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# BOSTON IRISH REPORTER

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**Christmas Blessings by Mary McSweeney**

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Mary Kennedy, left, was congratulated by Boston Irish Honors recipient Jim Hunt at the Boston Irish Reporter awards luncheon last month at the Seaport Hotel in Boston as her son Tom, right, Brockton's state senator and also an Honors awardee, looked on. Photo by Margaret Brett Hastings.

## Irish Social Club to reopen on Dec. 4

By MICHAEL CAPRIO  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

After an eight-month rally of fundraising, membership drives, and renovations, the Irish Social Club of West Roxbury will reopen its doors on Sun., Dec. 4, for an evening dance.

Since shutting its doors in April amidst financial issues and declining membership, the 65-year-old club has undergone extensive renovations and now boasts a repaired roof, new floor, and new wiring system. In those eight months, the club added 600 new members (making the official count now 952) and raised tens of thousands of dollars – much of that coming from a Sept. 24th all-day fundraiser at the club.

“They did not want this place to close,” said Mary Mulvey Jacobson, a member of the Save the Irish Social Club steering committee. “It was really the will of the people.”

During the renovation process, the club received support from the Local IBEW 103 to update the electrical wiring of the club's Park Street building, bringing the building into compliance with Boston Fire Department code and allowing it to reopen. “They sent a boatload of people,” Jacobson said. “It was a big help.”

Mary Maloney, the club's newly elected president, said that the organization will resume its weekly Sunday night dances and will be looking forward to offering more attractions during the week. “We're going to be moving forward next year,” she said.

## Mary L. (Cruise) Kennedy of Brockton dies at 101; prominent nurse of 50 years, mother of senator

Two month after celebrating her 101st birthday, Mary Louise (Cruise) Kennedy, RN, died peacefully on Sat., Nov. 26, of complications from pneumonia with her family at her side in her room at the Brockton Hospital. Wife of the late Robert Andrew Kennedy, Jr., she was a life-long resident of Brockton and the eldest of the nine children born to the late Peter E. and Margaret M. (Hopkins) Cruise, natives of Castlereagh, Co. Roscommon and Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo, respectively.

A graduate of Brockton High School Class of 1928, she began her career in the health care profession at the Brockton Hospital School of Nursing, graduating with the Class of 1931. Shortly thereafter she was named evening supervisor of nurses, a position that she held in various capacities for nearly 50 years. Mrs. Kennedy was renowned throughout the community for her care and concern for all patients under her watch. She also spent a few years on the nursing staff at the former Lakeville State Hospital where she met her husband.

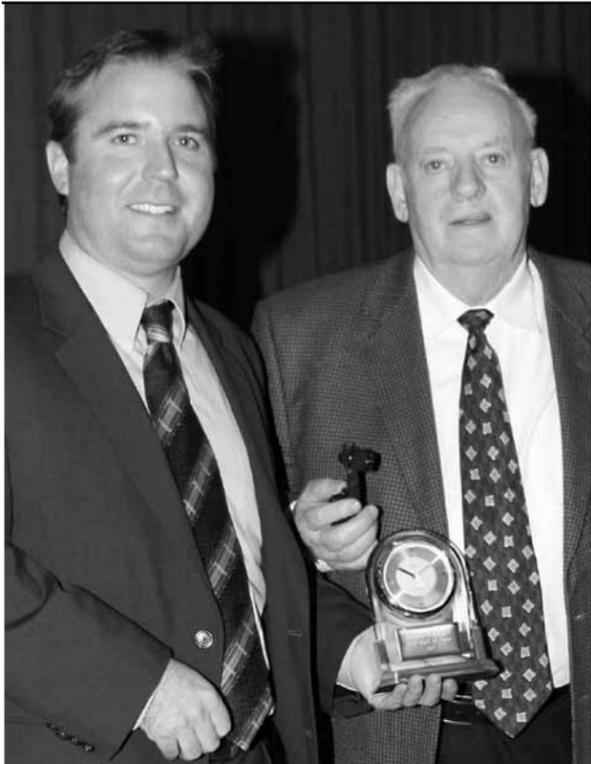
Although officially retired in 1977, Mrs. Kennedy continued her career by working as a nursing supervisor at Brockton's Lutheran Nursing Home. She was also appointed as commissioner of the Brockton Housing Authority for more than nine years in which post she was instrumental in helping to establish two first-of-their-kind institutions in the Brockton area: the Edwina Martin Recovery House for Women and the Ann Ward Congregate Assisted Living Home at the former St. Edward's Convent. When Mary finally did hang up her nursing shoes, she continued her remarkable life of service to others, attending to the medical and personal needs of family and friends as well as the residents of the Ann Ward House. Known for spending her Saturdays delivering homemade muffins, cooking breakfast and spending time with the residents, Mary stopped only when she voluntarily decided to give up driving in her early 90s. Not surprisingly, just about all the residents of the Ann Ward House were junior to her in age.

As the matriarch of a large Irish family, Mary had maintained close contact with her extended relatives, both at home and in Ireland. She was a communicant of St. Patrick's Parish and its oldest parishioner. Despite her advanced years, she was able to live virtually her entire life in the family homestead in which she was raised. Active and keen of mind, Mary read two papers each day and followed current events, especially politics.

Last month she attended the *Boston Irish Reporter's* Boston Irish Honors luncheon at the Seaport Hotel in Boston to see her son Tom, a state senator, receive his commendation for excellence in public service.

She leaves four children: Ann Kennedy Thibault and her husband Thomas of Indianapolis, Indiana; Mary Kennedy Bardsley and her husband R. Michael of Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada; Professor Robert A. Kennedy III; and Senator Thomas P. Kennedy of Brockton, as well as 12 grandchildren. She was the sister of Mrs. Eileen (Cruise) (Hogan) McVarish of W. Bridgewater and Brother Thomas J. Cruise, OMI of Lowell and was preceded in death by her siblings William, James, Peter and Joseph Cruise, Anna Connolly and Margaret McMenamy.

Her funeral Mass was scheduled for Sat., Dec. 3, at 11 a.m. in Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 433 West St., Brockton.



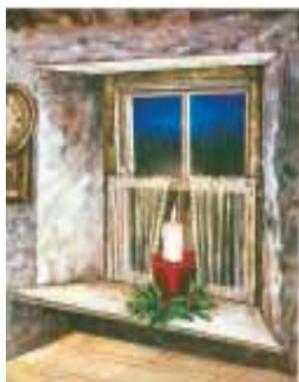
Irish fiddle champion Brendan Bulger of Boston, left, was recently inducted into the Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann Northeast Region Hall of Fame. The ceremony took place on Nov. 4-5 at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, CT. Larry Reynolds, president of the Boston chapter of Comhaltas, was on hand to present the award to Brendan, who was joined by his brother Chris and Chris's wife Margaret, both musicians. Bulger is one of just few American-born musicians to win the prestigious All-Ireland fiddle competition, which he captured in the 18-Under Category in 1991 in County Sligo. Brendan's music teacher was Seamus Connolly, Sullivan Artist in Residence at Boston College and head of the Gaelic Roots program there. Photo courtesy Mike Quinlin



Liam and Pauline Ferrie, proprietors of the Irish Emigrant online newsletter, paused on the campus of NUI Galway recently to savor the Honorary Master of Commerce degree that the university had conferred on Liam. A native of Scotland who now makes Menlo, Co. Galway his home, Liam founded the newsletter in 1987 and has, with Pauline, written, edited, and produced it every week since then. The Ferris are planning to retire early next year and the future of their journalistic endeavor is unclear as they hope to stir interest among possible buyers. BIR Publisher Ed Forry salutes the Ferris and their work on Page 4.

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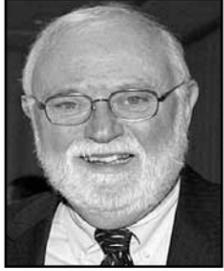
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## A fond farewell, Liam and Pauline

By Ed Forry

In 1990, when first we began to publish this newspaper, the plan was to tell "the stories of Boston's Irish." We noted then that there were scores of stories about the culture of Boston's broad and diverse Irish culture that were going untold in the general media, and since we were born and raised in that milieu, it was an area that called out for coverage.

At the same time, we had not been keeping up with information about Ireland, the land of our ancestors, so we began a search for reliable news and information from and about the Emerald Isle.



Ed Forry

It led in early 1994 to a home in Menlo in Galway city, where a former Digital Equipment Corporation employee, Liam Ferrie, and his wife, Pauline, were producing a weekly newsletter and sending it out over "the electronic superhighway." It was the early days of the Internet, and the Ferris were truly trailblazers, pioneering the way to communicate by computer around the world.

Their product – the *Irish Emigrant* – was revolutionary: A weekly letter from home, it brought news of births, deaths, politics, traffic accidents, sports scores, and business matters to Irish people around the world. That year the BIR made arrangements to publish some of those reports in our pages, and Liam Ferrie's newsletter from Ireland instantly became one of our most popular features.

Last month, the impact of the *Irish Emigrant* was recognized by the National University of Ireland Galway, as Liam was awarded an honorary Master of Commerce degree. "We are proud to honour Liam Ferrie for his contribution to the Irish diaspora," said NUI Galway President Dr Jim Browne. "He has fostered a sense of community among the global Irish diaspora and by delivering news from Ireland through his weekly online publication, the 'Irish Emigrant' newsletter." This was a crowning achievement for the Ferris, and one for which they rightfully should feel great pride.

But now, regrettably, they have decided to retire, and it's likely the *Irish Emigrant* publications may not continue without them.

"February 8 next will mark the 25th anniversary of the *Irish Emigrant* and will also mark the day on which Pauline and I step back from full-time involvement in the publication," Liam Ferrie wrote last month. "It could be said that e-mail was in its infancy in 1987 when the first edition was mailed to about 15 colleagues at Digital locations in North America and Europe. I, however, was not in the first flush of youth at the time, which means that these days I qualify for the free travel pass available to all in Ireland when they reach a certain age.

"It is therefore time to take things a little easier and not be bound by deadlines which keep me up until 2 a.m. and 3 a.m. on a weekly basis."

For her part, Pauline Ferrie developed a highly popular feature called "32 Counties," where she culled news from county publications all across the island. That feature came to an end in September. "After some seventeen years of compiling weekly stories from the 32 counties of Ireland, retirement beckons, and this will be my final edition," she wrote then. "It has been an interesting venture searching for good news stories, and stories that do not make headlines for the national papers; it has also left me with a rare familiarity with the names and locations of towns and villages all over the country.

"I hope the Around the 32 Counties feature has helped to bring readers a little closer to home over the years."

Maybe an investor will step in and purchase the business the couple has so lovingly built over the last quarter of a century, but so far no likely buyer has emerged.

Says Liam: "I would like to think that the *Irish Emigrant* will continue, and retain its claim to be the world's longest established e-mail publication. I have no idea how that might be achieved, and so I am open to suggestions."

## Nollaig Shona Dhuit (Happy Christmas to you)

By JOE LEARY  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

The celebration of Christmas in Ireland is a remarkable occasion. Not only is it the commemoration of the birth of the baby Jesus and, in fact, the beginning of the Catholic Church as we know it today, but for the Irish it is also a homecoming, a reunion of friends and family that is looked forward to with special anticipation throughout the year.



Joe Leary

All Irish men and women treasure their memories of Christmases when they were young, and wherever they are around the globe, they transport themselves home either physically or spiritually for the twelve days of Christmas.

The Irish typically hold a deep reverence for their friends, their family, and their country. Nowhere is this more in evidence than during the Christmas holidays.

It has been said that Ireland is a nation of wanderers. Returning young Irish gain much credibility for having lived in Australia, Canada, or Boston, San Francisco, or New York. Everyone, it seems, must travel. Perhaps it's because the country is a small island. But whatever it is, most Irish want to be home for Christmas. The Irish living in Britain or Europe take advantage of the short distance to try to come home. And the Aer Lingus flights from Boston, New York, and Chicago to Ireland are always full before Christmas.

Ireland's Consul General in Boston, Michael Loneragan, puts it this way: "Christmas is a very special time of year in Ireland, in particular as a time for families being reunited with loved ones living abroad. I recall traveling home from previous postings at Christmas and seeing the many joyous meetings between family members at the airport arrival gates. Even for those who can't get back for Christmas, it is a time of increased contact with family and friends, of exchanges of letters, cards, and parcels, and now through Skype and e-mail, news and photographs.

"The candles which still light in windows in Ireland on Christmas Eve also act as a reminder of our extended family abroad, the Irish diaspora throughout the world, and particularly here in the United States."

Ireland with all its troubled history, and invasion after invasion, remains a unique Catholic country. Though the church has lost some credibility recently, especially with young people, Catholic churches throughout the country will be filled on Christmas day. The traditions surrounding Christmas in Irish life are profoundly influenced by Catholic theology.

The candles Michael Loneragan talked about were originally placed in the window as a symbol of welcome to Mary and Joseph after their rejection by the innkeepers of Bethlehem. A home without a candle is seen to support the innkeepers. Some say the candles should be red, some say they should be white, but whatever the color, you will find them in the windows of most Irish homes. Today the candles welcome home family and friends and visitors alike.

Actually the preparation for Christmas begins many months before with the making of Christmas cakes to

be eaten on Christmas Day. Michael Binchy, a native of Charville just south of Mallow in North Cork, and now the owner of Owenoak Travel in Connecticut, remembers his mother making the cakes, wrapping them tightly in cheese cloth and storing them in a cool place. Michael's home had no candles, he says, because his father was deathly afraid of fires.

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day are family celebrations for the Irish. Gifts are exchanged, meals are shared (Christmas Day dinner features turkey and plum pudding. Years ago it was a goose dinner but the turkey has taken over), and most everyone goes to Mass together. All the pubs in Ireland are closed on Christmas. The only other time that happens is on Good Friday, another manifestation of Catholic Ireland.

Joe Creedon, owner of a small hotel in Inchigeelagh, West Cork, closes it for Christmas and invites his 35-member family to share dinner in his home after Mass. He claims that some family members will go for a swim in the River Lee, which runs through the small town, to work off the effect of the big meal. That would be a very cold swim.

Though originating in Germany in the 1500s the Christmas tree tradition is very strong in Ireland. The star on top of the tree, of course, signifies the star over Bethlehem followed by the three wise men announcing the birth of the Savior. Most every home, Catholic and Protestant, displays an ornamented tree. It takes between 8 and 10 years to grow a good tree, and because of its favorable climate, Ireland produces and cuts an estimated 800,000 trees each year. They are mostly grown in Wexford, Carlow, and Wicklow and sell on the island for \$35 to \$80 each. Ireland exports about 40 percent of the trees it grows to France and Britain.

The day after Christmas, St. Stephen's Day, is almost as important as Christmas Day. It, too, is a legal holiday, a day when the pubs reopen and the celebration continues, with great gusto. In Ireland, St. Stephen's Day is referred to as "La Fheile Stiofan" – The Day of the Wren. Even today, in parts of rural Ireland, children and young adults dressed in costume sing and dance their way to neighborhood homes demanding contributions to charity. The origin of the tradition is unclear. The Wren is accused of all manner of evil from cooperating with the British to siding with the Vikings. And "The Wren Boys" caused havoc whenever it suited them. These traditions have been dying out and barely exist in 21st-century Ireland.

In England, Dec. 26 is called Boxing Day, in recognition of the boxes given by the wealthy to their servants. The boxes would contain extra food, a few pennies, and perhaps old clothes for their poor families. Ireland would hardly celebrate such pretension; the Irish holiday is far more democratic and patriotic.

When the pubs open, they become St. Stephen's Day meeting places for friends and families, and especially for the returning Irish, home for the holidays. Even during the worst of times (like these past three years), joyous parties go on night after night during the "Twelve Days of Christmas." Lasting from Christmas Eve to the feast of the Epiphany on Jan. 6, the "Twelve Days" are commemorated in the famous song that many claim is a secret Catholic song dating from the days when Catholicism was illegal.

Here's hoping that as many Irish as possible make it home for Christmas.

## Humans should define 'reasonable'

By JAMES W. DOLAN  
SPECIAL TO THE REPORTER

The recent *Boston Globe* series on OUI cases illustrates the significant disparities that arise as judges, jurors, and everybody else grapple with the notion of what is "reasonable."

In a criminal trial, the standard of proof is beyond a reasonable doubt. What may be a reasonable doubt for some, may not be for others. The most celebrated illustrations of that fact are the O.J. Simpson case and, more recently, the Casey Anthony verdict.

Despite widespread belief that both juries got it wrong, carefully screened jurors, presumably conscientious and sincere, listened to the evidence, were instructed by a judge on the meaning of reasonable doubt, and unanimously found both not guilty.

Most feel that these were anomalies and that nine out of ten juries, exposed to the same evidence with the same instructions, would have convicted both. This same disagreement over what is reasonable is not limited to courthouses; it can be found wherever human judgment is at play.

Efforts of appellate courts to define and simplify the concept to make it more objective and easier to apply remain elusive and sometimes are even counterproductive. In Massachusetts, jurors are instructed that beyond a reasonable doubt means "proof to a moral certainty."

The use of a complex metaphysical concept to explain the standard of proof is more confusing than helpful. One could reasonably believe that moral certainty is more like absolute certainty.

There is probably no more complex term than "reasonable." There is no avoiding the fact that as much as we may hope for an objective standard, there are significant subjective elements in what we consider reasonable.

For example, judges and jurors who drink are likely to be more tolerant than teetotalers of what it means

to be impaired by the use of alcohol. Persons injured by another as a result of the negligent operation of a motor vehicle are likely to be more sympathetic to the injured party in a civil suit.

Conflicting trial evidence is not written on a blank slate. It is written on the minds and hearts of human beings whose differing backgrounds and experiences cause it to be absorbed differently.

We may look for a "smoking gun," but most trials are based on circumstantial evidence that requires interpretation. Even more objective disciplines like math and, particularly, science are open to interpretation.

We all consider ourselves reasonable. Despite widely divergent views on politics, religion, sports, or anything else, both sides are convinced of the reasonableness of their position.

Contained in that analysis are a host of subjective factors including intelligence, education, experience, insight, temperament, personality, and bias. Conservatives consider themselves more reasonable than liberals and vice versa.

For a prospective judge to testify that his personal views will not influence his legal decisions is nonsense, but such testimony is routinely heard at congressional hearings for Supreme Court nominees. It is an act that both sides know is impossible.

The human element, with all its strengths and flaws, remains at the center of all our activity. It is probably more evident in the court system than elsewhere partly because of attempts to minimize its influence.

Although well intentioned, those efforts can only go so far. In the final analysis important decisions must be made by human beings. Science can help, but hopefully it will never reduce "reasonable" to an equation. I'd prefer to take my chances before a judge or jury sincerely trying to do what is right than before a computer.

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

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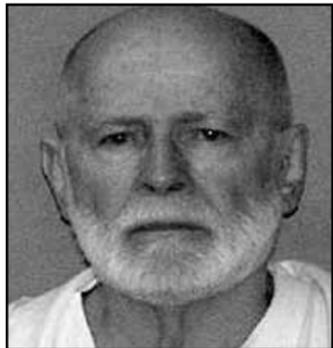
POINT OF VIEW / PETER F. STEVENS

# TAKING A LOOK AT THE WHITEY SWEEPSTAKES

## Damon and Affleck 'muscle' their way onto the crowded cinematic turf to bring Jimmy Bulger & Co. to the Big Screen

BY PETER F. STEVENS  
BIR STAFF

It's getting crowded in Whitey Bulger biopic field. The news that local-boys-made-good-Hollywood-wise Matt Damon and Ben Affleck plan to bring Jimmy Bulger's saga to the big screen should surprise no one around here. After all, they grew up in and around the city and first proved their grasp of the turf together in the film "Good Will Hunting." A few years ago, Damon shone in Martin Scorsese's "The Departed,"



James 'Whitey' Bulger

with Jack Nicholson's ruthless Southie gang honcho based loosely on the Whitey persona. Affleck's stellar direction of "Gone, Baby, Gone" and his recent turn in "The Town" further point to the near-inevitability that Damon and Affleck would jump into the Whitey "sweepstakes."

The news has to be disheartening for others who have already invested time and toil in their telling of the story. Two words – *Warner Brothers* – reflect the instant clout and backing that Damon and Affleck bring to the table along with their proven track record.

That cinematic muscle is bad news for the other pending Bulger projects. Producer Graham King, who nabbed an Oscar for "The Departed," has been stitching together a film with former Bulger employee/hitman John Martorano. Local actor Peter Facinelli plans to produce a film drawn from *Street Soldier: My Life as an Enforcer for Whitey Bulger and the Boston Irish Mob*, by Edward MacKenzie and BU professor Phyllis Karas.

Another acclaimed producer, Brian Oliver, has been working to bring *Black Mass: The True Story of an Unholy Alliance Between the FBI and the Irish Mob*,

to life on the big screen. My view is that this splendid book, by former *Boston Globe* reporters Dick Lehr and Gerard O'Neill, should provide the linchpin of any serious attempt to tell the brutal and compelling story of Bulger on-screen with any semblance of objectivity and accuracy. Of course, both of those words tend to ebb or vanish once a studio takes artistic and creative liberty with even the best of books.

Playing fast and loose with the facts for "dramatic effect" is – has always been – Hollywood's credo. No matter that the real story itself is almost incredible; producers, directors, screenwriters, or, God help us, actors and actresses believe that they can make the real story even "better."

Given the gnarled tale of Whitey Bulger, the possibility exists that no matter which project gets to the big screen first, the so-called facts of each frame will mostly lie low, fatuous, and false. The evolving Damon-Affleck venture reportedly has Damon playing Whitey, Affleck directing the film while also tackling the role of FBI agent John Connolly, and brother Casey Affleck playing Bill Bulger. Although I enjoy the work of all three, one can't help but wonder about the Hollywood distortions not only about the central characters, but also about families and victims.

A while back, Sebastian Junger's riveting bestseller *The Perfect Storm* was a box-office success with Mark Wahlberg as one of the co-stars. Not only were the book and movie both excoriated by many for taking huge liberties with the true, tragic story of the ill-fated Gloucester fishing boat and its crew, but the families of the victims also cried foul over the depictions of their loved ones. The thought makes me imagine the "real" conversations that Hollywood will cook up between Whitey and Bill Bulger, the conveniently muddled timelines and events that will fill the script, the innuendos and outright fabrications – "artistic license" – that will merge fact and urban fable.

In a *GQ* interview, Damon was asked if he'll "play Whitey as a young gangster or a geezer fugitive." The actor replied that he's not yet certain, but that "if it's a straight biopic, we'll do it over a period of time." He added, "But it's always a question of what part of the story do you tell, and biopics are always a little



Ben Affleck and Matt Damon with their Oscars for "Good Will Hunting" in 1997.

cumbersome. So do we find another way in? We're still figuring it out."

Just a suggestion, but Matt, Ben, Casey, and company could go a long way toward "figuring it out" by consulting with Dick Lehr and Gerard O'Neill, who are working on a new book that they want to be the biography on Whitey Bulger. Of course, the actors would have to figure where Brian Oliver, who had the foresight to turn first to *Black Mass*, fits into the mix. One hopes they will. As local guys, Damon and Affleck likely recall Lehr's and O'Neill's brilliant and courageous reporting on the unholy alliance between Bulger and the FBI. A number of other authors have profited off the Bulger saga by piggybacking on *Black Mass* – often without attribution.

Can Damon and Affleck get it right? Perhaps – but don't hold your breath hoping that "artistic license" won't blur fact and fiction, no matter how well intentioned the boys of "Good Will Hunting" are.

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## BIR Profile

# For Katherine Craven, public service goes with being Judge John J. Craven's daughter

BY GREG O'BRIEN  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

William Shakespeare once wrote, "It is a wise father that knows his own child." Retired Boston Juvenile Court Judge John J. Craven, a member of the Boston School Committee and Governor's Council in the late 1960s and early '70s, knew his daughter Katherine the way a literary genius knows the denouement of a great work. Through the collective wisdom of an extended family marinated in Boston politics and public service, Judge Craven passed down to his daughter, a standout in state government, the essence of the Irish: wit, a sturdy work ethic, and perseverance.

At 38, Harvard-educated Katherine P. Craven, sporting an impressive resume of achievements, is first deputy treasurer of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and executive director and chief executive officer of the Massachusetts School Building Authority, which she assembled from scratch as an independent state agency designed to institute fiscal responsibility and apply critical reforms to a school building process that had been rife with abuse and stood more than \$11 billion in debt. In seven years under her tenure, the authority has reimbursed cities, towns, and school regions more than \$8 billion in a streamlined process that cuts against the grain of an old boy political network in Massachusetts where the biggest hand always got the largest wad of cash.

This month, Craven the problem solver will leave the state agency to become executive director of the University of Massachusetts Building Authority where she will oversee a five-year plan to spend \$3.1 billion in building and renovating science labs, dorms, and athletic facilities in what has become one of the finest state university systems in the nation.

"My father was the center of my universe," Craven said in an interview late last month. "He taught me all the things a boy should know." You'd think Katherine Craven is fully contented, but she isn't. Less than 12 hours earlier, on the eve of Thanksgiving, her father passed away, succumbing to a long, lonely battle with Lewy Body Dementia, an Alzheimer's variant—a rapid onset disease that robs a person of memory, thinking, language, and, finally, life itself.

The loss of her father, she said, is paralyzing. Symptoms of the disease, a precursor to its final stages, were apparent after her father's retirement in 2005, she said, but he had the will to fight on with the loving care of family members. She often took her father, who had been admitted recently to a nursing home, on trips to familiar places to jog his memory and his spirit—a father/daughter connection that will live on for an eternity. Her dad is free now.

In many ways, Craven is a mirror image of her father, a Gov. Edward King appointee to the Boston Municipal Court bench, and a composite of her mother, Patricia: humble, resolute, and a person of great vision.

Raised in West Roxbury, which is something of an Irish waiting room to Heaven, Craven belonged to a faith-centered family with a younger brother John Robert, now an attorney with the state Inspector General's office, and a



*"I strive to keep my priorities straight, as my dad taught me: family first. I hope in the end that I can make a difference. I hope I can help a lot of people, figure things out, and make things work."*

— Katherine Craven

younger sister Patty, who has Down Syndrome. Craven's son, Joe, a precious 8 year old, also is a Down child.

For all that and more, faith and perseverance are family currency. "Someone once described my father as relentless," she said. "I think that's true. Relentless in the pursuit that his children got the best education possible, and used their God-given gifts to the fullest. My dad was a life coach."

At Harvard, John J. Craven, Roxbury Latin-educated and with roots in Roscommon, was called the "greasy grind," a moniker for his "persistent studying; he was very much a perfectionist in that way," she said. His father, John J. Craven, Sr., a second generation Irish American, was a state representative from the Roxbury district from 1930-38, and his mother, Katherine "Kitty" (Kane), who with John Sr. raised 11 children, was the first woman ever elected citywide to the Boston City Council. A vociferous opponent of urban renewal, she once "tossed an ashtray at a fellow councillor who had insulted her, and called another 'a bald-headed SOB,' threatening to poke him in the jaw," according to a *Boston Globe* story at the time.

John Jr.'s wife, Patricia, whose family came from Cork, added needed ballast, humor, and balance to a family driven to public service. She was raised in Mattapan, and her father, the first in the family to attend college, grew up in the "Leaky Roof" section of Roxbury, "a place where all the three-deckers leaked," said

Katherine.

"My grandparents' mission and focus was the political world," Katherine said, "a response to the inability of the Irish back then to break into the line of business in Boston."

That response was a calling passed down to her father, who served on the Governor's Council from 1968-70, and on the Boston School Committee from 1970-74. He also ran, unsuccessfully, for numerous other elective offices: lieutenant governor, Suffolk County sheriff, the state Senate and the City Council. A man of routine and discipline down to a Spartan science, he mentored as much as he monitored. "On the Juvenile Court, my dad always sought ways of helping people. But he was a disciplinarian if you weren't doing the best job possible. He inspired me to go into public service, to never give up. He had a way about him."

Early on, her dad taught Katherine how to keep Red Sox box scores—a skill of precision she has carried into professional life. "I was terrible in sports," she conceded. "I didn't have the eye-hand coordination going, but I knew how to keep score."

She has been doing that all her life. Craven attended elementary school at Mount Alvernia Academy in Newton and high school at Boston Latin en route to Harvard where she was a history major. In Cambridge, she managed the men's hockey team, a position advocated by her father when he realized his daughter was better as a manager than a player. While at Harvard, Craven met her husband, Jim Kryzanski, a neurosurgeon at Tufts Medical Center. The couple has four children: Delia, 11; Joe; James Henry, 5; and John Francis Xavier, 3, a boy with a name longer than his span. The couple lost a child, Mary Erin. "She died as a baby from West Nile virus," said Craven, noting she, too, almost died of the disease.

A quick study, Craven began her work career in the employ of Thomas M. Finneran as a budget analyst when he headed up the House Ways and Means Committee on Beacon Hill. She was named the panel's deputy budget director when she was 23, then joined the Finneran team when he became speaker of the House.

Asked how one goes from being a history major to budget analyst in one swift leap, she replied, "History is the predictor of the future. You fall back on

that skill. That's the trick of it. You don't have to be an accountant to be a budget analyst—at the state government level, at the intersection of budgets and policy."

She also was good at juggling. "She'd come in carrying two briefcases and a baby under her arms," Finneran recalled last year in a *Globe* feature story on Craven.

On Beacon Hill, Craven assisted in the drafting of ten state budgets and hundreds of supplemental accounts and capital appropriations bill where billions of dollars were paid out in thousands of budget line items. In the speaker's office, she counseled on major legislative initiatives, including the financing of the \$7 billion state Medicaid program and the Uncompensated Care Pool, the 2003 Economic Stimulus Act, the 2003 municipal relief package, and the marshaling of billions of dollars in capital bond bills.

Over time, Craven caught the attention of former State Treasurer Timothy P. Cahill, who appointed her in 2004 as the first executive director of the state's School Building Authority, a quasi-independent government agency created to reform the process of capital improvement projects in the state's public schools. "We had to revamp the entire state school building program," she said with some pride in her voice. "With a 90 percent state reimbursement, some school districts were getting six to eight lavish schools. There was a lot of waste and huge debt. No real budgets or planning were at play. Schools were built that never should have been built. There was no consistency. You leave things open for fraud when things happen like that. So we instituted checks and controls. We changed the culture."

In 2007, Cahill appointed her deputy treasurer for cash management, then earlier this year, incoming Treasurer Steve Grossman appointed her first deputy treasurer, the person who keeps the box score of the commonwealth's coffers. She has served as Grossman's statutory proxy in all matters, including the state's \$45 billion cash management program, the \$1.7 billion general obligation debt program, the \$50 billion pension reserves investment trust fund, the unclaimed property division, the state retirement board, the Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission, and the \$4.5 billion State Lottery Commission. She also has lectured on topics such as executive leadership and the intricacies of the state budget at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, Northeastern University, and the Donahue Institute at the University of Massachusetts.

Craven has hit the lottery in her professional life, and she now looks forward to her new, challenging responsibilities, overseeing the vigorous building program of the University of Massachusetts's five state campuses—Amherst, Lowell, Dartmouth, Worcester, and Boston. "UMass," she said, "has an incredible faculty and is one of the great university systems in the country, a national leader."

Schooled on fortitude and execution, Katherine Craven has achieved much in a young life. She looks in the rearview mirror with the training of a historian and to the future with the eyes of the community visionary who serves on the Partners Health Care Board of Incorporators and the Massachusetts Association for Mental Health and who is an advisor to the Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress (MDSC).

"I strive," she said, "to keep my priorities straight, as my dad taught me: family first. I hope in the end that I can make a difference. I hope I can help a lot of people, figure things out, and make things work."

At the moment, though, Craven is focused on the life of her dad—on the recollections, life lessons, and the role model filled by a man who knew, and taught, his daughter well.

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



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# Boston Irish Reporter's Here & There

By **BILL O'DONNELL**

**Is Pope John's Case Buried**—What in God's name is happening at the Vatican and the long-delayed canonization of **Pope John XXIII**? The case for Pope John, who died in 1963 and was beatified in September 2000, remains in some ideological backroom queue while **Pope John Paul II** has been fast-tracked for sainthood by the current denizens of the Vatican Curia.

For those of us who grew into adulthood in the early 1960s, the era was highlighted by the short, dynamic reigns of **John Fitzgerald Kennedy** and **Angelo Roncalli**, the patrician Gael and the peasant son of sharecroppers who would have an impact far in excess of their brief tenures. Some eleven years after Pope John was anointed as "Blessed John," his path to sainthood appears to be a casualty of the increasingly conservative Vatican hierarchy, led by **Pope Benedict XVI**, a close ally of the late John Paul II.



**Bill O'Donnell**

Pope John Paul may deserve to be canonized, despite some well-based naysaying, but not before Pope John, who convened the

Second Vatican Council, throwing open the Vatican windows to a fresh appraisal of its role in the world and offering a friendly face of Catholicism to the world. There are forces today, represented by a narrow, entrenched bureaucracy in Rome and an equally conservative council of American Catholic bishops, who operate like an arm of fundamental, evangelical Christianity, mostly eschewing "born again" theology but otherwise social and political clones of their Protestant, largely Republican Party brethren.

Respected Washington Post columnist **E.J. Dionne, Jr.**, in a column earlier this year, said, "...John Paul's most widely admired acts were built on John's legacy. It's hard to imagine **St. Augustine** without **St. Paul**, **Washington** without **Jefferson**, John Paul without John. A church that needs to open windows again would do well to honor the pope who freed it to be refreshed by modernity's bracing breezes."

Where are those voices inside the Catholic Church, from the American church pews to Saint Peter's throne, who will speak up for this sainted man, Pope John XXIII?

**Former Anglo Chief Lawyers Up**—**David Drumm**, the former CEO of the now state-owned Anglo Irish Bank who has been hiding out in Boston seeking a favorable bankruptcy court ruling, has gone to the blanket and hired two relatively low-rent law firms in Braintree and Burlington. The reports out of the legal community suggest that Drumm is paying an hourly legal fee of \$250 after an "initial retainer" of \$150,000 and an agreed-on \$10,000 payment each month. One law firm will handle the paper volume and filings, while the second firm, which labels itself a courtroom firm, will apparently handle the federal court trial proceedings.

The back story on Mr. Drumm is that he personally received and authorized tens of million of euros in loans while the bank he led was sliding into the abyss, which ended in the Irish state takeover. In his most notorious caper, Drumm allowed Anglo Bank chairman **Sean Fitzpatrick** to borrow over \$100 million and to park that loan off the books in a different bank so as to conceal the loan while Anglo Irish Bank was being audited. Drumm now claims in his bankruptcy petition that regulators knew and approved of the Fitzpatrick "warehousing arrangement." (Duh!) The bank involved in the Drumm court case, which also includes a \$10 million debt owed by former banker Drumm to Anglo, has been the subject of a state takeover and has been the recipient of billions in ratepayer bailout funding from the Republic of Ireland.

Given the large ownership stake the Irish state now has in the Anglo Irish Bank, it is at root, quite simply: **Drumm & Wife vs. the taxpayers of Ireland.**

**Taoiseach Enda Kenny Not Going Quietly**—Ireland's prime minister is still getting his feet wet in the Eurozone financial big time, but so far he seems to have exhibited more spine than his opponents had credited him with. The Fine Gael party leader and coalition chief has not displayed any of the timidity that the feisty German Chancellor, **Angela Merkel**, expects as her due from smaller borrower states like Ireland. In a recent visit to Berlin Kenny clashed on several key points with Merkel and her Finance Minister, **Wolfgang Schaeuble**.

Kenny told the German leaders that he believed that the European Central Bank should be the lender of last resort, the "ultimate firepower," in Kenny's words. The taoiseach earlier disagreed with Merkel, who had advocated treaty changes that would have penalized poorer EU countries that did not strictly abide by growth and stability rules.

It is probable that Kenny had safely tucked away in his coat pocket a new report from the credit rating agency Standard & Poor's that found that among all the Eurozone countries struggling with debt levels, Ireland and Estonia "have made the biggest budgetary adjustments" and demonstrated greater flexibility, and restored their competitiveness. Nuf said!

**Not A Good Career Move by Sinn Fein's McGuinness**—Despite repeated assertions by the North's Deputy First Minister **Martin McGuinness** that he was "glad" that he ran for the Irish presidency, the reviews are in and the news for the former IRA

commander isn't good. Truth to tell, McGuinness got clobbered during his campaign by all stripes of fellow politicians and the man in the street and ended up with a scant 14 percent with only one out of seven voters saying Yes.

While McGuinness could, and artfully did, evade tough questions about distant paramilitary operations when questioned by the media in the North, there was no similar "immunity" from the irreverent press types in the Republic who had little invested in the McGuinness legend.

He had a near impossible task once the boys in the Members Bar began outlining for the media the shark-jumping difficulties of an ex-IRA leader talking financial stability and inward investment with skeptical corporate types who sought stability, a peaceful status quo, and a solid return on investment.

Another strand of thought about the McGuinness electoral strategy is that he took a bullet for his Sinn Fein party. It was, some insiders strongly suggest, all a tactical part of a long term plan to "broaden the battlefield" as a way to achieve electoral success in both the Republic and Northern Ireland. **Jim Cusack** in the Irish Independent last month, citing well informed sources, wrote that the IRA still exists and "its central tactical goal was to have Sinn Fein at the core of the 1916 centenary ceremonies in Dublin," just a few years away. It gambled this time with the McGuinness presidential bid and failed. What might come next?

**A Quiet Profile In Courage**—His political pedigree is solid; his father, **Michael Connolly**, was a well-liked former Massachusetts Secretary of State. **John Connolly**, a Harvard graduate and attorney, was a school teacher before beginning his law career and in a short time has become a solid performer in Boston City Council elections since his initial 2007 victory.

John, moreover, did something in this recent council that I had never seen in watching elections for decades. He jeopardized his personal clout and vote by partnering and sharing the electoral spotlight with another at-large councillor-candidate, African-American **Ayanna Pressley**, who many predicted would fall short of reelection due to the re-emergence of former councillor Michael Flaherty on the ballot. Pressley surprised the pundits in topping the ticket, while Connolly was reelected, finishing third.

Some observers called Connolly's performance "disappointing." I don't think so. It was clear evidence that politics as usual is disappearing and John Connolly and his public action in reaching out to help Pressley in the council election was impressive and honorable.

**Peter Robinson Might Count His Blessings**—**Peter Robinson**, successor to **Ian Paisley** as Democratic Unionist Party leader and First Minister of the North's Stormont government, is a lucky man. Despite some questionable real estate transactions, errant political moves, a surprise election loss, and the very public political and marital difficulties of his wife, **Iris**, Robinson is surprisingly still at the top of the unionist political heap. He would be a sure thing on one of the ubiquitous Survivor TV shows.

Recently Robinson began a concerted campaign to broaden his electoral clout, reaching out to appeal to Catholic nationalist voters. Some critics have characterized Robinson's efforts as a late inning try to present himself as a "modern, inclusive, and liberal unionist," a far cry for nationalists who know the unionist leaders' political history and background. It's a tough sell.

One disbeliever certainly is the *Irish News*, the principal newspaper serving the mainstream nationalist community in the North. The News has been trying to get an interview with Robinson for the past two years (!) with no success. It is bewildering that the leader of the Northern Ireland government administration continues to avoid talking to the moderate nationalist paper, representing just the type of voter that Robinson claims to be interested in. The *Irish News*, clearly at wit's end at Robinson's stonewalling, called him on it late last month, citing his interview in the *London Times* but not in his hometown paper. The *Irish News* finds it difficult to believe Robinson is serious about reaching out to nationalists. I'm with the News.

**A Bill Of Rights For The North**—The idea for a Bill of Rights in the North has been mooted about for years but more often than not it's merely a casual discussion with nothing to jump start the proposal. That may be changing. A public opinion poll carried out in the summer by the Human Rights Consortium reflects "overwhelming cross-community and political support" for the idea.

More than 83 percent of the unionists and 86 percent of the nationalists polled believe that a Bill of Rights is important and should be introduced in the North. The human rights issue was first raised by the civil rights movement in the late 1960s, close to the eruption of the Troubles. Poll takers in the recent survey suggest that in talking to those polled it is no longer seen as an orange/green issue; most voters favor the Bill of Rights for its potential to enshrine basic living standards.

It had been conventional wisdom that there was reluctance within the unionist Protestant community to accept a Bill of Rights, but when provisions of the legislation were translated in terms of health, education, and housing, support shot up in all parties across the board.

**Gatherings With Diverse Agendas**—There were hundreds of former blanketmen who came together for an emotional reunion at the Emerald Roadhouse in Finaghy in West Belfast last month. They came to greet old friends and survivors of the H-Blocks at

Long Kesh Prison and they were joined by women who had served in Armagh Prison during that same 1976-1981 period. They were Irish republicans all and at final count numbered 1,200 people. Father **Raymond Murray** was there as were the families of Blanketmen **Brendan Hughes** and **Kieran Nugent**, along with a note of thanks to organizer **Seamus Kearney** from the family of the hunger striker **Patsy O'Hara**.

A ferry ride away, it was the members of the Orange Order who descended on Downing Street to deliver a message to the British prime minister. They were in London for their annual Remembrance Day march and they took a detour to make a point. They were there to tell all who would listen that changes in the Act of Settlement would call into question the future role of the monarch as the supreme governor of the Church of England.

In a nutshell, they were at Downing Street to oppose the recent changes that now allow Catholics to marry British royals. "We believe," unionist leaders said, "this is part of a long-term plan to disestablish the Church of England by damaging the link between the crown and the church."

**SDLP Leader: No Exit From Power-Sharing**—**Alasdair McDonnell**, the newly elected leader of the Social Democratic Labour Party, in his first post election party conference in Belfast said emphatically that the SDLP would not be pulling out of the power-sharing executive at Stormont to become part of an opposition bloc. McDonnell emphasized that he was keenly interested in "collective and inclusive government where everybody shares in the responsibilities and the benefits."

The SDLP Leader also warmly greeted the creation of the **Tip O'Neill and John Hume** peace chair at the University of Ulster on the Magee Campus. McDonnell welcomed the Hume/O'Neill chair, calling it a "worthy tribute to two political giants who played a pivotal role in the peace process."

## RANDOM CLIPPINGS

You see the name on signs at Fenway Park: One of the world's leaders in global health care products, Covidien, has newly invested some \$33 million in R & D in Galway and Athlone. ... Paddy power, Ireland's biggest bookmaker is now the Europe's most valuable betting firm. ... **Jim Carroll** continues on most days to be the most thought-provoking columnist in the *Boston Globe* lineup. ... Retired Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) retirees want to erect a monument at Glasnevin. The only catch is that the memorial would also honor the Black & Tans. ... I'm OK with **Theo** leaving and even **Francona** (best Sox manager ever), but **Heidi Watney** heading home to California. That's a downer. ... **Anne Sullivan Macy**, the brilliant, kindly teacher of the indomitable Helen Keller, died 75 years ago this fall. ... A reminder that Glasnevin Museum in Dublin is now open and one of the memorable stops on any tourist tour. ... The last I heard, old maritime friend the Jeanie Johnston, now at berth in Dublin, was looking for \$135,000 to finish some badly needed repairs to get back out to sea. ... Limerick City has a new attraction: The Frank McCourt Museum, which is located on the site of the Leamy school attended by the McCourt children.

The Irish people in the recent election turned thumbs down on two referendum questions, one of which would have granted stronger investigative rights to the Irish Parliament. The people win this time. ... Changes in the 300-year-old Succession Laws still bar Catholics from the throne. No big deal, really. ... Massachusetts native **Peter Fuller**, our top general in Afghanistan, said aloud what most top brass there believe—President Karzai is isolated from reality. He was canned. They got rid of the wrong guy. ... I loved the article about a tiny medieval Irish town in Kilkenny. The 13<sup>th</sup>-century village was unmistakably Irish. Home to only 500 people, it had 14 pubs. ... It's not Nantucket Sound, that's for sure. Two new wind farms were just approved by the planning board in south Connemara. ... At deadline there was still an impasse between the occupy Galway protestors and the city of Galway, which wants the Eyre Square space for a Christmas Market.

Another Brit paper has to eat its words as the Sunday World apologizes to Sinn Fein's **Gerry Kelly** over 2 false articles from 15 years ago!! ... The vandalism in Derry city against the town's community center simply because it hosted an event for the Police Service of Northern Ireland was the work of the malign Real IRA. Shameful. ... Here we go again. The new street signs for Dingle in Irish and English are too long for existing road signs and new ones, costing thousands, are being built. ... It only took them seven weeks in Clonkeen, Co. Kerry, to notice that the national school there had no pupils. It finally pulled the plug. I'm withholding the principal's name in a mercy move. ... **Sister Susie** wore a Celtic cross and was a full-time financial officer at Iona Collage in New York. On a part time basis she thought she was a gambler. Bottom line: she lost \$850,000 to Atlantic City casinos. ... **Foster & Allen**, the popular singing duo who have over the years been frequent visitors to our shores, owe the Irish Revenue Office some \$8 million. Royalties & records sales revenue slipped between the cracks. ... I will not be viewing the new so called Thatcher Biopic, "The Iron Lady," starring my favorite actress, **Meryl Streep**, as Baroness Thatcher. It reportedly shows Thatcher sliding into dementia. Sad, but sorry, I'll skip it on general principle.

Happy Christmas to one and all. May the news be better in 2012.

# IRISH INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRANT CENTER

An agency accredited by US Department of Justice



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**Program Updates**  
**Immigration Legal Services** – The Irish International Immigrant Center provides free, professional, and confidential legal assistance on immigration and citizenship. For assistance with immigration and citizenship questions please attend one of our free weekly legal clinics and meet with our dedicated and experienced immigration attorneys and citizenship experts. Upcoming clinics through to end 2011:

**Nov 30, 6:30 p.m.:** St. Mark's Parish (Basement) 1725 Dorchester Ave, Dorchester.

**Dec 6, 4 p.m.:** IIIC, 100 Franklin St., LL-1 Boston.

**Dec 12, 6:30 p.m.:** The Green Briar Pub, 304 Washington St., Brighton.

**Free Citizenship Assistance Event** – Sat., December 3, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The Citizenship Works Collaborative is hosting its second event to offer free naturalization information and application assistance. The event is at SEIU Local 615, 26 West Street, Boston, (Downtown Crossing & Park Street T Stations). The event is supported

by the Fish Family Foundation, in partnership with MIRA Coalition, and six other organizations serving the immigrant community in Boston: the Irish International Immigrant Center; Centro Latino; College Bound Dorchester; Jewish Vocational Service; and Massachusetts Association of Portuguese Speakers.

Each of these partner organizations offers strong, effective programs offering one or more of the services that an eligible Legal Permanent Resident needs in order to naturalize. In addition, the Collaborative will promote citizenship attainment with a comprehensive, community-wide education and outreach campaign.

Contact John Rattigan at 617-542-7654 for more information.

**Citizenship Classes** – Need help preparing for your citizenship exam and interview? Join us at the IIIC for Thursday afternoon or Thursday evening citizenship classes beginning on Jan. 19. Classes will run once a week for six-week sessions. Please

call Kielan O'Boyle to register at 617-542-7654, Ext. 42.

**Wellness and Education Services** – The IIIC offers support to Irish immigrants to be help you be successful and to thrive in your adopted home. Danielle Owen, a licensed substance abuse counselor, can assist you if you are experiencing issues such as substance abuse, domestic violence, anxiety, depression, lack of access to health care, or homelessness.

Please contact her at 617-542-7654 or at [dowen@iiicenter.org](mailto:dowen@iiicenter.org). All calls will be treated confidentially.

Please join us for our 3rd Annual Education Services Christmas Party on Dec. 13 in Dorchester this year. We would love to see you! Catch up with former classmates, network for new jobs, and find some Christmas Cheer! Call Kielan at Ext.42 to get your invitation!

**Employment & Education Open Day, Boston** – Are you looking for work as a home health aide? Interested in going to college? Then this Open Day is for you! Next spring we will be host-

ing an open day for HHA employers and schools from all over the state who are looking for new home health aide staff or new students interested in the health field, e.g., CNA, LPN, Nursing. They want to meet you!

We will also have seminars during the event, sharing information about financial aid options you may be eligible for. If you are interested in having a vendor table at this event, please contact Ann Marie Cugno at 617-542-7654, Ext.32.

We are planning lots more classes, workshops, and events for Spring 2012 and will be confirming new dates soon. Choose from the following options:

HHA & CPR Classes, Suicide Prevention Workshops, Computer Skills Courses, Reiki workshops, Stress Management Skills, Healthy Eating on a Budget.

For more information on all our Wellness and Education programs, please contact Kielan O'Boyle at [koboyle@iiicenter.org](mailto:koboyle@iiicenter.org) or at 617-542-7654.

Together for All Ni Neart go Cur le Cheile.

## Matters Of Substance

### A little faith for the holidays

BY DANIELLE OWEN  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

"My Dad has not had a drink in six months. It's like having a new dad in the house. He hugs us all the time instead of being mad at us for stupid things. He drives me to football practice most weekends and he keeps asking me if I'm okay. My big sister Eileen says Christmas is going to be the best ever this year but I am still not sure. Mum says dad is allergic to alco-

hol and once he stays away from it, everything will be better. I want to see if he will help us put the tree together this year but am a little scared he might get mad and leave the house like he did before. Do you think he will be okay?"

This is from a conversation I had with Paul, the ten-year-old child of a client of mine back in Dublin. We were chatting after a group session his family had attended. The conversation that day struck

a chord with me and even now I am reminded of this little boy as we head into the holiday season. Paul's ambivalence, his fear tinged with hope for a peaceful Christmas, reflects the fears of many of my current clients. He had every reason to be fearful, despite all the great changes he had seen at home.

I was honest with Paul. I said that while there were no guarantees, it was a great sign when someone was able to stay away from alcohol for increasingly long periods. I suggested he speak to his dad about his fear. He did, and his dad responded very honestly. He said that he also had the same fear, but that he was doing all he could to make sure he didn't drink, one day at a time. Paul then asked his dad if he would help him and Eileen do up the Christmas tree. He beamed with delight when his dad said he had already planned that very thing. Paul's dad later



Danielle Owen

told me that when things got tough or he had a craving, he reached for this memory: Paul's smile. Even though the past doesn't always encourage us, a little faith at the holidays goes a long way. Call Danielle 617-542-7654, Ext. 14, if you share similar anxieties about yourself or a loved one coming up to the holidays.

**Nollag Shona!** – *The staff, board members and volunteers of the Irish International Immigrant Center wish you all a Happy Christmas, and a peaceful and prosperous New Year.*

## IMMIGRATION Q & A

### Conditional Permanent Residence: Crucial steps

**Q.** I received a two-year green card, based on my marriage to a US citizen. I see that the card is due to expire in a few months. What do I do now?

**A.** Your two-year permanent residence (as opposed to green cards good for ten years in other circumstances) is "conditional," because you were married to your US citizen spouse for less than two years at the time when your legal permanent residence was granted. Now you and your spouse *must* jointly file Form I-751 with US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) during the three-month window before your current card expires, in order to "remove the condition" and obtain a green card with a ten-year validity period. Neglecting to file this application on time can have serious adverse consequences, including the loss of permanent resident status.

USCIS wants to see that you are still married and living with your spouse, and that you therefore still have a basis for permanent residence (and also that you do not have any disqualifying issues such as certain criminal convictions). The kinds of evidence that you use to demonstrate the marriage relationship are essentially the same as at your original green card interview, except that this time the evidence should cover the period from when you received your green card until the present, and you mail the evidence to USCIS along with the Form I-751. For example:

1. Birth certificates of any children born of the relationship, showing the applicant and spouse as the parents.
2. Copies of federal and state tax returns with the "married filing jointly" filing status.
3. Evidence of joint checking, savings, or other accounts or assets (stocks, bonds, mutual funds, retirement accounts, pension plans, etc.), or joint obligations on any loans.
4. Photo ID cards (such as driver's licenses, school IDs, or amended passports) showing the wife's married name.
5. An apartment lease or a letter from the landlord indicating that both spouses live at the apartment, or copies of rent receipts showing both parties' names.
6. House deeds or mortgage documents showing joint tenancy and obligation.
7. Credit cards showing both spouses' names on the accounts.
8. Documents from an employer showing a change in records to reflect the spouse's new marital status or showing designation of the spouse as the person to be notified in event of accident, sickness, or other emergency.

9. Evidence of life insurance policies where one spouse is named as the beneficiary of the other.

10. Evidence of one spouse's medical or health insurance plan that has coverage for the other spouse.

11. Evidence of correspondence between the parties during their relationship, including letters, birthday and holiday cards, telephone calls, e-mails, and other correspondences addressed to the parties.

12. A religious marriage certificate if the couple was married in a religious ceremony, as well as evidence relating to the wedding such as invitations, arrangements for the reception, etc.

13. Copies of gas, electric, telephone, cable, and other utility bills showing both parties' names (or at least the same mailing address).

14. Evidence of joint ownership of an automobile (title, insurance, registration, financing). If one spouse owns the car, show at least that the other is covered as a driver on the insurance policy.

15. Evidence of vacations and other trips taken together, including airline tickets and hotel bills.

16. Evidence of major purchases made together, such as computers, stereo, television, refrigerator, washer, dryer etc., including any financing documents.

17. Photographs that show both spouses together, and with family and friends. These can be taken at the wedding, at other functions or events, and throughout their relationship.

There is one important additional requirement with regard to marriage evidence at this stage: Applicants also must submit at least two sworn affidavits from people who know the spouses as a married couple and who can briefly describe their relationship with them. These can be relatives, close friends, employers and others, preferably US citizens. No one has all the evidence listed above, but every couple has at least some of it. The point is to submit everything that fits your particular situation.

IIIC can assist you with filing the I-751 form and affidavits and can help you to evaluate whether your marriage evidence documentation is adequate. Also, if there are any criminal offenses since you were granted conditional permanent residence, it is essential that you consult with an immigration lawyer before filing. Visit one of IIIC's regular clinics for a free, confidential consultation about this or any other immigration law issue.

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



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# NEWS DIRECT FROM IRELAND

## Playing games with the Budget; a promise on jobs

**BY LIAM FERRIE**  
**THE IRISH EMIGRANT**  
GALWAY— There is so much speculation about the content of the forthcoming budget that there is a suspicion that the Government is trying to create as bleak as possible a picture beforehand so that when the bad news is delivered it will be greeted with a sense of relief.

The speculation isn't of the type where commentators are saying perhaps it will include this, or the Minister must deal with that. Instead we have journalists telling us what it will include and, when Ministers are subsequently asked to confirm what has been reported, they respond with the stock answer that we are in a serious situation and everything must be considered.

The proposed increase in VAT from 21 percent to 23 percent continues to be widely debated. Of most concern is the revelation that Minister for Finance Michael Noonan has admitted that he has assumed unchanged spend-

ing patterns in calculating that the rate change will bring in an additional 670 million euro. Experience shows that when VAT goes up, consumers spend less and transfer some of their spending across the border.

The repeated Government mantra of 'no cuts in core social welfare payments' did not stop suggestions that unemployment assistance could again be cut. On Nov. 22, Minister for Health James Reilly briefed Fine Gael and Labour backbenchers on the areas he was considering as he tries to reduce health service spending. His ideas were going to become public sooner rather than later and have created fear among large sections of the community. Causing most concern is the suggestion that medical card holders will be asked to pay 50 euro per year for their card. The criteria for obtaining a medical card could also change to leave some people with a doctor-only medical card.

Dr. Reilly also spoke of

closing more than 40 nursing homes; of imposing a charge on elderly people who rely on home supports from the HSE; and an increase in the 50p per item prescription charge although the Minister had committed, on taking office, to remove this charge.

Fine Gael backbenchers are concerned at the direction the Budget is taking and blame the Labour party for its insistence that the Croke Park Agreement is honored. There is a clause in the agreement that gives the Government an out should public finances deteriorate, and many Fine Gael politicians want to avail of this. They believe that there is further scope for cutting the pay and conditions of public servants rather than targeting the poorer sections of the community.

**Government 'action plan' promises 100,000 jobs by 2015** —Following a special meeting of the Cabinet on Nov. 23, Taoiseach Enda Kenny pledged that 100,000 new jobs will be created

by 2015, and that income tax will not be increased in the forthcoming Budget. Among measures agreed at the meeting was a multi-annual action plan for jobs with quarterly targets set, and a group to oversee implementation.

Included are three measures to help combat the problems that businesses face in accessing credit: the establishment of a Micro Finance Loan Fund to generate up to 100 million euro in additional micro-enterprise lending; the establishment of a Temporary Partial Credit Guarantee Scheme; and a second call worth approximately 60 million euro under Innovation Fund Ireland also to take place in early 2012.

**House prices continue to fall** —According to the latest Residential Property Price Index, published by the Central Statistics Office, house prices in Dublin at the end of October were 49 percent below the peak reached in early 2007 and apartment prices in the capital had taken a bigger hit as they

were 60 percent off their peak.

Nationally the rate of decline in the price of residential property accelerated in October. Overall, prices fell by 2.2 percent during October compared with 1.5 percent in September and 1.2 percent in October 2010.

Dublin house prices decreased by 3.2 percent in October and were 17.1 percent lower compared to a year earlier. Dublin apartment prices fell by 2.3 percent in the month and were 21.2 percent lower when compared with the same month of 2010.

**Quinn ordered to pay 417 million euro to bank** —Businessman Seán Quinn, who recently filed for bankruptcy in the North, has been ordered by the Commercial Court to repay some 417 million euro to the Irish bank Resolution Corporation, formerly Anglo Irish Bank. This sum represents the largest summary judgement ever made against an individual in Irish courts.

**Cardinal concerned at suppression of religion** — Speaking at a graduation ceremony in St Patrick's College, Maynooth, Archbishop of Armagh Cardinal Seán Brady spoke of his concern at the approach to religion in the Ireland of today. He can accept that it is a personal choice that many people no longer accept the relevance of religion but questioned why those who do are expected to keep it to themselves. The Cardinal is unhappy with "a form of secularism which says religion is fine so long as it keeps to its place as a private belief and does not intrude into the public arena or a person's approach to their civic duties". This, he said, "is often justified in the name of tolerance and freedom", adding, "In fact, it could hardly be more intolerant and illiberal. A Republic that cannot accommodate the religious conviction and sentiment of large numbers of its citizens is no Republic at all. It is a contradiction in terms."

## Galway priest gets apology from RTE after paternity charge proved false

**BY LIAM FERRIE**  
**THE IRISH EMIGRANT**  
GALWAY— In the wake of an earlier out-of-court settlement, RTE agreed in the High Court on Thurs., Nov. 17, to issue a formal apology to Father Kevin Reynolds, the parish priest in Ahascragh, Co. Galway whom it had accused of raping a girl and fathering her child while he was serving as a priest in Kenya in 1982.

Before the offending broadcast, Reynolds had denied the allegation personally and through his solicitor. He also had offered to undergo a paternity test to prove that he wasn't the father of the child.

After the program was broadcast on Prime Time, Reynolds had to stand down from his parish work and could no longer serve as a priest. When a paternity test confirmed that he wasn't the father, RTE issued a retraction but the matter went to court anyway and a jury was sworn in. Then, he sides reached agreement outside the court room that involved a reading of an apology in open court, on RTE television, and on RTE radio's Morning Ireland program on which the accusation was also made. It was also stipulated that the apology would be published in the national newspapers.

Reynolds also received undisclosed damages and had his legal expenses paid. It has been estimated that the eventual cost to RTE will be in excess of a million euro.

None of those involved in the making of the program would comment afterwards, leaving RTE's head of corporate communications, Kevin Dawson, to deal with the media. He accepted that mistakes had been made and that lessons had to be learned but said that no one would lose their job.

The next day the Irish Missionary Union issued a statement relating to the case. It said that RTE needs to inform the Irish public who support it through license fees about:

- Why it decided to broadcast the false allegation when the reporter had been told that the alleged abuser would undergo a paternity test to prove his innocence.

- Why it chose to confront the priest in public view on church premises after Mass on a First Communion day.

- The legal advice it was given before it broadcast the false allegation.

- What means it used to try to verify the allegation made by the person who made the complaint in Africa.

- What disciplinary action has or will be taken against those responsible.

On Saturday, the Association of Catholic Priests also released a statement in which it claimed "there is a serious anti-Catholic and anti-priest bias among sections of the media, including some in the national broadcaster, and that this had led to a one-sided and unfair presentation of issues to do with Church and clergy in recent years".

It then complained of "the way the statement of correction and apology was presented by RTE on television and radio." The claim that it was read "quickly and with poor quality delivery" seeming



Fr. Kevin Reynolds at Ahascragh Church, Co. Galway. *The Irish Independent photo*

"almost to imply a lack of sincerity about the content" certainly appeared to be justified.

The statement also spoke of the silence in recent years of priests who "have been reluctant to engage in the public debate on issues related to the Church because they did not want to add to the suffering of those who were genuinely abused, but also because they believed they would not get a fair hearing".

Program presenters were accused of giving "free rein" to the critics

of the Church whereas "Church people were aggressively questioned and harassed about everything they said."

On Sunday, Reynolds's solicitor, Robert Dore, was interviewed on RTE Radio 1's This Week program. He accused RTE of behaving appallingly and said that he was determined to find the source of the allegation against his client. Dore argued that the concept of "journalistic confidentiality" did not apply where the source provided malicious and untrue allegations.

## New Papal Nuncio named

—The Pope has appointed US priest Monsignor Charles J. Brown as the new papal nuncio for Ireland. Msgr Brown, from New York, has worked for the past 17 years at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in the Vatican which has dealt directly with the

clerical sex abuse crisis.

The appointment is unusual in that the Monsignor has no experience of working in the Vatican's Diplomatic Corps. However, his background in dealing with clerical sex abuse is seen as making him an ideal choice.



### IRELAND'S WEATHER REPORTED MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2011

The weather changed rapidly throughout the week. Monday and Tuesday were fine although we had to scrape ice off the windscreen on Tuesday morning. Wednesday was wet and windy. Thursday started out windy but dry but by the afternoon we had gale force winds and driving rain. On Friday it began bright and sunny though it was also windy. On Saturday it was again wet and as the day progressed the rain became heavier and the winds became gales. At bedtime we were being hit by quite a storm but again woke to a bright sunny morning on Sunday.

I don't think we will escape rain on any day in the coming week but for the most part it will be showery. Monday night and early Tuesday will bring more persistent and heavy rain. It will be windy throughout the week and temperatures will drop to single figures from Thursday on.

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## New voices, new sounds added to the mix for Christmas Celtic Sojourn

By SEAN SMITH  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Northern Irish traditional singer Len Graham, Boston-area fiddle band Halali, and cross-genre Canadian singer Ruth Moody of The Wailin' Jennys join the cast for the ninth annual "Christmas Celtic Sojourn," the popular holiday-themed showcase of music, dance, songs, and stories in the Celtic tradition that kicks off a four-city tour Dec. 9 before its customary run at Boston's Cutler Majestic Theatre December 16-18.

This year's "Sojourn" will spotlight two instruments new to the show: the hammer dulcimer, played by Boston's Simon Chrisman; and the Uilleann pipes, in the hands of Kieran O'Hare. In addition, music director Seamus Egan of the band Solas will once again bring his assortment of instruments—including banjo, mandolin, guitar and whistles—to the festivities, while another "Sojourn" perennial, bassist Chico Huff, returns as well. Making his debut is Ben Wittman, a percussionist who has recorded with such performers as Rosanne Cash, Eileen Ivers, Paul Simon, and Laurie Anderson.

Kevin Doyle, whose dancing has already made him a "Sojourn" mainstay, this year also takes on the mantle of dance director. And the youthful members of the Walpole-based Harney Academy of Irish Dance, another fixture of the show, will return for their crowd-

pleasing turns.

Assuming his usual role as the show's host and guiding spirit will be Brian O'Donovan, of WGBH-FM's "A Celtic Sojourn," who sees the 2011 edition as a veritable feast for vocals.

"I'm looking forward to hearing a lot of lovely harmony singing," says O'Donovan. "When you have two absolutely wonderful singers like Len Graham and Ruth Moody around, you know you're going to have a treat for the ears. And, of course, with Halali—Laura Cortese, Lissa Schneckenburger, Hanneke Cassel, and Flynn Cohen—you have a versatile group who excel at singing as well as playing."

Graham is one of Ireland's most respected traditional singers, O'Donovan says, distinguished as much for his scholarship and knowledge of the music—especially that of Northern Ireland—as for his vocal ability. "Len is very conscious of, and conscientious about, the tradition. He spent time with a lot of the older 'roots' singers from Northern Ireland, and he is very well-versed in the region's Protestant traditions. It's great to have him with us."

Although Moody is known for her work in more contemporary musical styles, whether with The Wailin' Jennys or previously with Scrúj MacDuhk (later known as The Duhks), she has had a longstanding interest in traditional music, including the sean-nos Irish singing



The young dancers from the Harney Academy of Irish Dance will once again enliven "A Christmas Celtic Sojourn."

style. A frequent performer on "A Prairie Home Companion," Moody, who last year released her second solo album, "The Garden," was a winner of the Juno songwriting award and a finalist in the USA Songwriting Competition.

"We often like to blend the traditional and contemporary styles, and see how they relate," says O'Donovan. "Ruth has been working on a Gordon Lightfoot composition, 'Song for a Winter's Night,' that she'll perform in the show. It's just beautiful, and really fits well into the 'Christmas Celtic Sojourn' frame of mind."

O'Donovan is especially pleased to have Halali on board, given that all four

members have fashioned such successful individual careers and thus rarely have time or opportunity to play together: Cortese has developed both a talent as a songwriter and a fondness for multiple collaborations across musical genres; Cassel is acknowledged as one of the masters of the "American-Scottish" fiddle style, and frequently tours with her own trio; Schneckenburger has become a font of New England traditional song and dance music; and Cohen, the group's guitarist and a member of the "alt-trad" band Annalivia, is preparing to release his third solo CD.

"Collectively and individually, these

(Continued on page 13)

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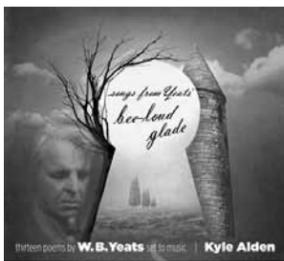
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# CD ROUNDUP

By SEAN SMITH

**Kyle Alden, "Songs from Yeats' Bee-Loud Glade"**—Setting classic Irish poetry to original or adapted music would seem to be an invitation to obviousness. Do you go for the Edwardian parlor piano-and-tenor approach? A Sean O'Riada-Chieftainseque ensemble arrangement? Dramatic ballad-group recreations? Wispy New-Agey/"Celtic Woman" spectacle? That's why the 1983 record "The Green Crow Caws," Paul Brady and John Kavanaugh's adaptations of Sean O'Casey poems, was so refreshing: Brady deftly drew on rock, folk/traditional, honky-tonk and other styles, supported by Kavanaugh's theatrical range of expressiveness, giving each poem-song its own unique identity.

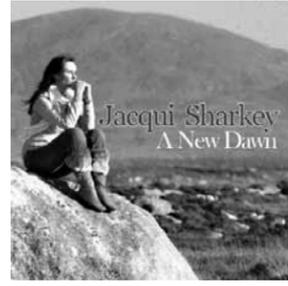


Comes now Bay area singer and guitarist Kyle Alden, who proceeds to turn the whole concept on its head. Alden plays with the Irish folk band The Gas Men but is grounded in American roots music a la bluegrass and old-timey, and it is the latter he mainly brings to bear on 13 works by William Butler Yeats. The idea may sound blasphemous enough to summon a corps of torch-and-pitchfork-wielding Yeats scholars, but the result is fascinating and utterly disarming. Backed by

the Americana groove of fiddler Athena Tergis and innovative "Newgrass" mandolinist Mike Marshall (along with several other recurring musicians, including former Frank Zappa sideman Scott Thunes on string bass and slide guitarist Robert Powell), Alden—eschewing affected Irish accent or dramatic persona—literally gives a new voice to timeless words familiar to so many, as in "The Lake Isle of Innisfree," "The Song of Wandering Aengus" and "Brown Penny," musically deconstructing and then rebuilding Yeats in a different yet quite suitable context.

The pastoral imagery, Romanticism and symbolism of Yeats translate very well to Alden's understated singing and the equally low-key arrangements. What's more, by consciously avoiding conspicuous "Irishness" in his adaptations, Alden makes the emotional and spiritual qualities of Yeats' poems seem all the more universal; those memorable verses of "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" sound as relevant for a beauty spot in, say, northern California or the upper Midwest (or, even more appropriately, Walden Pond, given that Thoreau served as an inspiration for Yeats) as they do for Sligo or Leitrim. By the same token, the bluesy bounce to "The Song of Wandering Aengus" gives it the whimsical air of some Ozark mountain song, while the allegorical "Colonel Martin" here seems redolent of a Jack Hardy ballad. Tergis' tender fiddle underscores a certain empathy in "The Pilgrim," a poem associated with the expansiveness in Yeats's world view during his later years. In the hands of Marshall and Tergis, "Brown Penny," with its "go and love, young man" exhortation, becomes like some joyful contra dance.

Not everything here works—the gratuitous "sha la



la" chorus grafted onto "The Cap and Bells," for example, and the minimalist melody and arrangement for "The Blessed," which makes it more like a dirge than a conversation—but Alden's instincts are overall very keen. And if "Bee-Loud Glade" raises awareness and appreciation for good old W.B., then

Alden has done both music and literature a good turn. **Jacqui Sharkey, "A New Dawn"**—Sharkey, a West Donegal native who grew up in Scotland before returning to her birthplace, dabbles in a variety of genres, from rock, pop and country to folk and traditional music, even a little jazz here and there. "A New Dawn," her first full-length CD, gravitates mostly to middle-of-the-road folk/country/pop territory, occasionally bland but pleasant enough, with a polished vocal style that reflects her experience in musical theater but is well-suited for the coffeehouse stage.

Except for two Sharkey originals, the songs here are covers, and she seems to have a predilection for singer-songwriters with three names; compositions by Mary Chapin Carpenter, Beth Nielsen Chapman, and Sandy Mason Theoret account for almost half of the 12 tracks. The three Carpenter songs give the album a certain literary panache, especially "This Shirt" (a long-time staple of the WUMB-FM playlist), in which an everyday item of clothing becomes a totem for the trajectory of a relationship; Sharkey, wisely, lets the lyrics do most of the work instead of trying to oversentimentalize them. She takes mostly the same tack with "Sand and Water," Chapman's dignified, frank contemplation on the mortality of loved ones (the song has made an appearance as the musical backdrop in a TV episode or two). Sharkey ventures into pop/torch song mode for Randy Goodrum's "You Needed Me," which was popularized by Anne Murray, and Theoret's "When I Dream."

Sharkey's two original songs are much in the same uber-romantic vein: "Midnight Symphony" is about the marriage of windswept landscape and romantic fantasy ("Wuthering Heights" on the Donegal shore), girded by Raymond McLoughlin's gentle piano and Eamon McLoughlin's gossamer-like mandolin and cello, while "Be My Valentine" is coyly amidst clichés ("You're the prayer the angels answered when I called"; "You're my destiny/you're the one I want to catch me when I fall"). There's nothing particularly groundbreaking or memorable here, but Sharkey is an assured, confident singer, and treats the material with clear respect and affection.

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# Celtic Sojourn's artistic director keeps focus on the show's 'distinctive pulse'

BY SEAN SMITH  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

With all the talented singers, musicians and dancers who appear each year in "Christmas Celtic Sojourn"—including Robbie O'Connell, Liz Carroll, John Doyle, Navan, Solas, Cara Dillon, Kieran Jordan, and Nic Gareiss, to name only a few—you could practically just raise the curtain and let them all go about their business. Right?

Yes, you could, says the show's artistic director Paula Plum—but then it wouldn't be "Christmas Celtic Sojourn."

"There is a distinctive pulse to 'Christmas Celtic Sojourn,' and it's based on switching mood and tempo in a very deliberate way," says Plum, who has been with the show since it began in 2003 (the 2011 edition begins Dec. 9 in Worcester and finishes up at the Cutler Majestic Theatre in Boston December 16-18). "I think of William Butler Yeats's comment about the Irish and their 'abiding sense of tragedy,' which sustains them 'through temporary periods of joy.' We try to polarize the show along those lines, to create variety within each act so that you're moving through a range of emotions."

It is Plum's job to make real the artistic vision of "Christmas Celtic Sojourn" creator and guiding spirit Brian O'Donovan, who conceived the show as a social event, not simply entertainment: an "intimate gathering" to celebrate the holiday season, and provide comfort and reassurance amidst the tumult of modern life. Fostering a living-room kind of intimacy in large theaters with a troupe of performers that includes school-age kids as well as adults may not be the easiest task—especially for someone who was a relative newcomer to Celtic music—but then Plum has gotten used to playing all kinds of roles in her career.

She has earned awards for her acting in such productions as "Lost in Yonkers," "Miss Price," "Wit" and her solo show, "Plum Pudding." Her honors also include the Boston Theatre Critics Association Elliot Norton Award for Sustained Excellence (past recipients include Sir Ian McKellen and Julie Harris) and a Distinguished Alumna Award from the Boston University School for the Arts. In addition to acting—in films and TV as well as on stage—Plum has broadened her talents over the years as a producer, director and teacher.

So when O'Donovan met Plum several years ago as the two were involved in Revels, the annual holiday season-themed production that draws on folk and traditional music and customs, he knew he had found the right person to help cultivate his own idea for a Christmas/New Year's-oriented show.

"Paula has done a tremendous job for us right from the beginning," says O'Donovan, who received an enthusiastic endorsement for Plum from no less than Revels Artistic Director Paddy Swanson. "She was the natural choice for artistic director, and while at the start she didn't have very much experience with Celtic music, she has learned a lot, and that has made her contributions all the more valuable."

Plum describes her responsibilities for "Christmas Celtic Sojourn" as encompassing "everything you see." That includes the performers and what they perform, of course, but also when and how they enter or exit

the stage. Of equal, if not greater, concern to Plum are matters like the stage set design and props, the sound and especially the lighting: "Lighting is everything," declares Plum, who praises the work Dan Jentzen does for the show. "If you have a stage with great lights, you can tell any story."

Actually, says Plum, even before she starts hashing out the when, where, and how of "Christmas Celtic Sojourn," she has to focus on the collective who. "It's about forming a group in which everyone understands what you're trying to accomplish, and really wants to be part of that effort. I have to create that environment, so the people who are working on the show not only feel good about how they use their individual talents and abilities, but how they collaborate with others."

Fortunately, she says, the show has been blessed by the presence of so many who see the big picture. "I can't name a person who hasn't been absolutely lovely and helpful. They all want to create something wonderful."

O'Donovan says Plum made a favorable impression right off the bat with the first "Christmas Celtic Sojourn," which featured Cherish the Ladies among the performers. "During the preparations, I got an e-mail from [band leader] Joanie Madden saying, 'Who is this Paula Plum? She sent me a list of everything that's happening on the show, and it's all spot on.' Now, Joanie doesn't necessarily give out compliments like that, so you certainly had to take it as a good sign that Paula knew what she was doing."

So, how do you even start putting together something like "Christmas Celtic Sojourn"? As Plum explains, it's both easier and harder than it looks. First, you begin with the number 30. That's approximately the total number of individual segments making up the show, about 15 per act. Then it's a case of "plugging things in": the overture, a song, a recitation, a set of tunes, a dance, and so on. This is where Plum, O'Donovan, and music director Seamus Egan (who also usually plays in the show's "house band") eyeball the roster of performers who have been invited for that year's production, and figure out who goes when, what they'll do, and whether it'll be a solo or a collaboration with others.

"Each of the performers brings a unique offering, and we think of the ways to utilize them," she says. "Sometimes, we use a segment to 'introduce' a singer, or musician, or band to the audience. Other times, we want to convey a particular mood, or some aspect of the holiday season. Or perhaps we want to spotlight something about a music tradition. We might even 'borrow' from other cultures: For example, last year one of the performers was Chris Stout, a fiddler from the Shetland Islands, which are Scottish but also have a lot of Scandinavian influences. So through Chris, we were able to get a glimpse of a tradition that is not really Celtic yet has some elements in common nonetheless."

A perennial highlight, for audience and show organizers alike, is the appearance of the children from the Harney Academy of Irish Dance, who typically do a high-speed set dance near the end of Act One. "The kids are always a 'gasp moment' in the show, even for people who've seen it before," says Plum. "We try to find other spots throughout the show where they can play a part, like listening to Brian tell a story, or per-



**Paula Plum, artistic director for "Christmas Celtic Sojourn," says the show's producers and cast seek "to create variety within each act so that you're moving through a range of emotions."**

forming with an adult dancer. They just always give the show a boost."

The time that tries those "Christmas Celtic Sojourn" souls comes in early December when everyone gathers for the rehearsal period prior to the inaugural performance. Given the touring schedules of some of the performers—especially those who live abroad—it's simply not possible to bring them all together any earlier, so the nearly year-long planning and preparation now comes to fruition in the space of a few hectic, intense days. But the confidence Plum and O'Donovan have in the cast is invariably rewarded, sometimes in unexpected ways.

"The year we had Chris Stout and his musical partner, harpist Catriona McKay, we wanted to open the second act with an old Irish air," recalls Plum. "Chris didn't like the idea, so he had sent us a recording of him and Catriona playing a tune she had written, 'Isflak'—Swedish for 'ice flow.' We listened and really weren't wild about it. But when they actually played the tune for us live, my eyebrows were singed—it was such virtuosic, expressive playing. So they did 'Isflak' and it was a great success."

"This goes to one of Brian's major beliefs, and what the show is all about: There is simply nothing like hearing music live."

With "Christmas Celtic Sojourn" now having become an on-the-road production—this year it'll be making stops in Worcester and Portsmouth, NH, and for the first time, New Bedford and Rockport—before its run at the Cutler Majestic Theatre, the demands on the cast and crew are greater, and that includes Plum. "You have to coordinate the lighting and sound for each theater, which takes some time. But everybody's attitude is great—they understand this is a marathon, and so we just need to pace ourselves."

"There can be so many things you feel are out of your control, especially as the premiere date draws closer—when in fact, everything is actually coming together. But that's what happens in theater, time and time again. It's the beauty of the whole experience."

## Christmas Celtic Sojourn: New voices, new sounds



(Continued from page 10)

four have made a big impact on the music scene here in Boston over the past decade," says O'Donovan. "It's important to note how much of an influence they've had on younger musicians as well. They're just a whole lot of fun to have around, and they'll definitely bring a lot of energy to the show."

O'Donovan says he, Egan and the show's artistic director, Paula Plum [see separate story] always look for "new sounds to add to the mix." This year, he feels, they've definitely made good on that quest. "I've hankered after the hammer dulcimer for a while now, because it has such a mesmerizing, resonant quality to it. And Simon Chrisman, who is a member of an up and coming locally-based group called The Bee Eaters, has a fascinating style of playing the dulcimer, with that 'old-meets-new' dynamic."

The addition of O'Hare this year is also gratifying for O'Donovan. "We've always wanted to feature the Uilleann pipes, but it just hasn't worked out to date. Christy O'Leary, who was with us a couple of years ago, is a fine piper, but at the time he had an injury and wasn't able to do very much on them. Now, with Kieran—who has played with the likes of Mick Moloney, Liz Carroll, Danny Doyle, and Niamh Parsons—we'll finally be able to show the full range of the instrument's capabilities."

This year will see two new venues for the show, Shalin Liu Performance Centre in Rockport (already sold out at press time) and Zeiterion Theatre in New Bedford, along with return engagements at Worcester's Hanover Theatre and The Music Hall in Portsmouth, NH. "We're very fortunate to have so much support across the board," says O'Donovan. "Nothing is a slam dunk in this day and age, obviously, so it's very heartening to see that people feel so strongly about 'Christmas Celtic Sojourn' to make it part of their itinerary."

Perhaps that's because wherever "Sojourn" goes, the aim—as O'Donovan explains—is to make the show

**Kevin Doyle will be the featured dancer and director of dance for the 2011 "Christmas Celtic Sojourn."**

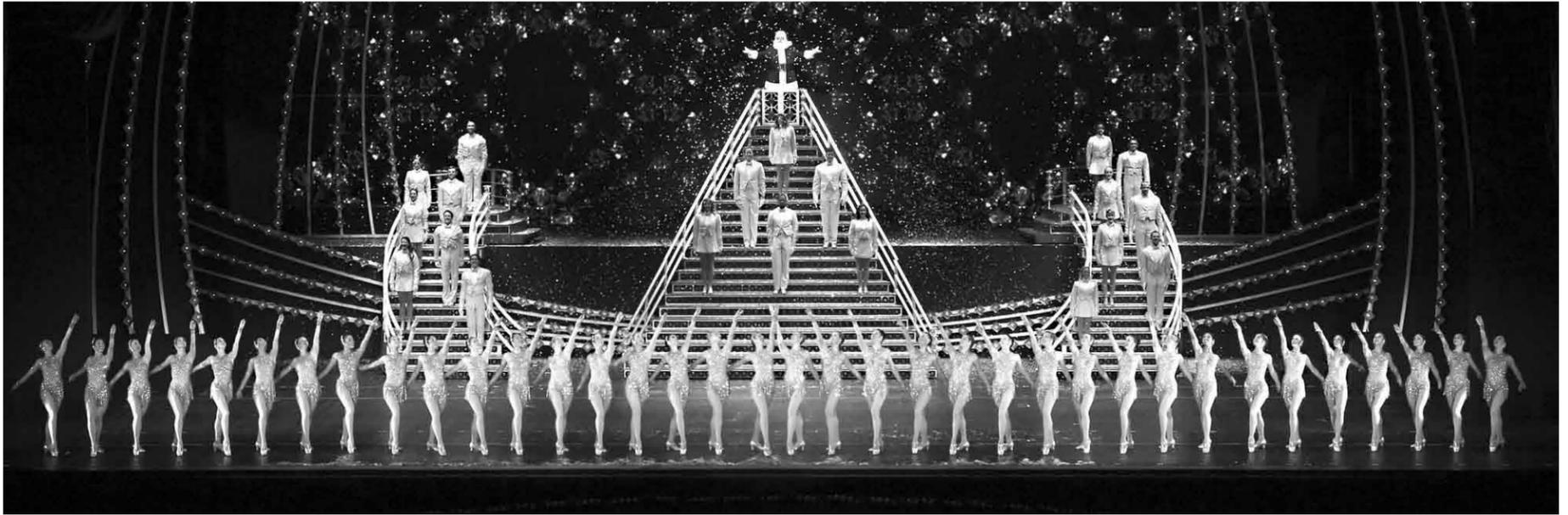


**Ruth Moody of The Wailin' Jennys joins the "Christmas Celtic Sojourn" cast this year.**

feel as if it's a gathering of family and friends in one's living room, an atmosphere underscored by the comfy chair he sits in while on stage as he shares stories or reminiscences related to the Christmas season. There's a paradox to such occasions: On the one hand, these traditions and customs families observe are timeless; yet time marches on, and families experience changes as a result. So it is with O'Donovan and his wife, Lindsay, who for the first time in the show's history will be without their youngest daughter, Fionnuala, now a freshman in college.

"Nuala was still in elementary school when 'Christmas Celtic Sojourn' began," recalls O'Donovan. "She really became part of the show early on: Here was this little girl, singing a beautiful Welsh song a cappella in the middle of the stage, and [vocal trio] Navan and I joined in with her. Definitely a special moment for us. We'll certainly miss having her there."

For ticket information and other details about "A Christmas Celtic Sojourn" performances, see [wgbh.org/celtic](http://wgbh.org/celtic).



The world-famous Radio City Rockettes showcase their signature precision dance style in the dazzling finale number, "Let Christmas Shine." The all new production of the "Radio City Christmas Spectacular" will play at the Citi Performing Arts Center Wang Theatre from December 2 – 28.

Photo: Madison Square Garden Entertainment

## Somerville dancer will be kicking high for the holidays Rockette Courtney Grassia performs in 'Radio City Christmas Spectacular'

By R. J. DONOVAN  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

When The Radio City Rockettes light up the stage at The Wang Theatre all this month with their new "Radio City Christmas Spectacular," there'll be a Boston-area native front and center. Courtney Grassia, born in Medford and a resident of Somerville when she's not on tour, has been dancing as a Rockette since 2006. Having trained at the Donna Miceli Dance Center in Lowell, she has been seen locally in such Reagle Music Theatre shows as "Hello, Dolly!," "No, No Nanette" (with Tony Award winner Donna McKechnie) and "La Cage aux Folles," among others. A magna cum laude graduate with a BFA in Dance from the University of Arizona, Courtney also traveled half way around the world to perform at Tokyo Disneyland.

We spoke recently by phone about her work and her return to Boston. This marks her second season at The Wang with the Radio City holiday show.

**BIR:** So what's the process like when someone auditions to become a Rockette?

**CG:** It's a very intense audition process actually. When I went to New York with a couple of my friends after I graduated from college, I remember getting to the audition about an hour early, and there were already about a hundred girls ahead of me. At ten o'clock, when the doors opened to start the audition, there were girls wrapped around Radio City Music Hall. Hundreds of girls. You know, all tall and beautiful and talented – just like you, right? (she laughs)

**BIR:** Were you there all day?

**CG:** It's essentially a two-day audition. We went in groups of about 75 into this room and we learned a jazz combination from the show and a tap combination. Then right after that, they made cuts. If you got cut, you got shuffled into another room and had to wait



Courtney Grassia

Photo: Madison Square Garden Entertainment

while the whole process went on with the other 500 girls behind you. It was a long day.

**BIR:** And what happened on Day Two?

**CG:** If you're called back, you go back and do pretty much the same thing all over again.

**BIR:** How many dancers made the final cut?

**CG:** I think at the end of the day there were 20 or 30 of us left. . . . And they say "Thank you, ladies, we'll be in contact with you." I auditioned in May and I didn't get a phone call until August that I had gotten the job. It was

a very anxious period. You're just waiting for that call every day. But when I got the call, I think I screamed out loud. I remember calling my Mom right away and she screamed, too. It was an incredible, incredible moment.

**BIR:** When the Rockettes are in formation on stage, you all look to be the same size. Is there a strict height requirement?

**CG:** You need to be between five-six and five-ten-and-a-half. The illusion when we're kicking . . . is that they put the taller ladies in the center and the less tall ladies at the end. So it looks like we're all the same height when we're doing our world famous eye-high kicks.

**BIR:** The Rockettes represent a real show business tradition. Is it exciting to be a part of that, or a little overwhelming?

**CG:** It's so humbling to know that the Radio City Christmas Spectacular has been around so long . . . The Rockettes started in 1925. They moved to Radio City in 1933, and I mean, we're still doing some of the original numbers, like "The Parade of the Wooden Soldiers" and "The Living Nativity." It's almost like you're carrying this torch of an American legacy . . . It's very humbling and it's incredible to be a part of something so much larger than yourself.

**BIR:** "The Parade of the Wooden Soldiers" must require a lot of strength to master that slow-motion fall at the end.

**CG:** Incredible strength, yes. We actually take a day of rehearsal just doing the fall. It's one of the most incredible aspects of the show, and we always get the biggest applause for that fall . . . It's a great moment.

**BIR:** So when did you begin working on this year's show?

**CG:** We started October 5. We rehearsed three and a half weeks, six hours a day, six days a week.

**BIR:** What can you share about the new things audiences will see at The Wang this year?

**CG:** This is actually the largest production Radio City has ever conceived in a theatrical setting . . . We have a 50-foot state-of-the-art LED screen throughout the entire show that will transport audiences from Santa's Workshop at the North Pole to New York City.

**BIR:** Do you have a favorite number among the new elements?

**CG:** One of my favorite moments in the show is called "New York at Christmas." The Rockettes are dancing onboard a life-size double-decker bus that actually rotates. The wheels spin, and behind us the LED screen is taking you through New York City with us. We pass Rockefeller Center, we end up in Times Square, and then we get off the bus and do a fabulous number – new choreography and costumes – and it ends with our world famous eye-high kicks, of course. And it's snowing on stage. It's a wonderful, wonderful show for the young and the young at heart.

**BIR:** It has to be gratifying to be performing in your hometown before a lot of family and friends.

**CG:** There are no words to describe how excited I am to come back. Just to perform at the Wang. I grew up going to shows there. It's a beautiful theater – I think it's one of the most beautiful theaters I've ever performed in. And I've performed around the county with this show now.

**BIR:** Any special family holiday plans this year?

**CG:** Last year I brought all the girls to my house – my Mom had a little party for all the Rockettes. So we'll probably do the same, because a lot of the girls won't be able to go home or have their families come here. So we'll kind of adopt them for the holidays.

**BIR:** Speaking of family, before I let you go, what can you tell me about your Irish heritage?

**CG:** Both of my grandmothers are 100 percent Irish and my grandfathers are both 100 percent Italian. So I'm 50-50 . . . (she says with a laugh). I have the light skin, the freckles and the blue eyes.

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

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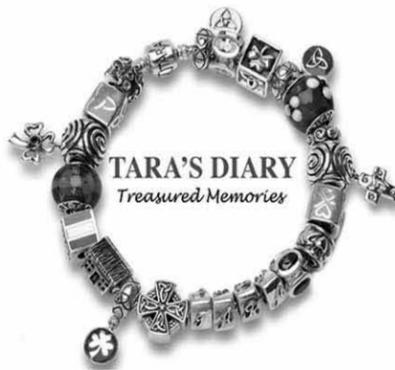
"The Radio City Christmas Spectacular," Dec. 2-28 at the Citi Performing Arts Center Wang Theatre. For tickets: 866-348-9738 or [citicenter.org](http://citicenter.org).



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# BCM Fest

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

— Sean Smith

**Teachable moments**—As a fiddle student, Laurel Martin learned from one of the best teachers around—10-time All-Ireland champion Seamus Connolly. Now, as a fiddle teacher herself, Martin seeks to give her students the same kind of guidance from which she benefited: mentoring that not only helps one learn to play the instrument, but also to develop an appreciation for the Irish music tradition.

At the Dec. 12 BCM Fest Celtic Music Monday, Martin will be joined by guitarist Matt Heaton, with special appearances by stepdancer Kieran Jordan and four of Martin's current protégés, Natalya Kay Trudeau, Fiona Henry, Ciara McGillivray, and Gabriella Barham. The concert, which will take place in Harvard Square's Club Passim beginning at 8 p.m., offers a glimpse of the teacher-student partnership and its role in passing along Irish music from generation to generation.

Martin, who plays in a subtle, lyrical style evocative of County Clare and East Galway, is on the faculty of the Indian Hill Music School in Littleton, Mass., is the former director of the Wellesley College Fiddleheads ensemble, and taught in the Boston College Irish Studies program for 13 years. She has performed and recorded with Connolly and the Childsplay ensemble, and released her own CD, "The Groves," in 2006.

The four aspiring, high school-age fiddlers joining her at Club Passim may have taken varied paths to get where they are—Fiona and Ciara came from families with interest and experience in Irish music, while Natalya Kay and Gabriella started out as classical violinists—but all have reached a critical point in their musical journey, says Martin: They have achieved a level of competence (enough to have already performed in public) that has empowered them to begin asserting their own personalities.

"Most every musician, if he or she stays at it, reaches that stage," she explains. "You learn how to really listen to the music, you learn how to make artistic choices based on the guidelines and conventions. If you are an Irish fiddler, that might mean making a choice to



Irish fiddler Laurel Martin, left, will be joined by her students, Fiona Henry, Gabriella Barham, Ciara McGillivray and Natalya Kay Trudeau, as part of her December 12 "Celtic Music Monday" concert.

ornament the melody with a roll or triplet, or to slur a sequence of notes together instead of bowing them separately. These are artistic judgments that come naturally once you have spent a lot of time listening to and playing Irish traditional music."

For young musicians to reach that stage, of course, the all-important dynamics of the teacher-student relationship have to be just right. Whether kids take up Irish music because of familial expectations or their own interest, Martin says, it's up to the teacher to show them that the music, and the tradition it comes from, matters.

"I try to teach my passion for Irish music," she says. "You run the risk that they'll roll their eyes at you, but you have to let them see that the music is something which gives you joy, and has been worth all those hours of work—not just playing, but listening to the music. Obviously, not all kids are going to see what you see. But then there's the student who sees the depth and beauty of the music, and who at some point 'gets it.'"

"That's been the case with Fiona, Ciara, Gabriella and Natalya Kay, and I'm very happy we will have the experience of being in this concert together."

Tickets for the concert are \$12, \$6 for members of Passim, WGBH and WUMB. For reservations and other information, see [passim.org](http://passim.org). The event also will be streamed live over the Web at [concertwindow.com](http://concertwindow.com).

**BCM Fest 2012 info**—A reminder that the ninth annual BCM Fest will take place Jan. 6 and 7, with several dozen of Boston's finest Celtic musicians, singers and dancers, at Club Passim and First Parish of Cambridge, both in Harvard Square. An opening night concert at Passim and the BCM Fest Boston Urban Ceilidh at The Atrium on Church Street will kick off BCM Fest 2012. The January 7 "Dayfest" will feature performances and participatory events at four venues, all literally within seconds of each other, culminating in the festival's finale concert that night in First Parish.

You can get information and updates on the festival at [bcmfest.com](http://bcmfest.com).

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Traveling People

# Ireland offers plenty of help for roots-searchers

**BY JUDY ENRIGHT  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR**  
Is it because this country is such a grand melting pot that so many of us are engaged in the search for our roots? There are, of course, a number of sensible reasons for learning about your past: ancient traditions that might be lost if you didn't learn about them; or genetic medical conditions in the family that you should know about and watch for.

But beyond all that, it's just plain fun to learn who your ancestors were, how and where they lived, what they did for work, who they married, when they came to this country, or why they stayed in Ireland or went to other countries, who their children were, where they are now, and more.

With all of that in mind, what better place to start your search for information than at any of the heritage centers all across Ireland?

**DAN O'HARA**  
We recently visited a heritage center in Lettershea, Connemara, just outside Clifden, Co. Galway. At the Connemara Heritage and History Centre, we stopped by Dan O'Hara's re-created homestead and learned that he and his family were forced by a cruel landlord to leave their home during the Famine.

O'Hara was among more

than a million Irish who emigrated during those famine years. He was evicted from his homestead in 1845 and, with his wife and seven children, sailed to New York aboard one of the infamous "coffin ships." Sadly, only Dan and four of his children survived the voyage.

The Heritage Centre in Lettershea has recreated the farm to commemorate O'Hara and all those who were forced to leave their homelands. Also at the Centre, there is a "Roots from Ireland Park" where you can choose an ash, alder, hawthorn, or sycamore tree that will be planted in honor of or in memory of your ancestors, friends, or family members. And, there's also a crannog lake dwelling to see, as well as a prehistoric dolmen, and some modern attractions like a café/restaurant, craft shop, and B&B.

It's an interesting place to visit although it is nearly impossible to imagine how a man, his wife, and their seven children could possibly have lived together in that small, one-room house.

If you happen to be out in the Connemara area, do stop by this heritage center - on the road to Clifden - and see for yourself how the O'Haras lived back in that day. For more information, visit the website: [rootsfromireland.com](http://rootsfromireland.com) or



An 1800s "lighting fixture" - we'd call it a candle today - sits in the window of Dan O'Hara's recreated house at the Connemara Heritage and History Centre in Lettershea, Clifden, Co. Galway.

(Judy Enright photo)

[connemaraheritage.com](http://connemaraheritage.com) or e-mail to [danohara@eircom.net](mailto:danohara@eircom.net).

**DONKEY SANCTUARY**

At Christmas, the givingest time of year, we like to mention the wonderful work done by Donkey Sanctuary in Lis-carroll, Mallow, Co. Cork. This is such a worthwhile Irish cause and one we support as often as we can.

The Sanctuary takes donkeys from all over the country and ensures that they receive veterinary care, food, shelter, a safe environment, and the attention and care of a devoted staff. If you are in that area, it's a great place to spend some time walking around and petting the donkeys.

We stopped by last spring and were as impressed as we always are by the excellent condition of these unwanted donkeys and by the well-maintained facility in which they live.

For more information, to donate online, or to adopt a donkey as a gift for some worthy child or adult, visit [thedonkeysanctuary.ie](http://thedonkeysanctuary.ie).

**GOOD NEWS**

The West of Ireland must be totally pumped by Ryanair's recent announcement that, starting in April, four new routes will be opened between Ireland West Airport in Knock, Co. Mayo, and Girona (Barcelona), Hahn (Frankfurt), Bergamo (Milan), and Beauvais (Paris.)

These new routes will link the airport with some of Europe's largest tourism markets and bring to 14 the total number of Ryanair routes operating out of Knock. The new routes are sure to boost employment and tourism opportunities in the West.

If you'd like to read a fun story about how Knock Airport came about, find a copy of *On a Wing and a Prayer, The Story of Knock Airport* by Terry Reilly. It's a most interesting story about Monsignor James Horan's travails and ultimate success in getting the airport built in the West of Ireland.

**ACTIVITIES**

If you are in Dublin between Nov. 30 and Dec. 4 and you enjoy buying unique gifts, be sure to stop by the National Crafts & Design Fair in the Main Hall at the RDS. There will be more than 500 exhibitors there and it sounds like a great show.

If shopping isn't what you like to do, then how about something more traditional and very, very Irish? Wren's Day on the Dingle Peninsula will be celebrated on Dec. 26 and was once enjoyed in towns all over Ireland. But those ancient rites have now nearly disappeared with the exception of this event in Dingle, which is one reason it is so special. Straw costumes and fancy dress are the order of the day as "wrens" go from

pub to pub collecting donations for charity. For details visit the website: [dinglepeninsula.ie](http://dinglepeninsula.ie)

Want to celebrate New Year's Eve in style? How about a visit to Dromoland Castle in Co. Clare or Castlemartyr Resort in Co. Cork? You can purchase a variety of holiday packages, some of which include accommodation, activities, meals, and more, depending on which package you choose. For more details, visit [dromoland.ie](http://dromoland.ie) or [castlemartyr-resort.ie](http://castlemartyr-resort.ie).

Love horse racing? Well then, how about getting involved in the exciting hunt racing at the Guinness Christmas Racing Festival held from Dec. 26-29 in Greenmount Park, Patrickswell, Co. Limerick? For details visit [limerickraces.ie](http://limerickraces.ie)

From Dec. 3 to 23, you can enjoy the season at the

Athenry Arts & Heritage Centre in Co. Galway. Visit [athenryheritagecentre.com](http://athenryheritagecentre.com) for more details about this festive event.

**TRAVEL**

When you decide to travel to Ireland, be sure to visit your favorite travel agent or the Aer Lingus website ([aerlingus.com](http://aerlingus.com)) for the latest in flight and ground deals. There are also flights and deals offered by US Airways ([usairways.com](http://usairways.com)) and other airlines, but they usually involve layovers that can add several hours to the trip but also reduce the cost.

And check out seasonal happenings at Tourism Ireland's informative website ([discoverireland.com](http://discoverireland.com).) Enjoy your trip to Ireland whenever you go.

We wish all our readers an enjoyable holiday season and a happy and healthy New Year.



This handsome fellow is one of the residents at the Donkey Sanctuary in Lis-carroll, Mallow, Co. Cork (Judy Enright photo)

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**PUZZLE SOLUTION FROM PAGE 16**

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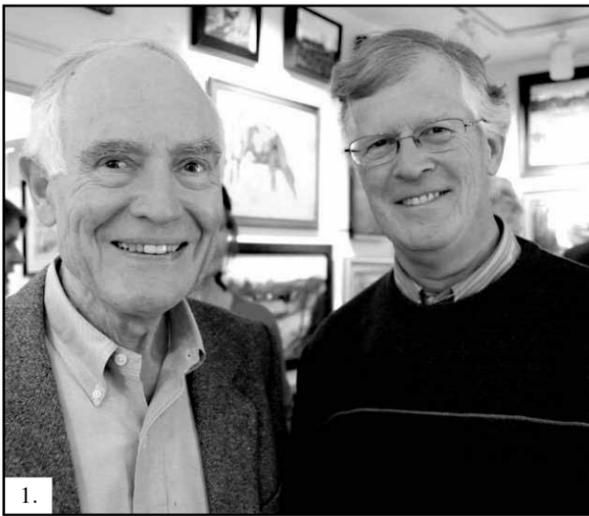
# BRETT'S BOSTON

By Harry Brett

Exclusive photos of Boston Irish people & events

The Eire Society of Boston hosted an Irish Artisan Marketplace – Pottery, Celtic Jewelry, Paintings, Photography – at the Aisling Gallery, on Sun., Nov. 13. Visiting artists included studio jeweler designer Deirdre Donnelly of Quechee VT; photographer Jack Gannon of Foxborough; Irish potter and Derry native Ann Mullan-Karakatsanis; photographer and Eire Society member Karen Ann Thornton; and Cork native and Dorchester resident artist Vincent Crotty, whose work is regularly on exhibit at the Aisling Gallery.

1.) Jim McLaughlin, Scituate; Jean Lavoie, Millis; 2.) Peg McCobb, Weymouth; Carol Darcy, Weymouth; 3.) Eileen Russell, Readville; Eileen Fagen, Wellesley; 4.) Edris Kelley, Marshfield; Jack Gannon, Foxborough; 5.) Ann Mullan, designer, Methuen; 6.) Sarah and Bridget Williams, Dorchester; 7.) Frank Russell, Readville; Mari Batholomew, Quincy; 8.) Bridget Williams, Dorchester; Mary Beth Fitzgerald, West Roxbury; 9.) Deirdre Donnelly, jeweler; Dan and Mary Carney, Milton; 10.) Ann Doherty, Newton; Katie and Dan O'Sullivan, Hull; 11.) John McGuire, Roslindale; Ann Walsh, Milton; Mike Dwyer, Westwood; 12.) Margaret Flagg, West Roxbury; Vincent Crotty, Dorchester, artist; Mary Beth Fitzgerald, West Roxbury.



Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge, Co. Antrim.

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