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Boston Neighborhood News, Inc.

# BOSTON IRISH REPORTER

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## THE PAST IS PROLOGUE

# From O'Brien to Walsh: 'A Long Green Line'



**Hugh O'Brien**  
Served from 1885 to 1889

By **PETER F. STEVENS**  
REPORTER STAFF

As Boston's mayor-elect to succeed Thomas Menino, Dorchester's Marty Walsh follows in the "green" footsteps of the likes of Patrick Collins, John "Honey Fitz" Fitzgerald, James Michael Curley, Maurice Tobin, John Hynes, John Collins, Kevin White, and Ray Flynn. Walsh captured the office at a time when the city's changing demographics will in the not-so-distant future make the Boston Irish mayoral chokehold of the past increasingly unlikely. But as challenging as

his hard-fought victory was, it was not as daunting as that of the city's first Irish mayor, Hugh O'Brien, who was not only of Boston, but also of Ireland itself.

O'Brien was sworn in as the city's first Irish-born mayor on Jan. 5, 1885. To many of Boston's Brahmins and Yankees, his ascent to City Hall represented a once-unthinkable development in a region notable for its antipathy toward Irish Catholics. His odyssey to the top of the heap in Boston politics began in 1832 when as a five year old he emigrated from Ireland with his parents.

He displayed a considerable intelligence early on, but was yanked from the city's public school system as a twelve year old to work as an apprentice to a printer at the *Boston Courier*. A tradesman's future beckoned the young O'Brien, who felt lucky in escaping the low-paying and insecure street sweeping or dockside work so many of his fellow Irish immigrants were forced to take. But he had set his eyes on a far loftier future — one placed in the rarefied circles of Yankee commerce.

Following his stint at the  
(Continued on page 3)



**Marty Walsh**  
Takes the mayor's seat on Jan. 6



The Tony Award-winning musical love story, "Once," plays Boston's Opera House from January 7 - 19. Photo by Joan Marcus

## Kenny thanks Irish for patience

BIR STAFF

Ireland Prime Minister Enda Kenny took to the RTE One airwaves on Sun., Dec. 15, to thank the Irish people for staying the course while the country coped with the three-year austerity program laid on them by the bailout program organized by the International Monetary Fund and the European Union.

Although Ireland was formally freed from the bailout's financial mandates that weekend, Kenny, while acknowledging that "many families have also had to face the devastating consequences of unemployment and emigration," warned that the country had no choice but to "continue to pursue prudent budgetary policies." The bailout funding from the IMF and the REU amounted to some 67 billion euro; in return, Ireland promised to organize an austerity process that over three years saw cuts of many billions of euros to the budgets of essential programs like construction projects, pensions and wages for governmental workers, and those entities addressing social welfare needs.

## Playwright Walsh hails the magic of 'Once'

By **R. J. DONOVAN**  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

"Once" first sparked to life as a tiny, 2007 independent Irish film about the power of music to draw people together. The two main characters are simply called Guy and Girl. Guy is a struggling Dublin street musician who has lost faith in his talent and his life. He crosses paths with Girl, a Czech immigrant who shows him his work is not yet done. Over the

### Tony Award-Winning musical at the Opera House Jan. 7-19

course of one fateful week, they diligently collaborate on music and an unlikely love emerges. However, complications follow.

With music and lyrics from Glen Hansard and Markéta Irglová (who starred in the film), "Once" went on to capture the hearts of critics and audi-

ences alike around the world. Included in its score is "Falling Slowly," which won an Oscar for Best Original Song.

Lightning struck yet again when "Once" made a stunning transition to Broadway, cast with an ensemble of actor/musicians who play their own in-

struments on stage. The show picked up eight Tony Awards, including Best Musical and one for Best Book, which went to Dublin-born playwright Enda Walsh. The prolific Mr. Walsh has authored 17 plays ("Penelope," "Hunger," "The New Electric Ballroom"), most of which have been translated for productions around the world.

He's currently working on multiple projects including an  
(Continued on page 10)

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An Appreciation

# This is the Jack Shaughnessy I knew

By ARTHUR MURPHY  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Jack Shaughnessy grew up in Quincy, graduated from BC High in wartime 1944, served in the Navy, and afterwards worked with his brother Al in building a very successful crane and rigging business in South Boston.

That is a spare biographical sketch, and only a small part of the Jack Shaughnessy the city of Boston came to know. He was clearly a man for all seasons, driven to help people, and it was easy from the outside to see that that drive was fueled by a wondrously abiding faith in God. Jack deeply believed that hard-working people and those in need deserved a chance to make a good life for themselves.

Over years I watched and worked with Jack as he operated in a variety of settings – as a CEO, board member, philanthropist, assisting people in their causes, political

environments, and family situations. He was always direct and determined, never one for idle discussion. He was a doer who thought that those who had the opportunity should use it constructively.

On his death, one former employee of his who is now a Teamster labor leader said, “Jack always wanted the best for his employees and was as hard a worker as anybody, always there the earliest. He provided me personal and business guidance from the very beginning. He wanted his employees to be paid with the best but he also demanded the best. Jack was like a second father to me through my career as a rigger and through the rough and tumble of my growth in the labor field.”

If you didn't know that Jack Shaughnessy, you missed out on knowing a special man. “Jack gave of his money, time, and advice to charities all

over the city of Boston,” one major philanthropist said. “He looked for groups that helped the poor and the needy as long as they could show results.” Jack also gave financial assistance to a large variety of educational, social service, and health-related agencies and projects. And let's not forget the Catholic Church, a major beneficiary of his generous heart and soul. All of this came from a clear vision that only by helping others could people do their jobs on earth.

A business acquaintance called Jack “a cheerleader of all that is right in the world, a fierce warrior against injustice, greed, prejudice, and boring behavior. Everything he did was expressed with a passion.” Said another: “Have you ever see anybody show more disdain for arrogance than Jack? He took it as a challenge to underscore that view if it in anyway negatively affected people around him.”

Once Jack Shaughnessy was committed to you and what you were doing he led the charge. The number is legion of those he assisted in getting jobs or in raising their self-esteem, not to leave out those he called out of the blue to see if he could help. I can't count the number of times he called me and said, “Please take care of this person, and if there is any charge, I will take care of it.”

But Jack's major driving force was perhaps his relentless pursuit of helping the young and the old and those in between. White or black or male or female or straight or gay, it didn't matter to him. He wanted all of them to have the opportunity to show their worth, and he did all he could to advance their causes, recommending them for schools and job promotion and, when appropriate, financial assistance or helping them to keep their jobs. He had a simple faith in people, and as one of them said: “He believed in mankind.”

Jack believed deeply that God tests individuals in a variety of ways – through sickness, economic matters, personal distress – but as they coped with those tests, it was his privilege to assist them if they could use the help. He believed with the biblical Job that if people hung in there and had faith in God, they

would make it through the darkness.

As one beneficiary of Jack's wisdom said recently, “Jack was thoughtful, respectful, and direct [a rarity these days]. He never got distracted by the ‘noise’; he always stayed on point. And he knew what was really important in life: family, friends, church and community.” Another said, “Jack always made you feel as if you were tops and if he saw any hesitation in direction he subtly got you back on track.”

In the everyday world, Jack stood up to trends that he felt hurt society, but he was always careful to separate the idea from the person, many times calling community leaders and directly challenging them on their positions while supporting them as individuals. And he didn't limit his outreach. In his last years, Jack often expressed a special concern over the activities of the so-called “jihadists” who preached Islam while carrying out violent attacks on people and property. He searched for answers, to the point where he took to reading the Koran. He concluded for himself that there was no justification for the murderous actions of the jihadist factions.

For all that, education was key, Jack knew, and he preached its value from his ever-ready soapbox, especially the lessons



Jack Shaughnessy  
“Generous, and direct”

waiting to be learned at his alma mater, BC High, which he helped financially over and over again. Yes, he had a bias for the Jesuits on Morrissey Boulevard, but that was offset some by his wife Mary, who made it possible for deserving students to study elsewhere than at one of her husband's “favorites.” It was about her that Jack often said: “Any success and enthusiasm I have had is the direct result of my magnificent wife Mary.”

This man for all seasons spread his faith in God and in the importance of the family and the individual far and wide, using that faith, his intellect, his work ethic, and his tenacity in pursuit of his deeply held values to benefit us all.

Arthur Murphy is an attorney with the Quincy firm Murphy, Hesse, Toomey & Lehane, LLP and a long time friend of Jack Shaughnessy.



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# For Walsh, Boston College makes perfect sense as inaugural venue

By BILL FORRY  
EDITOR

On Jan. 6, Marty Walsh will be sworn in as Boston's 54th mayor — and the first from Dorchester in more than a half-century. He'll take the oath and give his first mayoral address in front of a few thousand of his closest friends and admirers — including Irish tenor Ronan Tynan, who'll perform at the 10 a.m. ceremony.

Walsh's choice of venue for the historic occasion is Conte Forum, the Boston College sports arena that can accommodate up to 8,000 spectators. When

the news broke last month, there was some push-back from members of the Twittering class that the university is too remote from downtown, with some erroneously claiming that the Forum is located in Newton. In fact, the arena is laid out entirely on the Boston side of BC's sprawling campus.

Walsh, 46, is a 2010 graduate of BC's Woods College of Advancing Studies, and the fact of his diploma will make him the first mayor of Boston to hold an undergraduate degree from the 150-year-old Jesuit university (Maurice Tobin, a mayor from the late 1930s and early 1940s,

took classes there, but never earned a degree; Kevin White was a BC Law School graduate).

Recently, Walsh told the *Reporter* that his affection for his alma mater was a factor in his decision, adding that more practical considerations made The Heights his top choice.

"We looked at a lot of other places," he said, "but we have 6,000 volunteers and I want to be fully inclusive. This is the first first inaugural in 20 years. The TD Garden was booked that day because of the figure skating championship," Walsh said, "so I looked at my alma mater. BC won't be back from vacation yet, so there'll be plenty of parking and it's accessible to public transportation on the Green Line. BC has been very accommodating; it will raise their profile, too."

Jack Dunn, a spokesman for BC, said this last that Conte is "an ideal venue" because of its capacity and location. The Forum "has hosted many civic events over the years, including military deployment ceremonies, community breakfasts, the Mayor's Cup Ice Hockey tournament, high school commencements (Brighton and Newton North high schools)," he said, "as well as academic conferences and cultural offerings that are open to the public."

As to area colleges and universities, Dunn said, "Boston



The Silvio O. Conte Forum on the BC campus.

College is the leader in providing direct outreach and support to the Boston Public Schools and to the archdiocesan schools located within the city. BC students regularly volunteer in the schools and social service organizations, providing an estimated 550,000 hours of volunteer community service each year."

The Monday morning (10 a.m.) swearing-in — which will be administered by Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Roderick Ireland — will be a ticketed event, although there will be no fee. Kate Norton, a spokesperson for Walsh, said this week that the campaign was still working out the final details of how tickets would be issued to the general public. A significant number will be distributed via printed invitations, she said. More details are likely to be published first on a newly-minted website, [bostoninaugural2014.org](http://bostoninaugural2014.org).

Following the inaugural events at BC, an evening cel-

ebration will be held at the Hynes Convention Center on Boylston Street. Tickets, at \$35 per, will be available for purchase for that event, which will feature "a broad spectrum of entertainment from local artists, musicians, comedians, and other performers," said Norton.

The run-up to the inauguration will include a weekend-long series of volunteer events — such as serving meals to the homeless and painting school buildings — in each city neighborhood beginning on Fri., Jan. 3. Walsh will host a youth summit geared toward students in grades six through nine at Roxbury Community College on Saturday. On Sunday, he'll convene a brunch for seniors in the morning at Northeastern University's Cabot Athletic Center. Following the brunch, he will attend an interfaith service, hosted by Reverend Jeffrey Brown, at the Old South Church.



Boston Mayor-elect Marty Walsh and Boston Business Journal Executive Editor George Donnelly are shown at an event for business leaders hosted by the law firm Nelson Mullins. It was held last Thurs., Dec. 12 at the Boston Harbor Hotel's Meritage restaurant. Photo by Melissa Ostrow

## From O'Brien to Walsh: 'A Long Green Line'



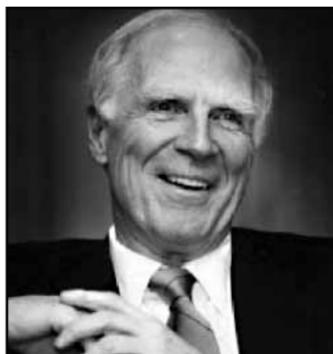
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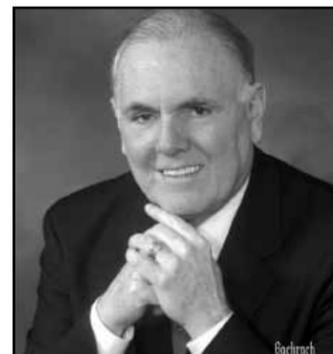
James Michael Curley



John B. Hynes



Kevin H. White



Raymond L. Flynn

(Continued from page 1)

*Courier*, O'Brien took a job at the private printing firm of Tuttle, Dennett and Chisholm on School Street, learning the ins and outs of printing while at the same time figuring out how to publish his own paper, the *Shipping and Commercial List*. His publication proved a smash hit among the Yankee merchants and Brahmin financiers who were always looking for ways to follow the flow of goods and business news across Boston's docks. It was quite the feat for the ambitious Irish Catholic to make himself indispensable to well-heeled Protestants whose Back Bay and Beacon Hill brownstones generally meant only one thing to immigrants

of "the old sod" — back-breaking work as maids or handymen. Grudgingly, Brahmins looked at O'Brien in a different light; these upscale sorts began to view him as an anomaly — one of the "good Irish."

O'Brien's business value to New England merchants and moguls notwithstanding, the question of how far the ambitious publisher could rise among what the historian George Potter termed the "Irish-hating ice-cicles of Yankeeland" intrigued the local Democratic leaders who ruled the city's Irish neighborhoods. In 1875, the forty-nine-year-old O'Brien won election to the Board of Alderman, and the watchful eyes and ears of the Irish community

noticed when, over the next seven years, even hard-boiled Yankees lauded his "conscientious hard work."

The Democratic luminaries of the burgeoning Irish community first put O'Brien's political palatability to Yankees to the test in late 1883 by nominating the publisher/alderman as the party's mayoral candidate. In the weeks before voters went to the polls, many Yankees recoiled against the notion of an Irish-born mayor. And on election night, the Irish turned out in force for their candidate, a man whose financial outlook shared more in common with his Protestant and Republican foe, Augustus Man, than with fellow immigrants. But O'Brien

lost the election, if by a narrow margin.

A year later, his name once again topped the Democratic mayoral ticket, and enough Yankee voters swallowed their misgivings to help the immigrant poor sweep him into office. O'Brien's campaign platform of lower taxes and his demonstrated ability as an alderman to back that promise had proven a fiscal siren song too sweet to resist for many Brahmins. He took the oath of office on Jan. 5, 1885, heralding a new political era for Boston and for the region. He wasted little time in keeping his campaign promises of sound spending and lower taxes, worked to improve the city's parks and roads, and

helped to lay the groundwork of the Boston Public Library, a site where even "Paddy and Bridget" would be allowed to read and study. O'Brien held the office until 1889. But it wasn't until 1903, when Patrick Collins, a resident of Dorchester, won the mayor's race, that the Irish dominance of the job began in earnest.

Boston has changed greatly in the past two decades as other immigrant groups and minorities began in turn to flex their political muscle in the way that the ward bosses once did. Marty Walsh worked hard to earn their trust and support, just as Hugh O'Brien did with the wary Yankees 130 years before.



Left, Boston City Hall on School Street 1865-1969... and today at Government Center.

## IMMIGRATION Q &amp; A

## Overstaying a visit to the United States? Not a good idea at all

**Q.** I came to the US for a visit under the Visa Waiver Program and was given permission to stay here for 90 days. I was thinking of staying on for a while longer and maybe getting a job to support myself here. I heard that staying past the 90-day limit could result in a bar on my re-entry to the US in the future. Is this true?

**A.** If you entered the US on the Visa Waiver Program, as most visitors from the 37 eligible countries do today, you normally are given up to 90 days to remain in this country – but you are not allowed to work here during that time. If you overstay this 90-day period by 180 days to one year, you face a three-year bar from re-entering the US. Overstaying the 90-day period by more than one year subjects you to a ten-year re-entry bar. But do not misinterpret the 180 days as any kind of “grace” period that allows you to remain in the US beyond the 90 days granted under the Visa Waiver Program. Any period of overstay at all may affect your ability to re-enter the US at a later date.

Aside from the problem of the three- and ten-year re-entry bars, if you overstay a visit under the Visa Waiver Program even by a few days you no longer would be allowed to re-enter under that program in the future. Instead you would have to make a formal application for the B-2 visitor’s visa at the nearest US Embassy, which requires a fee and can take considerable time. You can expect close scrutiny of your application, and if you have a compelling reason for a prior brief overstay, you should include evidence of it with your application. Holders of visitor’s visas usually are admitted for up to six months and may, before the expiration of the visa, apply for an extension if they have a good reason for wanting to stay longer in the US.

Employment in the US, either while in status under the Visa Waiver Program, while here on a visitor’s visa, or during an overstay, is another issue. People temporarily in the US are not allowed to have employment without specific authorization from the US government, either with a work visa (such as H-1B), or with an Employment Authorization Document issued, for example, while an application for adjustment of status to permanent residence is pending. If you do work here without authorization, that is considered visa fraud by the US immigration authorities, and you render yourself inadmissible to the US in the future in almost all circumstances.

Note, finally, that the 90-day Visa Waiver period of admission to the US normally cannot be extended. Only in extreme situations where you could document the reason with compelling evidence would you be granted an extension. An example of such a situation would be hospitalization in the US following an accident or serious illness.

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If you have questions about this or any other aspect of immigration law, you can have a free, confidential consultation at one of our weekly legal clinics. Remember: It is far better to get legal advice before taking a step that might have lifelong consequences for you, rather than to act first and then try to fix a situation that may well have no solution.

Disclaimer: These articles are published to inform generally, not to advise in individual cases. US Citizenship and Immigration Services and the US Department of State frequently amend regulations and alter processing and filing procedures. For legal advice seek the assistance of IIC immigration legal staff.



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**Tuesday, January 7th**  
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**Monday, January 13th**  
Green Briar Pub, 304 Washington St. Brighton

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Happy new year to all *Boston Irish Reporter* readers from IIC's staff, board members, and volunteers. Thank you for all your support in 2013.

**Become a US Citizen in 2014:** Is your New Year's resolution to become a US citizen? The IIC can guide you through the naturalization process, from completing the application to preparing for your citizenship interview. The USCIS will soon be doubling the naturalization application from 10 pages to 21 pages, so now is a good time to apply. If you are currently a Lawful Permanent Resident and eligible to file for

US citizenship, begin the process as soon as possible. Citizens of Ireland *do not* lose their Irish citizenship by becoming US citizens. The IIC offers free weekly citizenship clinics on Thursdays from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Come in for a confidential meeting with a citizenship specialist about your individual situation. For further details call Beatriz at 617-542-7654, Ext. 41.

**Begin the New Year with New Computer**

**Skills:** The Irish International Immigrant Center still has spaces open in the winter term's Computer Skills Classes. Our classes help students advance their careers by providing them with the skills, confidence, and computer competency needed to be successful in today's workplace. Our 10-week classes begin on Mon., Jan. 13, and will be held on Monday and Wednesday mornings; our Microsoft Word, Excel, and Power

Point classes will begin on Tues., Jan. 14, and will be held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Students should enroll as soon as possible. To sign up, please stop by our offices during normal business hours or contact Sarah Chapple-Sokol, Education Coordinator, at 617-542-7654, Ext. 36. All classes are held at the Center at 100 Franklin Street, Lower Level 1, Boston. Entrance is at 201 Devonshire Street.

## Matters Of Substance

### Recovery loves company

BY DANIELLE OWEN  
IIC STAFF

They say “miserer loves company.” For many, this is especially true around the holidays. Those with alcohol or drug problems can find it particularly challenging to enjoy the end-of-the-year holidays. However, those who feel isolated and alone can find support all over Massachusetts.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is an international fellowship founded in 1935 that has an estimated 116,000 in-person and online support groups. It is a fellowship of men and women who come together to share their experiences, strengths, and hopes for the purpose of staying

sober from their alcohol use and helping other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. The only requirement for attending meetings or membership is a desire to stop drinking.

AA has meetings open to all, tailored to young people, women, and other distinct groups. The twelve-step model born from AA has been used to build other fellowships for recovery including, Narcotics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous; and Al-Anon, Nar-Anon, and Gam-Anon, all of which offer support for those who are impacted by a loved one's addiction. All offer those affected by opioid, marijuana, or other drug problems, as well as

other addictions, an opportunity to find recovery or support in company with those that share their experience.

*“Walking into that old hall, people smiled at me for no reason other than they were glad I was there. No one had been glad to see me in so long, I didn't know what to do. So I just sat down, listened and after a couple of meetings actually found myself telling a bit about my own story! No one was more surprised than I was! The warmth of that first welcome kept me coming back. I know now I don't have to do this alone”*

One of our clients asked us to share this quote as his way of sharing the gift of peace and recovery in the new year.

AA, AL-Anon, and other fellowships are just one of the many tools of recovery. Others may need in-patient or structured group support, perhaps one-to-one counseling too. The Journal of Addictive Diseases published research that indicated that “among 266 highly committed young adult AA attendees, the average length of abstinence was 44 months. They had



attended an average of 233 AA meetings in the previous year. He found 66 percent had served as sponsors, and 92 percent reported experiencing an AA “spiritual awakening” which decreased the likelihood of alcohol craving.”

Curious about making changes in your life? Call or send an e-mail Danielle (617-542-7654, Ext.14; [dowen@iicenter.org](mailto:dowen@iicenter.org)) for more information about meetings or other tools to recovery. AA Boston shares listings of its meetings statewide and we regularly post this information on our “IIC Wellness Services” Facebook page. Recovery is possible, and for 2014 you don't have to do it alone!

Wishing all our readers a very peaceful New Year!

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# The IIC celebrates its 25th, and gives Solas Awards to five

Nearly 500 guests joined the Irish International Immigrant Center for its 2013 Solas Awards Celebration on Fri., Dec. 6, at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum. It was a truly memorable occasion as IIC launched its 25th year serving immigrant families and young people from Ireland and around the world while presenting Solas Awards to Joyce and Bill Cummings, John Hailer, Jack Joyce, and Raj Sharma.

*Photos by Bill McCormick, courtesy IIC center*

**Pictured in photos are:** 1.) IIC Executive Director Ronnie Millar with 2013 Solas Award recipients Raj Sharma, Bill Cummings, Joyce Cummings, John Hailer, and Jack Joyce. 2.) Program emcee Kelley Tuthill, WCVB-TV; 3.) IIC executive director Ronnie Millar with honorees 3.) Jack Joyce and 4.) Raj Sharma; 5.) Solas co-chair Anne Geraghty, Winnie Henry, Sr. Marguerite Kelly, Patrick "Doc" Walsh and Eileen Nee; 6.) Honorees John Hailer and 7.) Joyce and Bill Cummings with Mr. Millar; 8. & 9.) The Boston City Singers ensemble performed to the delight of the audience; 10.) a pre-dinner reception was held in the JFK atrium; 11.) Margaret Dalton sang the Irish and American national anthems; and 12.) Boston's Irish Consul General Breandan O'Caollai greeted the audience.



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12.

## Publisher's Notebook

# Enter Mayor Walsh, son of Ireland, BC, and Dorchester

By ED FORRY

This January marks the end of an era in our city. On the first Monday of the New Year, Jan. 6, Hyde Park's Tom Menino will step down as Boston's Mayor, and Dorchester's Marty Walsh will be sworn in as the new chief executive.

Born and raised in Savin Hill, and the son of two Irish immigrants, the incoming mayor traces his lineage back to Connemara in County Galway. Just as comfortable in Rosmuc as on Dot Ave., Marty Walsh as a boy regularly spent summer vacations with cousins back in the old country. Indeed, his election in November was front page news in the Connaught Tribune and the Galway Advertiser, and a TV crew from Ireland's national broadcaster RTE was on hand to report on the election. The Irish language

broadcasters were excited to learn that Walsh is fluent in the Irish language – a linguistic skill not well known in the states!

Several Irish television and newspaper reporters are expected to be back in Boston to cover Walsh's inaugural festivities, and scores of Galway relatives and friends, including the current mayor of Galway, Padraic Conneely, are also planning to be in town for the historic occasion.

Boston College's Conte Forum will be the venue for the inaugural ceremony, a fitting place for Walsh, who graduated from BC after years of evening classes. Remarkably, he will be the first-ever mayor of Boston with a BC undergraduate degree. In fact, the year 2013 was a successful one in Massachusetts politics for Boston College graduates: Edward Markey succeeded John Kerry to become the first BC Eagle to serve in the US Senate, while Linda Dorcea Forry, a 1996 graduate, is the first woman to win elections to represent South Boston, along with Dorchester, Mattapan, and Hyde Park, in the State Senate. (Full disclosure: Senator Forry is married to my son Bill, and is the mother of four of my grandchildren!)

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It's a pretty safe bet that Mayor Walsh will make plans to visit Ireland sometime in his term, likely sooner than later. Ireland is easily the most accessible European destination for Boston tourists, with regular non-stop service from Logan, the overnight flight is just a little more than five hours, shorter than the travel time to LA or San Francisco. So the Irish can expect to see a few more visitors this year.

Even as the Irish economy seems to be trending in a positive direction, the country's tourism industry is celebrating the success of 2013, the most successful year in half a decade.

The Irish Tourist Industry Confederation (ITIC) is issuing a year-end report projecting that as many as 7.5 million visitors are expected to visit the island in 2014, with a projected 6000 more jobs in the industry, according to a report in the *Irish Times*.

The good news comes on the completion of last year's "The Gathering" promotion, developed by Tourism Ireland. That year-long drive saw more than one million visitors from North America, with 2.5 million more from the continent of Europe. It is estimated that as many as 2.9 million British visitors traveled to Ireland during the year.

The *Times* report said: "In an upbeat assessment of both 2013 and 2014, the Irish Tourist Industry Confederation (ITIC) says conditions for the industry are more benign than they have been for five years. ITIC chief executive Eamonn McKeon said, "all the lights are green for go" for next year with improving economies in Ireland's three biggest markets, the UK, the US and Germany. In no occasion in the past have we had a situation where the three top economies are all good at the same time."

## Commentary

# It has been a rough road for the Irish, but their economy is making it back

By JOE LEARY  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

The strength, tenacity, and courage of the Irish people in dealing with their own share of the world's collapsing economy in the 2007-2009 period should make Irish Americans very proud.

Yes, there were abuses and perilous risk-taking that made Ireland's problems more severe than that of most countries. But now, in January 2014, we can see real improvement, for which we must pay tribute to the intelligence and discipline of the Irish people. Irish Minister of Finance Michael Noonan TD put his tribute this way: "The real heroes and heroines of the story are the Irish people."



Joe Leary

Ireland is the first European country that found itself in serious trouble six years ago to right itself after suffering the effects of the misdeeds of its banking hierarchy. European fiscal managers have been unimpressed in their praise of Ireland's new ways of managing its budget system. This has been a hard earned lesson for politicians and businessmen that will hopefully be remembered in the years ahead.

Credit Ireland's current leaders and the loyal Irish people for the emerging, almost miraculous signs of real improvement in the country's economic prospects going forward.

According to Ireland's Central Statistics Office website, the unemployment rate is now down to 12.5 percent after reaching nearly 15 percent in the past three years. And Ireland's foremost business organization IBEC (Irish Business and Employee Confederation) forecasts a 2.8 percent growth rate in the national economy this year while noting that 60,000 more Irish brought home paychecks this past Christmas.

The National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) was set up by the government in 2009 to relieve the banking system of weak, unpayable mortgages so that new funds could be used more freely for growth projects. They took possession of hundreds of properties, paying the banks as little as 7 percent of the mortgage value, and are now selling those properties into a growing market, returning significant funds to the Irish Treasury.

## Off the Bench

# Thoughts on our arrival at Remission Junction

By JAMES W. DOLAN  
SPECIAL TO THE REPORTER

We recently got off the train after 18 chemo treatments, pulling into Remission Junction with the hope it will be a long stay. Many got off in good spirits as an unfortunate few were boarding the train, desperately hoping to return.

It was like a graduation ceremony as care providers greeted and congratulated those disembarking. A few tears were shed, testimony to the warm bond that develops between the sick and the dedicated group that looked after them on the journey.



James W. Dolan

There were smiles, hugs, and presents to mark a not-so-small victory. Staff and patients get to know each other on this train. The understanding and compassion of those who run it help to allay the fears and ease the pain of a wide array of passengers.

My wife was a ticket holder and I was along for the ride aboard the No. 9 Train on the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC) line. We both found the journey difficult but rewarding. Julie the infusion nurse, Marty the survivor/volunteer, and Leo and Linda at the front desk were just a few of the staff who worked to ease the hardships of the reluctant travelers. Confronting fear with hope, sorrow with comfort, and despair with encouragement, they make the burdens manageable.

The disease strips away thoughts of much that is superficial – the desire for wealth, power, and acclaim. Instead, the passengers embrace things of greater value – love, family, humility, courage, and grace under pressure. How one is sick is probably a far more honest version of oneself than how one is healthy. There is no place for posturing when among the seriously ill.

Someone once observed: "Service to others is the rent we pay to live on earth." Health care is the most direct of the service occupations, which also include teaching, social work, and spiritual guidance. Other occupations,

like politics, may offer the promise of helping others, but too often they are subverted by ambition, power, hubris, and greed.

As to the real estate market, Dublin housed prices are 48 percent lower than they were in the overheated year of 2007. But they have risen by 15 percent over last year. As if we needed more reassurance that Ireland was on its way back, Forbes magazine, the renowned USA Financial publication has named Ireland as the "Best Country for Business," citing a favorable business attitude, low corporate taxes, and government agency assistance as prime reasons for that recognition and adding, "despite economic troubles, Ireland still maintains an extremely pro-business environment that has attracted investments by some of the world's biggest companies over the past decade."

And one news blogger, David McWilliams, led his recent column with the headline, "Ireland's engines start to fire."

It should be recognized, however, that Ireland is still paying off huge debts as the result of the banking crisis. The exuberance surrounding the "Celtic Tiger" atmosphere a few years ago caused many problems the effects of which remain an issue today with the remaining debt. Retail prices, restaurant prices, golf course fees, and Irish salaries all skyrocketed. Tourists were shocked to see their hotel bills. One golf course in Southwest Ireland charged almost \$400 for a round of golf.

In a major effort to cut government expenses and pay off the huge debt employees have had their salaries and pensions cut by an average of 20 percent. As a group, the Irish, while complaining bitterly, have accepted the necessity of paying the country's debt which came into full view in 2009 as the government had to borrow nearly \$100 billion to keep the banking system afloat. Misguided and failing bank loans were crippling all development, and the government was running out of money.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the European Union (EU) advanced the funds on the condition that Ireland submit itself to regular investigations by EU and IMF personnel, a mandate that some saw as a loss of Irish sovereignty.

The government then set in motion a series of draconian austerity cuts to its expenses. And it worked! Just two weeks ago, on Dec. 15, 2013, the bailout conditions were lifted after an asset review process. While this doesn't mean that the days of austerity are, many of the European controls have been cancelled.

All of which is a major achievement for the government and the Irish people, and a source of pride for both.

Where is love in our obsession with guns? Where is it in failing to provide healthcare to everyone? Where is it in the economic inequality now so evident? Where is it in discrimination and bullying? Where is it in video games, violent movies, or the accumulation of things?

Love is central to the messages of Dr. Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa and, thankfully, Pope Francis. You find it in families, hospitals, churches, schools, and in the many acts of kindness of ordinary people.

There is more love, honesty and transparency on a cancer train than in the halls of Congress. Ideology is of little concern to the travelers or their care-givers. The simple yet beautiful act of caring for someone in distress is not a theory but a reality that must be confronted every day.

There is no "kicking the can down the road." The need is now, the consequences imminent. I learned a lot on the cancer train, lessons not often found on more pleasant excursions. In many ways it was an uplifting experience to see how we can care for each other when it matters.

In the words of a now deceased cancer patient:

*"This is as good a place as any  
To cling to life.  
Nobody wears their wigs here;  
Just baseball caps or stocking hats.  
All the externals have fallen away.  
Each face a star.  
Shining brightly, blessedly  
Through the encroaching darkness."*

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



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## Story of the Year

## A heart-breaking loss triggers a spirited response

The year's most indelible images, memories and emotions for the city — and certainly for Dorchester at-large — are connected to the April 15th terror attack on spectators and participants at the Boston Marathon. The bombings killed three and wounded hundreds more and the aftershocks of the two devices rippled across the nation and globe. But the epicenter of grief, in many respects, was here in our backyard, where the Richard family mourned the loss of their younger son, Martin, age 8, who was killed at the scene, while at once coping with grievous injuries to other family members, including Jane, age 7, who lost her leg.

The atrocity visited upon the Richard family made the assault on the city all-the-more personal for the entire neighborhood. Thousands poured into Neponset's Garvey Park for a hastily-organized prayer vigil on the day after the attack. Candles flickered inside paper cups supplied to mourners, many of whom shared classes or sports jerseys with young Martin and his siblings.

"It's just heart wrenching you know?" said Maria Del Tufo, 47. It's hard to fathom that it happened in the first place, but when

it's somebody in your neighborhood, and your hometown. And such a little boy that is so full of life and so happy."

In the days and weeks to come, the overarching sentiment of the collective response was one of respectful solidarity. The Richard family requested and received privacy. Neighbors raised funds, created heartfelt memorials, including a pitch-perfect Peabody Square ceremony in which the historic clock was stopped and then re-started a week later in honor of young Martin.

When the Richard family convened a memorial Mass at St. Ann church in June, the event was closed to the press but overflowed with familiar faces. Poignant remarks from Martin's dad Bill Richard heartened the resolve of the community that this family would carry on. The Richards later greeted a throng of mourners who waited in a long line to greet them at the schoolhouse next door.

The family later shared images and details of Jane's progress through the year as she took her first tentative steps again on an artificial limb fashioned for her at Dorchester's United Prosthetics. Thrust into the international spotlight



Martin Richard



Jane Richard Photos courtesy Richard Family

under the worst imaginable circumstances, the Richard family responded with grace, dignity and determination that continue to inspire this community.  
— BILL FORRY

A view of the throng who came out to Garvey Park on April 16 in a spontaneous show of support for the covictims of the Boston Marathon terror attacks.  
Photo by Chris LovettMayor Tom Menino and Sen. Elizabeth Warren were on hand for a ceremony marking the one-week anniversary of the marathon bombing on April 22.  
Photo by Bill Forry

## Point of View

On the passing of an Irish 'Prince of Players'  
Peter O'Toole met his goal: "To be the event!"

BY PETER F. STEVENS  
BIR STAFF

There was always that voice. Several years ago, I had the opportunity to speak with the legendary actor Peter O'Toole, who passed away last month at the age of 81, and I dare say that no one who ever talked to him in person or on the phone could ever forget his voice. No matter whether he was delivering cinematic performances for the ages in such films as "Lawrence of Arabia," "Becket," and "The Lion in Winter," or rendering the only notable scenes in several forgettable movies, that magnificent voice, his intense blue eyes, and a physical presence that captured every conceivable emotion and action made him arguably the finest actor of the past half-century. Despite all that, despite the fact that he was nominated eight times for Academy Awards, he never won. It is an appalling indictment of Hollywood that he has been dubbed "Oscar's biggest loser."

Peter Seamus O'Toole was born on Aug. 2, 1932, in Connemara, Co. Galway. The family eventually moved to Leeds, England, where his father, Patrick O'Toole, was a bookmaker and gambler. Years later, in an *Esquire* magazine interview with Gay Talese, the actor recalled, "When my father would come home from the track after a good day,



Peter O'Toole as Lawrence of Arabia in 1962, in a 1980 interview, and in recent years.

the whole room would light up; it was fairyland. But when he lost, it was black. In our house, it was always a wake...or a wedding."

As a teenager, O'Toole left school and took a job at the *Yorkshire Evening Post*, where he mulled a career as a journalist but opted against it. According to author Robert Sellers in "Hellraisers: The Life and Times of Burton, Harris, O'Toole & Reed," O'Toole said, "I soon found out that, rather than chronicling events, I wanted to be the event." He certainly accomplished that goal.

Following required national service in the Royal Navy, O'Toole set out to become an actor and landed a spot with the vaunted Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, where



his classmates included Albert Finney and Alan Bates. At the Bristol Old Vic Theater, a springboard for many acclaimed actors and actresses, O'Toole's gifts captivated audiences and reviewers alike, especially in such Shakespearian roles as his turn in the title role of "Hamlet."

O'Toole's foray from the classical stage to movies began in 1960 with small roles in "The Savage Innocents," "Kidnapped," and "The Day They Robbed the Bank of England." While the roles were minor, his presence and voice were not; they captured the attention of director Sir David Lean, who was casting for the lead role in his latest project — "Lawrence of Arabia." Lean decided to give the coveted part of the mes-



sianic and controversial World War I officer T.E. Lawrence to the talented but relatively unknown Irish-born actor.

Although the film, which would take some two years to film in seven countries, featured an A-list cast with such actors as Alec Guinness, Anthony Quinn, Omar Sharif, and Jack Hawkins, it was O'Toole's stunning performance that defined the movie and propelled him to international fame. His depiction of the tormented British war hero earned him his first Oscar nod, but even though "Lawrence of Arabia" earned the award for best picture of 1962, O'Toole lost to Gregory Peck for his role in "To Kill a Mockingbird."

Over the following years, O'Toole's breadth of talent filled the screen

in films such as "Becket," in which he played King Henry II to Richard Burton's portrayal of the title character; "The Lion in Winter," in which he again played Henry II with Katherine Hepburn as his wife; and a searing performance in "Lord Jim," a drama based on the Joseph Conrad novel. In "Goodbye, Mr. Chips," O'Toole played a shy teacher in love with a showgirl, and he enthralled audiences in 1972's "The Ruling Class" as a deranged, delusional English aristocrat who believed he was Jesus Christ.

O'Toole's prodigious talent was nearly eclipsed by his prodigious drinking. In the early 1970s, he made some poor choices for his roles, and many in the film industry believed that he would never reclaim his perch as one of the era's finest actors. In 1975, at age 43, his drinking caught up with him; he underwent emergency surgery for an "abdominal irregularity and nearly dying." He then quit drinking, telling the *Daily Mail*, "The time has come to stop roaming. The pirate ship has berthed. I can still make whoopee, but now I do it sober." With his characteristic wry candor, O'Toole added, "I loved the drinking, and waking up in the morning to find I was in Mexico. It was part and parcel of being

an idiot."

He played a strikingly O'Toole-like character as hard-drinking, womanizing, elegantly dissipated actor Allan Swann in "My Favorite Year" (1982), his touching and hilarious tour-de-force earning yet another Oscar nomination, his seventh. Number eight came for his poignant portrayal of a dying actor in "Venus" (2006).

In 2012, O'Toole announced his retirement from acting. "It is time for me to chuck in the sponge," he told the media. "To retire from films and stage. The heart for it has gone out of me: it won't come back. My professional acting life, stage and screen, has brought me public support, emotional fulfillment, and material comfort. It has brought me together with fine people, good companions with whom I've shared the inevitable lot of all actors: flops and hits."

Peter O'Toole's acting life brought audiences some of the most memorable performances in the annals of film and stage. In the 19th century, Edwin Booth was hailed as "The Prince of Players." It is not hyperbolic to acclaim Peter Seamus O'Toole as another "Prince of Players," a magnificent thespian whose art imitated life and whose life imitated art.

# Boston Irish Reporter's Here & There

By **BILL O'DONNELL**

**O'Malley Pauses Campaign For Mandela Tribute – Padraig O'Malley**, the professor of Peace and Reconciliation at the McCormack Center at UMass Boston, has spent his recent years lecturing but rarely in a university classroom but working feverishly on three continents to bring peace and respect for differences to a range of warring cities and their leaders. With rare exceptions, there is little public funding



Bill O'Donnell

for O'Malley's protean efforts, still the whirlwind of planning, travel, and meetings involved in bringing enemies together grinds on for the professor-activist with peace as his goal.

O'Malley has a vehicle he uses to promote reconciliation; he calls them Forums for Cities in Transition. One was held at UMass Boston in 2009, and it drew participants from cities like Kirkuk, Derry, Kosovska, and South Nicosia, among others. Another was held in Derry with participants from Beirut, Belfast, Haifa, Derry/Londonderry, Kaduna, Nicosia, and Ramallah, to name a few. The most recent forum was held in Kaduna, Nigeria, where there was violence in the streets outside.

Deeply involved for years in Northern Ireland, O'Malley has pressed on with his and the McCormack Center's campaign to bring a new era to a fractious Ireland. One of his earliest allies in the mid-1990s was **Nelson Mandela**. O'Malley believed that the peace negotiators in the North would hugely benefit from the guidance and participation of those South Africans involved in ending apartheid, especially the lynchpin of that historic agreement, Mandela himself.

The friendship and working relationship between Mandela (or Madiba, as he was known at home) and O'Malley resulted in the South African's significant role in the Irish talks, a critical point on the road to the Good Friday agreement. When Mandela died at age 95 on Dec. 5, Professor O'Malley was asked to be one of the principal eulogists. In memorializing the deceased, he said:

"In a life during which he endured much personal pain and loss with stoicism, Mandiba drew on reserves of solitude to make a stronghold for the mind; he forged a will outside the makeshifts of human society. He was often alone, but never lonely. He mourned for others, but never for himself. ... He faced evil; he tamed and endowed the country he loved so much, for which he sacrificed a lifetime with the gift of empathy. ... He took us down the path of truth and made us face ourselves, a task that was often ugly and loathsome, but a task that was necessary if we were to heal ourselves and move forward"

**Boston Hospital Aids All-Ireland Heart Surgery** – An international team of doctors led by Dr. John Mayer, a cardiac surgeon at Boston Children's Hospital, is leading a study to look into an All-Ireland plan for an integrated network of pediatric heart surgeons serving children throughout Ireland, north and south. At the present time, because of the limited number of heart patients served in Belfast and in the less-populated North, many patients from the North accompanied by their parents are forced to travel to Dublin or Britain for children's heart surgery. The hope is that an integrated system will allow several specialized hospitals and cardiac surgeons north and south to maintain their skills through regular work. One of the tenets of major surgery is that the more patients a surgeon sees and operates on, the greater the skill and positive surgical outcome. In recent years the imbalance has been extreme; surgeons in Britain see 300-500 cases a year compared to 60 surgeries last year in Belfast.

The study envisions a health service for pediatric heart surgeons who would work together to provide top quality with more convenient service for families living in the North. Ireland's health minister, James Reilly, says the aim is "to establish an integrated service for cardiology and congenital cardiac surgery for all the children of this island, based on international best practice."

**Pope Francis is on a Winning Streak** – How was your December? Whatever the month brought you, it likely didn't match the high ratings and global praise that the leader of the Catholic Church was basking in. The soaring papal popularity was highlighted in a poll conducted by the Washington Post and ABC News showing **Pope Francis** with a approval rating of 92 percent, and his church at a ten-year high of 95 percent. Soon after announcing his retirement, **Pope Benedict** had a 76 percent approval rating. Adding to the laurels for the Jesuit pope was his selection as Time Magazine's "Person of the Year," which came with a Time cover. Later in the month, he was on the cover of the New Yorker and the subject of one of that magazine's prized profiles. Not bad PR for his first year.

Now it hasn't all been a stroll through the lilies for Francis. The bishop of Providence, **Thomas Tobin**, said he was "disappointed" at the pope for something or other. But, then, the stern head of the Providence diocese was also critical of Nelson Mandela for his support for Abortion in South Africa. The bishop has every right, and maybe a duty, to call them as he sees them, but calling Mandela's actions as president "shameful" on the day the people of South Africa were burying their beloved leader was a mean-spirited low blow that could have waited until the man was in the ground.

But then what should we expect from Tobin, the publisher of the Catholic Weekly in Rhode Island who found space on his paper's editorial page for the thoughts and advice for children authored by the notorious Bishop **John McCormack**, the now retired bishop in New Hampshire and a well-known enabler from Cardinal **Bernard Law's** see-no-evil cadre when the Boston archdiocese was shutting abusive priests around to parishes in Massachusetts, to Texas, California, and elsewhere. Anywhere except to a grand jury and the courthouse. Casting stones can get to be a complicated process, it seems to me.

**'Twelve Pubs Of Christmas Crawl' Under Fire** – Not to be a spoilsport but it should be said (out loud, high decibel) that the holiday practice in Galway and some other watering holes is a tradition that deserves retiring. The idea of visiting a dozen pubs in a single day and having a shot of hard stuff in each bar, which involves many young tipplers, is a second cousin of the half-price happy hours that once were rampant here in the states. And it could be lethal. Some pubs have already called "time's up" for the practice and many parents feel a sense of dread shadowing their Christmas holidays. The head of the Psychiatric Nurses Association said it was the young people who were most at risk. On a personal basis from my younger days, I can still recall far too vividly seeing the bars in Somerville late on holidays nights emptying out and sending revelers on shaky legs home to wives and children and maybe an unfinished tree still to be decorated. There was a scant supply of happy times in those homes.

**A Word Of Praise for a Decent Man** – I met former Taoiseach **Albert Reynolds** just once briefly, and all these years later I remember a small man with a ready, genuine smile and outreaching hand. Of his official duties I thought he had less guile and more freedom from his own ego than many of his high-placed contemporaries. I knew he was involved with the emerging peace process, but knew little more than that bare-bones notion. So it was comforting in one regard to read several press accounts marking the 20th anniversary of the Downing Street Declaration, which was followed nine months later by the IRA ceasefire, and note the fact that one of the signers of that historic document was Albert Reynolds. He was not there for the recent ceremony at Iveagh House, where he was represented by his wife **Kathleen** and their four children, because, his son **Philip** said, he is in the "very late stages" of Alzheimer's disease.

The success of the Downing Street Declaration, most historians agree, can be attributed to the relationship of trust between the British Prime Minister **John Major** and the Albert Reynolds. Months of negotiations between the two leaders were successful in the main because the principals respected each other. **Bertie Ahern** is often described, even by himself, as the architect of the peace process, but it is important to say for the record that much of the success that Ahern enjoyed was a by-product of Reynolds's hard work and character. And, of course, a result of being in the right place at the right time

**Late Conversion By GOP On JFK** – One of the abiding characteristics of right wing politicians and their cheerleaders on fact-free radio, conservative news outlets, and during any given minute on Fox, is that they have so little regard for the truth. Deeply involved in calling attention to the almost nightly lies and omissions by Fox's **Sean Hannity**, and the self-created "excellence in broadcasting credo of **Rush Limbaugh** on weekday radio, is the citizen supported Media Matters, which assiduously monitors the media, particularly the right wing and tea partiers.

**Willie Sutton** robbed banks, he said, "because that's where the money is." Media Matters keeps a close eye and tape recorders listening to the nutty right because that's where lies, misrepresentations, willful omissions, and torrents of race-baiting and homophobia are found – but damn few corrections when they are caught with their zeal-driven fingers in the ideological cookie jar. Can my friends on the right withstand a few case incidences (circa 2013) on their side's love affair with **President John F. Kennedy**:

- **Glen Beck** (Nov. 22, radio): "Kennedy would be a Tea Party radical." He went on to say that JFK had been "co-opted by the left." Of course, and white-sheeted Klansmen were holiday revelers.

- **Rush Limbaugh** (Nov. 21, radio): Kennedy "was not in any way a liberal as you know liberals today" because JFK cut taxes and he was "proud to be an American." And Rush makes \$30 million a year spouting things like that and similar bilge.

- **Chris Wallace** (Nov. 17, Fox News Sunday): There's a growing body of thought that in fact President Kennedy was quite conservative." Wallace noted JFK's tax cuts. JFK's niece and Bobby Kennedy's daughter, **Kathleen Kennedy Townsend**, who was in studio with Wallace, laughed while pointing out that the 70 percent marginal tax rate that JFK favored was way above the current tax rate that conservatives claim is too high.

- The Boston Globe's **Jeff Jacoby**: "By any reasonable definition [JFK] was a conservative."

The record on President Kennedy is that all during his incomplete presidency, he was viciously attacked by conservatives. "Wanted for Treason" flyers were much in evidence in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963, offering sentiments similar to those used today by the nutty right in describing **President Obama**. Kennedy's support for the United Nations was in sharp contrast to today's conservatives, who loath that institution and its supporters.

**Haass Visit North Not A Smooth Trip** – **Richard Haass**, the special US envoy and head-banger, has had better trips to Northern Ireland than the ragged, up-and-down negotiations he has been trying to score on with this most-recent visit. He has proposed a number of ideas for a new Northern Ireland flag that most unionists/loyalists, in a word, hate! He has also suggested authorizing licenses for flag display on government buildings. That proposal was DOA, as has been the case with most of the flag-related remedies offered.

Another idea the hard-working Haass is to create an "all embracing body" (as the *Irish Times* puts it) to deal with Troubles-related killings. This body would superimpose itself as a central clearing house whereas at the present time such investigations are tended to by the police (PSNI), the police Ombudsman, and the Historical Enquiries Team. The Haass team has also proposed a body or board to replace the controversial Parade Commission.

First Minister **Peter Robinson** of the Stormont government has been testy, but up until mid-December he was listening to, if not delighted with, what he has been hearing and reading. His latest remarks re the Haass proposals have been harsh but hypothetical, with him saying he would be outraged if proposals for dealing with unresolved issues were not finalized or not revised.

A reminder: the purpose of the Haass intervention is three-fold but that can get lost amidst the pages and paragraphs of new, expanded, and edited proposals. The aims are: To resolve the deeply rooted divisions in the North over flags and parades; their protests; and the past. And Haass would like to wrap things up by the end of *this* year.

## RANDOM CLIPPINGS

Not so comforting to see that Black Friday and its relatives shake out the same here or in Dublin. An array of tempting sales in Fair City shops and department stores have Irish women "stamped"

Through stores, grabbing cut-rate TVs out of each other's arms. People to hospitals amid sales riots. Just like the old Filene's Basement. ... The Fluties are back. **Troy Flutie**, Darren's son and Doug's nephew and a senior at Natick HS, threw seven touchdown passes in his last high school game, setting all sorts of school and state records. Next stop: Boston College. ... Flying today is a horror show, an endless loop of middle seats and luggage fees, but if the airlines approve cell phone use in flight, I might never take a vacation outside of New England. ... Why should AARP send me a donation slip for their "Foundation" when they have revenues (membership fees and licensing) of half a billion a year. Who's kidding whom? ... The other shoe for Taoiseach **Enda Kenny** re a possible European Union presidency has dropped and he says he was flattered but he is staying put. ... That overpriced fool and photo-op hound **Donald Trump**, who escaped his padded cell twice in the past to show interest in presidential campaigns, is talking about challenging NY Gov. **Andrew Cuomo**. Attention must be paid, says candidate Trump. ... Irish cadets, eleven of whom were graveside in November 1963, came back to Arlington for the 50th. ... Ryanair's **Michael O'Leary** is mellowing as lower fees and more liberal baggage rules have eased. ... A well-deserved shout-out to Roche Brothers and the West Roxbury Business & Professional Association for their free food gift deliveries to the needy and seniors there. ... The Police Chief of the World, **Bill Bratton**, is Mayor **Bill deBlasio's** pick to head up the NY police. This is his second time leading the cops there. ... A lot of good news out of Ireland amidst the plight of the struggling punters: Forbes Magazine is ranking Ireland "as the best country in the world in which to do business." Wow! ... Between 1906 (**Jimmie Collins**) and 2013 (**John Farrell**) the Red Sox have had twenty managers of Irish descent. And Italian **Terry Francona** may be the best ever. ... Good to see Mayor-elect **Marty Walsh** walking back his early harsh words about the BRA (where I once roosted). Many talented staffers and creative ideas can be found on the ninth floor. ... All the attention at the passing of **Nelson Mandela** reminds some of us that Mandela was an early visitor to Boston because we took a principled stand against apartheid. ... Was anyone out there shocked that an auction of **Curt Schilling's** property failed to attract interest in the former 38 Studios flagship video game? ... President Obama was boxed about the head and shoulders on Benghazi and the "scandal" at the IRS, but the Administration House deserves a hit at the phone-tapping of the AP wire service and the current policy of news photos shot, controlled, and distributed by the White House. Silly and unnecessary! That's so Nixonian, Barack. ... Belt-tightening or something else? The US is consolidating its embassy in Italy and the one in the Vatican in one Roman location. ... Lies & more lies: Rush Limbaugh continues saying that Americans don't support the immigrants' so-called "Path to Citizenship" despite a major poll showing that 63 percent of us favor it. The Big Lie lives in Roger Ailes's attic. ... Victoria's Secret has opened a shop in Terminal A of the Dublin Airport, its first store in staid Dublin. ... Galway's Christmas market, opened before the holiday, drew a record 85,000 on the first weekend. ... The Catholic League's caped crusader, **Bill Donohue**, is standing alongside Rush L. in the latter's attacks on the pope. Donohue has described the film industry as "controlled by secular Jews who hate Christianity in general and Catholicism in particular" Not my choice to speak for Catholicism. A homophobe and racist. No thanks. Catholics can do better.

# BOSTON IRISH REPORTER

BOSTON IRISH ARTS,  
ENTERTAINMENT,  
TRAVEL & MORE



"I've played these songs for quite a while," says Tom Courtney about his album "Guysborough Train," released this past year. "I wanted to record them with the sense that I'm giving something back, and saying 'Thank you for writing these great songs.'" *Bob Morin photo*

## Tom Courtney's first CD is a thank you to those who helped his music take off

BY SEAN SMITH  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Dublin native Tom Courtney regards his debut CD as a tribute album of sorts: an expression of gratitude to songwriters and singers who have inspired him the most since he started performing seriously more than two decades ago.

"I've played these songs for quite a while," says Courtney, a Boston resident since 1991, who released the 10-track "Guysborough Train" this past year. "I wanted to record them with the sense that I'm giving something back, and saying 'Thank you for writing these great songs.'"

It's a distinguished roster of songs and authors, to be sure: the title track, as well as "Bluenose" and "Mary Ellen Carter" by the late Stan Rogers, one of Canada's finest folk-singers; "No Man's Land (Green Fields of France)" by Australian Eric Bogle, also known for "The Band Played Waltzing Matilda"; "You'll Never Leave Harlan Alive" by Darrell Scott; "Sonny's Dream" by another esteemed Canadian songwriter, Ron Hynes; "Desperados Waiting for a Train" by Texan Guy Clark; and "John O'Dreams" by Bill Caddick, with an assist from some guy named Tchaikovsky.

There are also two traditional Irish songs that have become classics in their own right, "Cliffs of Doonee" and "Rose of Allendale."

If you're a habitu  of Irish pubs and the like, chances are you've heard most, if not all, of these songs – and not necessarily in the best possible way – but on "Guysborough Train," Courtney gives them new luster. Aided by his co-producers and arrangers Dave Mattacks and Mike Barry, Courtney fashions a crisp folk-rock sound centered around his acoustic and electric guitars. Mattacks – a stalwart for many years in the legendary Fairport Convention – makes another key contribution on drums, percussion and keyboards, heading up a tight rhythm section along with bassist Richard Gates and pianist Dave Limina. The Irish/folk flourishes are supplied by Boston-area fiddler Larry Young and whistle player Pat Broaders, a childhood friend of Courtney who has played with bohola and now Open the Door for Three.

Most of all, Courtney sings the songs with a straightforwardness and restraint that is refreshing. He doesn't try to oversell them, or go all out to tug the heartstrings or quicken the pulse;

he lets the songs do the work. And the dominant qualities in each one comes forth: the tender, sheltering nature of "John O'Dreams"; against-all-odds resilience in "Mary Ellen Carter" (and yes, Courtney trots out its well-known guitar lick halfway through); muted outrage in the elegiac "No Man's Land"; the emotional toll of the familial obligation vs. personal ambition tug-of-war in "Sonny's Dream"; and the bittersweet tumbleweed nostalgia of "Desperados Waiting for a Train."

"I didn't want to do them like they've always been done," says Courtney. "I went back and listened to different versions before I committed myself to a particular arrangement. Really, though, I wanted to evoke the songs' original sounds – the way I do 'Sonny's Dream,' for example, is closer to Ron Hynes' version than most anything else I heard."

"Dave and Mike were great to work with, and a big help in putting it all together. My feeling was, these are all strong enough songs to stand on their own, and they supported that idea."

"Guysborough Train" also serves as a kind of anthology of the influence that North American blue-collar country/roots (Continued on page 12)

## The grand finale at BCMFest will feature Celtic dance

Celtic dance – in both a traditional and contemporary vein – will be the focus of the BCMFest Nightcap, the grand finale for the 11th annual BCMFest (Boston's Celtic Music Fest), on Sat., Jan. 11.

A grassroots celebration of local Irish, Scottish, Cape Breton, and other Celtic music, BCMFest takes place over two days at venues in Harvard Square. The festival is a program of Passim, the nonprofit folk and acoustic music-oriented performance and education center.

The BCMFest Nightcap, which will begin at 7:30 p.m. at First Church, Cambridge, 3 Church Street, will feature solo, duet, and group performances of dances from Ireland, Scotland and Cape Breton. Accompanying the dancers – some of the most accomplished in the Greater Boston area – will be a "house band" comprising similarly top-

notch local musicians and singers. Local radio personality Brian O'Donovan of WGBH-FM's "A Celtic Sojourn" will serve as emcee.

Masterminding the concert are two of the Boston area's most eminent traditional-style dancers, Jaclyn O'Riley and Jennifer Schoonover. O'Riley has studied Irish step dancing at University College Cork with dancing master Peggy McTeggart and locally with Kieran Jordan, an acclaimed performer and teacher of several styles of percussive dance. It was through Jordan that O'Riley was inspired to learn the rich improvisational tradition of *sean-n s* dance, and the old-style step dancing which has influenced modern, competitive step dancing. In 2010, she began her own Irish dance program for children, with a goal of teaching dancers who know how to interact with musicians and other (Continued on page 10)



Uilleann piper Paddy Keenan, above, will kick off the spring slate of Gaelic Roots events this month with Jimmy Noonan. Page 11. *Sean Smith photo*

## The Murphy Beds: Laid back, but also deceptively elaborate

BY SEAN SMITH  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

The Murphy bed is one of those quintessential Irish-American success stories, born (allegedly) of romance and determination. As legend has it, San Franciscan William L. Murphy came up with his namesake invention at the turn of the 20th century because it was improper for a gentleman to host a lady in a room containing a bed – which made wooing his intended difficult, since he lived in a one-room apartment. So he devised a special hideaway bed to turn his bedroom into a parlor, got himself a patent, and did very well for himself; the company he founded is still in operation.

The Murphy Beds, the New York City-based duo of Massachusetts native (and sometime Boston resident) Jefferson Hamer and Dublin-born Eamon O'Leary, may not have the same historical or cultural impact as William L.

Murphy's creation, but it, too, is an Irish-American success story, on its own terms.

During the past 18 months, Hamer and O'Leary (when not pursuing other projects and collaborations) have performed at venues in New York, Washington, DC, Philadelphia, Ireland, and here in the Boston area at The Burren in Somerville; the duo will be back in town Feb. 14, when they play The Paradise. They've also released a 10-track CD that very effectively captures their laid-back yet deceptively elaborate, quietly mesmerizing arrangements of mainly traditional Irish and American songs.

The format for their material is largely consistent, with Hamer on guitar and occasionally mandolin, O'Leary on bouzouki and sometimes guitar; they sing in close harmony – O'Leary has a slightly bassier voice, (Continued on page 11)



The Tony Award-winning musical love story, "Once," plays Boston's Opera House from January 7 - 19.

Photo by Joan Marcus

## Playwright Walsh hails the magic of 'Once'

(Continued from page 1) adaptation of Roald Dahl's "The Twits" for a run at The Royal Court Theater, a play with Cillian Murphy for London's National Theatre plus a new Broadway project.

Speaking by phone from his home in London, Enda said, "I've done the odd movie, but theater for me still holds that draw. It's still extraordinary when you get it right. It's still, for me, the most beautiful and the most dangerous medium."

Here's a condensed look at our conversation about "Once," coming to Boston's Opera House from January 7 - 19.

**BIR:** Boston audiences feel a kind of ownership for "Once," considering it all began with a workshop at the American Repertory Theatre in 2011. Audiences just fell in love with the show's intimate, bittersweet magic.

**EW:** It rarely, rarely happens. I've been making work now for about

16 years ... and this was one of the moments where the alchemy was really right ... I swear there was just something about us all living together. First of all, it wasn't our own town. We were all sort of on top of one another and meeting and socializing and trying to make the work and talking about it ... And making a work about people who are transient in a city. Immigrants in a city, really, who are rubbing up against one another and forming friendships ... there was a lot of correlation between what we were going through and what the characters were going through ... It became much, much bigger than the sum of its parts.

**BIR:** The musicians are jamming on stage as the audience comes into the theater. Was that a choice from the beginning?

**EW:** That came really, really early. Actually that was (director) John Tiffany's initial (idea) to do it, and I balked at it

originally. I thought it was a terrible idea. I thought it was just a gimmick. I said I think you should just begin it in black, and then the characters start. I was interested in the story happening from no space. From a space that wasn't charged from something already. John, a great director, he went "No, no, no. It's much larger. It's about forgetting about musical theater and what's been presented before and really showing the bones of it."

**BIR:** And you have an actual, working pub on stage for the audience.

**EW:** Opening up the space to be used by an audience - I didn't understand until we got to the end and could feel how audiences were reacting to it. We're telling one love story on stage, but somehow, by handing it over to the audience, you're allowing a thousand love stories to bounce off one another ... It's most extraordinary

- you can feel people in the audience bringing their own love story to it, their own experience. It's an amazing thing.

**BIR:** Most theaters want to keep the public completely away from the performance area. Have there been any issues with people socializing too much on stage?

**EW:** Yeah, there's been a bit of that (laughing). There's guitars all over there and banjos, and a number of times we've had people grab a guitar and try to play along. The thing about it is, that would have been fine in a session, but actually some of the guitars are tuned (laughs). And lots of dancing. You know, it's the sweetest thing. Watching an audience get up there and be excited about it and go "Geeze, we're going to watch a story unfold and already our feet have been on it. We've been in the world, been in the space."

**BIR:** I've read that you believe good theater is

created more on the stage than on the page.

**EW:** Absolutely. We believe in ensemble and we believe in actors. Believe the power needs to be in the stomach of the actors. If (the play's) in any way sort of "authored" by the director or the writer or the designer, it just doesn't seem correct ... There's great power for the actors ... It's that great thing about theater. It's only true to the effort of the actor, sort of pushing words into space and taking it forward that the thing happens and the magic begins to happen.

**BIR:** Great theater really has that ability to transport, doesn't it.

**EW:** There are so many variables in the air. And there's that thing that it's such a daft medium, you know? It's all complete make believe. It's all lights and sets and pretending. But there's something that happens, with the deal that an audience comes, and there's



Dublin-born playwright Enda Walsh, winner of the Tony Award for "Once" playing Boston's Opera House from January 7 - 19.

that suspension of disbelief, of just going in and watching the imagination of that world happening in front of you. When you get it right, it's an extremely powerful medium.

R. J. Donovan is Editor and Publisher of [onstageboston.com](http://onstageboston.com).

\*\*\*  
"Once," Jan. 7 - 19, The Opera House, 539 Washington Street, Boston. Tickets: 1-800-982-2787 or [BroadwayIn-Boston.com](http://BroadwayIn-Boston.com).

## The grand finale at BCMFest will feature Celtic dance

(Continued from page 9) dancers and to encourage a lifelong appreciation for the tradition.

O'Riley has performed with "Atlantic Steps," an international *sean-nós* dance show organized by Connemara dancer Brian Cunningham, and has collaborated on projects with friend and fellow dancer Rebecca McGowan in Washington, DC - the two are performing at BCMFest 2014 as part of the production "Stepping Back." She also occasionally choreographs both solo and group pieces, and calls dances at weddings and ceilis.

Schoonover has performed Scottish dance at Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, and "Good Morning, America," and appeared at the Chestico

Days stepdancing festival in Cape Breton; she also was a co-choreographer for Bonnie Rideout's national production, "A Scottish Christmas." Her local performances include the Gaelic Roots festival at Boston College and the New England Folk Festival Association, as well as BCMFest as a member of Highland Dance Boston.

In addition, Schoonover has been active in modern dance, appearing at the Theater Outlet in Allentown, Pa., The Irondale Ensemble Project and Voice and Vision Theater in New York City, and as part of the Back Porch Dance Company and the Willing Suspension Players in Boston.

"Over the years, these dance traditions have fulfilled a number of roles," says O'Riley. "A dance

might be a 'party-piece' someone would share at a gathering of friends and family. Or perhaps it was for a competition, or - as has been the case in more recent years - used in a performance setting, perhaps with influences from other kinds of dance, like tap, modern or even ballet. And of course, in addition to solo dances there are also duets and more social-type dances that are part of the tradition."

Adds Schoonover, "In this concert, we hope to celebrate the symbiotic relationship of music and dance. Music is at the root of these dance traditions, where dancers often contribute to the music with sounds they make with their feet. In turn, dance has historically fueled musical forms. The two have always been intertwined,

and we're looking forward to putting them together again in the spotlight."

Joining O'Riley and Schoonover are Jordan and Kevin Doyle, a performer of old-style traditional Irish step dance and American tap dance whose resume includes "A Christmas Celtic Sojourn," as well as Abbie MacQuarrie, a former member of Highland Dance Boston.

Among the musicians slated to take part are John Coyne (bouzouki, vocals), Mairin Uí Cheide (vocals), Joey Abarta (uilleann pipes), Chris Stevens (accordion, concertina), Neil Pearlman (piano) and Katie McNally (fiddle).

BCMFest 2014 begins on Fri., Jan. 10, with the "Roots and Branches" concert at Club Passim,

which will feature NÓIR (Torrin Ryan, Mark Oien and Stuart Peak), Cat and the Moon (Kathleen Parks, Ricky Mier, Eamon Sefton, Elias Alexander and Charles Berthoud), and the trio of Mark Kilianski, Bronwyn Keith Hynes and B.B. Bowness. Also that night will be the Boston Urban Ceilidh, at The Atrium (50 Church Street), featuring participatory and social dances from the Irish, Scottish and Cape Breton traditions, all with live music.

The festival continues on Saturday with children/family-oriented entertainment in the morning at Club Passim, followed by concerts and participatory events at Passim and First Church, Cambridge. Performers include: Matt and Shannon Heaton; Liz Simmons; Katie McD; Owen

Marshall and Lindsay Straw; Flynn Cohen and the Deadstring Ensemble; Jenna Moynihan; Joey Abarta; Skylark; Realta Gaela; Sparrow's Joy; Oran Mor; Highland Dance Boston; *sean-nos* singers led by Bridget Fitzgerald; Step About Boston; Fresh Haggis; Diane Taraz; Lindsay Adler; Elizabeth and Ben Anderson; Molly Pinto Madigan; Wisp of Thistle; Royal Scottish Country Dance Society; Alba's Edge; Sean Smith; SoundShapes - a special performance of Irish music and dance featuring Kieran Jordan and Sean Clohessy - and Jigs & Saws.

Updates on BCMFest 2014 performers and events, and other details about the festival, are available at [passim.org/bcmfest](http://passim.org/bcmfest).



Hamer says that recording the Murphy Beds CD with O'Leary "really encouraged us to create, and helped us define what we wanted to be."



The Murphy Beds – Jefferson Hamer, left, and Eamon O'Leary – performing at The Burren in Somerville last year. Sean Smith photos

## The Murphy Beds: Laid back, but also deceptively elaborate

(Continued from page 9) blessed with Dublin accent and intonation, while Hamer is a little higher up on the register and with no obvious affectation to his vocals.

When it comes to song selection, The Murphy Beds boast a distinguished pedigree: some from the repertoire of traditional singers like Donegal's Lillis O'Laoire ("Rise Up, My Darling"), Arkansas' Almeda Riddle ("The Old Churchyard") and the redoubtable Paddy Tunney of Fermanagh ("Lovely

Willie"); others from classic song collections, like that of the aforementioned Francis Child ("Bonny George Campbell") or Sam Henry's *Songs of the People* ("Sweet Bann Water" and "The Nanny Boy"); and for good measure, the well-traveled 19th-century composition by W.T. Wrighton and J.E. Carpenter, "Her Bright Smile Haunts Me Still," one of those songs that resides equally comfortably among Irish, American, and British singers.

There's a pastoral, un-

hurried feel to the music here, but at the same time the interplay between Hamer and O'Leary gives their sound complexity and depth: The exquisite instrumental breaks in, for instance, "Rise Up My Darling" and "Lovely Willy" recall the fretted-string intricacies of 1960s/70s Irish revivalists like Planxty, Sweeney's Men and De Dannan. At other junctures, such as their take on "Come In (The False True Love)" and the lovely old hymn "The Old Churchyard,"

you hear the distinctly American side of their joined musical personalities, and it all seems perfectly natural and unforced.

"I've always preferred a recording where there is a sustained mood," says O'Leary, "instead of those where you're treated like someone with a short attention span: 'Here's something fast. Now here's something slow. Now here's lots of noise.' We were going for a unity of sound."

Adds Hamer, "I like the idea that every album is a 'concept album'—and that means you stick with the concept."

Well-matched as they are, Hamer and O'Leary took different paths to traditional music. O'Leary's was perhaps more conventional: During his teens, he befriended the Mayo family from Mayo, who were very much rooted in the tradition. "None of them played guitar, but I could, so I started learning traditional music in that role," he says.

O'Leary began spending time in New York City during the 1990s—moving there for good in 1994—and became a fixture in the city's Irish scene, performing and touring with numerous musicians. He appeared on the 2004 album "Live at Mona's" along with Patrick Ourceau, Dana Lyn, Cillian Vallely, Brendan Dolan, and Susan McKewon, among others.

Hamer credits a college professor of his for directing him toward folk music. "In class, he mentioned Jethro Tull, which was a band I liked. When I talk-

ed with him, he told me, 'If you like Tull, you should check out Fairport Convention, or Martin Carthy, or, Richard Thompson, or Steeleye Span.' So I started listening to those guys, and that got me going in the direction of folk and acoustic music. But when I got a guitar, I actually went to playing bluegrass first. So I was learning American, English and Irish folk music all at the same time, and that gave me a broad base in which to work; I was able to draw from lots of different sources."

Hamer's ecumenical approach has led him to collaborations with the likes of local fiddler-vocalist-songwriter Laura Cortese and, more recently, with singer-songwriter Anaïs Mitchell, resulting in the widely acclaimed CD "Child Ballads," an assortment of new, Americana-influenced adaptations of English and Scottish folk songs found in the venerable collection of ballads by Harvard professor Francis J. Child.

In 2008, Hamer made his way to New York City, and it wasn't long before he crossed paths with O'Leary. "The thing is, New York is a big city but a small town, in the musical sense," O'Leary explains. "If you're into old-timey or bluegrass or Irish or anything along the lines of folk/acoustic, you meet eventually."

As it happened, the two first met at a mutual friend's house, and discovered that each had a fondness and familiarity for the other's native music. "I knew Eamon played Irish, which was certainly

of interest to me, but I was surprised at how much he loved country music—I think a lot of Irish musicians share an enthusiasm for classic American songwriting. So we found ways of connecting outside Irish traditional music."

O'Leary adds, "I just love good songs, and there is a lot about American folk that attracts me. As everyone knows, you get a lot of crossover between Irish and American music, so it's not that big of a stretch for me."

Hamer and O'Leary originally began playing together as part of a quartet, but after a time realized they had a good enough rapport to work as a duo. They came up with a repertoire and decided to make the CD, so they set up recording gear in Hamer's apartment and went on from there. "The act of recording really encouraged us to create, and helped us define what we wanted to be," says Hamer.

A key decision in the process, says O'Leary, was "not to do overdubs, because once you do something like that it opens the floodgates. Doing it straight forced us to be creative: How can we get the maximum effect out of two voices and two instruments? 'We felt that, if you treat each song the same, you bring out what's best about them.'"

Now, having made their metaphorical and musical bed, O'Leary and Hamer are content to lie in it as often as is possible. "We do have a lot of things going on," says Hamer, "but we definitely enjoy playing in this groove."

## Gaelic Roots spring schedule is set

Uilleann pipes virtuoso Paddy Keenan and Boston College faculty musicians Jimmy Noonan and Sheila Falls will be among the performers featured during the spring 2014 Gaelic Roots series of traditional music that starts this month.

Directed by Sullivan Artist-in-Residence and master fiddler Séamus Connolly and sponsored by the Boston College Center for Irish Programs, the series brings to campus acclaimed musicians and experts in Irish, Scottish, and other related Gaelic music traditions.

Gaelic Roots events, all of which begin at 6:30 p.m., are free and open to the public.

Keenan—a found-

ing member of the Bothy Band, a pioneering group in the 1970s Irish folk music revival—and Noonan, an acclaimed and award-winning flute and tin whistle player, will present a concert on Jan. 25 in the Walsh Hall Function Room.

On Feb. 3, Connolly and BC Irish dance teacher Kieran Jordan will lead a participatory Irish dance and ceili evening in the Gasson Hall Irish Room, with student and local musicians.

The Western Massachusetts-based trio Mist Covered Mountains will make its Gaelic Roots on Feb. 27 with a concert in the Walsh Hall Function Room. The band—fiddler Donna Hébert, vocalist Molly Hébert-Wilson and

guitarist-vocalist Max Cohen—performs music from Celtic traditions and contemporary sources, and last year released the album "This Distant Shore."

Falls, a former fiddle student of Connolly, will appear on March 27 in the Walsh Hall Function Room with Mark Roberts, a solid performer on guitar, flute, bouzouki, banjo and other instruments. Among their many individual musical activities, Falls and Roberts have both been regular members of the fiddle supergroup Childsplay, which tours annually in the Boston area.

For more about Gaelic Roots, see [bc.edu/gaelic-roots](http://bc.edu/gaelic-roots).



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## CD Reviews

BY SEAN SMITH  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

**Liz Carroll, "On the Offbeat"** • Let's get this out of the way first, and fast: No, John Doyle does not appear on this album – counting the CDs they've made as a duo, it's the first time since 1988 he hasn't played on one of her releases (excluding Carroll's recordings as part of Trian and the String Sisters). If that's a disappointment to you, you'll get over it very quickly once you start listening to "On the Offbeat."

Not that Carroll hid her All-World fiddle talent under the proverbial bush in any of her work with Doyle, but here she is truly front and center, and her power, control, plus her sheer ability to wring seemingly every possible tone and emotion from her instrument, are at full deployment. Carroll's faculty for composition also is in the spotlight: With one exception, every tune on "On the Offbeat" was written by her. (Oh, and her flair for naming tunes is pretty impressive, too: "Barbara Streisand's Trip to Saginaw," "The Fruit and the Snoot," "The Yellow Pantsuit," "Go Ahead, Back Up," to name a few.)

She doesn't do it alone, mind you. Her supporting cast of Beoga's Sean Og Graham (guitar), Catriona McKay (harp), Natalie Haas (cello), Chico Huff (bass), Keith Murphy (guitar, piano), Solas' Winifred Horan (fiddle) and Seamus Egan (mandolin, percussion) – he also produced this fine CD – and Trevor Hutchinson (bass) individually and collectively seem to fire, and simultaneously draw on, Carroll's artistry.

In fact, the album reflects associations and activities in which Carroll has engaged over the past several years, notably her involvement with "A Christmas Celtic Sojourn" and the fiddle

ensemble Childsplay (whose most recent album she produced). There are some intriguing experiments with rhythm and meter, such as in "The Fruit and the Snoot/On the Offbeat," "The Wolf/The Duck" (the first tune is divinely histrionic, like the soundtrack for one of those sumptuous Golden Age of Animation cartoons; Carroll describes the set as "an imagining of different tunes for some of Prokofiev's protagonists") and – in a fine example of closing the circle – a set of tunes ("Liam Childs/Balkin' Balkan/The E-B-E Reel") she originally wrote for dancer Molly Gawler's performance with Childsplay, and which wound up on Childsplay's 2009 CD "Waiting for the Dawn"; the concluding tune in the set features a bracing double shot of fiddle from her and Horan.

"Tinsel," meanwhile, is a delicate melody with a structure and mood that hints of Scandinavia, Horan and Haas providing superb embellishment. Similarly, for the reel medley "W.T.'s 97th/Bar Hopping/Kelly's Roadhouse," Carroll duets with McKay, whose nimble, exotic style gives the set a transformative charm.

The one non-Carroll tune on the album, the traditional "Yellow Tinker," gets a decidedly non-traditional treatment, as an unaccompanied Carroll slowly and haltingly makes her way in before putting things into gear, tossing out a few "did-she-really-just-do-that?" variations and turns that Vassar Clements would've loved to call his own.

## Courtney's first CD is a thank you note

(Continued from page 9)

music has had on Irish singers like Courtney, who came of age in the 1970s listening to the likes of Rory Gallagher and Thin Lizzy but also was drawn to trad-oriented acts like Planxty – in fact, Andy Irvine was a neighbor of his.

"Dublin was a thriving place for music when I was growing up," Courtney recalls. "But it wasn't so much the traditional stuff – the old tunes and songs – that was the big deal, although it was certainly around. You'd go into a pub and people would be playing Woody Guthrie, or Johnny Cash, or Stan Rogers or especially Guy Clark. I learned 'Desperados' when I was 16, and have been playing it ever since.

"There's a connection, obviously, for Ireland with America and Canada, what with all the emigration over the years. But I also think those songs by writers like Stan Rogers and Guy Clark – about ordinary folks trying to make a living and triumph over hardship – really struck a chord with Irish people, and just became a part of the culture."

Although Courtney has extensive performance experience that includes not only Dublin but also London and other parts of the world, nowadays he is a "part-time" musician, playing nights at Boston-area venues like Mr. Dooley's, the Kinsale Pub, Waxy O'Connor's in Lexington, or O'Neill's in Salem after a day's toiling as a real estate broker. While he jokes how "it took forever – like two decades – to make the album," he is more serious about the role music plays in his life, and the relationships it has enabled him to cultivate.

"I can't say enough what a pleasure it was to work with Dave and Mike, and all the other musicians, on the CD. It's great to have the opportunity to get to know people like them, and fortunately, through playing music I've been able to do that for most of my life."

Yet this is Carroll, after all, so you know that at the core of all this innovation and experimentation are unimpeachable trad credentials. It's not so much that she's pushing out at musical boundaries – for Carroll, there are no boundaries, but a series of interlocking domains in which there are seemingly endless possibilities.

**Colleen Raney, "Here This Is Home"** • When does a Very Good Singer become a Great Singer? Well, if you're Portland, Ore., resident Colleen Raney, that time would seem to be now, and "Here This Is Home" – her fourth album – definitely helps the cause.

Her earlier releases, including "Cuan" (2011), showed Raney as a singer possessed of a rich, hearty, inviting and unaffected voice, and a familiar-enough repertoire taken mainly from traditional Irish, Scottish and English ("Lord Franklin," "Mary and the Soldier," "An-nachie Gordon," "Western Highway," "Wild Mountain Thyme"). On "Here This Is Home," there are subtle, delightful advances: a little more depth to her voice, a certain extra attention given to her delivery, perhaps, and a more discerning song selection.

No small reason for the appeal of "Here Now Is Home" is the presence of guitarist-vocalist Aidan Brennan (he's played with folks like Kevin Burke, Susan McKeown, and Loreena McKennitt), who also served as producer, and string-bassist Trevor Hutchinson (Lunasa, The Waterboys, Sharon Shannon), who did the recording and mixing. They are part of an ensemble that also includes Johnny B. Connolly (accordion), Steve Larkin (fiddle) – the interplay between Connolly and Larkin is particularly outstanding – Colm O'Caoimh (piano, harmonium), Dave Hingerty (drums, percus-

sion) and Aaron Jones (bouzouki), working in tight, pleasurable arrangements that compellingly support the vocals.

And those vocals are a treat. As if Raney's solos aren't outstanding enough – on the sweetly lamenting "Boys of Mullagh-bawn"; "The Lovely Green Banks of the Moy," a tribute to Michael Davitt, Irish firebrand turned non-violence advocate; "The Granemore Hare," which is high on everyone's list of Best Melodies for a Traditional Irish Song Ever; the melancholic, sublime "Nightingale," and in particular poet Vince Woods' emotionally complicated "Sanctuary" (with solemn solo piano backing by O'Caoimh) – her duets with Brennan are fresh and invigorating. They put new, energetic turns on traditional staples "Canadee-I-O" and "The Cruel Brother," as well as Joseph Kavanagh's "Colliery Boy," and are at their arguable best on the gently resolute "Stand Up for Love," Brennan's setting of another Woods composition. (Mention also must be made of the infectious "Lassie with the Yellow Coatie," on which Hanz Araki assumes backing vocal duties.)

Raney has often referred to her familial roots in Ireland as a source of enduring inspiration, and having recorded the album in Dublin, it's clear she is – quite literally – at home with her music.



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## Traveling People

## The Ireland I know: A list of my favorite things

By JUDY ENRIGHT  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

A new year has dawned, bringing with it the potential for many new adventures for us all – hopefully they'll be pleasant, fun, and memorable adventures.

We like to start the year by mentioning some of our favorites with the thought that readers might find them enjoyable, too, when visiting Ireland.

## FAVORITES

• Ireland has amazing ancient churches, friaries, and ruins where you can spend hours reading inscriptions on tombstones and admiring detailed carving, architecture, and Celtic crosses.

In Co. Offaly, the Clonmacnoise monastic settlement, founded by St. Ciaran in 548, is awe-inspiring and well worth visiting. There, on the eastern bank of the Shannon, you can see the ruins of a cathedral, seven churches (10th-13th century), two round towers, three high crosses, and the largest collection of Early Christian graveslabs in Western Europe.

In 2016, another historic site, Ballintubber Abbey in Co. Mayo, will celebrate the 800th anniversary of its founding by King Cathal O'Connor. Ballintubber is the only church in Ireland founded by an Irish king that is still in daily use. Mass has been said there every day since 1216.

Ross Errilly Friary in Co. Galway, founded in 1351, is said to be the most extensive and best preserved of all the Franciscan friaries in Ireland and, even though it's a ruin, it is still beautiful and worth a look.

In Co. Clare, the Kilfenora Cathedral sited next to The Burren Centre is another interesting ruin. The cathedral, with five high crosses, was built around 1190 on the site of an earlier monastery, and is dedicated to St. Fachtnan.

Those are some favorites but there are many, many more to visit as you'll discover when you drive around.

• Irish shopping is another of my favorites. Outstanding crafts are sold in many fine stores and visitor centers. Some of my favorite shops for unique gifts are: in Co. Mayo, The Beehive in Keel, Achill Island (where you can also get a delicious, fresh lunch); O'Reilly & Turpin in Westport (a fun town to walk around in); and Seamus Duffy's Bookshop on Bridge Street in Westport. In Co. Galway, I have found great gifts at Kylemore Abbey's beautiful shop ([shop.kylemoreabbeytourism.ie](http://shop.kylemoreabbeytourism.ie)); Cottage Handcrafts in Moyard ([cottagehandcrafts.ie](http://cottagehandcrafts.ie)); and at the Clifden Bookshop ([clifdenbookshop.com](http://clifdenbookshop.com)). Many stores in Ireland have websites now but many still do not.

## DONEGAL

• In Co. Donegal, I am always drawn to the buzz of the interesting and bustling port of Killybegs with its colorful fishing boats, piles of nets and



Fishing boats docked in colorful Killybegs Harbor in Co. Donegal.

buoys, and scenic harbor. If you stay in that area, there is a great restaurant nearby – Kitty Kelly's ([kittykellys.com](http://kittykellys.com)) - where we enjoyed the food and excellent service. Be sure to make a reservation, though, as Kitty Kelly's is always busy.

When you're up in Donegal, a visit to the nearly 40,000-acre Glenveagh National Park, one of six national parks in Ireland, is highly recommended. Glenveagh, once owned by several Americans with Harvard University connections, was officially opened to the public in 1986.

The story behind many of Ireland's landmarks is often as interesting as the landmarks themselves. John George Adair (1823-1885), a Co. Laois native, built Glenveagh Castle in the 1870s. He made much of his fortune in the US and owned a ranch in the Texas Panhandle. In 1883, its peak year, the JA Ranch had more than a million acres in portions of six Texas counties as well as 100,000 cattle.

In 1869, Adair married Cornelia Wadsworth Ritchie, daughter of James S. Wadsworth, a Union general in the Civil War. On returning to Ireland, Adair bought large tracts in Donegal and set about building the castle and estate.

American Henry Plummer McIlhenny, grandson of an Irish immigrant who

invented and developed the gas meter, was the last private owner of Glenveagh Castle. He bought the property in 1938 from his Harvard professor, A. Kingsley Porter, after renting it for several summers. McIlhenny sold most of the land to the Irish state in 1974-75 for a national park and gave the castle and gardens to the Irish state in 1979 while retaining the right to live there for his lifetime.

McIlhenny had many Boston area connections. He studied at Milton Academy, graduated from Harvard, and completed a graduate degree in art history at the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard. He served as the curator of decorative arts at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (for an annual salary of \$1) from 1935 to 1963 with time out for four years in the Naval Reserve during WWII. He regularly used Glenveagh as a part-time residence until 1982 and died in Philadelphia in 1986.

Be sure to visit the extraordinary gardens at Glenveagh to see the variety of exotic plantings and magnificent rhododendrons. Tours and booklets are available at the visitor center. The gardens are primarily attributable to McIlhenny, who personally supervised their development from 1937 to 1983.

## OTHER FAVORITES

• In Co. Cork, if you are

looking for a great place to take the family, be sure to stop by Fota Wildlife Park, a joint project between the Zoological Society of Ireland and University College Cork (UCC). The park, opened in 1983, was an idea originally conceived in the 1970s by a former director of the Dublin Zoo, Dr. Terry Murphy. Animals were chosen based on their ability to roam free, mix with other species, and thrive in the free-range environment. It's a fun place to visit and there were some fascinating animals there that I had never seen before – like the capybara.

While in Co. Cork, we also enjoyed the Cobh Heritage Centre, Donkey Sanctuary in Liscarroll, Jameson Distillery in Midleton (we had a delicious lunch at the Distillery and a great dinner that night at Farmgate Restaurant in Midleton), and Kinsale, the gourmet capital of Ireland. Be sure to tour West Cork, too, for gorgeous coastal scenery, great accommodation, and great food.

• In Co. Tipperary, the Rock of Cashel is a "must see" and in Co. Meath, be sure to visit Newgrange, Knowth, the Hill of Tara, and Trim Castle.

• Northern Ireland boasts many splendid attractions, too. Don't miss the Giant's Causeway, Dunluce Castle, Ballintoy Harbor, the Carrick-a-

Rede rope bridge, or the many historic homes and glorious gardens there. Visit [discovernorthernireland.com](http://discovernorthernireland.com) for details on these and other tourist attractions, accommodations, and more.

• In Co. Kerry, my favorite accommodation is Heaton's Guesthouse ([heatonsguesthouse.com](http://heatonsguesthouse.com)) in Dingle. Heaton's is clean, welcoming, and comfortable, with beautifully appointed rooms and delicious meals. I have stayed there a number of times and have always had an excellent visit.

• If I were to name my absolute favorite Irish hotel, I wouldn't hesitate to say it's the lovely, small, and homey Lough Inagh Lodge Hotel in the Inagh Valley, Connemara. Rooms are large, bathrooms have been updated from bathtub-only to walk-in showers, the food is delicious, and every member of the staff acts as though you are a family member coming home. In short, it's a wonderful place to stay, dine, or visit. A friend with a time-share in Barna stopped there for lunch one day last summer and then returned for lunch every day that she could manage thereafter because she and her traveling companion were so impressed.

There's a lot to do at and near Lough Inagh too – golf, fishing, hill-walking, and more for the athletic types. For the artistic, there's a watercolor workshop at Lough Inagh with accommodation included by Rosemary Burns ([rosemaryburnspainting.com](http://rosemaryburnspainting.com)) - usually several times a year.

Kylemore Abbey, a great place to visit, shop, and dine is nearby as is Clifden, a nice little town to walk around and dine at Mitchell's, my favorite seafood restaurant. The late, great Peter O'Toole was said to have owned a place near Clifden and was often seen in the town.

• B&Bs are plentiful everywhere, but a few of my favorites are Cahergal Farm (very near Shannon airport) and Riverfield House in Doolin, both in Co. Clare, and Helen and Christopher Kelly's

wonderful Lough Bishop House in Co. Westmeath.

• Favorite castle accommodations include Dromoland (also very near Shannon Airport) and Ashford in Cong, Co. Mayo. Red Carnation Hotels bought Ashford last year for 20 million euro. During the high-flying Celtic Tiger years, Ashford was sold by a group of American investors for 50 million euro to Galway-based property developer Gerry Barrett, but the hotel went into receivership in 2011. During the boom years, Ashford guests were reputed to be lavish spenders - one wedding party reportedly spent 250,000 euro on flowers alone and helicopters were a common sight ferrying guests in and out. The asking price for Ashford was 25 million euro before Red Carnation clinched the deal for 5 million less and bought the hotel. Today, most of the Ashford's guests are American, with the greatest number coming from California.

This year, Ashford celebrates its 75th year as a hotel. Noel Huggard, from a family of Co. Kerry hoteliers, bought the property from the Guinness family trust and opened the estate as a hotel in 1939. He bought 18th-century Ballinahinch Castle in Connemara 10 years later. At one time, the Huggard family owned seven Irish hotels – Ashford and Ballinahinch Castles, The Lake Hotel, The Royal in Valentia, Caragh Lake Hotel, The Bay View, and The Butler Arms in Waterville.

• Another favorite – this time for my rental car - is Dan Dooley ([dandooley.com](http://dandooley.com)) and my favorite car in Ireland is a Skoda – automatic, of course. I have heard that other car rental companies are less expensive, but I am happy to pay a bit extra for the security of having a vehicle that is so well-maintained and backed by outstanding Dooley personnel who are friendly, helpful, knowledgeable, and totally top-notch. I once rented from another company and discovered that someone had been sick in the back seat. The evidence had not been very well removed.

• Great pubs abound in Ireland where food is usually good and reasonable. A couple of West Coast favorites are the Granuaile in Newport, Co. Mayo, and McDermott's in Doolin, Co. Clare. You can find top Irish food products – like St. Tola Goat Cheese and Cashel Blue, Burren Smokehouse salmon, and other products - in stores across the country. My favorite store there is Tesco – their store brand products (the fish pie is divine) are excellent and the variety is amazing.

## TRAVELING

Here's hoping you were lucky enough to get tickets to Ireland for the holidays and, no doubt, you'll return from your trip with your own list of favorites. Be sure to visit Tourism Ireland's website - [discoverireland.com](http://discoverireland.com) - for events, accommodation, and more on the Emerald Isle and enjoy Ireland whenever you go.



Even the black-faced sheep on Achill Island, Co. Mayo, like to stop by The Beehive in Keel.

## The Irish Language

by Philip Mac AnGhabhann

**Bliana Mhaith Úr Dhuibh** -- "Happy New year to You-all!"

Until now I have avoid the grammatical term, **Nominative Case**. Not because it is difficult but I don't believe in throwing the names of technical grammatical categories around. Actually, the **Nominative Case** is quite simple. The term "Case" tells you that it is applied to **nouns**. The **Nominative Case** or "Naming Case", is the form that you will find first in a dictionary – the form used as either the subject or direct object of a sentence.

**Tá Cait ag caint le Nora.** "Kate is talking to (with) Nora." Here both "Kate" and "Nora" are in the **Nominative Case**. You can substitute any noun in the **Nominative Case** for "Kate" and "Nora" – **Tá an garda ag caint le an múinteoir** "The policeman is talking to (with) the teacher".

The reason that you now know what the **Nominative Case** is so that you can understand when some one quotes the rule, "The Genitive Singular is the same as the Nominative Plural and the Nominative Singular is the same as the Genitive Plural." This is best illustrated by the word **cat** /kaht/, "cat."

- Chonaic cat an madra**  
/HON-ehk kaht uh MAHD-ruh/  
"A cat saw the dog."
- Chonaic cait an madra.**  
"(Some) Cats saw the dog."
- Chonaic madra súil na cait.**  
"A dog saw an eye (of) the cat."
- Chonaic madra súl na cat.**  
"A dog saw eyes (of) the cats."

Or even better ...

Singular		Plural
Nominative:	<b>cat</b>	<b>cait</b>
Genitive:	<b>cait</b>	<b>cat</b>

This rule does not take into account all of the "irregular Genitives" although it does apply to many if not most.

- bean** /ben/ "woman"
- mná** /mrah/ "women" / Genitive singular
- beaince** /BAYNK-uh/ Genitive singular

In these cases (pun intended) you will have to memorize them – but I will be sure to tell you the Genitive. Most of these are **nouns** making plurals ending in **-(e)anna** and are newer words in Irish. Now, did you notice how this column began? **Bliana Maith Úr Dhuibh!** "Good New Year to You-all!" Here is another example of dialects in Irish. The "Official Irish" is that recognized by the Irish Government and used in all governmental documents and in Irish courses taught in schools with the blessing of the Irish Ministry of Education. The **Cois Fhairrge** or "Sea Coast" dialect is the one spoken in Galway where the majority of native speakers now reside.

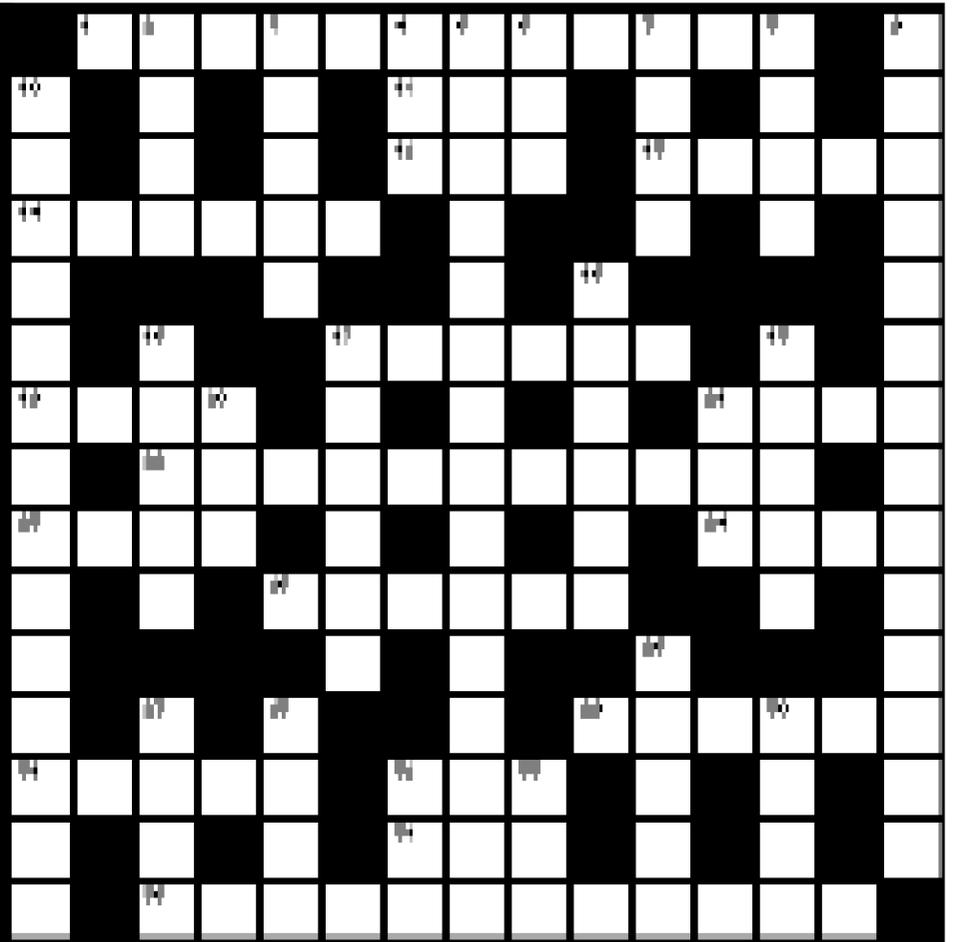
The difference is in the pronunciation of the initial consonant of the **Prepositional Pronoun, d-** in "Official" but **dh-** in **Cois Fhairrge**. We will not concern ourselves with the vowel sounds for now. **Dh-** represents a sound which does not occur in American English (nor in many other dialects of English). It is a "g-like" sound made with the top back of the tongue not quite touching the roof of the mouth, characterized by some as a "gargled g". From here on we will represent this sound by the Greek lower case "Gamma" /ɣ/, a "v" with a little loop on the bottom, not to be confused with the English letter "y" as in /yee/.

Official	Irish	Pronounced	Cois Fhairrge	Meaning
				Pronounced
<b>dom</b>	dohm/	<b>dhom</b>	/ɣohm/	"to me"
<b>duit</b>	/dooch/	<b>dhuit</b>	/ɣooch/	"to you"
<b>dó</b>	/doh/	<b>dhó</b>	/ɣoh/	"to him"
<b>di</b>	/jee/	<b>dhi</b>	/yee/	"to her"
<b>dúinn</b>	/doon/	<b>dhúinn</b>	/ɣoon/	"to us"
<b>daoibh</b>	/deev/	<b>dhaoibh</b>	/ɣeev/	"to you-all"
<b>dóibh</b>	/dohv/	<b>dhóibh</b>	/ɣohv/	"to them"

In the February column we will review the uses and the rules associated with the preposition **do** "to" or "toward" and how to tell it from its homonyms.

## CELTIC CROSS WORDS

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



## IRELAND IN CROSSWORDS ©-bigwood.com

**ACROSS**

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

**DOWN**

2. One nut I cracked. (4)
3. Peruvian pack animal seen coming back through Tuam all alone. (5)
4. Upset trash can to find the means of writing. (3)
5. Oh, R.U.C. tour ban row. (anag.) North Wexford seaside resort near Gorey with a 2 mile sandy beach. (8,7)
6. "Go to the -- thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise." Proverbs Chap. 6 verse 6 (3)
7. Sound of Ireland's first republican? (4)
8. "Nothing is -- done in this world until men are prepared to kill one another if it is not done." Shaw (4)

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

(Solution on page 15)

## Irish Sayings ...

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

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# For local teams, stunning in a rear-view look

By CLARK BOOTH  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Clearing the decks soon to be draped in holly as the clock runs out on what's been another banner year in sports—especially if you hail from New England!

The scorecard for 2013 is stunning! A spectacular championship in baseball. In hockey, a precious near-miss as tender as any Cup might be. A festival of world-class dramatics in football that has become routine in the Belichick/Brady era. And if in basketball we had to accept the end of an era, your team, given its history, need never apologize.

In years like this, you should wonder what it's like living in Cleveland, Milwaukee, or Atlanta. Which is why one finds intolerable the spoiled yuppies hanging out in Foxborough when they gripe about officiating, or those inveterate bores from The Nation when they whine about the psychic sores they retain from the 1949 baseball season. Tell them they should move to Seattle!

Without question Jameis Winston was the nation's best college football player, and yet his winning by a landslide of the Heisman Trophy only further cheapens that once-fabled bauble to the point where it ought to be retired out of respect for those who won it validly once upon a time. Winston is the third highly controversial winner in the last four years.

Vaguely cleared of very serious legal charges against him, the 19-year-old freshman QB from Florida State has every right to ply his trade, which will be soon enough in the NFL where he belongs. But his now-anointed status as a collegiate icon is ludicrous, like everything else connected with Big Sport on America's campuses.

A remarkable 115 of the 900 sportswriters and broadcasters who voted for the Heisman this year left Winston off their ballots. That's a lot; in fact it's an unprecedented rebuff to a winner. So maybe the cheerleaders are waking up. And maybe next year the cow will jump over the moon.

Further in the realm of no-brainers, few will



This acclaimed photograph taken on the night of Oct. 13 by The Boston Globe's Stan Grossfeld as David Ortiz's eighth-inning home run soared into the visitors' bullpen in Game 2 of the American League championship series says it all about the 2013 Red Sox: A winner to beat all.

quibble with the Veteran Committee's selection of the three baseball managerial tenors – Brothers Torre, Cox, and LaRussa – for the Hall of Fame. As well as deserving, they are highly popular picks and Cooperstown ever craves to appease the popular fancy. But was it necessary now, their first year of eligibility?

Bolder, even smarter choices might have been characters who've been waiting patiently for their turn, including a fascinating trio, each of whom had genuine historical impact: Marvin Miller, whose continuing rejection borders on the scandalous; George Steinbrenner, who is certainly as worthy as Tom Yawkey; and the chap who is No. 1 on my list, Tommy John. How the electors can deny the superior craftsman John, the winner of 288 games while playing a historic role in sports medicine, remains beyond me.

Choosing Miller, Steinbrenner, and John would have required a bit more imagination, along with a deeper sense of history, and would have, thereby, been, may I politely suggest, more impressive.

With their garrison finishes of late, the swash-buckling Patriots owe us nothing in terms of entertainment. It's as if their playbook were taken from the Perils of Pauline. But does this bode well for the post-season? Not likely.

More to the point, of their seven thrilling and epic finishes this season, three resulted in losses, with two of them to teams presumed to be decidedly inferior. You should keep

in mind that save for a handful of flukes, they'd be 6-8.

A finely orchestrated parity is the work of genius in the other three major games, yet professional basketball survives with very little of the stuff. Rules have been rigged in the other leagues to promote the equitable distribution of talent in the pursuit of as high a degree of competitive integrity as possible. But in basketball such efforts have failed miserably.

So with the NBA season near a third over, you have three of the six division races virtually decided, only two of the fifteen Eastern Conference teams having winning records, six teams serving as doormats with miserable winning percentages of less than .300, and the Boston Celtics leading their division with an 11-14 record (as of the writing) and little likelihood of much improving. This is astonishing, and probably unprecedented in modern pro sport; all of it.

How a league can survive with such disparities and so little competitive balance defies explanation. But the Celtics, as

the lucky beneficiaries of this woeful imbalance at the moment, are not likely to demand answers.

Well known as a class act and team guy, etc., Dustin Pedroia isn't likely to demand a re-opening of his contract negotiations now that he will be earning less than half of what Robinson Cano will drag down in Seattle. Nor is it a knock on Cano to note that most baseball GMs, given the choice, would prefer the spunky lad who plays for Boston.

Cano may have greater talent, but there's something special, indeed rare, about Pedroia much as was cited about Derek Jeter over the years when he was oft compared with A-Rod. You can safely bet Pedroia will remain mum on the matter. But, it's fair to ask, what was he thinking?

On the other hand, it's fair to wonder what Cano was thinking when he lamented that the Yankees had "disrespected" him by only offering a seven-year deal for \$25 million per. Was there no one in his witty entourage able to advise, 'Don't go there'.

Regarding the severe suspension and censure the Bruins' Shawn Thornton got socked with for his smack-down of the Penguins' Brooks Orpik. Yes, a stiff penalty was in order. Thornton, as he himself has entirely acknowledged, bolted well over the line. But a 15- game suspension was too stiff; 10 was sufficient, 12 at the most. Keep in mind that the Buffalo roughneck who ambushed and concussed Louie Ericksson earlier this season got only six, although the incident was equally nasty, with the Sabre, unlike Thornton, being a repeat offender.

Moreover, lowering the boom on Thornton fails to take into account the

totality of that particular evening's nastiness, beginning with Orpik's hit on Eriksson, which ignited the unpleasantness. It was vicious and should have been penalized. The deliberate attempt by another Penguin to injure Marchand of the Bruins was another huge factor. That offending Penguin also got suspended – six games – mainly because he's also a repeat offender. Finally, there was the matter of a Penguin defenseman deliberately slashing the Bruins' Kelly, breaking his ankle, an ugly incident that went un-penalized because none of the four on-ice officials noticed. Maybe they need six.

Kelly will be lost two months. The Penguin who attacked him has been identified but not even questioned, let alone punished. It's unclear how long Eriksson will be sidelined, but it'll be longer than Orpik, who appears near to returning at this writing. Having sustained two concussions in less than two months, the very clean-playing and non-violent Eriksson will be at considerable risk henceforth.

Maybe it's impossible to precisely adjudicate these messy scenarios. They might defy the wisdom of a Solomon. But vaguely there remains the sense this one was fumbled while the intrinsic complexity of these situations is not being properly understood, let



**Sports Clark Booth**

alone factored. In the end, the stigma Thornton now permanently bears seems further unfair. But to go much beyond that suggestion is to appear to defend what I don't wish to defend.

There are no easy answers. It may be convenient for bombastic newspaper columnists to declare justice is being done here. But they are wrong. And mounting the soapbox on this issue is always suspect. I'm thinking of a local scribe in particular who has loftily denounced sporting violence as represented in the Thornton case. Most impressive! Now he can go back to fawning over his first love, the National Football League.

On that complex and admittedly uneven note may we conclude this year's ramblings. They seem consistent with the nature of the times, sporting and otherwise. And to all, a Good Night!

**PUZZLE SOLUTION FROM PAGE 14**



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