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BOSTON IRISH REPORTER

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BIR Luncheon honors Rep. Neal, Bob & Mary Muse family, Brendan & Greg Feeney

The Boston Irish Reporter, the region's leading chronicler of all things Irish-American, will host "Boston Irish Honors 2012" on Fri., Oct. 19, in the main ballroom of Boston's Seaport Hotel. The annual event draws an appreciative audience of some 400 top Boston business and civic leaders and officials of Boston's many Irish social and cultural organizations.



"The Irish Reporter is pleased to host this third annual Boston Irish Honors celebratory luncheon," said Reporter publisher Ed Forry. "In keeping with our own heritage, the newspaper will give special recognition to the Muse family, an exemplary Irish American family

who shares our common Boston and Irish roots; to Congressman Richard Neal, for his outstanding leadership in Congress; and to Brendan and Greg Feeney, who emigrated from Sligo 30 years ago and have built their firm, Feeney Brothers Contracting, a leading excavation firm." This year's anniversary luncheon committee is chaired by Dave Bresnahan, the president of Lexington Insurance.

The Muse family is one of Greater Boston's leading Irish-American clans and its members have spent much of their lives working on issues of peace and justice in the North of Ireland and here in Massachusetts as well. Bob Muse Sr. played an instrumental role in pursuing justice following the Bloody Sunday massacre in Derry. Bob and his wife Mary, a retired Massachusetts Probate Court judge, their children and grandchildren have distinguished themselves in a wide variety of fields.

Congressman Neal will receive his Boston Irish Honor for his outstanding work on behalf of Irish-Americans, Ireland, and the peace process. Neal, who serves as the Democratic Leader of the Friends of Ireland in Congress, is a past recipient of the International Leadership Award by the American Ireland Fund.

Brendan Feeney and Aidan (Greg) Feeney are natives of Co. Sligo who have built a thriving and well-respected contracting business in Boston over the last 30 years. Feeney Brothers Excavation — launched as a two-man operation in 1988 — has grown into one of New England's leading utility contractors, with well over 200 employees headquartered in Dorchester. The brothers also founded and co-own three outstanding establishments in Boston — Ledge in Lower Mills, Sweet Caroline's in Fenway and Slate in downtown Boston.

The inaugural Irish Honors event in 2010 honored Congressman Edward J. Markey; John Donohue, the CEO of Arbella Insurance; the Brett family; the Hynes family; and the Geraghty family. In 2011, honorees included State Sen. Tom Kennedy, the James and Jean Hunt Family, the Mulvoy Family, and the Corcoran family.

Boston Irish Honors 2012 Committee members include Dave Bresnahan, Event Chair; Robert E. Sheridan, founding event chair and Matthew Power, 2011 chair; and Michael Lonergan, Consul General of Ireland. Luncheon tickets, at \$150 each, are on sale now. Call the Reporter at 617-436-1222 or send an e-mail to BIRHonors@bostonirish.com for reservations.

Assessing the prospects for an emerging Ireland

Irish American Partnership takes to road to check on opportunities and difficulties

By JOE LEARY

SPECIAL TO THE BIR

A group of 14 Irish American Partnership members, including several Bostonians, traveled to Ireland recently to learn for themselves about the difficulties and opportunities facing the Irish people in these difficult economic times. In an extraordinary tour, the visitors made 21 stops and talked with some 60 Irish leaders, North and South, over four and one half days.

Sunny, ideal Irish weather was the order of the day throughout the trip; transportation was by a luxurious bus; and Irish hospitality was in evidence everywhere.

Politicians, educators, community leaders, schools and officials from both governments honored the Americans at every stop. John Murray of New Jersey, chairman of the Irish American Partnership, and his fellow members — eight from the Boston area, three from Ireland, and one each from Washington DC, New Jersey, and Virginia — received detailed and valuable information that is not usually available to the average visitor.

This was a strenuous, hard-working trip for the members, who were on a mission to assess the value of Partnership funding in Ireland and the extent of additional funding in



Above, one of the many sessions involving members of the Irish American Partnership and Irish officials (in this case a meeting with members of the Northern Ireland Legislative Assembly) that took place during the Partnership's mission to Ireland in August. Below, "The Wishing Hand" by Sculptor Linda Brunker, which is located in the courtyard outside of the Department of Education & Skills in Dublin.

Josephine Shields photos

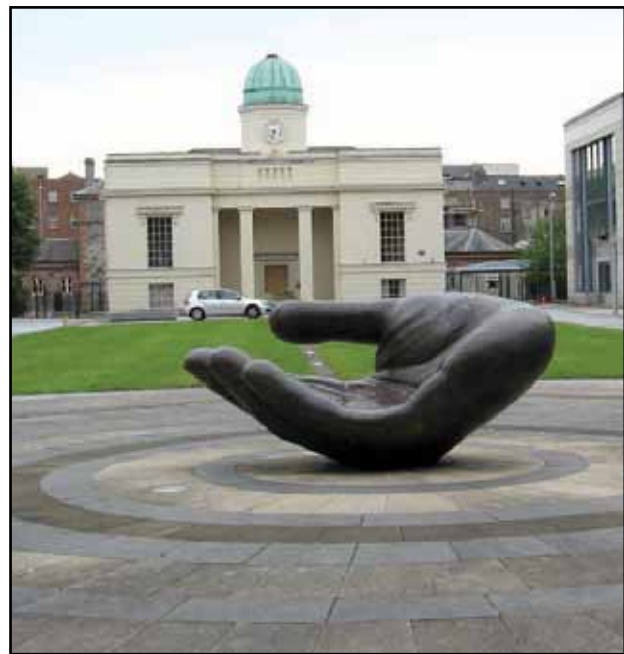
the years ahead.

Partnership Directors Liam Connellan of Dublin, Charles Donahue of Boston, Tom Nicholson of Virginia, and Partnership Executive Director Mary Sugrue McAleer assisted Chairman Murray in delivering \$55,000 in grants to Irish schools and training centers.

Other mission participants were Gil Sullivan, Sean Moynihan, Mary Henderson, John Holian, and Josephine Shields of Boston; Monique Miller, of Washington DC; and Niall PowerSmith of Dublin.

The visitors used the opportunity to focus on three areas:

(Continued on page 5)



'The Gathering' draws near

By ED FORRY

BIR PUBLISHER

Ireland's Minister for Tourism Leo Varadkar was in Boston Sept. 28 with officials of Tourism Ireland to talk about the official launch of "The Gathering 2013 — Bring it Home," a major marketing effort to encourage tourism across the 32 counties

next year.

In an exclusive interview with the BIR on Sept. 7 at Tourism Ireland's offices just off Dublin's St. Stephen's Green, TI executive director Niall Gibbons explained the government's vision for the year-long promotion.

"The Gathering is a very exciting initiative," Gib-

bons said. "It's the biggest tourism initiative in the history of the state. It's going to take place in 2013. It has been in preparation through a lot of this year and it's going to be a very exciting time for anybody coming to visit Ireland."

He explained that the effort is "the invitation, really, from Ireland to the

world, to visit Ireland in 2013, and it's not just (for) the diaspora although they form a very important part of it. There are 80 million people around the world who claim Irish heritage, 44 million in the United States alone. There are more than over six million in Britain, and

(Continued on page 3)

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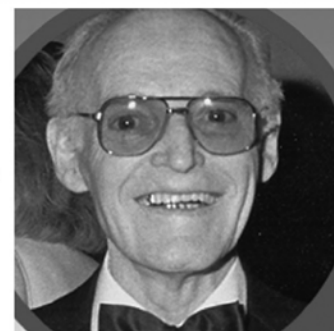
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DCR's Mother's Rest, South Boston • 9:00 AM

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The 5K2Play Run, walk, or jog will be raising money in order to make essential changes to the Michael Joyce Memorial Playground at Marine Park in South Boston. Help us rebuild the playground to better reflect the great man that it is dedicated too. For more information, sponsorships and registration visit www.JoycePlayground.org

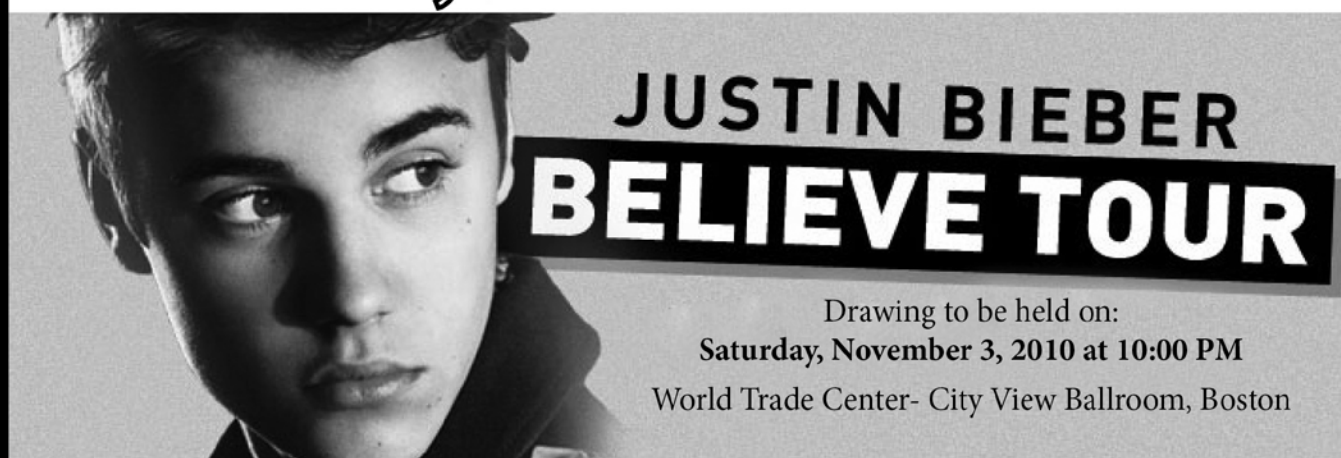


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Weekend to remember for Tip O'Neill's clan

By LIAM FERRIE
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

BUNCRANA, Co. Donegal –The late Tip O'Neill was no doubt looking down with a huge smile on his face on events in Buncrana on the first weekend of September. His lifetime achievements were being acknowledged by the people of the County Donegal town near which his grandmother was born and it was all taking place in the presence of his many descendants, including his sons Tom and Christopher and daughters Susan and Rosemary.

More than 80 members of the O'Neill clan, including spouses and prospective spouses, traveled from the US to participate in the celebrations and to meet their Irish relatives, who trace their ancestry back to the siblings of Eunice (Unity) Fullerton, Tip O'Neill's grandmother, who was born outside Buncrana and emigrated to the US as a young woman.

Buncrana is proud of the O'Neill connection, and Donegal County Council decided in 2012 to launch the "Annual Tip O'Neill Donegal Diaspora Award" in his honor. The council, which actively connects with its Diaspora, wished to celebrate the life and achievements of the US politician on the centenary of his birth. The award will be presented each year to a member of the worldwide Irish diaspora and will be a recognition and acknowledgment, here in Ireland, of the success and achievement that he or she has attained in his or her chosen field.

On Fri., Sept. 8, before an invited audience at the Inishowen Gateway Hotel in Buncrana, the inaugural Tip O'Neill Donegal Diaspora Award was presented to the New York-based publisher Niall O'Dowd. In making the presentation, Pat Hume, wife of the Nobel Laureate John Hume, referred to O'Dowd's success with the Irish Voice newspaper and other Irish-American publications, his campaigning on behalf of undocumented Irish immigrants, and his efforts to facilitate the peace process through his contacts with US politicians.

Mrs. Hume herself received a standing ovation when she stepped up to the podium, the audience recognizing the unsung role she played over the years while her husband devoted all his energies to bringing an end to violence and while improving the lot of all the citizens of the North.

Prior to the main event Michaela O'Neill Daniel, Tip O'Neill's granddaughter, formally presented Irish American Partnership Bursaries to five primary schools in the Buncrana area.

After the formalities were over it was time to relax over a buffet dinner, make new friendships, take time to dance, or just listen to the music. Before the night ended John Hume enthralled those present with three songs, one in Irish, one in English and one in French.

On Saturday morning some 200 people turned up to listen to the first annual Tip O'Neill Diaspora Lecture, "Legacy, Leadership, Diaspora", delivered by Professor Paul Arthur of Ulster University.

The professor of politics captivated his audience



The O'Neill clan gathers with Taoiseach Enda Kenny in Dublin on September 6. Pictured, l-r: Michael O'Neill, Jr., grandson of Speaker O'Neill Thomas P. O'Neill III, son of Speaker O'Neill, Shelly O'Neill, Thomas P. O'Neill III's wife, Taoiseach, Rosemary O'Neill, daughter of Speaker O'Neill, Sarah and Peter O'Neill, the Speaker's grandson, Leigh O'Neill, granddaughter of the Speaker, Thomas P. O'Neill IV, grandson of the Speaker.
Photo courtesy Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs

with his account of how Tip O'Neill and John Hume, with the support of a few other leading Irish American politicians, transformed Ireland's relationship with the White House. While Irish America had become more influential on local issues over the decades, the White House always followed London's lead when it came to political differences between Britain and Ireland.

According to Professor Arthur that started to change in 1977, thanks to the wisdom and influence of Tip O'Neill, who was being advised by John Hume. It was, he argued, that change in the relationship between the US and Ireland that ultimately facilitated a successful outcome to the peace process.

Those attending the lecture next made their way to the shores of Lough Swilly for the unveiling of a bust of Tip O'Neill. That night the celebrations continued with a function in the Red Door restaurant at Fahan. The O'Neills were there in force and so were the Fullertons and other Irish cousins.

A day later the focus had shifted to the University of Ulster in nearby Derry where a reception was held to honor Tip's 100th birthday and John Hume's 75th. Details were also announced of the University's plans to establish the John Hume and Thomas P. O'Neill Chair in Peace.

At the end of a memorable weekend the extended O'Neill clan were clearly delighted with the welcome they had received from those still living in the area where their ancestor spent her formative years. The people of Buncrana were equally thrilled to have hosted the family of such an illustrious figure and they understood better just how influential Tip O'Neill was in US politics, how he had won the respect of politicians of all shades and of the enormous impact he had in bringing peace to an Ireland that lived under the shadow of the bomb and the bullet for some 30 years.

From Donegal and Derry the O'Neills made their way to Mallow in Co. Cork, the birthplace of Tip O'Neill's grandfather, Patrick O'Neill. On Tues., Sept. 11, Tom and Rosemary O'Neill unveiled a plaque dedicated to their father in a park that has been named after him. Later the O'Neills planted a tree in his memory in the grounds of Mallow Castle.

The ongoing links between O'Neills and Ireland have been assured with the decision to make the award and lecture annual events in Buncrana. DonegalDiasporaAward.ie is looking for nominations for the 2013 award and stresses that it is open to members of the Diaspora with links to any part of Ireland.

For Ireland 'The Gathering' initiative draws near

(Continued from page 1)

over two-and-half million in Australia. So the Irish are very spread and the markets of the United States, Canada, Britain, and Australia are the four key markets for the gathering because that's where most of the Irish diaspora are. But it extends well beyond that."

Among the plans is an expansion of Dublin's traditional St. Patrick's Day parade next year where visitors will have the chance to join in the parade. Gibbons says that in the past there has been a "huge demand" from Americans wanting to join the parade. "It was always limited to a certain number of bands, but next year you're going to be able actually to walk in the parade in Dublin. And around the country as well there's a whole range of festivals that have been planned, and they are going to be new and upgraded. So there will be lots of things to see and do.

"I think it's going to re-awaken a lot of people to their ancestry, too, because a lot of people have a connection to Ireland that they don't know about yet, or they know they come from Ireland but they just haven't discovered it, so there's going to be lots of things to see and do when they come back here.

"The Irish reach into every section of society, and politics and everything. And there's a great opportunity for people who haven't discovered Ireland before, to come to Ireland in 2013. And what they're going to experience is a year-long celebration of festivals and events which starts on the first of January with the New Year's festival, with fireworks and a lot of music around the city. It'll be good fun, good traditional Irish sort of fun and it's going to be something new because we haven't had a New Year's Eve festival in the past. So for people who might have thought about coming around that time of the year, that is really a good reason to do so."

Gibbons says that some 900,000 Americans are expected to visit the island this year, and the country is targeting an increase for next year. "We're looking to work with the existing carriers (Aer Lingus, Continental, and Delta) and new carriers and we'd like to see additional air access capacity because fares are going up now because the demand is so strong. And it's a good news story to some extent because Ireland is obviously still very popular and people really want to come here.

"But in the current economic climate, fuel prices



Tim O'Connor, Michael Ring, Leo Varadkar, Shaun Quinn and Niall Gibbons attend the launch of the major tourism drive in Belfast early in September.

are very high, airlines are very cautious, and we saw a large amount of capacity taken out of the market when things went bad in 2008 or 2009 and we're very keen to see that go back in. We'd love to see more services into Boston.

"There's no question about it, Ireland is still very popular. This year we'll have our biggest market share of the outbound travel to Europe from the United States for well over 10 years. So of all the people from the United States who travel to Europe, Ireland has about 8½ percent of the total share. And that's the best it's ever been, it's an extraordinary percentage for such a small island off the periphery of Europe. You can imagine that you're competing with Italy and France and Germany and all these destinations.

"And per head of population we're by far ahead away of all of them. I think Ireland is still a dream destination; we have an experience that other countries can't offer in terms of the warmth of the people, the scenery, the friendliness, the culture, and the fun."

The tourism official pointed to the success of a new state-of-the-art air terminal at Dublin Airport, and an expanded road network that make cross-country travel more accessible.

"There's been a lot of good new developments in the last number of years; the new terminal is excellent, (and) you've got a really good road network now as well. So for people hiring a car (in Dublin) you can get to Galway in two hours, whereas before it took three and a half; you can get to Cork in two hours, Belfast in an hour and three quarters. So getting around Ireland is much easier than it used to be. And there are some great facilities here as well for people who want to visit. So I think we're very well placed.

"You know as more people want to come here it's going to be easier to get here. The value-for-money issue is very interesting because Ireland had got a perception as being a very expensive place to visit around 2007 or 2008. And we survey people from all our main countries every year to see what were (their) perceptions of Ireland. And the good news is that 99 percent would recommend it as a holiday to a friend. But our value-for-money perception in North America is the best it's been in 10 years. And I think with the way the exchange rate has gone against the dollar this summer, it's going to be even better next year as well."

Gibbons said that "The Gathering is an all encompassing idea, and it is about doing what Ireland is really good at – people. That's what the gathering is really about at the end of the day. And if you were to narrow it down there, what does it mean, well, it can mean a lot of things. (All across) Ireland at the moment, people are being asked to come up with concepts of gatherings, where they could invite people home."

"There's a very interesting project called 'Ireland Reaching Out' (Ireland XO) which started down in Galway by a guy called Mike Feerick. And Mike got a few communities together in East Galway, and by working with the census records online, and with local cemeteries and churches, they discovered a large number of people who had emigrated but never knew they had a connection with Ireland. So they wrote to them and invited them back. Now 30 people came, which is a small number but actually they were people who never would have thought of coming to Ireland. So those people came back, it's a nice story in a time of real recession.

"You know it's what Ireland is really good at."

Notebook entry: September 2012 visit to Ireland

By Ed Forry

A September trip to Ireland brought with it good weather, some surprising motoring, and some great new memories from my ancestral homeland.

The good news for this visitor is how the exchange rate is advantageous against the dollar; in late September, a euro cost \$1.30, not a bad rate compared to a year ago. Also, Irish hotels and restaurants are offering attractive low rates and package deals, helping the American tourist to stretch the travel budget.

Our trip took us to Dublin, Sligo, and Galway, and the weather – mirabile dictu – was mild and largely dry. In eight days of cross-country travel, we encountered very little rain, and after the hot steamy Boston summer, the mild mid-60's Irish climate felt just right.

In Dublin the Fitz William Hotel was a convenient central location. Despite crowds in town for the Galway/Kilkenny hurling match, and a weekend gathering of some 25 Ukrainian revelers, who filled the breakfast room with a bit of a clamor, the location was just right for a mid-day stroll across the sunny St. Stephens Green, and a walk down Grafton Street to see the Molly Malone statue across from Trinity College.

A one-day hop-on/hop-off sight-seeing tour offered a taste of Dublin, the only disappointment being an overpriced stop at the Guinness brewery.

In driving cross-country in a rental car to Sligo, we found that the new M4 motorway made our 100-mile Saturday afternoon excursion an easy trip. A sparkling Tesco service station and café in Enfield was a good rest stop, and the ride to Sligo took less than three hours. We settled in the Cromleach Lodge just off the N4 in Castlebaldwin, a spectacular resort on a hill overlooking Lough Arrow not far from Sligo town. It is easy to recommend Cromleach, with some of the best vistas of the Sligo hills and a fabulous menu of native meals and baked goods.

After two days we were on the road, with lunch in Westport (Ireland's "best place to live," according to the town leaders) and a meandering ride through Leenane and Maam to Galway. There, we stayed at the House Hotel, a 40-room "boutique" hotel just off Quay Square and the Spanish Arch.

A good example of great restaurant bargains: The Viña Mara (Spanish for vineyard and the sea) on Middle Street offers all entrees on Monday and Tuesday nights for just 10 euro. The food was terrific and the price was more than reasonable. One of our party said the complimentary sautéed potato wedges were the best she had every tasted.

Viña Mara proprietor Eileen Feeney said that she and her husband Jarlath opened the business ten years ago, conceiving it as a Spanish wine bar. "We spent our holidays with children in Spain over the years," she explained. "You know how you love Spanish wine – well I do, anyway – and the atmosphere of Spain, the sun, and the sea. So I had a plan to have a little wine bar. It turned into a restaurant because the premises we found were a little too big for a wine bar. We had a really good up-and-coming young chef who came on board with us." And for many years the new eatery thrived.

But the bad economy caused Feeney and her husband to make some hard management decisions.

"When we started it was not a recession time and people had loads of money in Ireland, and it was very lucrative time in the country. We have had to make changes and we made changes at the right time. We changed before we needed to change, and this is, I think, our saving grace."

She explains the bargain prices are sustained by a big increase in customers: "On a Monday or Tuesday night, we might have 25 diners," she says. "Now on those nights we serve 100. With the reduced prices diners typically decide to add an appetizer or dessert, or a bottle of wine. "We keep costs strictly under control, and have not had to add any staff other than a server or two."



Eileen Feeney and her daughter Kate.
Ed Forry photo

Whither religion in this presidential campaign?

By Peter F. Stevens
BIR Staff

In John F. Kennedy's historic presidential run in 1960, religion mattered greatly – his Roman Catholicism. Many Protestant voters believed that if elected, the Irish Catholic Kennedy would take his marching orders from the Vatican. So crucial an issue was his religion that he was compelled to take it head-on in his now-landmark speech to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association on Sept. 12, 1960.

"I am not the Catholic candidate for President," Kennedy pronounced. "I am the Democratic Party's candidate for President who also happens to be a Catholic. I do not speak for my Church on public matters – and the Church does not speak for me."

He went on to win the election, becoming the nation's first and only Roman Catholic president to this point. It was a watershed moment in America's annals, and while, thankfully, religious intolerance has waned since 1960, regrettably it has not vanished.

Just ask Barack Obama and Mitt Romney. In a recent Pew Research survey, only some 60 percent of voters are aware that Romney is a Mormon. Although 81 percent claim that his religion does not matter to them, the survey reveals that only 50 percent believe Mormonism to be a Christian faith. Romney, who felt the necessity to deliver a defense of his faith to the religious right in the previous presidential race, continues to assuage Bible Belt voters with references to God and values, but without the barriers of a few years ago. That his Mormonism is not given the political weight that Kennedy's Catholicism proved to have does reflect that America has changed for the better.

Now, though, comes the counterpunch of lingering intolerance swirling around President Barack Obama's "real" religion – or, take your pick, lack of it. Recent polls by both Pew and *USA Today* indicate that many evangelicals who plan to vote for Romney are doing so not because they embrace Mormonism as a Christian faith, but because they view Obama as a non-Christian and a Muslim. *USA Today* states that fewer Americans surveyed believe Obama is a Christian than in 2008.

Success isn't merited; it has context

By James W. Dolan
Special to the Reporter

Do those who achieve what we define today as suc-



James W. Dolan

President Obama said success in business does not mean you did it on your own. Some believed he diminished individual achievement by suggesting that parents, family resources, education, timing, direct or indirect government assistance, and plain old good luck played a role.

They find those lacking these qualities somehow less respectable and less virtuous, and therefore not entitled to share in the benefits one would normally associate with the good life. If they don't earn it, they don't deserve decent housing, health care, or a good education.

In other words: If you can't make it, it's your own fault. You get what you deserve and there is no obligation for the successful to "sacrifice" some of what they have achieved to benefit others. The common good does not include the uninitiated – the ignorant, lazy, disabled, sick, or illegal.

Success is not an abstraction; it occurs within a context. You play the hand you are dealt and the fact you get good cards does not make you any more deserving than a bad hand makes you less so.

Does God really love the haves more than the have-nots? Is worldly success a sign of His approval? Many believers seem to think so. I don't!

I no more merit being born healthy, the son of a successful doctor in a loving family with the money to educate and care for me than does someone born to a poor, drug-addicted mother in a dysfunctional family with little hope of the guidance and education so necessary today to achieve even the basics.

As a judge, it became clear to me that many of those

cess actually merit it? Are those who attain wealth, power, and status really better than the rest of us? Republicans tend to stress the importance of the individual. Wealth, in particular, becomes the measure of a person's value. Intelligence, imagination, ambition, and perseverance are seen as qualities shared by those who are successful.

That attitude was evident in the uproar by Republicans when

who appeared before me had few, if any, opportunities to be other than what they were. Had I been born into the same situation, I could see myself on a similar path.

At least the Democrats recognize our responsibility to provide a safety net to provide basic services to the less fortunate, including the opportunity to break free of the limitations they encounter, often through no fault of their own.

The belief that you get what you deserve is dangerous. It becomes an excuse not to share with the less fortunate. It undermines the "common good," a fundamental element of a fair and stable society. Of course, it requires the redistribution of wealth. But that doesn't mean there is no more wealth and no poverty. It only means the wealthy are less rich and the poor are less disadvantaged.

Government's role, as I see it, is to find that balance – no easy task. It does require an awareness that merit, when earned, is built on a foundation over which we have no more control than one born into privation.

The notion of "noblesse oblige" – to whom much is given, much is expected – applies as much to sharing wealth as it does to talent. The converse is: To whom little is given, much is owed. How much and in what form is the responsibility of wise leaders.

Wisdom appears to be in short supply these days. James W. Dolan is a retired Dorchester District Court judge who now practices law.



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Assessing the prospects for an emerging Ireland

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The first was on the work of the Partnership in supporting Irish education with visits to four Universities, a high-tech training organization in Dublin, and three schools in Belfast.

The second was an interface with both governments in several meetings to discuss the Partnership's focus on education and to learn more about current conditions.

And the third was the opportunity for more social engagements with government personnel and universities.

In the meantime, we had the good fortune to squeeze in visits to the highly successful new Titanic Museum and the regeneration of the Crumlin Jail in Belfast and to enjoy a night at the Abbey theatre in Dublin.

Our first day began on the campus of the University of Dublin's Michael Smurfit School of Business. Brief rain drops and a smiling Dean Ciaran O hOgartaigh greeted us at the door. The professional presentations following the traditional coffee service reminded us that the Smurfit Business School is one of the finest in the world, producing highly trained future leaders for Ireland's business community.

The Partnership is funding multiple-year scholarship programs at Smurfit and Chairman Murray and Executive Director McAleer presented a grant of \$18,000 on behalf of Partnership donors after which we met and listened to the first scholarship winner describe her assigned project: "Ireland as a Catalyst for United States Investment in the European Common Market."

St. Patrick's Teaching College in Drumcondra, Dublin, was next. The Partnership has been working with St. Patrick's for over eight years developing extensive research and training science programs for rural Western Ireland primary schools. Professor Dr. Paula Kilfeather and her assistant, Greg Smith, have managed the various programs on behalf of the school and the Partnership. Science teaching is a central focus of Partnership programs in the belief that a highly trained workforce is a vital component of Ireland's future success.

One of Ireland's most ingenious and praised programs is the "Fastrack to IT" (FIT) in Glasnevin Dublin, which is supported by the Partnership. Finding and training underutilized talents for various high-tech jobs is the program's specialty, with a concentration on turning the unemployed and underemployed into full-time high technology employees. Run by President Peter Davitt, FIT is expanding into the North, specifically Belfast. The Partnership presented a grant of \$10,000 for the program after which we were privileged to hear an emotional talk by a Denny Vitty of East Belfast describing the extreme need and value of the FIT program to the young people of Northern Ireland.



Partnership tour participants gathered for a picture outside the Irish-speaking school Colaiste Feirste in Belfast.

Josephine Shields photo

The trip to Belfast was an experience for all of us. The new four-lane highway has cut the time to Dublin to two hours, from the four hours of just a few years ago. We were provided with song sheets, courtesy of Charlie Donahue, and kept ourselves awake by singing part of the way during a pleasant ride in the Irish countryside. In that vein, we were told that it is now faster to travel to the North by automobile than by train. Infrastructure such as these roads that were built during Ireland's and Europe's better days will serve Ireland well over the next years.

The seat of government in Northern Ireland is located in the Stormont group of buildings in East Belfast. The main building, now painted stone white, is located at the top of a prominent and picturesque hill. A wide road up to the building greets all visitors with a striking view. During World War II, it was a target for German bombers and so was completely painted black, some of which is still showing. Stormont Castle, which is used for administrative offices, is set off to the right.

Once here, we were ushered into a meeting room with six members of the Northern Ireland Assembly (MLA's) who represented the major political parties. It was a fascinating two-hour session as each of our participants had the opportunity to ask questions mostly concerning the problems facing primary and secondary schools.

There was a surprising consensus regarding the prevalence of illiteracy in the Protestant primary schools, especially among young boys. Unfortunately, it appears that many

parents who cannot read or write either don't seem to care.

The members of the Assembly who spent the two hours with us were Alasdair McDonnell MP, MLA and leader of the SDLP, Sean Rogers MLA SDLP, Mike Nesbitt, MLA Leader of the UUP, Leslie Cree MLA UUP, Jennifer McCann MLA SF, and Sammy Douglas MLA DUP.

Later, the group was treated to a visit with Belfast's new Lord Mayor, Alderman Gavin Robinson of the DUP, at Belfast's venerable City Hall. Mayor Robinson is a very impressive young man. He had prepared himself well for our visit; he knew the Partnership's history and programs, and he presented mementos to each member of the group. He is a leader to pay attention to in the future.

That evening we were guests at Hillsborough Castle, the queen's residence when she comes to Ireland, for a formal dinner hosted by Northern Ireland Minister and Member of the British Parliament The Right Hon. Hugo Swire. It was a grand evening with guests Baroness May Blood and Sir George Quigley, the Partnership's Northern Ireland member of the Board of Directors. We were taken on a tour of the gardens and enjoyed entertaining, if sometimes intense, discussions.

The most important part of our mission to Northern Ireland were our visits to three schools that had received recent grants from the Partnership:

- Colaiste Feirste, a thriving 550-student Irish-speaking secondary school just off the Falls Road, courtesy of Principal Sean Mitchell, who explained the history and growth of the school.
- The Glengormley Integrated

Primary School in Newtownabbey, courtesy of Principal Nigel Arnold, who reviewed the rapid expansion of the school and its severe need for more space and qualified teachers. We were also greeted there by our friend Baroness May Blood, with whom we work in providing support for such schools.

- The Tullycarnet Primary School in East Belfast where Principal Eileen Quinn discussed the illiteracy problems in the neighborhood and showed us the use of the electronic "white Bbard" as a teaching tool.

Back in Dublin after another short bus trip down from Belfast the next day, we visited Ireland's Industrial Development Agency (IDA) headquarter offices and received a briefing on IDA's progress and accomplishments over the years from their head of communications, Emmet Oliver. There is no doubt as to their serious contribution to the Irish economy.

We had lunch at the famed Buswells Hotel with Jimmy Deenihan TD, Minister for Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Executive Director McAleer presented Deenihan with \$7,500 from the Chicago Partnership membership for five schools in North Kerry. After the presentation, Deenihan took us on a tour of the Dail Eireann across the street.

A visit to Trinity College Dublin followed for a review of its Access Scholarship program, which is funded by the Partnership, after which the group attended a reception courtesy of the Department of Foreign Affairs at Iveagh House, where we were greeted by former Boston Deputy Consul General Deidre Ni Fhalluin and

a contingent of old friends going back a number of years. It was a very pleasant reunion. Michael Collins, Ireland's ambassador to the US, and Niall Burgess, director-general of the department, were our hosts.

Our last evening was hosted by Dublin City University (DCU) President Brian MacCraith on the university campus. Before dinner the group met with DCU's Access program managers and several of the students who had received Partnership Access Scholarships. Executive Director McAleer, Chairman Murray and Director Nicholson presented a grant of \$13,000 to President MacCraith for DCU's special Northern Ireland Access program.

In a most engaging and productive conversation over dinner, Brian MacCraith, John Murray, and Tom Nicholson discussed the many aspects of Irish education and how the Partnership might help in the future.

On Friday morning our last and perhaps most important meeting was held at the Department of Education and Skills with Minister Ruairi Quinn TD. In an open discussion, the Partnership received the minister's advice and his assurance of the gratefulness of the Irish people and the support of his department.

Make no mistake: Ireland, North and South, is moving forward, dealing with its problems and planning aggressively for its future. The Irish American Partnership's support, in particular its interest in education, is not only welcome; it can make a vital difference.

Joe Leary is the CEO and president of the Irish American Partnership.



At left, the presentation of \$13,000 check to Dublin City University for Northern Ireland Access Program. From left, Partnership President Joe Leary, Partnership Executive Director Mary Sugrue

McAleer, DCU President Brian MacCraith, Partnership Chairman John Murray, and Partnership Director Tom Nicholson. At right, a talking session at the Department of Education & Skills: From left,



Assistant to the Minister Larry O'Grady, Partnership President Joe Leary, Partnership Chairman John Murray, and Minister Ruairi Quinn.

Josephine Shields photos

BIR Profile

When you listen to A.J. Gerritson talk, you know he's a man who's on the move

By GREG O'BRIEN
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

How many angels can dance on the head of a pin? That's a tough one. But do you know the temperature at which paper burns? A. J. Gerritson does, and in fact he branded it on his company's name.

In true 21st century style, Gerritson and his founding co-partner, Nicholas Lowe, discerning the need for new, on-line approaches to communications and marketing, created the firm of 451 Marketing in 2004, naming it after Ray Bradbury's classic novel, *Fahrenheit 451*.

Bradbury wrote his entire novel in the basement of UCLA's Powell Library on a pay typewriter that he rented for ten cents an hour. In contrast, Gerritson today works out of a Boston high rise on North Washington Street where he, four other partners, and a staff of 35 build brand awareness, create fan loyalty (Red Sox take note!), and drive business through a cutting-edge communications approach that unites public relations, social media, and search engine marketing.

"Too hot for paper," declares Gerritson, who saw the Internet in its infancy as more than just a shopping mall.

That's a lot those of us who fumble through a pocket dial or an iPhone calendar to absorb, but such refined communication and marketing approaches are as groundbreaking as Bradbury's masterpiece. In 2011 and again this year, 451 Marketing (451marketing.com) was recognized as a Boston Business Journal Pacesetter, an award recognizing the 50 fastest growing private companies in Massachusetts.

A "Type A" personality from central casting who gives the term new meaning, Gerritson, a third-generation Irish American with family ties to Cork and Cavan, is also president of the Boston Irish Business Association (BIBA), a non-profit organization, originally established in 1990 as ICCUSA (Ireland Chamber of Commerce-USA), which merged with the Boston-based Irish Networking Society (INS) in 2009.

BIBA, with 650 members, is committed to fostering economic and professional growth among a progressive network of business and political leaders, while retaining and strengthening ties to Ireland and around the world.

"The Irish in me keeps me forever grounded, always in search of self-improvement, always looking for creative ways to do it better," Gerritson, 35, said in an interview.

A.J.'s given name is Arlen Jeffrey, but in parochial Boston "no one got it," he says. "They couldn't get through the name, alien to them. So I changed it to A.J. on advice from a friend."

Good branding. Today, the initials stick like superglue in the Hub business community.

Gerritson confers much of the credit for his business acumen and personal drive on his maternal grandfather, Charles McGowan, a former State House Sergeant At Arms, a former state representative and a Dedham selectman for 15 years. "He taught me about compassion, street sense, and passion for life. I'm probably most like him, gregarious in nature."

McGowan played a key role hand in



**"The Irish in me keeps me forever grounded, always in search of self-improvement, always looking for creative ways to do it better."
— A.J. Gerritson**

the raising of the young Gerritson after his parents separated. Gerritson's father, Stephen, is head of economic development for a Seattle firm. His mother, Alicen, is the director of an alcohol and substance abuse organization on Cape Cod and lives in Wareham. His sister, Sasha, is an opera singer in Chicago.

Growing up in suburban Dedham, Gerritson early on applied his talents to sports. Today, you might call him an urbane jock. At Dedham High School, he played three varsity sports — football, wrestling, and baseball. Positions on the playing fields and in the workplace often say a lot about a person's nature. In football, he played linebacker and was a blocking back on offense. In wrestling, he was a heavyweight with a 225-pound frame that still stands out in any setting. In baseball, he played first base, knocking down screaming infield liners. Oh, he was a good student, as well.

The Dedham jock took his body and

brain to UMass in Amherst, where he earned a degree in journalism, captained the Men's Rugby Team, and was named a two time All-America, playing the position of "prop," usually reserved for the sturdiest players on the team who attack in size and strength, plunging into a defensive line like a battering ram.

Get the picture?

After college, when he couldn't find work in a newsroom (most gruff editors probably would have been intimidated), Gerritson worked briefly in recruiting as a headhunter for Franklin Pierce Associates in Boston, then opted for some headhunting abroad. For a year and a half, he played professional rugby in Limerick in the All Ireland League for the Young Muster Rugby Football Club, supporting himself with a rugby stipend and tips from pouring Guinness at the celebrated Peter Clohessy's Sports Bar, a rugby haven in the heart of Limerick, owned by ex-Munster and Ireland prop

Clohessy.

"My time in Ireland transformed me," says Gerritson. "The Irish are so engaging, so personal; it's contagious."

He remembers the day in Limerick near the River Shannon when a frail 80-year-old woman chatted him up on the street. The conversation quickly turned from small talk to sports.

"You know," she said, "You play a good game, but..."

She then proceeded to instruct Gerritson on the fine points of playing prop.

It was at that point, he realized, as Dorothy said in the Wizard of Oz: 'We're not in Kansas any more.'

Kansas can't compete with Ireland and no one knows that better than Gerritson. He returned to the states in 2003, becoming vice president of public relations for AsiaFoods.com, an on-line company that specialized in the import and distribution of Asian foods into mainstream marketplaces. Gerritson built the company from the ground up, positioning it for a successful acquisition. He was then hired as vice president at Zeeo Interactive, an award-winning interactive Boston marketing and digital advertising agency with a client list that included Time Warner and Disney.

Still, he found time for the playing fields, joining the Boston Irish Wolfhounds Rugby Football Club and leading them to two USA Rugby Division 1 national titles in 2003 and 2004.

Division titles are impressive on a shelf or framed on a wall, but family is the foundation stone of Gerritson's life. He is married to Meghan (Toland), whom he met at a BIBA function; the couple lives in Hull with their 11-month-old son, Jack. Family, indeed, is the prism through which Gerritson views life, at home, at the office, and beyond. He sits on the Board of Directors for Junior Achievement of Northern New England and the March of Dimes in Boston.

Gerritson is always looking for ways to optimize what's put before him. And so it is with social media. How a guy who once lumped as a landscaper, drove quarterbacks into the turf, and then made mincemeat on the rugby field, has the panache to master social media in ways that open fertile doors for clients is testimony to his extraordinary range.

Diffident in an Irish way, Gerritson says is all about "vision, excellence, and pursuit." And it doesn't hurt, he concedes, to have self-confidence, honed communication skills, and grandfather McGowan's intense passion. You can book him on-line for a motivational speaking engagement.

"You can't go wrong with A.J.," says Samantha Dawson Hammer, Economics Initiative Director of the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

It's a chorus heard today throughout Boston, and likely also in the backyard of his Hull home, as Gerritson prepares to teach young Jack the art of a scrum.

Greg O'Brien, president of the Stony Brook Group, a publishing and political consulting/communications firm based on Cape Cod, is the author/editor of several books. He also writes for various regional and national publications.

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Boston Irish Reporter's Here & There

By BILL O'DONNELL

Lies, Bad Journalism Typify Murdoch Brand

— One of the immutable principles of newspaper columns and opinion pieces is that they must be signed, with the identity and relevant facts about the writer attached to the piece. Only then can we begin to know and weigh what ties exist and/or what employment history may have influenced the opinions and judgments of the writer.

The same principles, or rules of the game, are essentially in force for other media.



Bill O'Donnell

Rupert Murdoch is the founder and major stockholder of News Corporation and the creator of Fox Broadcasting. His huge media empire includes the Wall Street Journal and the self-styled “fair & balanced” Fox news channel. As unfolding events in Britain clearly show, Murdoch and his editors, writers, TV interviewers, et al, have precious little respect for

these well-entrenched principles of journalism. The Murdoch-encouraged illegal wiretapping and similar smarmy activities have been the subject of indictments in Britain, and trials for those charged in those cases will be forthcoming.

Closer to home, the Murdoch brand has grossly and continuously abused these journalistic guidelines; in many cases totally ignoring the rules and operating in such a way as to disguise or intentionally omit the relationships of writers and/or interview subjects to their material. Only in this way can the Wall Street Journal, Fox News and other Murdoch media outlets hide their frequent conflicts of interest and keep readers and viewers in the dark about the bias and special pleading by their employees that is endemic in many outlets of the Murdoch empire.

A brief glance at the two major News Corporation companies operating in the US — the WSJ and Fox — show they have thumbed their noses at the principles of ethics and fair play. Just since the presidential campaign began, the Journal has published op-ed opinion articles twenty times by at least nine Romney advisers without disclosing their relationship to candidate **Mitt Romney**, according to Media Matters. These under-the-radar commentators have used their print space and air time to attack **President Obama** or his administration without having to own up to their campaign ties.

This is not what legitimate, responsible, honest journalists do.

Similar tactics are regularly allowed by the management at Fox News where a steady stream of paid Fox commentators with ties to the Romney campaign appear offering campaign news and comment, and where a swath of Romney advisors appear on Fox programs without disclosing their ties to the Republican candidate. These practices betray a complete disregard by Murdoch media for basic communication ethics and a disturbing disdain for those readers and viewers who rely (but rarely receive) the unvarnished truth.

George Mitchell, A Man For All Seasons — From peace in Northern Ireland and Middle East negotiator to steroid use in major league baseball, former US Senate Majority Leader **George Mitchell** of Maine has proved to be the go-to-guy when the chips are down. His history and accomplishments are the stuff of dreams. His father was an Irish-American janitor, his mother a Lebanese immigrant who didn't read or write.

Today, Mitchell leads a major law firm and was recently named an integrity monitor overseeing the NCAA sanctions on Penn State University. In a recent interview with CBS News, he spoke of his early years with his family: “My mother was a weaver in a textile mill and she worked a night shift. I still can't figure out how she did it. She had five children, so including she and my father there were seven people in our house. We had one tiny bathroom.”

In 1962, Mitchell was offered a job by then-US Sen. Edmund Muskie. Seventeen years later, he was elected to Muskie's Senate seat. A decade later, he was elected majority leader by his peers. In 1995, he left the Senate. Then came Northern Ireland and ultimately a peace accord he helped to orchestrate with the aid and encouragement of hundreds of Irish and Americans of good will.

When asked by CBS's **Rita Braver** how he found the patience to overcome the stops and starts, the tiring debates, the disappointing moments in the lengthy search for peace in Ireland, Mitchell said, “Very early in the process I said, ‘Look, I'm a product of the US Senate. I've listened to 16-hour speeches. There nothing you guys can say that can faze me.’ And so it was!”

Vatican Council II Marks Golden Anniversary — On Oct. 11, 1962, some 2,500 bishops from across the Catholic world were called together by **Pope John XXIII** to participate in an ecumenical council, the 21st such gathering in the history of the church. One of the 16 documents approved by the bishops insists that the Catholic Church must be at the service of all humanity, especially those most in need. The council also underlined the importance of protecting the unborn and working to end war, militarism, and poverty.

Pope John's council was a joyful, fresh breeze that invigorated an insular Church. One way to underline

the importance of that event 50 years ago this month would seem to be relatively simple for the Vatican curia and the current pope to accomplish: Complete with a proper flourish and celebration the canonization of Blessed Pope John XXIII and honor him and the key role he played in enhancing the Catholic Church for modern times. Such a move is woefully overdue; it's embarrassingly shameful to delay Angelo Roncalli's elevation to sainthood.

Irish Social Club A Success Story — Early last month a bill was signed by Massachusetts Gov. **Deval Patrick** after passage by both the Massachusetts House and Senate that should result in the return of a permanent liquor license to the West Roxbury club, a move that is essential if the revived organization is to be successful in organizing its numerous social events and neighborhood activities. The club previously had a full liquor license, but it was mistakenly turned in and so in the meantime it has been forced to use a series of temporary licenses. But that problem is well on the way to being solved.

The Irish Social Club has overcome a number of obstacles in the past six months and with great concern and solid effort, it has attracted hundred of old and new members and made repairs to the club building and its operating systems. It is now prepared to move forward for the next chapter in one of the most celebrated venues in the greater Boston Irish Community. Congratulations!

NOTABLE QUOTE

“The Irish have a word for it. The small town merchant who gradually achieves a stranglehold on his neighbors is called a gombeen-man. Gomba, in Gaelic, means vaguely a bit or a scrap. Gombeen is the diminutive. A textbook of economics might well be condensed into that single word.”

James ‘Jim’ Phelan (1895 -1960)
from his Bog Blossom Stories

Mary Robinson Memoir Due Out in Early 2013

— Easily one of the most accomplished and preeminent women of the 20th century, former Irish President **Mary Robinson**, 68, will finally have her memoir published in the United States early next year. Last month, her keenly awaited story was published in her native Ireland, as her way of honoring the country of her birth. The hectic life of service across the globe by the former Irish President and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has delayed the book's completion, but she obviously enjoyed launching it in her hometown of Ballina, Co. Mayo.

Mrs. Robinson's memoir, titled “Everybody Matters” (distributed by MacMillan) takes her from the early days in Mayo and on to her education as a lawyer at Trinity and Harvard. Prior to her election as president, she served for 20 years in the Irish Senate and was one of Ireland's most respected barristers and an outspoken activist voice for human rights.

She has been honored by the United States with the President's Medal of Honor, and has received Amnesty International's Ambassador of Conscience citation. She serves on many boards and maintains (as her book title might suggest) a full schedule that keeps her in demand and traveling in behalf of many causes, including her Mary Robinson Foundation.

I first met the future Irish President in the early 1980s when she was a member of the Irish Senate and was briefly in Boston with her husband Nick. Following a phone call alerting me that she was stopping in Boston, I met the couple at the Parker House and we did a fast-paced lobby interview. I was stunned then by how attractive she was, and bright as a new star. A bit smitten, I was, maybe.

About ten years later, I again had the opportunity to meet her. She was then president of Ireland and the passage of time had been kind to her. She joined some of us for lunch at the World Trade Center during the Boston Ireland Ventures trade festival. I recall thinking at the time that some day she might be the new face on the Irish punt. The Euro put paid to that notion.

Update: ECB Threatened Lenihan With Disaster — Three newly released letters from the then president of the European Central Bank, **Jean-Claude Trichet**, to the late Irish Finance Minister **Brian Lenihan** show that Trichet warned Lenihan that if Ireland did not apply in timely fashion for the huge bailout with conditions, the entire Euro banking system would be put at risk.

The Irish Times reports it has seen the three ECB letters that were sent to Lenihan in the days leading up to the 2010 Irish bailout.

In looking back at the dire risk assessment by the ECB, it is apparent in hindsight that Minister Lenihan, grievously ill from the cancer that would soon kill him, was being backed into a corner and forced into signing onto an outsized bailout that haunts Ireland and its economy to this day. The pressure was enormous, more so given the grave health issues facing the young Irishman.

In Trichet's letter of November 4, and others later that month, he emphasized the concerns of the ECB about its exposure to the Irish banking system for the enormous sums involved in the bailout and that the support of the ECB was contingent on the four-year plan being implemented. On Nov. 20, Lenihan and the Irish government, despite profound, unresolved concerns, formally applied for the EU-International Monetary Fund program.

Trinity College Scientists Celebrate Discovery

— The hard-working lads in their Trinity laboratories have yet to find a cure for sleepwalking, or to discover a way to keep the Orangenemen off the Queen's Highways in July, but the scientists there have found a beer breakthrough. Honest.

Plastic bottles currently in use have a relatively short shelf life; their contents lose their taste and fizz quickly as they sit on shelves. This, in turn, led to finding that beer could retain its flavor on the shelf in plastic bottles if a material they discovered at Trinity was added to the liquid.

Miller Brewing Company has taken instant notice and is “delighted to partner on this exciting project.”

O'Neill Family in Donegal For ‘Tip’s’ Centennial

— Eighty members of **Thomas P. ‘Tip’ O'Neill's** family were in Buncrana, Co. Donegal, last month to celebrate Tip's 100 birthday. The late speaker of the US House was born on Dec. 9, 1912. He served in Congress for 34 years and was speaker from 1977 to 1987.

In fact, the O'Neill family was in Ireland for two special occasions. The first was the visit to Buncrana, the seaside town where Tip's grandmother, **Eunice Fullerton**, was born. A statue of Tip overlooking Lough Swilly was unveiled by his daughter, **Susan O'Neill**. There are still many O'Neill cousins living in and around Buncrana. **Carl Fullerton**, a cousin of Tip's, said “We are delighted as a family to come together this weekend to remember the life and contribution of a man whose ancestors began here. Tip never forgot his Donegal roots.”

The second occasion was a stop at the University of Ulster Magee Campus in Derry to attend the announcement of additional funding of \$1.4 million for the **John Hume** and Thomas P. O'Neill Chair in Peace, which will be headquartered at Magee. A happy weekend in Ireland for the O'Neills and a grand celebration to mark Tip's 100th.

RANDOM CLIPPINGS

Happy 150th anniversary to Boston College. The growth and achievements of the Jesuit university in Chestnut Hill is a tribute to the vision of the faculty and graduates of this outstanding educational institution. ... The US is the favored location for holiday breaks for the Irish this autumn. ... Finally, the degrading unnecessary full-body searches of republican prisoners in Magilligan are being replaced by new, high-tech scanners. ... The Irish are determined to see their greedy bankers do some serious jail time. The same cannot be said for US authorities. ... Rhode Island will soon have drivers licenses imprinted with the designation VETERAN, if qualified. ... If you live in any New England state except New Hampshire your Nov. vote for president won't make any difference.

Gerry Adams continues to promise an alternative budget but, like Mitt, he has not delivered with details. ... Speaking of Gerry, he was out-talked and out-debated by Fianna Fail leader **Micheal Martin** on RTE's Prime Time. ... The Northern Ireland golfer **Darren Clarke**, who lost his wife to cancer, has donated \$125,000 to the Queen's cancer center. ... World # 1 golfer **Rory McIlroy** has said that he is reconsidering his remark that he would golf for Britain in the 2016 Olympics. ... Galway continues its tradition of workshops devoted to the fine, ancient art of making stone walls. ... A recent poll in the North showed that roughly 43 percent of voters would like British or Irish political parties to organize there. ... Irish President **Michael D. Higgins** has been a viral sensation on a 2010 clip slamming the US Tea Party movement. ... The recent summer Olympics in London reminded me of the heroics in the 1896 Olympics of Southie's **James Brendan Connolly**.

The compensation for helping arm the IRA agreed to by the UK and Libya is in Limbo now. ... **Cardinal Tim Dolan** gave the closing prayer at the GOP convention, then was shamed into making the same offer to the Democrats. ... A veteran Church of Ireland cleric in Britain has backed PM **David Cameron's** call for same sex marriages. ... Aer Lingus is catching some flak for reducing the size of carry-ons they will accept. ... If you have never tried the escorted tours of the Boston Irish Heritage Trail, call BITA at 617-696-9880. It's a great history-filled jaunt. ... It's old news, I suppose, but the Italian government prosecutors have upheld the convictions of 23 Americans for kidnaping suspected terrorists as part of the CIA's extraordinary rendition program.

In 2005, an Irish farmer sold 8.5 acres to a developer for \$2 million. He just bought it back for one-twenty-fifth of what he paid, \$80,000, from the same builder. ... A third of Ireland's grads plan to emigrate to find work, and student union leaders are saying that “a serious lack of self confidence” is setting in. ... I spent 16 months as a Marine guard in Seoul, Korea, protecting our diplomats at the US Embassy there and the one thing I always knew (apropos of the Benghazi attack in Libya) is that no small Marine contingent can protect our embassies without backup and the support of the host government's police or army.

RIP — BC Professor **Ruth-Ann Harris**, a familiar, friendly presence in the Irish community and at the Heights who was on faculty for years at Northeastern and, later, BC while focusing on studying the migration of the Irish to Boston, died on Sept. 5. I served alongside her on the Eire Society board and she was not only a gifted teacher but also a dedicated lifetime student of Irish trends and social history. My condolences to her husband John and her family.

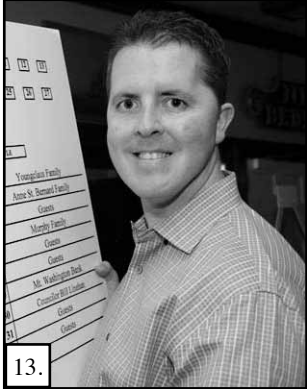
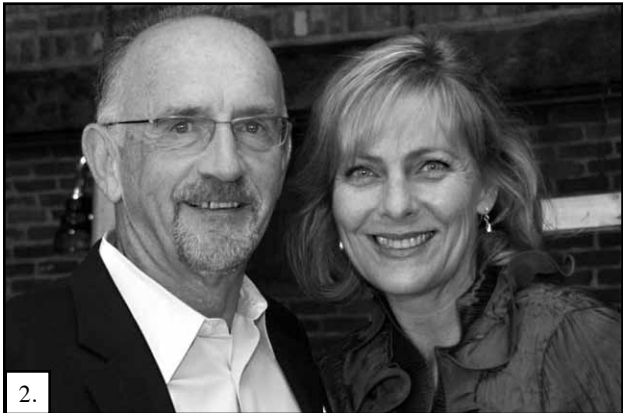
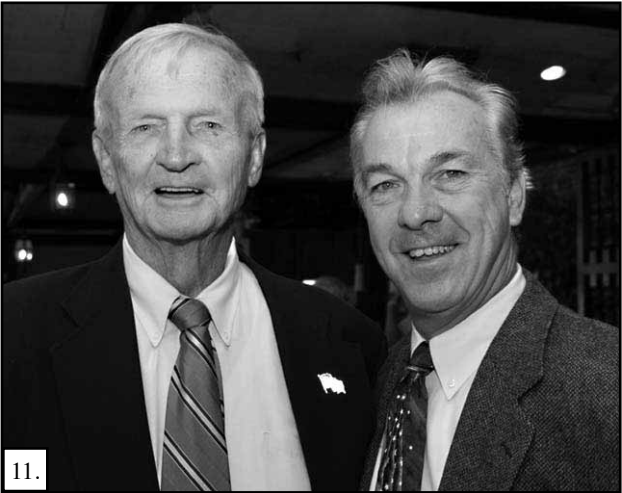
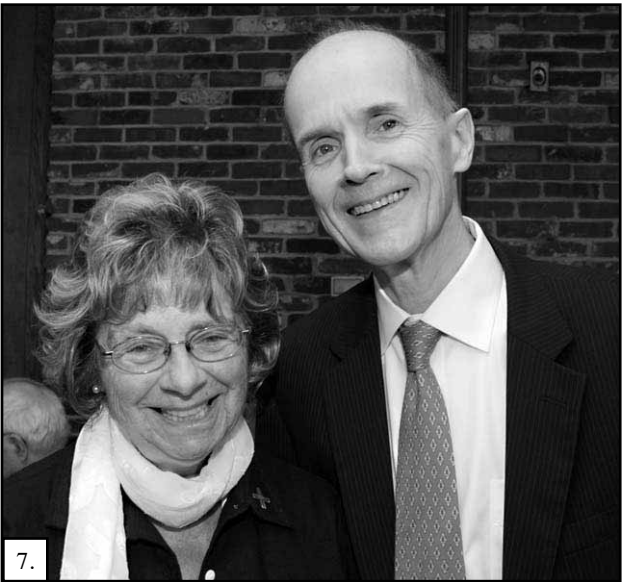
BRETT'S BOSTON

By Harry Brett

Exclusive photos of Boston Irish people & events

The annual breakfast to benefit the Simon of Cyrene Society was held on Sunday morning, Sept. 9 at Anthony's Pier 4 on the Boston waterfront. The event supports the society's mission, as stated by its founder, the late Father Tom McDonnell: "Making the Goodness of God alive by sharing, instructing, advising, consoling, feeling and praying with the community of people who are disabled, and their families."

1.) Sr. Peggy Youngclaus, So. Boston; Kerin, Ann and Ellen Youngclaus all of Weymouth; 2.) City Councillor Bill Linehan, So. Boston; Maryellen Brett, Dorchester; 3.) Jack Youngclaus, Weymouth; Sr. Peggy Youngclaus; 4.) Mary Jo Chaisson, So. Boston; Mayor Thomas Menino; 5.) Enrico and Linda Rossi, So. Boston; 6.) Chris Norman and Marlene Norman, Holbrook; 7.) Sister Elizabeth Calcagni, SND, St. Christopher Parish, Dorchester; Ed Casey, So. Easton; 8.) Mike Reynolds and Brendan Bulger (performers); 9.) Sr. Mary Lou Graziano, SND; Jack Shaughnessy, Milton; 10.) Melissa Donahue, Roslindale; Karen Regan, So. Boston; 11.) Harry Uhlman; George Locassio; So. Boston; 12.) Ted Judge, Everett; 13.) Joe Rooney, Dorchester; 14.) Sheila Dillon, Tom Tinlin, and Linda Luskas, all of So. Boston; 15.) Susan and Jack Forbush; Julia McCarthy, Quincy; 16.) Philip Jr., Sheila and Lindsay Gerety, Weymouth.



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Special Guest, Boxer Danny O'Connor, to attend Oct. 4 Event – On Oct. 4, we invite you and your friends to come and enjoy a night of entertainment at our Rod Stewart Tribute show at the Malden Irish American Club. We have a great night lined up for you with Rick Larrimore and his band taking the stage to perform all of the favorite Rod Stewart songs.

Also in attendance, we are delighted to announce, will be a special guest, the Irish boxer Danny O'Connor. This sports star from Framingham is proudly bringing "big time boxing" back to the city of Boston! 2012 has been a huge year for Danny and he is quickly gaining a reputation as a force to be reckoned with in the boxing ring! We are delighted that he and his lovely wife will be joining us for this fun night. Tickets (\$25) are on sale now and are selling fast. We will also holding a silent auction with all proceeds on the night helping support the work that we do here at the Irish International Immigrant Center. For tickets or more information, contact the Ann Marie Cugno at 617-542-7654, Ext. 32.

IIIC's QPR Suicide Prevention Workshop Saves Lives—Each year more than 30,000 people in the United States take their own lives. Suicide is the third leading cause of death among people between the ages of 15 and 24. In 1995 Dr. Paul Quinnett developed a method of suicide prevention called QPR and founded an institute to study and promote the strategy. The IIIC offers



IIIC staff and local host families welcome the Wider Horizon's Springboard group from Belfast and Dublin. The group will be in Boston for the next seven weeks training in various community based organizations.

an introduction training workshop designed to help anyone identify and respond to a suicide crisis, for a friend, stranger, or family member. To learn more about how to detect the warning signs of suicide, and what to do if you know someone that you think may be contemplating suicide, please consider signing up for our next QPR workshop by contacting Kielan O'Boyle at 617-542-7654 ext. 42. To register, please visit our office during normal business hours. If you need to speak to someone confidentially please call our counselor Danielle Owen who can be reached at ext.14.

Citizenship Class Starts Oct. 11—Are you interested in becoming a US Citizen? If you need to begin your application for citizenship, our Immigration and Citizenship Services staff can help you through the whole process. Start by joining

us and register for citizenship classes to prepare for the citizenship exam and interview. The six-week class runs on Thursday afternoons (1 p.m. – 3 p.m.) or you can attend the Thursday evening class (6 p.m. – 8 p.m.). For more information, please contact Evelyn Brito at 617 542-7654.

Upcoming Free Immigration Legal Clinics – Oct. 2, and Oct. 16 at 4 p.m. at the IIIC, 100 Franklin St., Lower Level, Boston; Oct. 30 at 6 p.m. at the South Boston Labouré Center, 275 West Broadway, South Boston. Please call 617-542-7654 to confirm these schedules.

Save the Date—Solas Awards Celebration – Thurs., Dec. 6 –We warmly invite you to attend the IIIC's annual Solas Awards Celebration on Thurs., Dec. 6, at the JFK Library. Named from the Gaelic word for "light," the Solas Awards are presented to leaders

whose work in their communities touch and inspire. In buying tickets to the event, your contribution directly helps immigrant families integrate into their new homes and communities. The IIIC provides free legal, wellness and education services for immigrant and refugees from all over the world. This can sometimes be a matter of life and death for some families. Please help us continue the work. Individual seats are \$250 each. This could be a great holiday gift for your loved one. Contact Mary Kerr at 617-695-1554 or e-mail her at mkerr@iiicenter.org to discuss sponsorship options or reserve your seats. The Irish International Immigrant Center is a 501(c)3 organization. All sponsorships are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. The cost for each meal is not tax deductible. We deeply appreciate your support.

Matters Of Substance

A New Freedom: Anita's story

**By DANIELLE OWEN
IIIC DIRECTOR
OF WELLNESS
AND EDUCATION SERVICES**
"We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others."

Those are "The Promises of Recovery" as taken from "Alcoholics Anonymous" otherwise known as the Big Book (Pages 83-84).

"My name is Anita and I'm an alcoholic and prescription drug addict. I have been sober for nearly 5 years and sometimes I can't quite believe how I survived. I had lots of reasons to use but ignored all the reasons I had to quit, for a long time. I literally lost everything. My husband and two daughters had to move



Danielle Owen

back to Ireland because my behavior had become so crazy that restraining orders meant nothing to me. When I finally stayed in treatment for longer than 10 days; sanity hit me and I woke up to the devastation I had created around me.

"I was so grateful that I couldn't leave the center at that time because the guilt and shame was so overwhelming, all I wanted to do was run away and drink myself into oblivion. I stayed.

After 6 months I got a job and finally an apartment with one other sober person. It was really hard to get work initially; no one took me seriously and I had some many gaps in my CV, no one wanted to trust me with a job. A friend in my meeting suggested I apply as a volunteer at her elder care agency, reading to the seniors etc and so the staff got to know me and see how I really enjoyed chatting the their residents.

"The boss suggested I apply for a 12 week CNA course, which I finished last year. They offered me work straight away and now I am putting the paperwork together to get my nursing associates degree.

"I go to meetings 3-4 times a week, have a sponsor and finally plucked up the courage to phone my kid over 4 years ago. Now I get to see my girls whenever I want. When I am not in school, at meetings,

with my kids or working I began to volunteer at a substance abuse prevention center for teens. I see them starting out the way I did but I'm getting a chance to chat with them in a way I wish someone had with me at home in Ballymun.

"I'm finally giving back and not taking anymore. My kids are beginning to trust that I won't disappear again and I am finally friends with my ex-husband. I help newcomers in meetings and I am so grateful to be giving back to my community in a way that I wasn't able to before.

"I have a life now that I could never have dreamed of 5 years ago. Recovery happens!"

If you are curious about the promises of recovery, call Danielle at 617-542-7654, Ext. 14 or email her at dowen@iiicenter.org. Alternatively check out this website: aaboston.org.

IMMIGRATION Q & A

Key dates for legal permanent residence

Q. I have an interview scheduled with US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) on my application for permanent residence. Assuming the interview goes well, what happens next?

A. In cases where the interview is successful, the USCIS officer has the authority to grant you permanent residence immediately. Your new status will begin on the very same day as the interview and run for ten years in general. Those whose permanent residence application is based on a marriage to a US citizen where the couple has been married for less than two years at the time of the grant of residence receive "conditional permanent residence" that is valid for two years.

After the interview, the officer will take care of ordering your permanent resident card (I-551, or "green card"). In cases where no interview is required, a notice of a favorable decision is mailed to the applicant. In both types of cases, the actual card will then be mailed to the home address as shown in the agency's records (so make sure to inform USCIS – not just the Post Office – right away if you change your address).

After obtaining permanent resident status, green card holders should be aware of the following:

(1) "Conditional" permanent residents need to petition to have the condition removed before the two-year green card expires. Petitions can be filed with USCIS as early as 90 days before the expiration date.

(2) Those whose permanent residence is based on marriage to a US citizen are eligible to apply for US citizenship three years after the date when permanent residence began. Applications may be filed as early as 90 days before the end of the three-year period.

(3) With certain exceptions (involving military service, for example), other green card holders may apply to become US citizens five years after the grant of permanent residence. Again, applications may be filed up as early as 90 days before the five years have expired.

Eligibility to apply for US citizenship of course involves other criteria in addition to length of permanent residence – good moral character, English language proficiency, physical presence in the US, etc. IIIC can assist prospective applicants in determining their eligibility and in filing the necessary application and documentation.

Visit one of our weekly legal clinics for a free, confidential consultation on this or any other immigration issue.

Disclaimer: These articles are published to inform generally, not to provide advice in specific cases. For legal advice seek the assistance of an immigration lawyer or an IIIC immigration counselor.

IIIC seeks volunteers

Are you looking for an enjoyable and worthwhile way to stay active and involved? Are you a student or job seeker looking to gain valuable resume building skills? Do you enjoy meeting new people from all over the world? Would you like to help make a difference in real people's lives? Well, you can.

The IIIC is looking for part-time volunteers of all ages and backgrounds to help staff our lively reception and help organize events, as well as volun-

teers to teach or assist in our English language and conversation classes. Both positions offer great opportunities to meet and help people from all over the world and be part of a vibrant, friendly team. All we ask is a minimum commitment of 2 hours a week, though more is always welcome. Full training and support is provided. For more information contact our volunteering coordinator Evelyn Brito at volunteering@iiicenter.org or at 617-542-7654.

It's a Dance Party!

Join us for an evening of music and dance to Kick off your holiday weekend!



Rick Larrimore
The ultimate tribute to Rod Stewart

Put on your dancing shoes and join us at the Malden Irish American Club with Rod Stewart impersonator Rick Larrimore for an evening of fun to benefit the work of the Irish International Immigrant Center with Special Guest...

Danny O'Connor

Thursday, October 4, 2012

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MALDEN, MA
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For tickets, call Ann Marie Cugno at
(617) 542-7654 ext. 32 or
PJ at (781) 322-8624.



BOSTON IRISH REPORTER

Celebrating 22 years "Telling the Stories of Boston's Irish"

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Friday, October 19, 2012

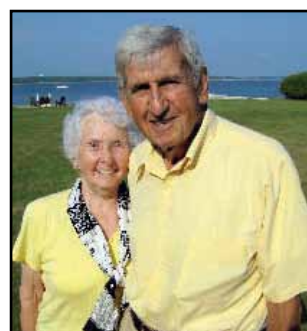
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Boston Irish Honors 2012

2012 Boston Irish Honorees



US Congressman Richard Neal



Mary and Bob Muse



Greg and Brendan Feeney

US Congressman Richard Neal

Mary and Bob Muse & Family

Brendan and Greg Feeney

Registration 11:15 a.m.

Luncheon 11:45 a.m.

\$150 per guest, Table of 10, \$1500

RSVP card enclosed or email: honors2012@bostonirish.com.
Sponsorship opportunities available - please call 617-436-1222.

North End’s St. Stephen Church celebrates sesquicentennial

By PATRICK E. O’CONNOR

The 150th anniversary of the establishment of St. Stephen Church on Hanover Street in the North End was remembered with a Mass of Thanksgiving on Sunday, September 23 with Auxiliary Bishop Robert F. Hennessey presiding.

St. Stephen Church was originally the New North Congregational Church. Boston born Charles Bulfinch, the nation’s premier architect of the time, received the commission to design a church to replace a previous church at Hanover and Clark Streets in 1802. The church was completed in 1804 and by 1814, renamed the Second Unitarian Church.

During the Civil War era, the Unitarian congregation declined as the immigrant population of the North End swelled. A previously established St. John the Baptist Church on Moon Street had outgrown its use. Father John J. Williams, administrator at the time and later Archbishop of Boston, purchased the church on September 26, 1862 for \$35,000. He dedicated the church to St. Stephen, the first Christian Martyr on December 2, 1862.



St. Stephen Church, circa 1960.

In the years since 1862, the church has survived a major fire in the spring of 1897 and again in September, 1929 and undergone numerous renovations. By the 1960’s, the neglect of the structure came to the attention of Cardinal Cushing. He authorized the church to close in 1964 for restoration and began raising funds to pay for the cost.

On Thursday, Novem-

ber 11, 1965, Cardinal Cushing rededicated the church. A new era began in April, 1968. The St. James Missionary Society established their headquarters at the church and rectory and assumed responsibility for the parish. In 2004, all of the North End was reorganized into St. Leonard Parish. St. Stephen’s lost its status as a parish but remained open as a chapel.



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BOSTON IRISH REPORTER

**BOSTON IRISH ARTS,
ENTERTAINMENT,
TRAVEL & MORE**

‘Three Ducks and a Goose’ The backstory begins on a farm in Mayo

BY SEAN SMITH
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

It was probably a day like many others in his childhood in County Mayo, but that doesn't make it any less special for Boston area fiddler Brendan Tonra.

He remembers the arrival of rain, prompting his mother to call him inside from the various activities favored by a three-year-old boy living on a Mayo farm. He remembers settling in by a window, looking out onto the barnyard and watching the family's three ducks and a goose enjoying themselves in the deluge, and wanting nothing else but to join in their frolics. And he remembers the rain stopping, which was his cue to bolt out the door and splash around in the newly formed puddles, just like the fowl he'd been observing.

"I had an older sister and brother," says Tonra, "but my sister, Josie, was dainty and didn't want to get dirty playing out in the rain and mud. So I just went out there on my own."

Such a simple, joyful thing, and such a pleasant memory.

So pleasant, in fact, that one day Tonra found himself composing on fiddle a set dance evoking that memory, adding to an already distinguished list of tunes he has written over the years. Nor did he stop there. He added a verse to the tune:

When I was a young lad I'd always complain

When my mother would make me come in from the rain

I'd run to a window that was shaky and loose

And from there I could see three ducks and a goose

Those ducks and that goose they'd be having great fun

They'd rather the rain any day than the sun

They'd be flapping and splashing as round they did run

But soon the rain would be over and then

I'd run to the door and go outside again

I'd jump and down with shirt flying loose

And join in the fun with three ducks and a goose

Tonra shared his creation with his good friend and long-time musical collaborator, the pianist Helen Kiesel, and before



One of the Boston area's most celebrated Irish musicians, Brendan Tonra also has composed more than 100 tunes.

they knew it, Tonra's set dance and song was drawing raves from acquaintances of theirs, who suggested it would make an ideal children's story.

Now, a year and a half after Tonra first began setting this childhood reminiscence to music, *Three Ducks and a Goose* is being published this fall as a book with an accompanying CD. Joining Tonra and Kiesel on the recording, made at Sounds Interesting Studio in Middleborough, was dancer Kieran Jordan and a children's choir from St. Margaret's School in Bourne. The book's illustrations were done by Kendra D'Angora, an art teacher at St. Margaret's.

Three Ducks and a Goose has been an unexpected, and thoroughly enjoyable, development in an unlikely, yet strong and enduring friendship. Newton native Kiesel comes from Polish roots and developed her keyboard talents playing the music of her family's cultural heritage; after coming to the US in 1959, Tonra became a fixture in the Boston Irish music



Helen Kiesel and Brendan Tonra have created *Three Ducks and a Goose*, a children's book and accompanying CD, based on a tune Tonra composed that was inspired by a childhood memory.

Sean Smith photos

scene, celebrated not only for his fiddle, flute and tin whistle playing but also for his penchant

for composing tunes – more than 100, he estimates – in the traditional vein.

Their paths crossed after Kiesel went to Ireland in 1977 and "fell in love with the music" she found there. Upon her return to Boston, Kiesel began exploring her new-found interest in Irish music, which led her to regular listenings of the radio show hosted by Larry Reynolds, another legend in Boston Irish music and co-founder of the local Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann branch. Through Reynolds's show, Kiesel became interested in learning tin whistle and found a tutor in Tonra. With his prompting, she immersed herself in the local Irish sessions, in particular the weekly gathering at The Village Coach House in Brookline Village – one of the more popular hotspots for Irish musicians for years until its closing in the late 1980s.

Since then, Tonra and Kiesel have been a welcome presence at sessions, concerts, and festivals throughout the Boston area and beyond, while also serving as a link to the area's rich legacy of Irish music.

But they didn't ever expect to be children's book authors or song composers.

"I had never thought until now about what makes a good kids' song," says Kiesel. "But you take a song like 'Inchworm' – 'Inchworm, inchworm, measuring the marigolds' – and it's so sweet and charming. It's also very simple without being stupid. I think that even in this day and age, with all the computers and fancy gadgets around, kids are still kids, and they appreciate the simple little things – like looking at bugs, or tromping around in puddles."

Tonra agrees that imagination, as well as a fondness for simple things, is a far greater resource for children than any state-of-technology plaything. "We didn't have any toys when I was a kid, but you would always find something to play with. I used to take stones and pebbles and arrange them so that I had my own miniature farm and fields, and made up all kinds of stories about it."

Another favorite activity, he says with a smile, was to take discarded chicken feet and use them to make tracks in the dust and dirt around the farm.

(Continued on page 14)

Adams Corner Irish fest takes a year off, looks to '13 renewal

The Irish Heritage Festival, which for the past three Columbus Day weekends has transformed Dorchester's Adams Corner into a block party celebrating the richness of Irish arts, culture and music in Boston, will not take place this year.

But organizers are already looking ahead to bringing back the event for 2013, and recently announced a date of October 13.

The festival, which is free of charge, has drawn upwards of 5,000 people annually since it debuted in 2009 with an array of Irish music and dance performers, many with strong ties to the Boston area, such as Robbie O'Connell, Aoife Clancy, The Joshua Tree, The

Gobshites, Erin's Melody, The Kieran Jordan Dancers, and the local Hanafin-Cooley branch of Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann. It also has served as an expression of civic pride for Dorchester, with neighborhood businesses and volunteers contributing support and encouraging visitors and former residents alike to discover "old Dot."

However, a stubbornly sluggish economy, combined with the considerable cost and logistics involved in producing an event on such a scale, convinced organizers that they should take a hiatus this year.

In a statement posted in late August on the festival's Facebook page, festival committee

member John O'Toole noted that costs for police details, lighting, permits, and other aspects of the festival run upwards of \$40,000.

"As you know, economically, it has been a very difficult year for many families and businesses, and we depend on the generosity of our donors to make the festival a success," O'Toole wrote. "We are extremely grateful to those folks, businesses, and our trade unions who helped make it a huge success for the past three years. The festival committee has decided to give a financial break to those who make the festival possible and are already planning next year's festival."

O'Toole concluded by thanking all those who have volunteered in the past, and said he looked forward "to welcoming new volunteers for next year's festival."

Then, a few weeks later, O'Toole posted another statement announcing that the festival would take place in 2013. "We appreciate the offers of help and are looking for more volunteers to keep up this great Dorchester tradition," he wrote. "Let me or a committee member know if you are willing to help in any way, every bit helps."

The festival website is at irishheritagefestival.com.

– SEAN SMITH



John O'Toole: "Every bit helps."

She's one of the 'Good People' at the Huntington

By R. J. DONOVAN
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

The streets of South Boston come alive as The Huntington Theatre presents "Good People" by Boston native and Pulitzer Prize winning playwright David Lindsay-Abaire. With a nod to the issues of identity, luck, class perception, and stereotyping, the insightful Broadway comedy packs a wallop as it takes a long hard look at Margie Walsh, a sharp-tongued, single, train-wreck of a Mom who has a handicapped daughter. Although Margie tries hard to make ends meet, secrets emerge, as does a surprise twist. Performances run through Oct. 14.

Playing Margie's friend Dottie, a woman who clearly lacks a filter for her comments, is Boston actress Nancy E. Carroll. A mainstay on our local stages, Nancy has scored raves from "The Savannah Disputation" at SpeakEasy to "Trad" at Tir Na Theatre to "The Year of Magical Thinking" at Lyric Stage, and more.



Nancy E. Carroll plays Dottie in David Lindsay-Abaire's "Good People," at The Huntington Theatre through October 14.

She practically stole the show from star Victor Garber in the Huntington production of Noel Coward's "Present Laughter" in 2007. Such that when the show later headed off to Broadway, Nancy went right along with it. She was also honored to tour with Galway's renowned Druid Theatre Company, here in Boston, across America, and throughout Ireland.

Born in Haverhill, she moved to Ohio at the age of three when her father took a teaching job there. Relatives remained behind, so returning to Massachusetts for summer trips was commonplace. Early on, she developed an affinity for the sea. "I was hooked," she said. "As soon as I was old enough to move here, I said, 'Forget it, I'm moving to the ocean.'"

Prior to a day of rehearsals at the Huntington, we spoke about her role in "Good People" and her time with the Druid. Here's a condensed look at our conversation:

Q. Tell me a little about Dottie, the character you're playing in "Good People."

A. Ah, Dottie, God love her. I think she has a good heart. She tends to blurt. (Laughing) Some of the things she says are, I'm not going to say rude, but they're not the most sympathetic words . . . ("Good People") is a wonderful piece. . . It's going to keep you guessing right 'till the final moments. And I think that's going to be marvelously intriguing for the audience. The characters are just terrific.

Q. The play was enthusiastically embraced on Broadway, but how do you think local folk will take to seeing themselves, or versions of themselves, portrayed on stage. Will they find it fun, or perhaps a little too close to home?

A. No, I think it will be fun, I really do. . . I don't think there's anything in it where anyone would go, "Oh they're not portraying that correctly." It's a slice of life. It's who these people are. Just a peek into a neighborhood, a struggling woman, and how she tries to solve her problems.

Q. You had a wonderful opportunity to work with The Druid Theater company. How did that come about?

A. I had spoken to my agent and said I was anxious for an adventure. I felt a need to be somewhere else. I



Nancy E. Carroll (left, as Dottie) and Karen MacDonald (right, as Jean) in David Lindsay-Abaire's "Good People," at The Huntington Theatre through October 14. (Photo: T. Charles Erickson)

had this wanderlust. So we were pouring through the various things that were auditioning in New York. I came across this on the Internet and I rang (my agent) and said, "Stop, this is what I want to be seen for. It's 'The Cripple of Inishmaan' with the Druid Theater Company and its going to play Ireland and the US and I want to be seen for it."

A. And it happened.

A. And lucky me. I got into the audition and I got a call back and got cast. Mid-way through that six-month gig with them, they asked me to come back and do "Big Maggie." So I went back in the fall and did another five months with them and toured only in Ireland.

Q. "Cripple of Inishmaan" played here in Boston at ArtsEmerson, but the tour took you back and forth to Ireland, didn't it?

A. I can't tell you how many times we jumped the pond. We opened in Ireland, and then Boston was our first stop (here). Then I think we went right back to play Dublin, and then we came back and did Washington and L.A. and the Spoleto Festival, which was phenomenal. Then at the very end, we went back to Ireland to do it in Inishmaan, where it had never been performed.

Q. Talk about performing a play on its own turf.

A. The place was packed. It was such an event that Mary Robinson, the president of Ireland at the time, attended. It was full of luminaries. You couldn't find a room on the island. People were pitching tents in pastures. It was magical.

Q. Did your time in Ireland satisfy the wanderlust?

A. I just loved the slower pace. And the countryside was so stunning. In Galway, you've got the best of all worlds. You've got the sea, and the mountains behind

you. You've got this wonderful medieval town.

Q. Ireland has always been special to your family?

A. My great-great-grandfather came over from Ireland, from County Offaly and the Roscommon areas. My father had traveled to Ireland a couple of times in his lifetime. Since he was a teacher, he went by himself – we couldn't afford to take the whole family. It was such an important part of our family. My father made it such an important part. It was all I heard about when I was a child.

Q. Did you ever have the chance to make a visit together?

A. Unfortunately, my father died very very young. So my brothers and I went, on the first anniversary of his death, to celebrate his life. And that is how my insane addiction developed. Because before I ever got the job with the Druid, I had been back to Ireland 16 times on vacation. Totally addicted.

Q. Somewhere, your Dad was probably delighted.

A. I can tell you very, very strongly, on the first night of "Cripple" – we had opened in Roscommon – I remember this moment – I was standing outside under the stars and I thought, "God, my father, if he were just here, he would be so proud of me, knowing that I was working in Ireland, doing an Irish play." It can be cloudy in Ireland, you know that. And suddenly the clouds parted and the moon shown down on me, and I said, "Okay, that's my sign. He heard me."

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

"Good People," through Oct. 14, at the Huntington's BU Theatre, 264 Huntington Avenue, Boston. Tickets: 617-266-0800 or huntingtontheatre.org.

Canadian-American Club is celebrating its 75th year

By SEAN SMITH
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

The Canadian-American Club, one of the Boston area's most enduring strongholds of Celtic music, will mark its 75th anniversary this month with a celebration the weekend of October 19-21 that includes social, music, and dance events.

Located at 202 Arlington St. in Watertown, the club has long played a vital role in the life of the area's Canadian Maritimes (including Nova Scotia and Cape Breton as well as Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick) community as a concert venue and dance hall as well as a gathering place for families, friends and visitors with links to – or an interest in – the Maritimes and its cultural traditions. At the same time, the club also has served as an equally important hub of activity for the local Irish community as the site of the monthly meeting of Boston's Hanafin-Cooley branch of Comhaltas

Ceoltoiri Eireann.

The roster of distinguished musicians who have played there, at concerts, ceilidhs or sessions, is like a Hall of Fame unto itself. It includes the likes of John Campbell, who first organized the club's dances, Jerry Holland, Buddy MacMaster, Bill Lamey, Joe Cormier, Kimberley Fraser, Brenda Stubbert, Larry Reynolds, Jimmy Hogan, and Seamus Connolly, to name just a few.

Kicking off the festivities on Oct. 19 will be an informal evening of music in the downstairs portion of the club. The next day will be a dinner and dance party, with Irish and American music by the Jackie Brown Band and Cape Breton music by Troy MacGillivray – part of the vanguard of the new generation of talented Cape Breton musicians – and bagpiper Mike Kerr. MacGillivray also will be on hand on Sunday for a fiddle workshop at 11 a.m. and, at 3 p.m., a family-



Social dancing has long been a favorite activity at the Canadian American Club, and will be a highlight of its 75th anniversary celebration.

Sean Smith photo

style "Kitchen Ceilidh" (\$15 admission at the door) that concludes the celebration.

Reservations are required for the Saturday night dinner, but not for the Friday night and Sunday afternoon events. To make reservations for the dinner, send e-mail by October 20 to peggymorrison21@verizon.net.

Although the club originated as a political league to provide support for Canadian-born Bostonians considering public

office, according to club president Peggy Morrison, it quickly evolved into a social and charitable organization. World War II and the late 1940s saw the club nearly die out, but it re-established itself in 1950, adding bylaws and dedicating itself to help foster amicable relations between the US and Canada, promote citizenship among Canadians in the US, and continue its social, educational and charitable activities, among other things.

For 32 years, club meetings were held in private homes, until the club moved in 1960 to the Knights of Columbus Hall in Allston. In 1969, the club purchased the building at 202 Arlington St.

Inevitably, the traditional music and dance that has been such a big part of the Canadian Maritimes community's social life, whether back home or in Boston, found its way into the club.

"In the 1960s and '70s, every Saturday night, the place would be full," recalls Morrison, who began her association with the club in the early 1960s. "The local musicians would be there, of course, and we'd invite people from the Maritimes to come down and play. If you weren't there before 9, you wouldn't get a seat."

Changing demographics, socioeconomic trends, and other factors have made an impact on Boston's Maritimes community, and on the club as a result. As Morrison notes,

in the 1990s there was less migration from Nova Scotia and elsewhere in the region to the Boston area, and younger generations seemed less inclined to embrace the music and dance traditions (although Morrison's daughter Christine, for her part, performs and teaches Cape Breton dance).

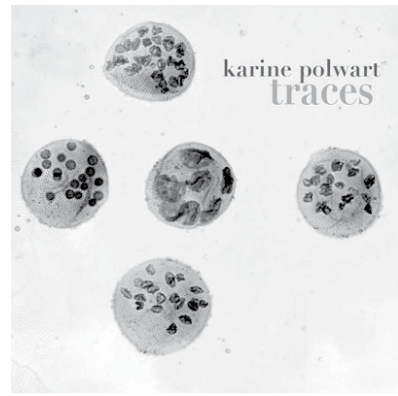
"Fortunately," Morrison adds, "in the '90s you saw more people from outside Cape Breton, PEI, and the Maritimes develop an interest in the music and dance, so that brought a new crowd to the club's events."

"It's important to keep alive the history, culture and traditions of our families," said Morrison. "We've all worked very hard to do that through the club, and we've appreciated the support and encouragement. We hope that people, whether they have ties to the Maritimes or not, will keep coming out to the club, listen to music, try some dancing, and enjoy themselves."

CD ROUNDUP

By SEAN SMITH

Karine Polwart, "Traces" • You may not have heard Karine Polwart, but chances are you've heard some of her work. Over the past decade, the Scottish singer-songwriter's compositions—intelligent, probing, vivid, and with a propensity to transpose small-scale triumphs or tragedies into the wider human experience—have proliferated throughout the folk/acoustic scene. Solas, on their most recent album, "Turning the Tide," covered "Sorry," Polwart's dignified, elegantly phrased promise of comeuppance to those who cause pain or, even worse, are indifferent to its impact. Other



songs of hers gaining attention include the haunting yet hopeful "Waterlily" and the anthemic "Follow the Heron Home" (which she sang during her appearance locally in "Christmas Celtic Sojourn" a few years ago). The story on "Traces," however, is not only of content

but also of form. Producer Iain Cook adds orchestrations and other stylistic touches that seek to enhance or underscore particular elements of a song, in a way that hasn't been done on a Polwart recording before now: booming percussion here, industrial time-clock rhythm there, vocals filtered, distorted or magnified. It's no small gamble: Does this approach serve to aurally complement Polwart's lyrics, or does it merely distract?

Fortunately, such are Polwart's strengths as a writer—of melodies as well as words—and singer that by and large Cook's flourishes are an asset instead of a hindrance. It also helps that Polwart has a supporting cast of brother Steven on guitars and backing vocals and the inimitable Inge Thomson on piano accordion, percussion, and backing vocals, both of who have been the core of her touring band for a while now.

The album's first track, "Cover Your Eyes"—inspired by mogul Donald Trump's attempts to construct an executive golf course in rural Aberdeenshire—is marked by a sustained note, with swelling cymbal and reverbed vocals, evoking windswept ocean-side vistas that, as Polwart makes clear, are ultimately harder than man's avarice ("And the tide still ebbs and flows/where the Ythan meets the ocean/not even God himself/can stop the Northerlies from blowing").

Durability in the face of adversity also is at the heart of "King of Birds," a fascinatingly intricate juxtaposing of bird mythology—specifically, the wren, "the king of birds"—with the venerable history of St. Paul's Cathedral (designed by Sir Christopher Wren), graced by an almost liturgical-sounding chorus.

Two songs in particular demonstrate Polwart's steadfastness in confronting events of unspeakable

real-life tragedy and finding the potential for hope, even redemption: "Strange News" is an especially personal exploration, about the death of her young (33-year-old) cousin on Christmas Day and its effect on the family, its interlude a crescendo that suggests mounting, bursting anguish; "Half a Mile" is a meditation on the final moments of freedom of a young girl from northern England who, walking home on her own for the first time, was abducted and killed—Polwart calls it "by far the most difficult song I've ever written."

But the fact of our mortality is not always so wrenching or devastating, as Polwart proposes in "Salter's Road," a tribute to her friend and late neighbor who died just short of turning 90. With tenderly elegiac piano and horns in the background, Polwart sings of a long, eventful life passing gently into memory ("The old north wind/gathers her into his arms once more").

Through it all is Polwart's insistence on evincing optimism in grim circumstances. "Don't worry/worrying won't pay the bills/I would trade in the view from this mountainside/for some tiny little molehill," she sings in "Don't Worry." And you absolutely believe her.

The Outside Track, "Flash Company" • Another thoroughly enjoyable effort from this still youthful quintet, whose membership and musical influences stem from Ireland, Scotland, and Canada, once again displaying excellent musicianship and choice of material, as well as arrangements that are imaginative and highly pleasing to the ear.

The band's core strength is the tight, skillful playing of Mairi Rankin (fiddle), Norah Rendell (flute, whistle), Fiona Black (accordion), and Ailie Robertson (harp), ably backed by guitarist Cilian O'Dalaigh (guitar). "The Body Parts Set" starts off with O'Dalaigh's funky, syncopated backing underneath Robertson's dexterous playing of a Quebecois tune, "Reel de La Fesse Crampee," with the rest of the band gradually merging—Robertson shares a lovely turn with Rendell's whistle at one point—and then each taking a phrase, before Black amps up Sharon Shannon's "Neckbelly," and guests Ewan Baird on percussion and double bassist Duncan Lyall help underscore O'Dalaigh's rhythmic alterations.

"The Testimonial" is another demonstration of the band's talent for arrangements. Black begins with a slow strathspey, "Welcome Sara Malaney" by Cape Breton fiddler David Greenberg, with Rendell and Rankin adding soft touches. Then Rankin launches into a faster strathspey, "Colin Rankin's," that goes into the twisty "Billy MacLeod's Testimonial"—Black's accordion and Baird's bodhran play with the beat until it almost sounds Afro-Caribbean—and finally into a classic Irish reel, "The Donegal Tinker," with a shifting key signature. Another set, Rankin's "Kelly Peck" and Eric Favreau's "Petit Sarny," pairs Quebecois-style jigs that both have funny little rhythmic turns in them.

Meanwhile, their vocal quality has, if anything, gotten even better. Rendell leads the singing, her voice possessed of a subtle sinewiness but also a capacity for delicacy and sensitivity where appropriate. The group harmonies are an absolute treat, such as on the jaunty, irresistible "Mountain Road," with Robertson's harp providing the rhythmical impetus, or "The False Knight on the Road" (a contest of wits between a young boy and the devil incognito—think of the Bridgekeeper scene in "Monty Python and the Holy Grail"), abetted by a robust chordal burst by Black. The moody "The Hawk and the Crow," taken from Peter Kennedy's "Folk Songs of Britain and Ireland" collection, is full of ornithological-based symbolism and mythology, while "Inisvaddy Annie"—a Helen Cruikshank poem of teenage motherhood updated and adapted by Irish singer Padrigin Ni Uallachain (wife of Len Graham)—is sweet and sad.

Boston-area Cape Breton enthusiasts will be happy to know that the CD contains a few nods to the late Jerry Holland. Rankin masterfully interpolates his well-known "My Cape Breton Home" in the album's title track, one of those countless foolish-youth/no-regrets songs in the British Isles folk tradition, voiced with gusto by Rendell. Holland's "Fr. John Angus Rankin" shows up intermittently throughout another song, "Whitby Maid," and the group also has a go at "Fishcakes," written as a tribute to Holland by Daniel Lapp.

This is the group's third CD, the second with this current line-up, and it's plain to see their current track leads to ever-wider acceptance in the Celtic music realm.



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A column of news and updates of Boston's Celtic Music Fest (BCMfest) that celebrates the Boston area's rich heritage of Irish, Scottish, Cape Breton music and dance with a grassroots, musician-run winter music festival and other events during the year. BCMfest, which will celebrate its 10th anniversary when it takes place January 11-12, 2013, is a program of Passim, the Harvard Square-based center for folk and acoustic music. Learn about BCMfest at passim.org/bcmfest.
— SEAN SMITH

Songs for spooking: In what has now become a BCMfest tradition, this month's Celtic Music Monday event will once again serve as a "pre-Halloween special," featuring ballads of the supernatural and other spooky songs from the Celtic music traditions. Appearing at the Oct. 8 concert in Harvard Square's Club Passim will be: husband-wife guitar-flute duo Matt and Shannon Heaton, whose repertoire includes their own Irish-American material as well as traditional tunes and songs; Liz Simmons, vocalist with the band Annalivia, who has worked with Niamh Parsons and Aoife Clancy, among others; and fiddler-vocalist Lissa Schneckenburger — a scholar as well as performer of traditional music from New England — with guitarist Bethany Waickman.

Admission to the concert, which begins at 8 p.m., is \$12, \$6 for members of Passim, WGBH and WUMB. See passim.org for reservations or other details.

Countdown continues: At press time, the line-up for the 10th BCMfest, to be held January 11 and 12, was still being finalized. Be sure to check passim.org/bcmfest for updates. The 2013 festival announcement will appear here next month.

Lending a hand: BCMfest is always looking for people willing to lend their time and talents. If you are interested in volunteering at the festival, or in contributing ideas and skills to help BCMfest, please drop us a note at our e-mail address, bcmfest@passim.org.

'Three Ducks and a Goose'

(Continued from page 12)

Still, even a "simple" kids' song takes a certain amount of effort to make it work, as Tonra notes: "It wasn't just a matter of coming up with the right words. I had to make sure they fit with the tune in just the right way."

Kiesel loved Tonra's creation as soon as she heard it, and — in what might be described as an informal kind of "test-marketing" — shared the tune and song with musical friends who had a young daughter. The friends were equally impressed, and suggested Tonra and Kiesel turn the song into a book.

Kiesel notes that the book has an underlying historical aspect. "The pictures show the farm house and yard of Brendan's childhood exactly as they were, and Brendan as he was as a three-year-old. So you get a view of what Irish farm life was like in the 1930s."

Once the book was under way, another idea occurred to Tonra and Kiesel: to make a recording of the song and include it as a CD with the book. And while they knew plenty of singers, Tonra and Kiesel felt the song needed a special, youthful touch. "We really wanted kids' voices on the CD, so having a children's choir sing the song made a lot of sense," says Kiesel.

The St. Margaret's choir took a couple of months to learn the song, then recorded it in the school auditorium. Before going into the studio to record their part, Tonra and Kiesel had another brainstorm, and asked Jordan if she would provide step dance accompaniment. Jordan concocted a dance to go with the tune and recorded her stepping while listening to the music on headphones.

Kiesel and Tonra are grateful to all the friends who helped them along the way in making *Three Ducks and a Goose* a reality.

"I have quite a lot of admiration and respect for writers, now that I see what goes into producing a book," says Kiesel. "It's been a lot of work, but also a lot of fun, and we hope people will enjoy the results."

Three Ducks and a Goose will be available via Ossian USA, at ossianusa.com, according to Kiesel, who says those interested in the book and CD also can contact her at hkiesel@rcn.com.



Clannad performs at the Berklee Performance Center on October 10 during its first North American tour in 18 years.

OCTOBER CONCERTS CALENDAR

BY SEAN SMITH
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Upcoming concerts in the Greater Boston area offer a diverse spectrum of music from Irish, Scottish, Canadian Maritime, and other Celtic-associated traditions.

The Forge, a mainly traditional Irish quartet featuring Boston-based musicians Maeve Gilchrist, a Scottish-born harpist and vocalist whose playing encompasses jazz and world music as well as Celtic influences, and Frankowicz, whose fiddling has bolstered the area's Irish session scene for years, joined with flutist Nicole Rabata and bodhran player Anna Colliton to form the band last year. Opening for The Forge will be fiddler Mariel Vandersteel, a member of Celtic-Americana band Annalivia whose musical interests range to Appalachian and Scandinavian as well as Celtic music. For tickets and other information, see passim.org.

The **Burren**, located in Somerville's Davis Square, hosts dynamic bagpiper **Carlos Nunez**, on Oct. 8 at 7:30 p.m. as part of the pub's "Backroom" series. As charismatic as he is talented, Nunez has helped spark interest in the music of the Celtic-influenced Galician region of Spain through his appearances with The Chieftains — most notably on their Grammy-winning album "Santiago" — Altan, Donal Lunny, and Sharon Shannon, among others, and at festivals and concerts around the world. Nunez will be joined at The Burren by Boston-based fiddlers Katie McNally and Hanneke Cassel.

For tickets and information on Burren Backroom events, see brownpaper-tickets.com/profile/86614.

Also on October 8 will be the **BCMfest** Celtic Music Monday concert, a pre-Halloween special of spooky songs and ballads of the supernatural with Matt and Shannon Heaton, Lissa Schneckenburger and Bethany Waickman, and Liz Simmons. [See the BCMfest column elsewhere in this section for details.]

On October 10, the **notloB Concert Series** will present award-winning Prince Edward Island fiddler Richard Wood with accompanist Gordon Belsher at the **Loring-Greenough House**, 12 South Street, Jamaica Plain. Wood's combina-

tion of traditional style and rock-n-roll energy has made him a popular performer beyond his native Canada, and he has appeared with such acts as The Chieftains, Shania Twain and former "Riverdance" star Jean Butler. He has won three Canadian East Coast Music Awards and been named by MacLean's Magazine as one of the Top 100 Canadians to watch in the 21st century.

Belsher, who plays guitar, mandola and bodhran and sings, has toured extensively across Canada, in the US, the UK, Europe, Japan and Australia. His CDs "Call Up All The Neighbours" and "Reel in the Flickering Light" both received nominations for "Roots/Traditional Solo Recording of the Year" category of the East Coast Music Awards.

Prior to their concert, which begins at 8 p.m., Wood and Belsher will each give separate-admission workshops. Suggested donation for the concert is \$19 plus a \$1 preservation fee; there is a \$2 members discount. The workshop is \$20 for non-members, \$17 for members, and reservations are required. For more on the show, as well as other notloB events, go to google.com/site/notlobmusic.

That same night, Oct. 10, will see the return to Boston of the Grammy-winning Irish band **Clannad** as part of their first North American tour in 18 years, with a concert in the **Berklee Performance Center**, 136 Mass. Ave., at 7:30 p.m. The group, comprised of siblings Moya, Ciaran, and Pol Brennan along with their twin uncles Noel and Padraig Duggan, is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. Clannad started out in 1972 as an acoustic band whose repertoire reflected their Donegal roots, with songs in Irish as well as English. In the 1980s, the group began to incorporate more rock and world music influences, adding electric instruments and complex, atmospheric arrangements, and went on to achieve international stardom with songs like "In a Lifetime" and "Theme from Harry's Game." In 1999, Clannad was awarded a Grammy in the Best New Age Album category.

Tickets for the concert are \$49.50 and \$59.50 (reserved seating) and can be purchased through berkleebpc.com. For more information, call 617-747-2261.

Irish-American singer **Cathie Ryan** will mark



Keith Murphy and Becky Tracy appear as part of the notloB Concert Series on November 1.

the release of her new CD, "Through Wind and Rain," in **The Burren Backroom** on Oct. 14 at 8 p.m. A former member of Cherish the Ladies, Ryan has cultivated a highly successful solo career as an interpreter of both traditional and contemporary songs. Much of the material on "Through Wind and Rain" is modern songs written by singers who, like Ryan, have solid backgrounds in traditional music, including Kate Rusby, John Doyle, Mairead Ni Mhoanaigh, Roger McGuinn, and Laura Smith. Ryan will be accompanied by Patsy O'Brien on guitar and vocals and Matt Mancuso on fiddle and vocals. Tickets are \$18 in advance, \$20 at the door; see brownpaper-tickets.com/event/271741 for details.

Popular New England husband-wife duo **Keith Murphy and Becky Tracy** will perform in the notloB series on November 1, also at the **Loring-Greenough House**. Murphy (guitar, mandolin, piano, foot percussion, vocals) and Tracy (fiddle) formed two-thirds of the

trio Nightingale, which for almost 20 years attracted a large following in concert venues and dance halls throughout the US, Canada, and Europe with their rhythmically intensive and sophisticated, innovative yet respectful renditions of traditional music, including Irish, Canadian, French and Scandinavian.

Those qualities have been present in the individual solo as well as duet work of Murphy and Tracy, who also are highly esteemed as teachers as well as musicians. Murphy has shared his natural, intimate singing and quietly powerful percussive-style guitar style in stints with Boston-area fiddle ensemble Childsplay, among others. Tracy, who studied Irish fiddling with Brendan Mulvihill and Eugene O'Donnell, has a strong background and wealth of experience in the New England contra dance scene.

The suggested donation for the concert is \$14, plus a \$1 preservation fee.

For more information, go to google.com/site/notlobmusic.



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BOSTON IRISH REPORTER BOOK BRIEFS

REVIEWS OF BOOKS RECENTLY PUBLISHED IN IRELAND

Mistaken

By Neil Jordan

Kevin Thunder grew up with a double -- a boy so uncannily like him that they were mistaken for each other at every turn. As children in 1960s Dublin, one lived next to Bram Stoker's house, haunted by an imagined Dracula, the other in the more refined spaces of Palmerston Park. Though divided, like the city itself, by background and class, they shared the same smell, the same looks and perhaps, Kevin comes to believe, the same soul. They exchange identities when it suits them, each acting the part of the other one, but as they reach adulthood, what started as a childhood game descends into something more sinister and they discover taking on another's life can lead to darker places than either had imagined. Neil Jordan's long-awaited new novel is an extraordinary achievement, a comedy of manners at the same time as a Gothic tragedy, a thriller and an elegy. It offers

imaginative entertainment of the highest order. Other reviewers said: Of all his books, *Mistaken* is perhaps the most universal -- funny, mysterious, and ultimately moving. (The Times); Nothing less than a plangent, incisive poetic wonder of a book. (Irish Times) ; The novel is so precisely written, in every detail, each syllable weighed, or so it feels that reading slowly, you find yourself watermarked by a tale you don't wish to put down, and can't bear to end . . . Two things make this tale a stand-out read: First, Jordan's restraint . . . The other coup is the novel's structure; it is essentially an intimate revelation . . . unputdownable. (Scotsman) ; Written with great skill, confidence and vim . . . utterly convincing: full of subtlety, delicate, piercing prose, charming, lively dialogue and descriptive passages that are poetic, witty, and acute. At times it has the pace of a thriller, yet for all its highly specific subject matter it still manages to achieve a feeling of spaciousness in which it is possible for the writer to ponder, with a bit of leisure, the definition of human nature. A fine achievement, a powerful, involving and beautifully written book about identity and loss. (Financial Times).

PUZZLE SOLUTION FROM PAGE 19

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Re: **Michael Raftery deceased**
Caltra, Ballinasloe, County Galway

I am seeking information on Michael's 1st cousins, children of the late John Joe Raftery late of 43 Denmark Avenue, Milton, Mass. Who we believe are John Joe Junior, Mary E. McConnon and Patricia L. Powers.;

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From his prison cell, Bobby Sands made the world take notice

Following is the eighth in a series of articles on individuals who had a substantial impact on civic life in Ireland in the 20th century.

Bobby Sands
1954-1981

STEPHEN M. PINGEL
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Beginning in the late 1960s, many of the most dramatic events in Ireland over the following two decades or so took place in the North, most of them tied to The Troubles.

Of the many figures who emerged to have a strong presence and broad influence on civic life in Northern Ireland, Bobby Sands stands out as the unofficial martyr of The Troubles era and as a prominent figure representing the struggles the Irish Catholics faced in trying to maintain their culture and language in



Bobby Sands
Listverse.com

a region mostly hostile to those aims.

Controversy followed Sands around, but this was a man who was an elected MP at the Westminster Parliament and, for many in Ireland, what Ernesto "Che" Guevara was to Latin America.

Born on March 9, 1954, in Abbots Cross, Newtonabbey, Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland, Sands encountered disruption early on in life: frequent family moves while growing up in an impoverished yet growing Irish-Catholic family that moved three times before the early 1960s alone, all within Newtonabbey. Few would question the notion that upheaval at home informed the young Bobby's view of life as he grew up in region of want and violence.

While living in Rathcoole, Newtonabbey, the Sands family encountered one of the more polarizing incidents of their lives, one that ended with Bobby finding a new home and a focus on the future: They

were essentially forced out of town by heavy Loyalist threats and activity. They moved directly into run-down and violent West Belfast, the core of Irish nationalism in Northern Ireland.

It was from that base that Sands and many other young adults became caught up in the world of Irish nationalism and its struggle against the British Crown.

In 1972, at age 18, Sands joined the Provisional IRA (PIRA) and soon rose within its ranks, although with a largely poetic and peaceful take on The Troubles. During that year, though, he experienced his first arrest, on a charge of possession of several handguns that were found in a home he was staying in.

Still, life went on, and that same year, just before his arrest, Sands married Geraldine Noade. The following April, with Geraldine eight months pregnant, he was tried and sentenced to five years in prison for his involvement with the handguns found the year earlier. This would not be his last collision with the police and acquaintance with prison life.

As for Geraldine and their son, Gerard, they moved to mainland England later that year, away from the violence and instability of their homeland.

After his release in 1976, Sands returned with a vengeance to the cause of Northern Irish independence and to a life where there was always trouble ahead.

He was suspected of involvement in several PIRA bombings that year and in one major case, involving the bombing of the Balmoral Furniture Company, he was tried with five others though the police didn't have enough evidence for a conviction.

Soon after, though, Sands was implicated for playing a role in a gun battle with the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). Unfortunately for Sands, his weapon was recovered and he was promptly tried and convicted. This time, he was given 14 years at HM Prison Maze, infamously known in Belfast as the Long Kesh prison.

It was in Long Kesh that Sands gained worldwide

notoriety – and, from many, acclaim – as he managed, in 1981 and from his cell, to get elected to Parliament at Westminster while earning praise for his writing and poetry that had his admirers from around the world, especially with Sinn Féin adherents in Northern Ireland, comparing him favorably to Che Guevara, the Cuban revolutionary.

Sands used his time in Long Kesh to write several articles for *An Phoblacht*, some under a pseudonym, several songs, poems, and, perhaps most importantly, *A Day In My Life*, his autobiography. His most notable quote came out of Long Kesh: "Our revenge will be the laughter of our children."

His prison days also saw Sands becoming involved in several of the more notable prison strikes: The Blanket Protest, where prisoners refused to wear common prison clothes rather than be recognized as political prisoners; and the Dirty Protest, where prisoners refused to "slop out" (clean out their commode buckets) to further protest the lack of special status.

During this time the Thatcher administration in London didn't help diplomatic matters by contemptuously referring to the prison protesters as "common criminals."

In March 1981, Bobby Sands began his ultimate protest: a hunger strike along with others. Beginning the first day of the month, they stopped eating. For Sands, the strike ran over 66 days until his death at age 27 on May 5 in the hospital prison with his mother at his side. In his final days, Sands spoke with priests for hours and hours each day, often recalling the beauty and peacefulness of his homeland.

In the interim, and while at death's door, he was elected to Parliament on April 9 as the MP for Fermanagh and South Tyrone.

The idea of a prisoner on a hunger strike in Northern Ireland becoming the youngest MP in the hostile British Parliament (for 25 days) was startling to the world and brought heavy criticism to Margaret Thatcher's door at 10 Downing Street.

Her riposte to news of



Bobby Sands Mural on the side of Sinn Féin headquarters, West Falls Road, Belfast.

his death? "Mr. Sands was a convicted criminal. He chose to take his own life. It was a choice that his organization did not allow to many of its victims."

With Sands's death, unrest broke out in Belfast and beyond as his admirers mourned the passing of a martyred symbol of independence. In Tehran, Iranians changed the name of the street the British embassy was located on, forcing the diplomats to change their entrance to avoid having their address read "Bobby Sands Street, Tehran, Iran."

In the United States, his death was a Page One story. With Irish-American support for the IRA at perhaps an all time high in 1981, several groups, largely composed of Irish-Americans, protested in their own ways. In New York, for instance, the Longshoreman's Union refused to unload any British ship for 24 hours.

Back in Northern Ireland's prisons, some concessions were made to prisoners, mostly without direct reference to the death of Bobby Sands, who today holds an elevated status in modern Irish history. His youthful face dots the landscape of West Belfast in the form of murals; political prisoners in Northern Ireland remember him as a martyr to their cause; and many in Latin America,

particularly Cuba, view him as an accomplished writer who gave his life to the causes of ending imperialism and freedom of choice for peoples across the world. Some of Bobby Sands's original works can be found in the Irish Republican History Museum, located in the Conway Mill right off Falls Road, West Belfast, two blocks from Sinn Féin headquarters.

Today, post the 1998 Good Friday Agreement sessions, there is clear evidence that Bobby Sands's

dream did come true. There is laughter among the children of Belfast, a precious peace across Loyalist and Nationalist lines, and hope in the hearts and minds of the youth who vow to end violence in the North.

Stephen M. Pingel is a student at the University of Massachusetts in Lowell where he is specializing in the socio-economic history of modern conflicts as well as 20th-century Irish history.

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When it comes to wind energy, the Irish know their stuff

By JUDY ENRIGHT
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

The Irish are a wind-loving lot – and why not when they are so often buffeted by the gales that swirl around the greenest island in the Atlantic?

While some here complain that wind turbines block their vistas, the Irish have long embraced the concept of harnessing the wind's energy and all its resulting benefits and you can see turbines atop many hills in the country.

At last count, there were 31 on-shore wind energy projects operating in the Republic with the Airtricity Wind Farm, at Kingsmountain, Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo, producing the most energy – enough to power more than 15,000 homes, they claim.

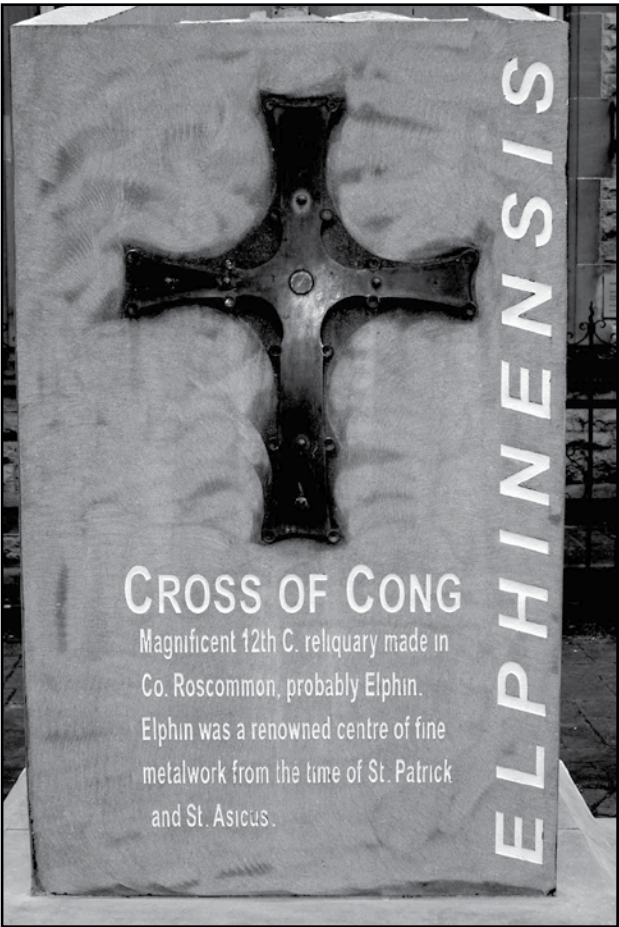
But wind turbines are modern technology; before they came on the scene, windmill blades (or sails) captured the gusts and transmitted that energy down to the millstones to grind grain. So making use of the prevailing breeze is nothing new for Ireland.

Historians say the first windmills were built in Iran around 600 A.D. and that Ireland once boasted about 500 of them, primarily on the Eastern seaboard where water often ran short in the summer. The first record of an Irish windmill was noted in 1281, in Kilsanlon, Co. Wexford.

Windmills were somewhat more rare in the Midlands, although at one time there were eight in operation within a few miles of Roscommon Town.

There are a number of windmills in Ireland today, including several in Skerries, Co. Dublin; in Blennerville in Tralee, Co. Kerry; in Elphin in Co. Roscommon, and in Ballycopeland in Co. Down. Primarily, they are tourist attractions as better and faster methods for grinding grain have been discovered over the years.

BLENNERVILLE
Tralee, Co. Kerry, has long been a tourist mecca, thanks, in part, to the Blennerville Windmill that was built in 1800 by Sir Roland Blennerhasset. Visitors can take a guided tour of the beautifully restored five-story windmill and hear about the various stages of grain milling, and later stop by the excellent restaurant and craft shop on site. Blennerville was the



The 12th Century Cross of Cong is said to have been made in Elphin, Co. Roscommon.

main port of emigration from Co. Kerry during Famine years and the visitor center at the windmill also has an extensive exhibit that includes models of the so-called “coffin ships.” The windmill is open April through October from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily and is well worth a visit.

In addition to the windmill, there is now a 4.5-million Euro Tralee Bay Wetlands visitor park nearby that features many spots – including a viewing tower – from which you can quietly watch wildlife in the protected Tralee Bay Nature Reserve. The Park - in the planning stages for more than a decade - is said to be a leading example of “soft tourism,” with multilingual wildlife boat rides through the habitats, light water sports, and walking and cycling trails. The park is expected to draw some 70,000 visitors a year.

ELPHIN WINDMILL
Up the road in Co. Roscommon, is the Elphin Windmill that was restored and opened to the public in 1996, thanks to the efforts of a committee of dedicated and focused local residents.

Elphin is an interesting place and a hotbed of Irish history. The poet and playwright Oliver Goldsmith was born in Smithhill,

Elphin, in 1728, and Percy French, a songwriter, poet and artist, was born in Clooneyquinn, Elphin, in 1854. And, they say that the famous 12th Century Cross of Cong was most probably made in Elphin, which was a noted center for fine metalwork from the time of St. Patrick, who founded an ecclesiastical site there in 433 A.D.

The Elphin Windmill is on a small road about half a mile northwest of the town and those planning to rebuild the windmill had only a derelict tower and a notation on an 1837 Ordnance Survey map to go by. The map said “ruins of windmill,” which indicated that the structure had been derelict for a very long time. Planners suspect that the original windmill was probably built in the mid-1700s by the local landowner, Edward Synge, who was Bishop of Elphin from 1740 to his death in 1762. He farmed extensively and, historians think, built the windmill primarily to grind oats for porridge and oatcakes as well as animal feed.

Most windmills were eventually abandoned in favor of more reliable watermills and by the 1830s, most had ceased operation.

If you're near Elphin in your Irish travels, be sure to stop by the windmill



The Elphin Windmill, in an ecclesiastical area founded by St. Patrick in Co. Roscommon about 433 AD, was restored over a three-year period and opened to the public in 1996.

Judy Enright photo

and adjacent visitor center and see the work done by this group of committed residents to restore and share their history.

OCTOBER
Spooky time is here again and that's great news for all resident ghosts and goblins.

Dromoland Castle, just around the corner from Shannon Airport, is offering a Halloween value package from Oct. 30 to Nov. 2 that includes Scary Movie Nights for Little Wizards and Witches, pumpkin carving, castle ghosts, Haunting Horse and Cart Trips, a bonfire, Halloween games, and traditional dining fare. Children under 12, sharing with their parents (maximum two adults and two children), are included in the package at no additional cost. Also included is a full Irish breakfast daily and children's high tea. Contact Dromoland for more information. Dromoland is in Newmarket-on-Fergus, Co. Clare, 1-800-346-7007, on the web at dromoland.ie or contact Preferred Hotels and Resorts at 1-800-323-7500 (preferredhotels.com.)

In Co. Roscommon, enjoy the Samhain Celtic Fire Festival from Oct. 26-31. Details at rathcrogan.ie

There will be *A Haunting* in the People's Park Limerick on Oct. 29, created by Gothicise in collaboration with Limerick City Council. The concept follows the spectral theme of *A Haunting*; in this case, the haunting quality will come from the past of the Park itself. For more details: culturefox.ie/festival/a-haunting/

Ballina, Co. Mayo, will host its third Samhain Abhainn festival from Oct. 27-31 to mark Halloween and the end of summer. The festival offers something for all from the very young to the not so young and includes art workshops, traditional activities, horrible history walking tours, an historical journey with the Jackie Clarke Museum, treasure hunts, murder mystery, and spooky strolls through Belleek Woods. The festival celebrates the unique Irish historical context of Halloween that was originally a pagan festival that started back in 100 A.D.

when the Celts marked the season of Halloween or Samhain, an Irish word meaning the “end of Summer.” See northmayo.ie/festivals.html for more details.

The always fun Westport House in Westport, Co. Mayo, offers a Halloween Fest from Oct. 27 to Nov. 4 with a Fireworks Extravaganza on Oct. 28. See westporthouse.ie for more.

The 2012 Achill Sheep Show will take place on Oct. 14. For more information, visit achillsheepshow.com. And, if you're on Achill Island, be sure to take in the events in the Storytelling Festival with drama workshops and other activities from Oct. 27 to Nov. 4. Contact achilltourism.com or visit achill.com for details.

When you are in Mayo, be sure to stop by the Mayo Peace Park in Castlebar that was designed to commemorate the men and women from Mayo who served and died on foreign battlefields in the major world wars and on UN peacekeeping missions during the last century. The park is opposite the Harlequin Hotel on Lannagh Road. For more, see mayomemorialpeacepark.org

TRAVELS

Enjoy your trip to Ireland whenever you go and be sure to look online for more happenings and for deals on airfare and land travel. We're getting into the shoulder season when fares and other prices are generally cheaper.



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The Irish Language

by Philip Mac AnGhabhann

Let us finish our discussion of the Irish naming system this month. In review, in “Ireland of Old”, when people lived in small villages and only a few ever got more than twenty miles from where they were born, last names were superfluous. When there were a dozen men named “Sean O’ Sullivan” it was easier to refer to one as “Big Seán” (**Seán Mór**) and another as “Redheaded Seán” (**Seán Ruá**) while a third would be known as “Seán the Tailor (**Seán Tháilliúir**). Similarly with women although when both were married they would be known simply and informally as **Bean Sheáin**, “Seán’s wife” or **Duine Nóra**, “Nora’s husband.”

Notice that there is no word in Irish for “husband” or “wife.” Since marriage is “until death do us part”, the words are just “Nora’s man” and “Seán’s woman.” In the Gaelic world women generally kept their birth name locally throughout their lives so it is not unusual to see tombstones marked “Here lies Nora McMahon, wife of James Murphy” even today. However, officially and formally she would be known as **Bean Uí Mhurchú** /BEN ee VOOR–uh-koo/, “Mrs. Murphy.”

Their son’s last name would be either **O’ Murchú** or **Mac Mhurchú** and their daughter’s would be **Ní Mhurchú**. **Mac** “son”, **Ní** “daughter of” both lenite the following consonant except for a few surnames that begin with **C**-. As explained in last month’s column, this is because that particular **C**- has “crept over” from the word for “son” or “daughter”. (**Ní** was **Níc** in older Irish.)

Don’t forget that little vowel sound /uh/ that must be inserted between the **-r-** and **-c - /-k-**. This is true of all combinations of **-r-** or **-l-** followed by a sound in which the air is stopped completely – in Irish, **-b-, -c-, -m-, -p-**. Native speakers will assert that they are just repeating the first vowel sound.

Not so. You cannot move your tongue from an Irish pronunciation of /-r-/ or [-l-/ which is pronounced a little farther back in the mouth (as a trilled or “flap” **-r-** , for example) to one of the sounds listed above without making that slight /uh/ sound in between. I once asked a native speaker of Gaelic to record the word for “Scotland”, **Alba**. She was too careful and said, “AL-LAH-puh/ when I knew very well she had already referred to that nation in our conversation as /AHL-uh-puh/.

Here are some of the more common Irish surnames (last names) that we will use in exercises that follow. The **Ó** can be either **Ó** or **Uí** – if **Uí** it lenites. However, if the last part of the name begins with a vowel, then an **h** is inserted to keep the words from running together. More and more Irish families that once dropped the **O’** are using it again, often in place of the original **Uí**. The two are now regarded as interchangeable. **Mc-** is *always* an abbreviation of **Mac**.

Béarla

Ó Sullivan
Ó Spillane
McMahon
Ó Hurley
Ó Dempsey
Ó Connell
Mac Sorley
Delaney

Gaelge

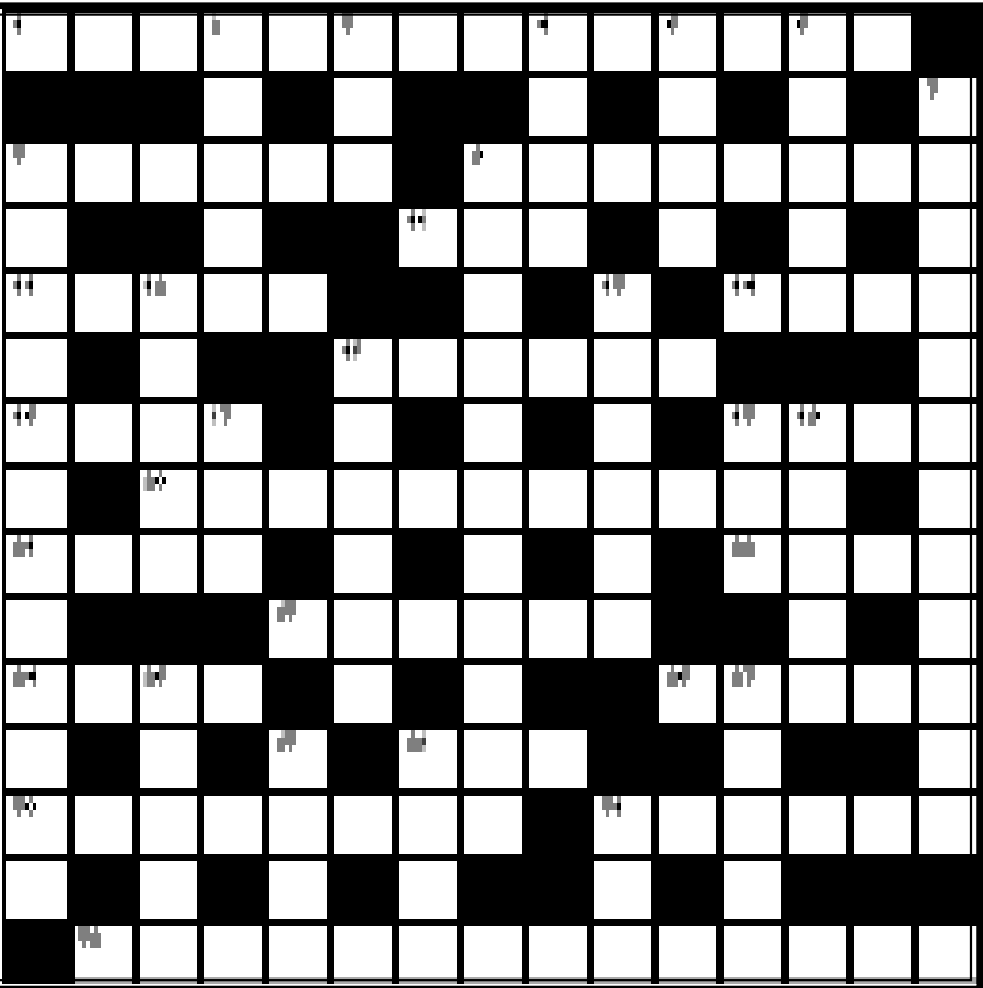
Uí Shúileabháin
Uí Spealáin
Mac Mathúna
Ó hUrthuile
Uí Dhiomasaigh
Ó Conaill
Mac Somhairle
Ó Dubhshláine

Questions: 1.) If Nora Delany marries Liam O’ Hurley, she would still be known by her Irish speaking friends as _____. 2.) As “Liam’s wife” she would be known as _____. 3.) Formally, she would be known as _____. 4.) but to neighboring children she would be called _____. 5.) Their daughter Bridget would enroll in school as _____. 6.) but when she marries Patrick Sullivan, the priest will write down her name as _____. 7.) Bridget will always address her mother as _____. 8.) Meantime, Nora and Liam’s son, Seán, is interested in Susan McMahon, who is known in Irish as _____. 9.) If she ever marries Seán then she will entered in the records as _____.

Answers: 1.) **Nóra Ní Dhubhshláine**. 2.) **Bean Liam**. 3.) **Nóra Ó hUrthuile** 4.) **Bean Ó hUrthuile** 5.) **Bríd Ní hUrthuile** 6.) **Bríd Uí Shúileabhán** 7.) **A mhamái** 8.) **Siobhan Ní Mhathúna**. 9.) **Siobhan Uí hUrthuile**.

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

- DOWN**
2. Poetic as ever, that is strange, back in Eire, even (5)
3. Give little thanks to ten for deducting this from your wages. (3)
4. Genus of holly seen in O’Neil example. (4)
5. “Take care of what you — —, or you will be forced to — — what you get.” Shaw. (4)
6. Mortice partner returns for the musical group, having one over the eight. (5)
7. Draws one card and shuffles for the 1910 northern leader of no surrender, born in Dublin and educated in T.C.D. (6,6)
8. Round Bann, Tom. (anag.) Kerry height of 3,127

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

CROSSWORD SOLUTION ON PAGE 16

Irish Sayings

“A friends eye is a good mirror.”
“It is the good horse that draws its own cart.”
“A lock is better than suspicion.”
“Two thirds of the work is the semblance.”
“He who gets a name for early rising can stay in bed until midday.”
“If you do not sow in the spring you will not reap in the autumn.”
“Put silk on a goat, and it’s still a goat.”
“Listen to the sound of the river and you will get a trout.”
“A person’s heart is in his feet.”
“It is a long road that has no turning.”
“Necessity knows no law.”
“The wearer best knows where the shoe pinches.”
“There is no luck except where there is discipline.”
“The man with the boots does not mind where he places his foot.”
“The light heart lives long.”
True greatness knows gentleness.
When wrathful words arise a closed mouth is soothing.
Blind should be the eyes in the abode of another.

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