Group, which has leased the chapel from its present owners, Fintan and Peg Gannon.

Limerick: The annual Solenn Novena held by the Redemptorist order in Limerick this year was made available on the Internet, and Father Seamus Enright reports that in the first three days more than four thousand people logged onto the site. The website, which is following the initiative of the Belfast Novena at Clonard, was formally launched by Senator Ronan Mullen and it has proved a boon to those who cannot attend the services in person, as well as Limerick people overseas who would like to be part of the annual event. The ultimate aim of the order is to have the Redemptorist Church site online twenty-four hours a day.

Longford: One immigrant from Slovakia living in Lanesboro has found an unusual niche in the market for something he began as a hobby. Gezza Shurger makes chain mail, taking about six months to complete one hooded item, and at the moment his market is mostly to Eastern European film producers. However he is hoping that theaters, art galleries, and museums in Ireland will be interested in acquiring some of his handwork, as well as battle re-enactors. Gezza uses pliers to join the links together and the result weighs a massive nine stone and is valued at 1,000 euro.

Louth: Recently, the authorities at Dundalk Stadium quietly tried out an idea for a new event at the facility, and it proved so successful that two additional events were scheduled for August-- harness races. The drivers at the trial event, who had approached the Stadium officials last year about the possibility of holding "trotting" races there, were entirely happy with the all-weather surface during a mock event in May. One difference between harness and horseracing is that with the former the Tote does not operate.

Mayo: A hero of the Civil War and Ballina native is to have a new road named after him, some years after another section of road bearing his name had been redesignated. What is now Emmet Street in the town was at one time known as Emmet Street, Victoria Terrace, and James Street, the latter commemorating Thomas James who was shot in Co. Galway in 1922. Also killed in the same incident was another Ballina man, Padraig Morrison, after whom Morrison Terrace is named. Now the town council has voted to name the new link road connecting Kevin Barry Street with the junction and Connolly Street and Hill Street after Thomas James.

Meath: Sinead Noonan from Dunboyne, a student at the Gai-

(Continued on page 23)



IRELAND'S WEATHER

REPORTED MONDAY,
AUGUST 25, 2008

BY LIAM FERRIE

Monday brought more heavy rain but I forgot to ask anyone about the weather on Tuesday and Wednesday. By the time we returned to Ireland at lunchtime on Thursday it was dry and by the time we crossed the Shannon the sun was shining brightly. Friday was also dry but again we had to wait until late in the day for the sun to appear. Saturday brought more persistent rain and we were promised the same on Sunday but here in Galway we had long periods of sunshine.

After all the rain of recent weeks we are being promised some respite in the coming week. The rain will still be around on Monday but will have eased by Tuesday. While some showers may linger in the northwest until Thursday, bright warm conditions are forecast for most of the country through next weekend.

Latest Temperatures:

Day 19C (66F).....Night 15C (59F)

NEWS DIRECT FROM IRELAND

FROM THE IRISH EMIGRANT
Exchequer returns for July turned out to be even more disappointing than expected. A tax shortfall of 776-million euro brought the cumulative shortfall for the year to date to 2.2-billion euro. The figures show that a slump in consumer spending has resulted in VAT receipts running more than one-billion euro behind target; stamp duties are about 300-million euro behind and capital gains taxes are around 350-million euro worse than expected. Income tax receipts are running closest to what had been projected. The result is that the exchequer deficit for the first seven months of the year stands at 6.7-billion euro. Economists say that the month-old government projection of a shortfall for the full year of 3-billion euro already looks overly optimistic and the figure of 4 billion is now being talked about. It is also suggested that the corrective action announced by the government early in July will not be sufficient. A government spokesperson said that there will be no further official revision to existing projections until September.

Later in the week it was reported that the number of new house starts in July was down 84 percent on last year, while at the same time the latest IIB/ESRI consumer sentiment index was at its lowest since its inception in 1996. In July it dropped for the sixth month in a row to reach 39.6, down 2.6 points on June. If there was something approaching good news it was the reduction in the July inflation rate. It was down to 4.4 percent from 5 percent in June. It would appear that the fall in consumer spending has forced retailers to cut prices, although Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment Mary Coughlan suggests that the price cuts are attributable to pressure from the National Consumer agency and her department. Both have been highlighting the fact that supermarket chains, operating here, charge substantially lower prices in their British outlets.

Clothing and footwear showed the biggest price reduction in July with most retailers in the sector holding sales. Food prices were also down marginally.

The Institute of Public Health in Ireland last month published new statistics showing that people living in Ballymoney, Co. Antrim, can expect to live longer than those living in any other part of the island. Women in Ballymoney have a life expectancy of 82.4 compared to 78.1 for men. Roscommon had the highest life expectancy in the Republic for both males and females, 76.9 and 82.2 years respectively. In the North, Belfast had the lowest life expectancy for males at 73.5 years while in the Republic it was Leitrim that claimed this record, at 72.8 years. At 79.3 the women of Derry and the women of Limerick had the lowest life expectancy for females. The all-Ireland life expectancy was 75.6 years for males and 80.6 years for females. The latter figure was the same North and South while the Northern male could expect to live slightly longer than his Southern counterpart, at 75.9 years and 75.5 respectively.

New laws aimed at reducing the incidence of public order offences are now in effect. Among the measures introduced are a ban on the sale of alcohol before 10:30 a.m. and a ban on the sale of alcohol from off-licenses and supermarkets after 10 p.m. Gardaí have also been given more powers when dealing with drunks and can confiscate alcohol from those under the age of 18.

Gardaí in Galway have denied that the city is any worse than other cities and towns for violent assaults, following a number of incidents reported the last week of July. Two men were injured in an unprovoked attack on Dominick Street while a Polish man was attacked in Eyre Square. The Central Statistics Office reports that the Galway West division suffered 715 serious assaults in the first quarter of the year, compared with 332 in the same

Ireland Today

Ireland Today: Summer Weather on Dreary Side; Still, It All Depends on Where You Are of a Day

GALWAY -- It hasn't been a great summer weatherwise, but just how bad it is from day to day depends very much on where you happen to be. The weather forecasters have had a difficult time trying to predict where the rain would fall and in what volumes. Few, however, will have it quite as bad as the people who were in Newcastle West in Co. Limerick on the eve of August. Torrential rain fell on the area from about 7 p.m. and continued until around midnight. It was reported that four inches of rain fell in that period, or the equivalent of the average for the entire month of July. It was around 12:30 a.m. that the normally placid River Arra started to rise ominously and before long it had breached its retaining walls and flowed onto adjacent streets. It continued to rise, flooding houses and business premises and carrying vehicles and beer barrels with it. The emergency services were alerted and an elderly woman, who had evacuated her home and was treading water, was rescued by helicopter. Her dog, which had alerted her to the danger, was later found unharmed. Early on the electricity supply failed and throughout the night rescue helicopters used their spotlights to light up the affected area.

In the light of day local business owners surveyed the damage. Equipment in offices and restaurants was destroyed and in many cases the high water mark was some five feet above floor level. The main Limerick to Kerry road was impassable for a number of hours but reopened before lunchtime on Fri., Aug. 1 Residents of the area were urged to boil their drinking water while the clean-up continued. Not only is there no memory of the River Arra bursting its banks in the past, none of the older people in the town had heard of flooding from their parents or grandparents.

Then came Sat., Aug 9, when torrential rain caused serious flooding, mainly in the greater Dublin area but extending into the midlands. GAA followers throughout the country, sitting in front of their televisions, saw darkness fall

over the capital as the rain fell in torrents on the Kerry and Galway footballers playing in Croke Park. The stadium's floodlights were switched on before 5 p.m. Near the end fans were told that they could not leave the ground via Jones Road due to flooding.

In the early evening gardaí issued warnings about flooded roads in various parts of the capital. Video footage of the N3 in Blanchardstown suggested a canal, if it weren't for the abandoned cars. Tolka Park and its surrounds were under so much water that a soccer match between Shamrock Rovers and Sunderland was cancelled. Dublin Airport recorded 76.2mm (three inches) of rain during the day, well ahead of the August record of 60mm which fell in one 24-hour period in 1986 when Hurricane Charlie hit the country.

Also canceled was the Tullamore Agricultural Show, which was planned for Sunday. Some 500 exhibitors had been waiting to welcome an estimated 50,000 visitors to what is the largest one-day agricultural event in the country. At least it's the biggest when it takes place - it was also canceled last year due to torrential rain. The organizers carried out a great deal of work on the showground and were confident that the walkways could have supported the crowds but decided that the car parks were too waterlogged to take cars. Gardaí were still issuing warnings about flooded roads on Sunday morning; both carriageways of the N3 remained impassable in Blanchardstown. Racing at the Curragh was abandoned.

Localized torrential rain was a feature throughout the week of Aug. 4. It caused problems at a scout jamboree in Puncchestown and gave Shannon Airport its heaviest rainfall in a single hour since records began. Met Eireann reported 38.4mm of rain, or more than an inch and a half, falling between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. on Wednesday. This amount represents nearly half the average total for the entire month of August.

-- LIAM FERRIE

period four years ago. Chief Superintendent Tom Curley pointed out that between 16,000 and 18,000 were socializing in the city each weekend.

The Galway entry into the Volvo Ocean Race arrived into its home port last month. Members of the Galway Bay Sailing Club were waiting at

Ballyvaughan to accompany the 70-foot vessel into Galway docks where it was officially named Green Dragon in recognition of its joint sponsorship by Irish and Chinese business groups. The sails are emblazoned with the discoverireland.com name and shamrock logo. The Green Dragon is now in Cork for fit-

ting out prior to the start of the round the world race in Alicante in Spain in October. All the competing yachts will sail into Galway from Boston next May and will remain here for two weeks before going on to complete the final stages, with stopovers in Gothenburg, Stockholm, and St. Petersburg.

THIRTY-TWO COUNTIES

(Continued from page 22)

ety School of Acting in Dublin, was crowned Miss Ireland in July and will now represent Ireland at the Miss World competition in Ukraine in October. The 21-year-old won the Miss Meath title in Solar nightclub in Navan and went on from there to take the Miss Leinster title, thus qualifying for the national finals. The daughter of Peter and Stephanie Noonan, Sinead has already had experience in representing her country, since she swam competitively until she was seventeen, and represented Ireland at water polo.

Monaghan: Two councillors have called for an extra cash dispensing machine to be installed in Carrickmacross after the existing machines ran out of cash on two occasions. According to Noel Keelan, nearly all the cashpoints ran out of supplies over the festival weekend, leaving a large number of people in financial difficulty. Teresa Carolan said that as far as she was aware this was the second weekend that the situation had arisen in the town. It appears that Ulster Bank has lodged an application for permission to install a cash dispensing machine, though a difficulty might occur since the bank is a listed building.

Offaly: Both Taoiseach Brian Cowen and his brother Barry, recently elected as chairman of the county council, attended the official launch of the Ra-

han monastic site conservation plan just outside Tullamore last month. The restoration of the 800-year-old church of St. Carthage is being overseen by architect James Howley, who described it as a remarkable building by either national or international standards, since it is still fulfilling its original function as a place of worship. At the beginning of the launch of the project four Cistercian monks performed a medieval chant.

Roscommon: The Paranormal Research Association of Ireland paid a visit to King House recently to investigate any other unexplained sightings or sounds. Eight investigators used a range of equipment including magnetic field meters, electronic audio recorders, and night vision cameras and detectors in an attempt to prove or disprove, on a scientific basis, the existence in King House of any paranormal activity. Although it will be some weeks before all the evidence collected is sifted through and collated, the group reported that at least one unexplained phenomenon was registered on their equipment.

Sligo: Anyone who is interested in learning to play, or honing their expertise on, the bodhran, was heading for the Coleman Country Bodhran School at the Coleman Traditional Music Centre in Gurteen last month. Among tutors for

the more than forty hours of classes and lectures were Junior Davey, the five-time All-Ireland champion; Svend Kjeldsen, who holds an MA in Irish Traditional Performance; Colm Phelan, World Bodhran Champion of 2006; and that year's All-Ireland champion Sean O'Neill. Also on the agenda were sessions and concerts featuring Tommy Cunniffe, Karl Nesbitt, and Brian Morrissey.

Tipperary: Parma Developments has lodged an application with Clonmel Borough Council to totally transform the former Fair Oak Foods meat processing plant in the Upper Irishtown area of the town. The 85-million euro proposal includes a hotel and conference centre, retail units, a medical centre and gym, and a 160-meter-long boardwalk along the river. During the construction stage the project would generate up to 500 jobs, while 300 permanent jobs would be created on completion. The proposal has been welcomed by the town's mayor, Richie Molloy.

Tyrone: It might have been Judge Martin McBride's view, voiced in a courthouse recently, that Tyrone people are "thick," but David O'Donnell from Omagh has certainly proved him wrong. For David, a politics graduate from Queen's University Belfast, has been named champion of the TV game "Countdown," presented by Carol Vorderman and Des

O'Connor. At present undertaking an internship at the Centre for Migration Studies, David was accompanied to the final in Leeds by family and friends. When it was televised last week they went to the Hogshead pub in Omagh to watch, accompanied by David's 87-year-old grandfather from Strabane.

Waterford: When members of Tramore Town Council took exception to remarks made by former councillor Betty Twomey about the amount of litter at the town's sand dunes, she came up with a fairly persuasive answer. Betty had been speaking on WLRfm's Deise AM program presented by Billy McCarthy and when the councillors accused her of spreading falsehoods she decided to back up her argument. With a group of people sympathetic to her stance, she spent two hours clearing litter from an area between the back strand and the beach, and managed to fill a staggering fifty black sacks.

Westmeath: Organizers of the recent Waterways Ireland TriAthlon enlisted the support of Buckley Cycles to effect rapid repairs on the day. Pat Buckley helped out last year repairing anything from punctures to broken wheels, to handlebar problems. In addition to carrying out repairs on the spot, Buckley Cycles also offered a free service check to all the competitors in the TriAthlon in addition to a bike sizing-up, which ensures

that each bike is perfectly suited to the competitor's body.

Wexford: After more than 40 years of manning the switchboard at Wexford General Hospital, Ned Roche has retired, and a party was held for him recently at the Riverbank Hotel. Along with his son Nicholas and his daughter Aoife, Ned was joined by more than one hundred of his colleagues from the hospital who paid tribute to the man who became the "voice" of the hospital for so many patients and relatives down through the years. During the evening four presentations were made to Ned, from the maternity unit, the switchboard staff, the social club and the remainder of the staff.

Wicklow: For one competitor in this year's Wicklow Way relay the event turned into something of an embarrassment when he managed to lose his way. The unnamed man had set off from Kilmashogue car park in the Irish Mountain Running Association organized event, but failed to arrive at the designated checkpoint at Curtlestown Wood one and a half hours later. A member of the Dublin/Wicklow Mountain Rescue Team, alerted his colleagues and with a rescue vehicle they searched the route. Eventually the man was located more than two hours later; he had become ill and subsequently disorientated on the first leg of the run.

From Meath to Wicklow

Traveling People

A Visit to Lough Aderra in Co. Cork Means Time to Admire and Feed the Graceful Swans

By JUDY ENRIGHT
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Is there any creature that can capture the imagination more completely than a swan? It's absolutely magical to sit beside a pond or lough (lake) and watch these magnificent snowy birds coming and going, circling and diving for food.

You probably know that swans mate for life. And, you've no doubt heard stories about a swan chasing away any man or beast that dares venture near its nest and that swans are so powerful they can break a man's arm with their powerful wings.



A Whooper Swan's head is beaded with water droplets after he broke the surface of his idyllic pond in his hunt for food. *Judy Enright photo.*

If you're a fan of Irish folklore, then you've no doubt heard about the four Children of Lir, who were turned into swans by their wicked stepmother, Aoifa, and how, in one version of the story, Aibric the Wanderer took them hundreds of years later

to meet Saint Kemoc and how when King Larnen tried to catch them they turned to dust. Ireland's wild swans are protected in deference to the Children of Lir tale and it's said that when someone sees a swan on the wing in Ireland, they say a blessing for the Children of Lir.

This spring, when we traveled through Co. Cork along the main road (the N25) from Dungarvan to Cork City, we made a point of stopping beside what I call "Swan Lake" near Middleton. As you can well imagine, the waterway is not called "Swan Lake" at all but Lough Aderra and it's in Ballintotis, Castlemartyr, Co. Cork. Cars and trucks stop alongside the busy highway to admire and feed the swans, and we did the same. There were probably 50 swans on Lough Aderra, primarily mute swans and a very odd-looking swan that was either a whooper or Bewick swan and was very different from swans we are accustomed to seeing.

We had some day-old scones from the wonderful B&B where we'd stayed the night before - An Bohreen in Dungarvan. Ann Mulligan, who owns the B&B with her husband, Jim, is a magnificent cook who trained at the Ballymaloe Cookery School. The scones, even at a day old, were really much too good to throw in the water, but

we had no other food and really wanted to attract the swans. They came flying, skittering and scooting across the water when they saw the food and it was such a thrill! They are so beautiful.

After about an hour at the Lake, we went into Middleton and had the most delicious lunch at Farmgate, an interesting combination of a farmers' market in the front and a restaurant in the back. In the front, just off the sidewalk, is a shop with all kinds of local produce - cheeses, honey, breads, fruits and veggies. We walked through the shop to get to the comfortable - and packed - restaurant in the back. Lunch was excellent - and we enjoyed a nice glass of white wine with it.

Farmgate is open Monday to Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and lunch is served from noon to 3:30. Dinner is served Thursday through Saturday from 6:30 to 9:30. The restaurant and shop are closed Sundays and bank holidays and for a few days around the Christmas holidays. As with all recommendations we make in this column, you are always wise to call ahead (021 463 2771) to ensure that hours haven't changed since we visited.

And as for swans, if you are as hooked on them as we are, they can be found in many other places around the country, including Cork City



A Mute Swan at the 30-acre Loughaderra Lake on the Cork-Youghal Road in Co. Cork. *Judy Enright photo.*

and Galway, lots of sites in the North, and wherever there is an expanse of water and probably friendly passersby who feed them.

MORE BIRDS

Some 53 rare birds were recently released in Counties Down and Wicklow as part of a phased reintroduction of the Red Kite to Ireland, we read in *The Irish Times*. Last year about 30 Red Kites were reintroduced and, while the majority survived, one was found shot shortly after it was released. It is hoped that the latest birds released will go on to breed. The Red Kite has a distinctive forked tail and was once common in Ireland and Britain but was driven to extinction (except in some of the most remote parts of Wales) by shooting, trapping, and poisoning.

The *Times* wrote, "Of the new batch of birds to be introduced to Ireland, 27 Red Kites have been brought to Co. Down... the other 26 birds will be released by the Golden Eagle Trust in Co. Wicklow. The Red Kite is so called because of its reddish brown body and tail. Its tail is deeply forked making it an easily recognizable bird. Kites have a wingspan of up to 1.8 meters. Tracking of the newly released Kites will be possible through the fitting of satellite packs to two of the birds. These tiny solar powered packs are fitted to the birds' backs and allow the project team to check the exact location of the birds via the Internet. Updates on the project can be seen on the Golden Eagle Trust website at goldeneagle.ie."

To learn more about Ireland's birds, visit birdsireland.com or [\[watchireland.ie\]\(http://watchireland.ie\)](http://bird-</p>
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SEAWEED

The Irish are focusing on energy sources and are currently studying seaweed for possible use as a biofuel. Scientists claim (again, in a story from *The Irish Times*) that seaweed from Ireland's coasts - which already has many uses, including food supplements, fertilizer, liquid seaweed extracts, cosmetics, body care products, seaweed treatments, and biomedicine - could help run cars in the future.

The experts say biofuel could be produced from the 16 varieties of algae that grow in Ireland. Irish Seaweed Centre manager Dr. Stefan Kraan said: "With its rich, sustainable, seaweed resources, Ireland is poised to become an important player in the next generation of biofuel production. We will examine the economic and social aspects of... biofuel production from macroalgae." Kraan was speaking at an annual international conference of experts on the issue at NUI Galway.

The Australian seaweed expert Prof. Michael A Borowitzka said biofuel needs to be produced cheaply on a year-round basis to be commercially viable.

The NUI Galway event was organized by the International Society for Applied Phycology (the scientific study of algae) and attracted engineers, manufacturers, contractors, scientists, researchers, students, economists, industry representatives and policymakers. Ireland already has 16 commercially useful seaweed species and its location off Western Europe, surrounded by clean seas, could be a major selling point to the

world market, the *Times* wrote.

When you're next in Ireland, be on the lookout for seaweed soaps and hair products. They're very nice and fun to bring home as gifts.

FESTIVALS

If you'll be in Northern Ireland this month, be sure to take visit Ireland's North West Dancing Championships on Sept. 20 and 21 in Londonderry. This is a two-day festival of championship Irish dancing that is attended by competitors from all over the world. For more information, call 44 (0)28 7126 4455.

If you plan to be in Dublin in September, don't miss Style in The City from Sept. 11-14. During this event, Merrion Square Gardens are transformed into the fashion, beauty and style capital of the world with top Irish fashion houses coming together in one venue. There will be features from a fully-seated catwalk show to boutique shopping, pampering Style Oasis and more. For details, visit styleinthecity.ie

TRAVEL PLANS

Whenever you decide to visit Ireland, stop by your favorite travel agent or visit the Aer Lingus' website (aerlingus.com) for the latest direct flights and cheapest ground deals. Flights and deals are also offered by US Airways (usairways.com) and several other airlines, but usually involve layovers in Chicago, Newark, New York, Philadelphia and elsewhere, adding several hours to the trip but also reducing the cost.

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

Paintings of Ireland

by

Mary McSweeney



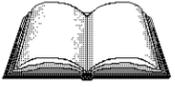
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Boston Irish Reporter Author Interview

Sebastian Barry Surely is One of the Finest Novelists of the Generation

BIR INTERVIEW
By PETER F. STEVENS

As this reviewer has noted, Sebastian Barry is unquestionably one of Ireland's finest novelists. His most recent novel, *The Secret Scripture*, is every bit as stunning in scope and language as his 2005 Booker Prize shortlisted work, *A Long Long Way*. As with that earlier novel, Barry's newest peels back generations – in this case a century – of Ireland's turbulent past, further cementing his status as one of the greatest novelists at work today.

Barry is not only a brilliant author whose other books include the highly praised novels *The Whereabouts of Aeneas McNulty* and *Annie Dunne* but he is also an accomplished playwright whose "The Steward of Christendom" won numerous awards. He was born in Dublin in 1955 and lives in Co. Wicklow. By telephone from Ireland, Barry discussed his work and craft with the BIR.

His new book, *The Secret Scripture*, tells the story of Roseanne McNulty, who was one of the most beautiful and beguiling girls in Co. Sligo, Ireland. Now, as her hundredth year draws near, she is a patient at Roscommon Regional Mental Hospital, and she decides to record the events of her life.

While examining and, in many ways, exhuming her past, she hides her manuscript beneath the floorboards in her bedroom. She has just learned that Roscommon Hospital will be closed in a few months and that her caregiver, Dr. Grene, has been charged with evaluating the patients and deciding whether they can return to society. Roseanne has been in the hospital for most of her adult life, but the years before her admission there are a saga every aspect of Ireland's war-scarred, religious, cultural, and familial landscape.

As Dr. Grene researches her case, he discovers a document written by a local priest that tells a very different story of Roseanne's life than what she recalls. As doctor and patient attempt to understand each other, they begin to uncover long-buried secrets about themselves. Unfolding in an Ireland besieged by a century of conflict, *The Secret Scripture* stands as an epic story of love, betrayal, and stark, immutable tragedy, scrutinizing of the stranglehold that the Catholic Church had on the nation and its lives for much of the 20th century.

BIR: You have modeled the character of previous

'The Secret Scripture' is a Remarkable Juxtaposition of a Troubled Woman and Her Nation's 'Troubles'

novels on people from your own family's past. Is Roseanne McNulty in that vein?

Barry: She is loosely drawn on one of our great aunts. She was placed in a mental institution for some mysterious offense – possibly having to do with her beauty.

BIR: When and how did you become aware of your great aunt's story?

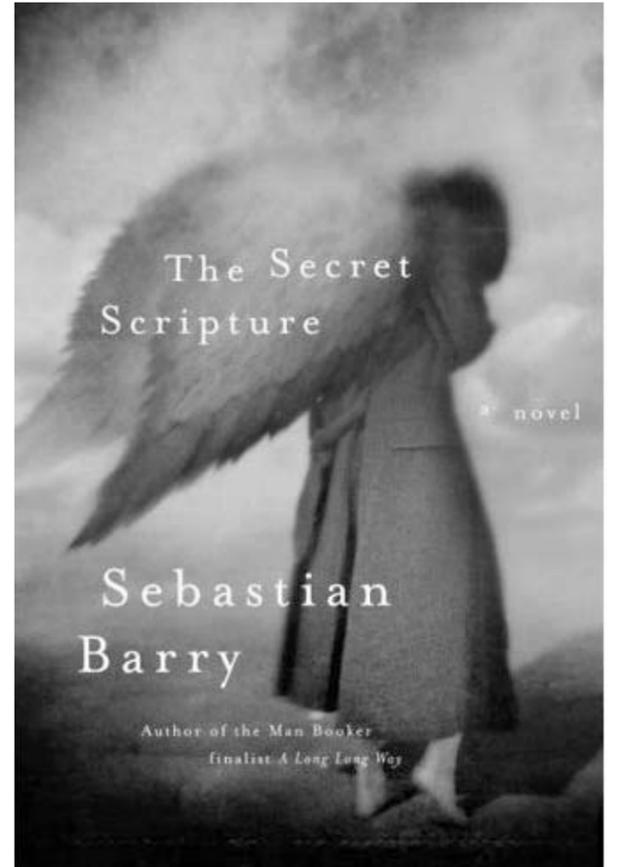
Barry: My mother told me about her. Many years ago in Sligo, my mother pointed at a tin hut and said to me, "That's where your great uncle's first wife was put. Later, I realized that she was put there for some sort of indiscretion, or promiscuity. Everyone said she was truly beautiful, and I was fascinated by who she might have been, what she may have done, what was done to "control" her.

BIR: How did she evolve in your imagination, and was her real name "Roseanne?"

Barry: No, Roseanne is the name I gave her. It took a long time for her to take shape for me in words. In some way, these characters live inside you, and they emerge when they're ready. All of us, writers and readers alike, have a history in us, people who reside somewhere in our emotional and intellectual landscape.

BIR: Some reviewers contend that you have a proverbial ax to grind against the Catholic Church.

Barry: My family's past teems with priests and nuns, some noble, some otherwise. In *A Long Long Way*, my character Father Buckley is a humane, moral force amid the carnage of the trenches of the Western Front. He ministers to all the soldiers – their actual religion notwithstanding. Father Gaunt, in *The Secret Scripture*, has crossed some inner divide that separates the priests who tended to Catholic and Presbyterian alike in the trenches, but who came back home to minister with iron rigidity about morality. I tried



to understand that gap and present him as honestly as one can and to present the damage he causes for Roseanne and others.

BIR: History – Ireland's history – permeates every word of your novels.

Barry: History has always seemed to me to be an intoxication of facts, and it is in the ever-present ruins of history that I work.

The Secret Scripture, by Sebastian Barry, Viking, hardcover, ISBN 978-0670019403, 304 pages, \$24.95.



Boston Irish Reporter Book Review

Another Foray Into Dublin's Dark Side For Detective Ed Loy

By PETER F. STEVENS
BIR STAFF

The detective/thriller bug has hit a number of Irish writers hard these days, attracting no less a literary lion than the great John Banville, whose "Benjamin Black" novels have delighted readers and raised eyebrows among the "serious" purveyors of fiction. High on that



Declan Hughes

list of gifted writers turning their estimable talents to the genre is playwright Declan Hughes, and in his third novel, *The Price of Blood*, he plunges his protagonist, Ed Loy, into the midst of another case with compelling twists and turns, colorful and dangerous characters, and a fascinating look into the world of Irish horseracing and gambling. As good as the first two Ed Loy novels – *The Wrong Kind of Blood* and *The Color of Blood* – are, the latest Loy tale is even better.

A Dubliner himself and a winner

of the prestigious Shamus Award (for crime fiction), Hughes delves far below the city surface featured in glitzy guidebooks and into the sometimes rotten core of where new EU Dublin and the insular city of yesteryear converge. Ed Loy's newest adventure begins with a simple name given to him by Father Vincent Tyrrell, the brother of prominent racehorse trainer F.

X. Tyrrell. The priest asks Loy to find a missing person. If not for waning finances and a paucity of cases, Loy might not even consider the request, but he agrees to nose around for the cleric.

While working another case, Loy comes across a phone number apparently connected to F.X. Tyrrell and uncovers a maze of wheeling and dealing – as well as gambling – in the world of horse breeding and racing. He becomes increasingly suspicious about the Tyrrells – including the priest – when two more people with connections to the family turn up dead. What Loy has stumbled onto is a ruthless, utterly twisted murderer poised to unleash a final spasm of violence on the very eve of one of Ireland's largest sporting events – the four-day Leopardstown Race-Course Christmas Festival. Nothing about the Tyrrells is what it seems on the surface, and as the festival nears, Loy frantically tries to head off the killer.

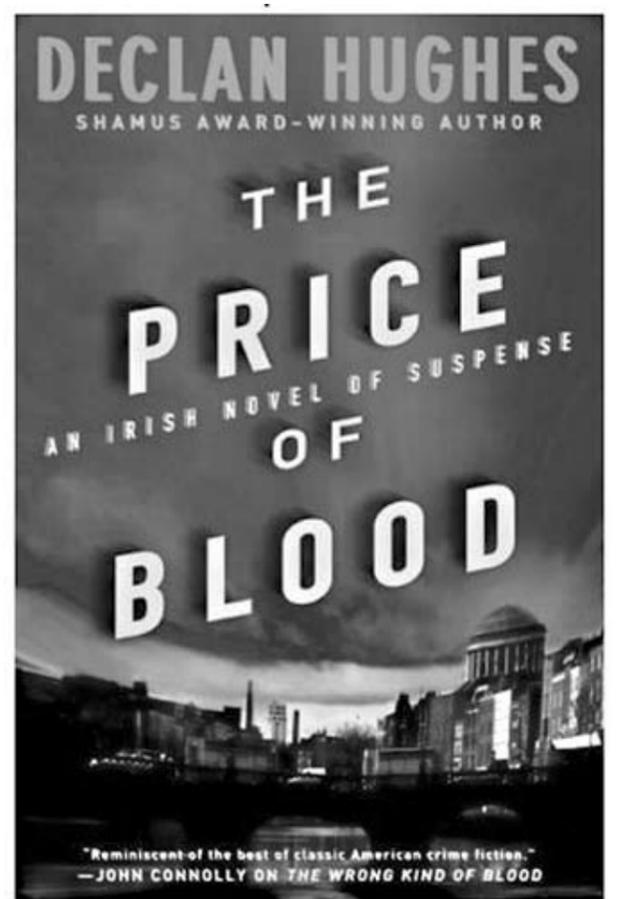
The dark and fast-paced plot and Loy's flawed but decent character infuse every page, unveiling not only the mystery of the killer's intent and identity but also immersing the reader in a chilling world of crime, passion, and every emotion under the sky. The tale's conclusion is jaw-dropping – and ultimately satisfying. In *The Price of Blood*, Declan Hughes once again paints an arresting portrait of an Ireland not found in any guidebooks. With Hughes's gift for dialogue and prescient details, the stage is set early in Chapter One in a meeting between Loy and Father Tyrrell:

"It's about a boy," he [Father Tyrrell] said. I waited a long time for him to say something else. "Patrick Hutton was... is his name."

There was another long silence, during which Tyrrell finished his drink and stared into his glass. He wore an open-necked black shirt and a black jacket, classic priest's mufti; the clothes themselves were finely cut, the shirt silk, but then it had always been clear not only that Vincent Tyrrell came from money but that he still had some; the crucifix on his lapel was inlaid with tiny diamonds...

Tyrrell produced an envelope, opened it to reveal a sheaf of bills and laid it on the table between us. "Five thousand. Just to get you going."

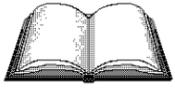
Loy indeed gets going, and the case simmers and



then boils over as the detective tries to find the boy, sifts through the tangled history of the Tyrrells, takes up with enigmatic Miranda Hart, trails a savage killer, tries to outrun foes old and new, and follows a bloody trail of clues and secrets to the savage conclusion at the races.

In short, *The Price of Blood* is well worth the price at the bookstore. Hughes has proven himself yet again a master of the Irish suspense novel.

The Price of Blood, by Declan Hughes, William Morrow, hardcover, ISBN 978-0060825515, 320 pages, \$24.95



BOSTON IRISH REPORTER BOOK BRIEFS

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

A Year in the Province

By Christopher Marsh



While large numbers of Irish people head to a new lifestyle in the sun, Christopher Marsh's hero, Jesus Sanchez Ventura, brings his family from the "burning blue Andalusian sky" to a place that is "cold, wet, tense, incomprehensible, insecure and disintegrated". And what better choice for the Ventura family than to exchange the orange groves of Spain for the Orange droves of Northern Ireland? On this premise the author has contrived a delightfully entertaining book in which Jesus, taking up an appointment as a history lecturer at the Royal University of Belfast, endeavors to integrate himself and his family into life in the province.

Among the "defining features" of their new life is the school run, in which they join a long line of cars crawling along the Malone Road even though they could quite easily have walked the children to school along what Jesus insists on writing as the toe-path. And as he drives he observes the drivers who, in their cars, do things they would never consider doing in the front windows of their houses while hundreds of people pass by. Jesus' wife, Begona, and their three daughters, Concepcion, Purificacion, and Dilatacion, predictably begin to integrate more easily and more quickly

than Jesus himself. Begona, in particular, evolves from the traditional role of wife and mother to that of budding entrepreneur, and it is her increasing absences from the home that plunge Jesus into a new hands-on approach to child-rearing. But this also allows the author to introduce the more domestic side of Belfast life in which Jesus interacts with a number of women and believes he is in danger of losing his masculinity.

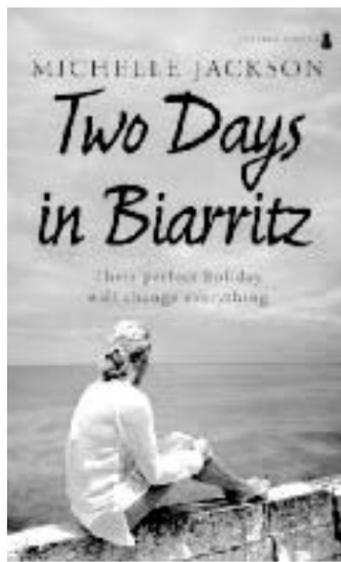
"A Year in the Province" is particularly good on the political scene. Jesus learns from the newspapers of the "misery-go-round" that is the peace process, from which politicians regularly fall and have "to be coaxed back onto their plastic ponies by visitors from London, Dublin and Washington". He encounters examples from both sides of the political divide; the neighbors Irving and Edith Naughtie and their small dog, Carson, and the staunchly Republican Seamus whose resistance has become more political than violent with the peace process. And all through the narrative one has the sense of a slightly bewildered Jesus being eclipsed by the business success of his wife, and by the successful integration into Belfast life of his daughters. Even his professed fluency and grasp of the idiom in English is betrayed by such mixed metaphors as the "shared effort to get a lid with a handle on the bubbling saucepan of Ulster culture" and "You can't teach an old dog to suck eggs", although the difficulty with the language is not sustained throughout. The adventures of the Ventura family also, of course, provide the author with an opportunity to record his own observations, views that constitute an engaging satire on the political, social and academic life of post-ceasefire Belfast.

Beautiful Books, ISBN 978-1-905636-23-5, 346 pages.

Two Days in Biarritz

By Michelle Jackson

Two broken marriages, two one-night stands, an unexpected death, an unplanned pregnancy, family relationships that are not what they have



seemed, and the rekindling of two old love affairs are thrown into the melting pot for Michelle Jackson's debut novel. The eponymous two days in Biarritz spent by Annabel and Kate are the catalyst for an explosion of anger and emotion that leaves the old friends estranged when they most need each other.

While introducing the characters against a French background, the author soon places the bulk of the action in the more familiar surroundings of Howth, and it is here that the various human dramas are played out. Much of the interest in the narrative is based on secrets withheld for decades, secrets that have a devastating effect when eventually revealed, either through lips loosened by drink, or through the closure of death. There is an inevitability in the coming together once again of Annabel and Kate, but the degree of forgiveness necessary is introduced gradually and the author has intuitively portrayed the tentative steps and the hesitations that form a prelude to the reconciliation.

Both Annabel and Kate are engaged in a dance of desire on the one hand and an awareness of practicality on the other with regard to an old love, a love that is recognised as the only one in their lives despite the fact that Annabel is married, Kate has just been divorced for the second time, and both have children to consider. Annabel's future happiness is complicated by the fact that the man she has loved for the past twenty years is Kate's father, but another twist in the plot changes this perspective. Ultimately Kate is reconciled with her childhood sweetheart, Shane, while Annabel and Damian look set to continue at last what began on board a yacht during a storm twenty years previously. The disposal of former spouses of the four is achieved with facility by the author, who has fashioned a story with sufficient balance between dark and light to satisfy many tastes.

Poolbeg, ISBN 978-1-84223-329-0, 456 pages.

Love Lies Bleeding

By Kate Thompson

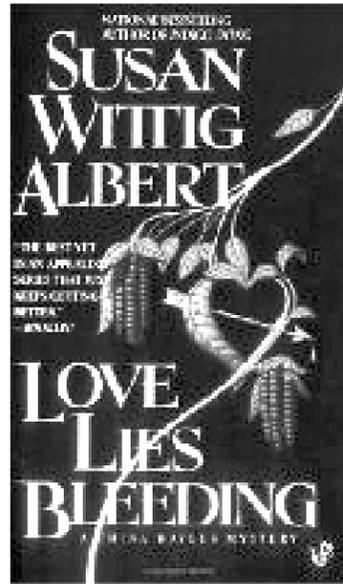
There is no shortage of interesting and diverse characters in Kate Thompson's latest novel, which is mainly set in an idyllic French village in the Languedoc region. Here are gathered a Hollywood actor and his screenwriter wife, a film director and his desperate-to-be-pregnant wife, a famous Irish artist and his web designer wife, and Bianca, who hosts the most glittering parties in the village. The resident cast members are joined by the artist's nephew, two Irishwomen who are both "artists" and "a couple", and, most

importantly, Greta O'Flaherty from Connemara.

The Irish element is very strong, despite the French setting, since most of the characters are Irish by birth, and Greta herself is drawn as the quintessential Irish colleen with red gold hair and a background of the simple life in Connemara. Poetry and prose, both Irish and English, also have a major part to play, especially in the way in which Greta manages Ben, the child in her care. However she is also an artist who has supplemented her income by becoming a chaperone to child film stars and ultimately as a body double for steamy sex scenes with Rory McDonagh. And it is this career move that dominates the narrative as she unwittingly takes a job looking after his three children, leading to all kinds of secrets kept and revelations gradually released. Amidst all the angst and soul-searching there are some lighter moments, often inspired by the artistic pair, Colleen and Margo, who on one occasion attempt to stage their play, "Sile na Gig in the Temple of Hecate" en plein air during a mistral.

Thompson keeps the action bowling merrily along, with the almost too perfect Greta causing pleasant emotions in the male population while giving rise to a range of unpleasant emotions among the females. Raging jealousy, suspicion and misunderstandings almost bring disaster, but the author has chosen a decisive ploy to ensure that the truth eventually emerges. And there is a pleasing neatness in the lines she has chosen to close what is a well-written, if somewhat overly busy novel.

New Island, ISBN 978-1-84840-002-3, 522 pages.

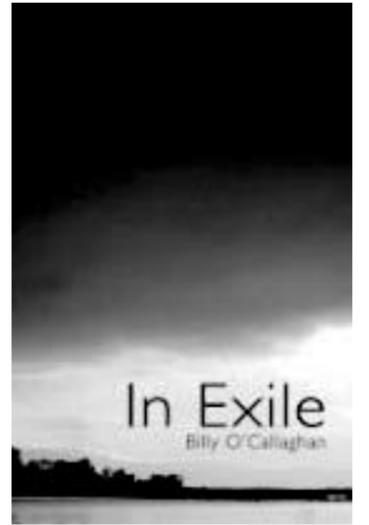


In Exile

By Billy O'Callaghan

The landscapes and seascapes of Ireland form both backdrop and foreground in this collection of stories by award-winning writer Billy O'Callaghan. Ranging from the wildness of Cape Clear to the violent streets of Belfast, they speak of an Ireland that in some respects is long gone but in others has a modern resonance. "The Wedding Day" is a perfect example of the former, the days of the "shotgun" marriage, the desperate need to formalize an unexpected pregnancy, and the fact that "nobody even thought to mention love" in the context.

Conversely, "All That Jazz" deals with contemporary Ireland and its new immigrant population of eastern Europeans, the exotic attraction of the unusual, and one woman's discovery of her own self-worth.



There is a particular poignancy in "No Room at the Inn", a story revealing the exile of poverty, of a young mother and her son at Christmastime seeking shelter, although the author injects a tentative note of hope as the story closes.

Exile from islands plays a distinctive role in O'Callaghan's stories; we meet the Cape Clear man who observes the changes to his island home from the days of his grandmother to the "concrete boxes with black slate roofs" that are the summer homes for the people from the mainland; the man living in the Dublin suburbs who always knows when he has been dreaming of his island home by the way the English words as he speaks "feel awkward and ill-fitting". There is a constant undercurrent in these stories of a way of life lost, of a sense of there being no return to the ways of childhood; an exile encompassing both time and place.

Not totally confining himself to Ireland, in "War Song" O'Callaghan engages with the experiences of a soldier in Vietnam as he is evacuated after being wounded in an ambush. He chooses the same stage for "Ghosts," in which an American soldier comes to terms with his first killing, "a boy...as young as fifteen maybe, or twelve." The killing by the soldier, only 19 himself, is set in the wider context of war as he explains his reaction: "And if my age made me fearful then it also made me stupidly brave, which is why they have young men fight wars, I think."

"In Exile", written in language at once lyrical and economical, presents a cast of characters, rich and poor, passive and violent, who are all in a sense yearning to return from exile to a place, a relationship, a particular stage in their lives.

Mercier Press, ISBN 978-1-85635-598-8, 222 pages.

Savage Heritage

By James McMurtry

James McMurtry has produced a slow-moving but nonetheless enjoyable novel centred mainly on rural County Cork. Dublin teacher Orla O'Shea has successfully emerged from a somewhat dysfunctional family to a career as a teacher, a comfortable lifestyle, and a fiancé. It is the death of her grandmother, Margaret, that opens the way to a new life for Orla. However it is not that simple to abandon all she has in Dublin, mainly because those around her, her fiancé Martin and her best friend Bernadette, think she is making a grave mistake. But the author has written convincingly of the draw of the countryside and the draw of family, a family of which Orla was unaware until after her grandmother's death.

(Continued on page 26)

Bestsellers in Ireland

Paperback Fiction

- I. Lessons in Heartbreak, Cathy Kelly - Harper
- II. No Time for Goodbye, Linwood Barclay - Orion
- III. The Overlook, Michael Connelly - Orion
- IV. The Quickie, James Patterson and Michael Ledwidge - Headline
- V. Bad Behaviour, Sheila O'Flanagan - Headline

Paperback Non-fiction

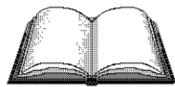
- I. Angels in My Hair, Lorna Byrne - Century
- II. Guide to (South) Dublin, Ross O'Carroll-Kelly - Penguin Ireland
- III. My Booky Wook, Russell Brand - Hodder
- IV. Eat, Pray, Love, Elizabeth Gilbert - Bloomsbury
- V. Ma, He Sold Me for a Few Cigarettes, Martha Long - Mainstream

Hardback Fiction

- I. Whose Life is it Anyway? Sinead Moriarty - Penguin Ireland
- II. This Charming Man, Marian Keyes - Michael Joseph
- III. Champagne Kisses, Amanda Bruner - Transworld Ireland
- IV. Fractured, Karin Slaughter - Century
- V. The Broken Window, Jeffery Deaver - Hodder & Stoughton

Hardback Non-fiction

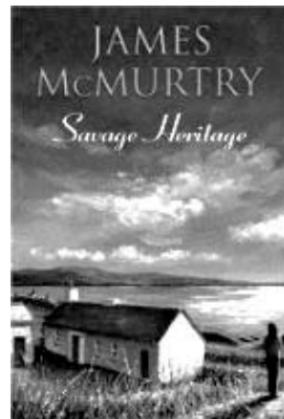
- I. The Secret, Rhonda Byrne - Simon & Schuster
- II. Irish History: Minipedia, Seamus MacAnnaid - Parragon
- III. Life with My Sister Madonna, Christopher Ciccone and Wen Leigh - Simon & Schuster
- IV. Your 15th Club, Bot Rotella - Simon & Schuster
- V. Benedictus - John O'Donohue



BOSTON IRISH REPORTER BOOK BRIEFS

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

(Continued from page 25)



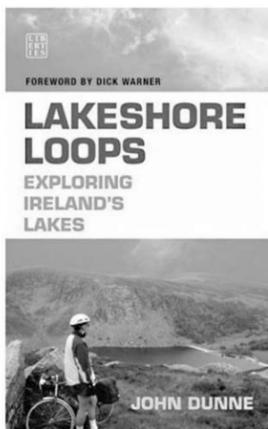
irritating fiancé Martin who is asking to be discarded almost from page one. "Savage Heritage" works as a modern story set against a historical background, and as a family saga, albeit a saga that rather meanders towards its conclusion.

Robert Hale, ISBN 978-0-7090-8617-8, 224 pages.

Lakeshore Loops By John Dunne

The landscape of Cork, both gentle and raw, is described in detail that bespeaks a personal knowledge of the area. Indeed the landscape has a greater quality of reality than do many of the characters, and though Orla is drawn convincingly the male characters tend to be set-pieces, the strong silent Patrick McLeavy, the charming but devious Jack Callaghan and the

With the current cost of fuel, John Dunne's guide to the lakes of Ireland using the bicycle as a means of transport is particularly timely. Having previously written of a cycling tour of the country's inland waterways, he now undertakes a journey that takes him to some of the larger of Ireland's more than 6,000 natural lakes. As far as is possible he keeps to the water's edge



as he recounts the history of each area, the various inhabitants of the castles or big houses, and legends associated with the many landmarks he encounters. Accurate distances and road conditions are also included in the narrative, making it both a practical and an entertaining guide.

From the Lakes of Killarney in the south to Lough Neagh and Lough

Erne in the North, each is described with a breadth of knowledge that will answer almost every question of the touring cyclist. How places came by their names, trails marked on maps that are best avoided such as the Miner's Way around Lough Allen in Co. Leitrim, and refreshment stops along the way are all included in this comprehensive guide. Each chapter is accompanied by a map of the relevant lake but the book is lacking photographs, which might have enhanced the overall picture.

Liberties Press, ISBN 978-1-905483-44-0, 336 pages.

Eire-Ireland Diarmaid Ferriter, Guest Editor

This latest edition of the interdisciplinary journal is a special issue focusing on the changes that have

taken place in Ireland since the 1960s. Guest-edited by historian Diarmaid Ferriter, author of "The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000," the edition includes contributions from Brian Girvin of the University of Glasgow, who takes as his subject the changed attitude to the Catholic Church over that period, while Oliver P. Rafferty, S.J., focuses on a similar topic as it applies to Northern Ireland.

The writer Colm Tóibín records "a decade of Godlessness and growth and a decade of national optimism" from the mid-1990s in his "Selling Tara, Buying Florida," in which he looks for the reasons be-

hind our economic growth. Richard B. Finnegan of Stonehill College examines the political system in Ireland and the development of the elite circle from the "men in mohair suits" in the early 1960s to the financial deals that led ultimately to the many tribunals.

Other contributors include Professor Tim White of Cincinnati University, Catriona Crowe of the National Archives of Ireland, William Murphy of Dublin's Mater Dei Institute, and Emilie Pine and Paul Rouse, both of University College Dublin.

Irish American Cultural Institute, ISSN 0013-2683, 240 pages. Annual subscription, \$100.

BIR Booknotes

Having placed their entire bookselling operation on line two years ago, due to popular demand **Kennys of Galway** have now reopened their bookshop, this time at their premises on the Liosbán Estate. Seven hundred square metres of space is filled with some 50,000 titles as well as a number of comfortable armchairs where browsers can relax and read. ... The second **John McGahern International Seminar** took place in Carrick-on-Shannon during July. The opening address, "John McGahern's Irelands" was delivered by **Professor Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh** of NUI Galway. The first volume of the "John McGahern Yearbook" was also launched at the 2008 Seminar by **Kevin Reynolds** of RTE. The annual hardback volume, compiled and edited by **Dr. John Kenny**, Department of English, NUI Galway, includes contributions from **Séamus Heaney**, **Declan Kiberd**, **Joseph O'Connor**, and **Belinda McKeon**.

The entire collection of books owned by the late **Charles J. Haughey** has been donated by his family to the National Museum of Country Life in Castlebar, Co. Mayo. The former Taoiseach was born in Castlebar where his father was stationed while serving in the army, and the collection will be housed in the library of the museum. ... Oxford University Press has published "Spying on Ireland: British Intelligence and Irish Neutrality During the Second World War". The book, written by **Eunan O'Halpin**, was launched at Trinity College Dublin's Centre for Contemporary Irish History where the author holds the Bank of Ireland Chair. ... "Na Comharsana Nua by Eamonn Ó Loingsigh is a new novel for learners of Irish, published by **Cló Iar-Chonachta**. Awarded first prize in the Oireachtas Literary Competition for reading material for learners in 2007, the book includes a glossary of difficult words.

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