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BOSTON IRISH REPORTER

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Boston Irish Honors to hail five who make us all proud

A beloved public servant, an exemplary Boston Irish family, and one of the city's most respected journalists will be the honorees at this month's Boston Irish Honors luncheon, the season's premier celebration of Irish-American achievement in Massachusetts.

The 8th annual luncheon, which serves as an anniversary celebration for the Boston Irish Reporter, will be held at the Seaport Boston Hotel on Oct. 26. Some 400 top Boston business, civic, and political leaders will be on hand for the luncheon event, which begins at 11:30 a.m.

Boston Globe columnist Kevin Cullen will be honored for his career in journalism. Cullen, more than any other single

reporter or columnist of his generation, has cultivated a sophisticated understanding of the deep ties between Boston and Ireland.

Tom Tinlin, who stepped down as the state's Highway Commissioner last summer, has been a trusted advisor to Mayor Tom Menino, state Sen. Linda Forry, and Gov. Charlie Baker among many others. A consummate public servant and proud son of South Boston, Tinlin and his wife Heather are now devoted to bringing awareness to the prevention of brain aneurysms, after Tom himself narrowly survived a life-threatening episode earlier this year.

The Kennedy family — Bill, Annmarie, and Nora — are a truly exemplary Boston

Irish family who are constantly giving back to their community. Bill Kennedy, a partner at the Nutter law firm in Boston's Seaport district, is a native of Dorchester who served as chief of staff and chief legal counsel to Speaker of the House Thomas M. Finneran and as an assistant clerk to the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court.

The 35-member luncheon committee is chaired by Aidan Browne, partner at Sullivan & Worcester and chairman of the Boston Friends of the Gaelic Players Association. Serving as honorary chairs are US Sen. Edward Markey and Boston Mayor Marty Walsh. The program moderator will be Boston Red Sox "poet laureate" Dick Flavin.

"This inspiring luncheon allows us to recognize and celebrate exemplary Irish individuals and their families who share our heritage in Boston and Ireland," explained Ed Forry, the founder and publisher of the Boston Irish Reporter.

The Boston Irish Reporter is a family-owned and-operated media publication and, in keeping with our own heritage, the newspaper tells the story of Boston-Irish individuals and families for special achievements in public service and business, and exemplary Irish families who share our common roots in Boston and Ireland. For tickets, call 617-436-1222 or email bostonirishhonors@bostonirish.com.

Bringing family histories to life in the present

BY MAUREEN FORRY-SORRELL
BIR STAFF

Last month, the Maine Irish Gaeltacht DNA project joined up with the Irish Cultural Center of New England (ICCNE) for a workshop focusing on DNA testing and the ways in which it can connect us all with our past and our future. The information they shared with workshop participants offered a fascinating look at the study of genealogy and the wonderful ways that gene-based science can bring our history to life in the present.

The day kicked off with ICCNE Librarian Dave Barrett giving an overview of the history of (Continued on page 5)



Traditional Irish duo Caitlín Nic Gabhann and Ciarán Ó Maonaigh appear at the Burren Backroom series this month. See the BIR's Calendar of Events on Page 13.

'IT HAD TO BE MADE' Film depicts Hume's path to Irish peace

BY DANIEL SHEEHAN
REPORTER CORRESPONDENT

The filmmaker Maurice Fitzpatrick's new documentary, "In the Name of Peace: John Hume in America," will be screened at the John F. Kennedy Library and Museum in Dorchester at a free forum on Tues., Oct. 10. The showing will be followed by a discussion between Fitzpatrick and former US Sen. George Mitchell, who served as the chairman of the peace talks that led to the Good Friday Accord of 1998. The exchange will be moderated by the *Boston Globe's* Kevin Cullen.

The documentary had its American premiere last week at the Boston Film Festival, where Hume family members, admirers, scholars, and fans of history gathered to see the film, which explores the 1998 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate's work with US, British, and Irish politicians to bring peace and stability to Northern Ireland.

The movie contains input from various politicians and activists, notably US presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, and the rock star Bono, who pointed to Hume's masterly communication skills as a primary driver of the eventual understanding. "He could speak the language of US politics better than they could," the singer and social activist said.

The film explores Hume's almost single-handed efforts to involve US politicians in Northern Ireland peace efforts and to put pressure on British officials to work to resolve the problem of the Troubles. Much of Hume's collaboration in the US was with a group that came to be known as "The Four Horsemen," all of whom are deceased: Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, a longtime speaker of the US House, US Sen. Edward M. "Ted" Kennedy of Massachusetts, US Sen. Pat Moynihan of New York, and many-time New York Governor Hugh Carey.

In an interview with the *Reporter* last week, Fitzpatrick expounded upon Bono's emphasis on language, speaking to Hume's ability to create a dialogue in which both sides of the conflict were involved. "Forging a new idiom, a new language upon which people could build understanding was a very important development," he said.



John Hume:
Masterly communicator

(Continued on page 8)

Dorchester's Irish Heritage festival has bounced back; Sun., Oct. 8, is the day

BY SEAN SMITH
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Resilient as its namesake setting, the Dorchester Irish Heritage Festival — cancelled last year due to severe rain — will take place for the seventh time on Oct. 8, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Florian Hall (55 Hallett Street).

Among the performers confirmed for the festival are The Joshua Tree; Clíodhna & Friends; Silver Spears; Devri; Pauline Wells; Erin's Melody; Fenian Sons; the quartet of Paudí Walsh, Joe Walsh, Joe O'Malley, and Joey Abarta; Jinty McGrath; musicians from the Boston branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, and a "singers round," including Mairín Keady, Maureen McNally, and Liam Hart. Also appearing will be the Greene-

O'Leary School of Irish Dance, Smith-Houlihan Irish Dance Academy, and Kenny Academy of Irish Dance.

The festival has become a Columbus Day Weekend highlight for Irish/Celtic music and dance devotees in Greater Boston and beyond who have come by the thousands. It's also a steadfast symbol of community pride, built on the work of stalwart organizers and volunteers and supported by local businesses as well as larger sponsors. The event has endured the growing pains typical of such a large-scale enterprise, but also unexpected twists: Four years ago, organizers had to move the festival from its original location in Adams Corner due to a major construction project.

That year, 2013, saw the festival hold a "Dorchester Strong" tribute to the tenacity displayed by its host (Continued on page 13)



I work in Hollywood but I keep my money
in my hometown-Kevin Chapman

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KENNEDY LIBRARY FORUM


In the Name of Peace: John Hume in America

Tuesday, October 10, 2017 6:00-8:00 PM

JFK Presidential Library, Columbia Point, Boston

Free Parking – Accessible by T - JFK/UMass (Red Line)

Reservations for this free program are strongly recommended and guarantee a seat in the building, but not in the main hall. Filmmaker Maurice Fitzpatrick screens his new documentary, *In the Name of Peace: John Hume in America*, on the work and legacy of John Hume, who shared a Nobel Peace Prize for his role in peace building in Northern Ireland. A discussion with Fitzpatrick and Senator George Mitchell, who served as the chairman of the peace talks resulting in the Good Friday Accord, moderated by The Boston Globe's Kevin Cullen, follows.



To make a reservation, please call 617-514-1643 or register online at www.jfklibrary.org/forums

JOHN HUMe in AMERICA

In The Name of Peace

A Film by Maurice Fitzpatrick

Original Music by Bill Whelan

Narrated by Liam Neeson



“I became convinced that the United States should speak out for change on this issue”
President Jimmy Carter

“The Irish conflict’s Martin Luther King”
President Bill Clinton

“A Visionary Peacemaker”
Bono



Creaney Films in association with the IFB, BAI, RTE and the DFAT proudly presents *In the Name of Peace: John Hume in America*
Presidents Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, Prime Ministers John Major and Tony Blair,
Irish Taoisigh Bertie Ahern and Enda Kenny.
Narrated by Liam Neeson, Original Music by Bill Whelan, DoP Basil Al-Rawi, Editor David Fox
Written, Directed & Produced by Maurice Fitzpatrick

DOING THE ‘HUMAN THING’

BC High senior helped resuscitate man who had OD’d at Town Field

By DANIEL SHEEHAN
REPORTER CORRESPONDENT

Students at Dorchester’s Boston College High School are taught early on that they should strive to “be an upstander, not a bystander.” Ryan McWade, a senior at the Jesuit school, took that core tenet to heart last month when, acting quickly and boldly, he helped to save the life of a man who was overdosing from an opioid at Town Field in Dorchester.

The 17-year-old Quincy resident volunteered this summer as a youth counselor at All Dorchester Sports and Leadership, a non-profit based in Fields Corner. He was working with kids at Town Field on Aug. 10 when another volunteer noticed a man lying— apparently unconscious and not breathing— on a nearby hill in the park. “It happened so suddenly,” McWade said.

Upon seeing the motionless body and people standing around, he sprang into action, shouting for someone to call 911 while moving to start CPR on the man. Although he had not been formally

trained in CPR, McWade continued his efforts for 10 minutes, keeping the victim alive until EMTs arrived and treated him with Narcan. The entire episode was over within 15 minutes.

“I got upset that no one else was willing to step up,” explained McWade. “I felt so bad for that man.”

ADSL director Candice Gartley said McWade displayed great poise and maturity throughout the incident. “When he returned to sign out for the day, he was very concerned by the fact that so many other people were standing there, but no one stepped up to help,” Gartley said. “I was anticipating more of an overwhelmed young man – not one who felt outraged at the lack of response.”

McWade said he had learned the basics of performing CPR from online instructional videos. He hopes the story will raise awareness about the opioid epidemic that is gripping many parts of the country.

“This was my first en-



Ryan McWade, a senior at BC High, is credited with saving the life of a young man who stopped breathing during a medical emergency at Town Field last month.
Jen Tegan/BC High photo

counter with something like that,” he said. “and I think it was a wake-up call that there are people dealing with this crisis who need help.”

McWade is humble on the subject of his heroism, redirecting praise toward his teachers, classmates, and family. “I’ve been fortunate to always be surrounded by good people who try to do the right thing,” he said.

Mayor Marty Walsh,

who heard about McWade’s actions this week, issued a statement praising the student: “I commend Ryan on his tremendous efforts and incredible acts of courage to assist this person. Nothing makes me more proud as mayor than to shine a light on the everyday heroes of our community who step up and do what’s right, because that’s who we are as a city.”

Gartley said the situ-

ation was yet another example of BC High students making a difference in the community. “We also partner with some area colleges and universities, but hands down, the BC High students are the most reliable and well prepared,” she said.

“BC High is filled with people who do so many great things, whether academically or athletically,” said McWade who was honored by the BC

High community during a school-wide Mass and assembly last week.

“I had never won an award like that before,” he said, “but it was great to be recognized. In my case, it wasn’t a school or sports-related thing. It was a human thing.”

McWade never learned the man’s name, but he still thinks about him. “I would love to talk to the guy, to see if he’s okay,” he said.



The clean-up operations are pictured in this Irish Times photo at Cockhill Bridge in Buncrana, Co Donegal. The Inishowen peninsula sustained widespread damage when the remnants of hurricane Harvey found its way to Ireland and lashed the northern coast of the island with high winds and flash floods.

Flooding in Donegal spurs a fund-raiser

Florian Hall will be the site of a “Homes of Donegal” fundraiser on Sun., Oct. 29, in support of those affected by this summer’s flooding in the Inishowen Peninsula of Donegal on the northern coast of Ireland.

The event begins at 2 pm, and will include live music, raffles, auction items, and a few special

guests. All proceeds will be donated to the Red Cross in Inishowen.

Children are encouraged to wear Halloween costumes to this family-oriented event. Those wishing to donate auction or raffle items can drop them off at The Cottage Bar in Weymouth or the Adams Corner Butcher Shop in Dorchester.

Movement seen for memorial on Deer Island for quarantine victims

There’s progress to report on efforts to establish a memorial to the Irish who fled on “famine ships” in the mid-19th century only to lose their lives in quarantine in Boston Harbor. More than 800 Irish men, women, and children died and were buried in graves on Deer Island, and a committee has been at work to create a memorial.

John Foley, an East Boston attorney who co-chairs the effort, said that an 18-foot Celtic Cross is now being sculpted, and will be installed on a promontory overlooking the Harbor. “There has been considerable movement on Deer Island,” Foley said. “The stone wall is almost complete and soon we expect the delivery of the Celtic Cross.”

Foley and BIR publisher Ed Forry have been heading the effort to complete the task conceived two decades ago by the late Bill and Rita O’Connell and they are working with historian Christine Kinealy and city archivist John McColgan to prepare interpretative signage for the site.

Foley had praise for the MWRA, which controls the land, and Winthrop contractor Mike Carney and volunteer Mark Porter, who are among a group of volunteers working to complete the memorial. Dedication ceremonies are tentatively set for next spring.



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The Honorable
Linda Dorcea Forry
Massachusetts Senate

For further details, please contact Megan Miller: 617-695-1554 | mmiller@iicenter.org

Publisher's Notebook

Taking in Dublin, appreciating Vermeer

By Ed Forry

It was a ten-day sojourn to Ireland last month, taking the late evening Aer Lingus flight out of Logan on Friday night, just as Labor Day weekend began. The plane arrived at Dublin Airport at 9 on Saturday morning, the first stop on a journey that would wind its way down the southeast coast of the island, spending one or two nights in Wicklow, Wexford, Cork, and Galway, and seeing the sights in Waterford, Tipperary, and Clare. It was a memorable vacation, and I was delighted to visit parts of the country that for me had remained unexplored.



After some years of overnight flights to the Emerald Isle, I have learned that I usually get little or no sleep on the flight, and the next-day, mid-morning arrival leaves me largely unfit for hopping into a rental car and negotiating the “wrong-side” driving patterns on the Irish roads.

In years past, it was the custom to book a hotel room on the first day in Ireland, hoping to get a few hours of sleep, but that plan often didn't work out well because the hotel rooms usually were already filled from the night before, necessitating a wearying wait in the lobby until they became available. Not a good way to adjust to driving on the left side of the road.

This time, however, the plan was to stay in a hotel at Dublin Airport, and a room was booked for Friday night, the day before arrival. That way, after a short cab ride, I checked in to the hotel, went right to the room, and by ten o'clock that morning, I was fast asleep, grabbing a few hours of rest before taking in the great city of Dublin.

By three that afternoon, a 25-minute cab ride into center city led to Ireland's National Gallery, on Merrion Square, where a wondrous exhibition, “Vermeer and the Masters of Genre Painting: Inspiration and Rivalry,” was in its final weeks. The Vermeers were part of a major Old Master exhibition in Dublin, totaling 60 works from public and private collections around the world in a celebration of the reopening of the Gallery's refurbished historic wings and a new display of the permanent collection.

Limited groups of tickets were available and a 3:15 reservation allowed for a full two hours to view the exhibit, including ten masterpieces by Vermeer, accounting for almost one third of the artist's known works that remain in the world. (One of his works, “The Concert”, was among 13 priceless works stolen in the infamous March 1990 art heist from Boston's Gardner Museum.

Among the works on view in Dublin were the National Gallery of Ireland's own Vermeer, “Woman Writing a Letter, with her Maid,” c.1670, and other Vermeers, including “Woman with a Balance,” c.1663–4, “Woman with a Pearl Necklace,” 1663–4, “The Astronomer,” 1668, and “The Geographer.” In addition, there were paintings of daily life by contemporaries of Vermeer, including Gerrit Dou, Gerard ter Borch, Jan Steen, Gabriel Metsu, Pieter de Hooch and Frans van Mieris.

Dr. Adriaan Waiboer, head of Collections and Research at the National Gallery of Ireland, and curator of the exhibition, explained in a brochure that “Johannes Vermeer is frequently portrayed as an enigmatic figure working largely in isolation, but this exhibition clearly demonstrates how Vermeer's subjects, compositions, and figure types owe much to works by contemporary Dutch artists, including Gerrit Dou, Gerard ter Borch and Frans van Mieris, all of whom were more successful and influential in their time.”

In a press release, the exhibition was said to feature “groups of paintings of domestic scenes – letter writing, in front of a mirror, musical scenes – and the obvious similarity of the compositions shows the interplay between artists – nonetheless Vermeer's brilliance and originality brings new heights to the subjects and his work takes genre painting to a yet higher level.”

The Vermeer Exhibition, which previously was housed at the Louvre in Paris, closed in Dublin on Sept. 17, and now is on the way to America, where it will open on Oct. 22 at National Gallery of Art, running until Jan. 21, 2018. The Washington DC exhibit will feature an additional five works, and admission will be free.

By Joe Leary
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Every county in Ireland has its dedicated followers. For me, the western part of Co. Cork is special. Not only have I spent a great deal of time there, but I can also trace my family roots to Inchigeelagh and Tracton Abbey, both in West Cork. My great-grandfather immigrated from Inchigeelagh.



Joe Leary

One of Ireland's most beautiful and inspiring features is in the Inchigeelagh/Ballingeary area in the Shehy Mountains at the Kerry border. Called Gougane Barra, it is a deep valley surrounded by high quiet cliffs – almost like an upside down Cliffs of Moher that make you feel as if you are in a huge outdoor church. In the center of Gougane Barra is a small lake filled by the runoff from the mountains that feeds

the beginning of the River Lee that runs from there all the way to Cork City.

Around 600 AD, a local priest named Finnbarr selected this sheltered lake to create an outdoor oratory for his followers where they could pray and dedicate their lives to God. A representation of the oratory still exists along with a tiny chapel (no bigger than your living room) where weddings are performed and where hundreds of people gather every year on Sept. 25, the birthday of Saint Finnbarr, who is credited with founding Cork City where there is a large cathedral named after him.

In classic Irish mythology, Saint Finnbarr was considered so holy that he was consecrated directly from heaven and the sun did not go down for two weeks after he died in 633.

West Cork features a number of extraordinary towns and villages, each with its own histories and people living their hard working lives and their children going to school every day. Towns like Dunmanway, Skibbereen, Clonakilty, Macroom, and Bantry are filled with the challenges of small town life and losing population each year to larger cities and emigration.

One of the most celebrated parts of West Cork is the Beara Peninsula, which is famous for its formerly active copper mines. Many Bostonians have immigrated from there. Additionally, when the profitable mining of copper ended, a goodly number of Beara

residents traveled to Montana to work in their copper mines and establish a significant Irish American population in that state.

The West Cork area was one of the last in Ireland to receive electricity. Unfortunately, this was accomplished by damming the River Lee and creating two hydro-electric dams, resulting in some of Ireland's worst landscapes. You can still see the ugly tree stumps appearing out of the water where one of Europe's thriving forests used to be. The price of progress.

Paris, New York, and Boston all had received electricity in the 1870s but it took another 85 years or so – 1955 – before the lights went on in West Cork. No wonder parts of Ireland have taken so long to modernize and remain essentially rural.

The conviction amongst the Irish that Ireland should be free to manage its own affairs has its roots going back a thousand years. The men and women of Cork and West Cork have been at the forefront of that struggle.

Over the centuries, native Irish forces were constantly fighting with the occupying British army, with the years 1916 to 1921 seeing hundreds of deaths in Cork on both sides.

Thomas MacCurtain, a member of The Irish Republican Brotherhood, a secret rebel group, was elected Lord Mayor of Cork City in January 1920. By March he had so aggravated the British that their army y broke in to his house in the middle of the night and shot him.

His successor, Terence MacSwiney, served until he was arrested in August 1920 and put in Brixton prison in London where he went on his famous hunger strike and died on Oct. 25. His funeral on Nov. 1 was attended by thousands of mourners. He was buried in Saint Finnbarr's Cemetery in Cork.

By that time, the British finally had enough and on Dec. 12, they moved to burn down Cork City. Soldiers went to the main buildings and set them afire. Many valuable documents were lost, but today the city has been rebuilt and MacCurtain and MacSwiney are considered heroes.

One of the main figures in all this fighting in West Cork was Tom Barry, a former British soldier who commanded the West Cork Flying column that fought many engagements with the British forces. His favorite hideaway was Gougane Barra; he led up to 104 men in fighting in that region and escaped several times into its high mountains. He lived until he was 83 and, like MacSwiney, is buried in Saint Finnbarr's Cemetery.

This is only a brief look at West Cork and we can say that everything is peaceful now in Gougane Barra.

Off the Bench

Putting rebel monuments in perspective

By James W. Dolan
SPECIAL TO THE REPORTER

I have mixed feelings about the movement to eliminate Confederate monuments. How do we preserve our history without denying it? Can we honor the often



James W. Dolan

gallant yet imperfect, misguided souls who believed they were right. While it's true that the leaders of the rebellion were traitors and slaveholders, the rank-and-file troops for the most part owned no slaves and were responding to the “patriotic” appeal of the Southern power structure to protect their states from a Northern invasion. Seen in context, they were shaped by a culture that condoned and depended upon what was euphemistically called the “peculiar institution.”

Slavery and not “states' rights” was at the heart of the revolt. In the north, the rallying cry was “Preserve the Union.” It was only later that emancipation became an acknowledged purpose. Only after the Union victory at Antietam in 1862 was Abraham Lincoln confident enough to make freeing the slaves a stated goal.

From the perspective of a black person, one can readily see history in starker terms. Instead of mythical heroes in a lost cause, Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, James Longstreet, and Jeb Stuart, among others, were traitors who fought for the continued subjugation of human beings they considered inferior. They were not just wrong; they were evil, undeserving of honor or respect. Their cause was a stain on the nation's history, something to be ashamed of not embellished.

But is that all there is to it? While they may not warrant forgiveness, do they deserve understanding? Normally after a rebellion, the military leaders and politicians on the losing side are executed or imprisoned. However, President Lincoln and Gen. Grant showed mercy, allowing the troops to go home and the generals their freedom upon their pledging allegiance to the Union. In a war that cost over 600,000 lives, Lincoln and Grant they sought reconciliation, not retribution.

I am reminded of an incident that occurred outside the home in Appomattox where Lee surrendered in 1865. Southern troops were directed to stack their weapons before heading home. Lounging on both sides of the road were the troops of Gen. Joshua Chamberlain, a Gettysburg hero who later became governor of Maine. As Confederate Gen. John Brown Gordon's troops approached, bedraggled and dejected, Chamberlain called his troops to attention and to present arms. When Gen. Gordon saw that his units were being honored, he called them to attention. A salute was exchanged, a sign of mutual respect between victors and vanquished. If those veterans of that bloody conflict could respect each other, why can't we feel some compassion? Good people can do bad things.

Instead of seeing them simply as symbols of repression, shouldn't we try to understand what they did within the cultural context of the ante-bellum South in which they were born and raised? It was an environment not likely to produce abolitionists. When George Washington and Thomas Jefferson led a different revolution less than 100 years earlier, they, too, were slave owners as was most of the Southern aristocracy. For them, freedom was a white man's privilege, yet we rightly honor them despite their hypocrisy. But for the timing of their births, Lee and Stuart could have been Revolutionary War heroes and Washington, Jefferson, and Patrick Henry Civil War secessionists.

With the collapse of Reconstruction, unrepentant southerners sought to impose slavery's residue by other means: “Jim Crow” laws were enacted and enforced with terror. What was lost on bloody battlefields, they sought to resurrect by glorifying the cause and memorializing its heroes. By so doing, they hoped to achieve by other means another form of subjugation.

It was during this period when many of the controversial monuments were constructed. Had they been alive, I expect many of those so honored would have objected.

The Civil War was the price this country paid for the grievous sin of slavery. Unfortunately, we are still paying for its remnants, bigotry and hate. Is the present bitter reaction against these monuments just a further example of pent-up anger? Even if justified to some degree, wouldn't it be better to view them as historical examples of human folly when brave men fought and died to perpetuate an abomination?

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



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“IT’S DÉJÀ VU ALL OVER AGAIN”

A tragedy barely avoided a tragedy remembered

By PETER F. STEVENS
BIR STAFF

Racing toward history’s cliff

With all credit to the late, great Yogi Berra, “it’s like Déjà vu all over again.” As of this moment, the GOP has pulled back from the brink of unleashing a medical catastrophe for anywhere between 20 and 32 million Americans. President Trump and a cadre of many Irish-American acolytes such as GOP leaders Paul Ryan Mick Mulvaney and Scots-Irish-American Mitch McConnell fell just a few votes short of “winning” their war on the poorest and weakest Americans. The Graham-Cassidy Bill, a cynical, last-gasp, hastily scrawled assault to immolate the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare or ACA), was dealt a lethal blow – again – by Senators John McCain and Susan Collins.

So rushed and ill-conceived was the GOP bill that there was not even time before September 30 for the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) to issue a full financial assessment of Graham-Cassidy. The estimable John McCain gave another thumbs-down, this time to his pal Graham’s heartless, careless bill. As he did several weeks ago, McCain advocated for a restoration of Senate process and – anathema to far too many Republicans and Democrats alike for far too many years – genuine bipartisan debate.

Maine Senator Susan Margaret Collins again bucked staggering pressure from the White House and the GOP to stand as one of the very few Republican legislators unwilling to rip Medicaid away from the poor and the elderly. With its near-total abandonment of protections for pre-existing conditions and removal of lifetime health-insurance caps and with merciless slashes to Medicaid, the Graham-Cassidy Bill appeared far worse than the previous GOP Obamacare “replacement” that Collins voted against.

In hopes of pressuring Collins and Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski to vote yes this time, proponents of the bill played a shell game to rip Medicaid from several states and offer it as an “incentive” to Maine and Alaska. Collins stepped up to say no – her vote is not for sale. If ever one doubted that our commander-in-chief and his crew have become denizens of the very D.C. swamp they promised to drain, Graham-Cassidy was proof-positive. Proof-negative, actually.

The GOP has promised to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act for some seven years. In all that time, they have come up with no viable alternative. Not even one. Instead, they just offered up a toxic hash of a “replacement” in less than two weeks. Michael Collins, shortly after signing the Treaty that partitioned Ireland, reportedly said that he had signed his own death warrant. Prediction: If the Graham-Cassidy Bill had passed, or if another fraudulent “replacement” clears

both the Senate and the House somewhere down the road, the GOP will have signed its death warrant as a viable political party. The fate of the Whigs would await the once-proud party of Lincoln.

Until or unless this blind rush by the GOP to torch the ACA without a genuine, well-crafted replacement ebbs, the prescient words of Daniel O’Connell, The Liberator, should remain a warning for politicians and bear repeating yet again on the edge of a political and moral tragedy:

“Nothing is politically right which is morally wrong.”

Senator Collins’s conscience has embraced those words, as her terse, blistering public rebuke of Graham-Cassidy proves.

“Deep into the depths of hell”

Each October, this writer’s thoughts invariably turn to an immigration tragedy that unfolded off local shores in October 1849. Even amid the catastrophe, common humanity trumped – all puns intended – prejudice for an all-too-brief moment.

Henry David Thoreau had never seen anything like it. On Oct. 9, 1849, he wandered the shore of Cohasset, Massachusetts, and gaped at the wreck of the brig St. John, a Boston-bound merchantman that had set sail from Ireland “laden with emigrants” fleeing the Great Famine. The vessel was one of sixty emigrant ships, or aptly named “coffin ships,” lost between 1847 and 1853.

As Thoreau surveyed the scene, he poured into a notebook a torrent of words capturing the gut-wrenching scene: “I saw many marble feet and matted heads as the cloths were raised, and one livid, swollen and mangled body of a drowned girl,—who probably had intended to go out to service in some American family. ... Sometimes there were two or more children, or a parent and child, in the same box, and on the lid would perhaps be written with red chalk, ‘Bridget such-a-one, and sister’s child.’”

On October 7, 1849, the St. John, five weeks out of Galway Bay and packed with Irish immigrants fleeing the Great Famine, was hurled by a gale onto the crags of Grampus Ledge, off Cohasset, Massachusetts. A second “coffin ship,” the Kathleen, grounded safely nearby on a sand bar. But the St. John broke in two on the rocks. Immigrants and crewmen thrashed in the foaming surf. Eyewitness Elizabeth Lothrop wrote that “no human power could stay the waves,” which pulled the brig “deep into the depths of Hell.”

On the shore, the boatmen of Cohasset – Yankees with little affinity for the Irish – left prejudice on the beach as they tried again and again to launch the town’s lifesaving boats into the crashing surf. Led by Captain Daniel T. Lothrop, a Cohasset “salt,” the rescuers “struggled through the enormous waves for nearly forty-five minutes before reaching the area of the St. John. It was then that they noticed the longboat rowing to shore, with Captain Oliver [of the St. John] and the

crew of the ship. The captain made no mention to the lifesavers that passengers had been left behind on the wreck to fend for themselves. Accordingly, the lifeboat proceeded to the Kathleen, unaware that numbers of people may yet have been desperately clinging to the remains of the brig. The magnitude of this tragedy only became apparent after the lifesavers had returned to shore and learned that the emigrants had been left stranded on the wreck.”

The rescuers managed to aid only the Kathleen in the end. Most of the St. John’s passengers were doomed. Over the next few days, 45 bodies washed ashore, and the townspeople buried them in a common grave. An exact total was never possible. At least 99 people drowned; 11 survived. In all, up to 145 may have been lost.

Among the most heart-rending stories of the disaster was that of Galwayman Patrick Sweeney and his family: “He and his wife, along with their nine children, had journeyed here in search of a new home. As the wreck disintegrated into the sea, he saw his wife and eight of their children swept away. Finally, he and his three-year-old daughter Agnes made a desperate attempt to reach the longboat. A great wave swept over the father and daughter as they approached the boat. They were never seen again.” Adding additional agony to the saga and pointing a finger at Captain Oliver, Captain Lothrop would testify that if he had only been told that there were passengers clinging to the brig’s wreckage, he might well have been able to rescue some of them.

The tragedy claimed one last victim on the Cohasset shore. An Irishwoman who had rushed to the scene from Boston in hopes that her infant daughter and her sister had survived the shipwreck found their corpses beneath a sheet on the sand. “The infant [was] tightly folded in the sister’s arms,” Elizabeth Lothrop remembered. “The mother died of heartbreak.”

The infant and at least 44 other victims were buried in a “great common grave” near the Cohasset shore, and the matter of a proper ceremony for the Catholic dead was raised. As the Ancient Order of Hibernians notes: “It was then that the nearest priest, Father John T. Roddan, of Quincy, was asked to come to [Cohasset]. It was within a day or two after the storm that Father Roddan blessed the great common grave that held the remains for forty-five emigrants. This, in turn, served as a catalyst for Cohasset Catholics to begin petitioning Boston for a church of their own.”

In 1914, the Massachusetts Loyal Order of Hibernians raised a 19-foot Celtic cross near the victims’ common grave. Today, on display at the Cohasset Maritime Museum is all that is left of the ill-fated brig: a trunk, a small writing desk, and a piece of one of the ship’s pulleys.

IAP gives \$50,000 to education in Ireland

The Irish American Partnership presented grants totaling \$50,000 to four educational programs in Ireland during a dinner held last month at the Royal Dublin Golf Club to promote transatlantic trade links and business development.

President Brian Mac-Craith of Dublin City University delivered the keynote address focusing on STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) education in Ireland and accepted a \$20,000 Partnership check for a primary science program.

The WSSP (Western Seaboard Science Program) originated from a study piloted by The Irish

American Partnership in 2003 that demonstrated a strong need for science teacher training at the primary school level. In conjunction with the Partnership, St. Patrick’s Teaching College, a subsidiary of DCU, developed WSSP as a reaction to this study, seeking to increase knowledge and confidence in the primary school science curriculum. To date, the program has reached 78 schools in Kerry, Donegal, Kilkenny, Mayo, and Clare.

Partnership board members also presented a grant of \$20,000 to CEO of the RDS Michael Duffy for the RDS primary science fairs. This year, the RDS fairs attracted 13,500 stu-



Left to right: Partnership Board members Aidan Browne, Niall Power Smith, Liam Connellan, CEO of the RDS Michael Duffy, Board Chairman Michael Clune, CEO Mary Sugrue, and Board member Bruce Robinson. The Partnership presented a \$20,000 check to Mr. Duffy for the RDS Primary Science Fairs.

dents and teachers, making a tangible difference in science learning and teaching at the grassroots level.

In honor of Partnership Board member Liam Connellan’s beloved wife Marie, who passed away this year, Partnership CEO Mary Sugrue presented a \$5,000 grant to the Peter McVerry Trust.

Marie Connellan was a cherished member of The Irish American Partnership with a passion for preventing homelessness through education. This grant will enable the Father McVerry Trust to establish a three-year program to provide computer access and literacy for pupils who do not have technology at home.

The Trust will work with Belvedere Youth Club, which serves 400 young people from the North Inner City of Dublin—one of the most deprived areas of the country.

The Partnership also announced a \$5,000 grant to Holy Spirit Girls National School in Ballymun, Dublin. This grant was awarded with Delta Air

Lines in commemoration of their new Boston-Dublin route. Holy Spirit Girls National School is a 325-pupil DEIS band 1 school, indicating substantial need in the student population. The school was very grateful for the gift, which will be used to purchase new books and science materials.

DNA: Bringing family histories to life in the present

(Continued from page 1) his organization and also that of the Maine Irish Heritage Centre (MIHC) and their shared interest in tracking familial DNA connections from New England back to Ireland and elsewhere.

Historians from the Maine side presented information about the Gaeltacht project, a labor of love born from a desire to trace family roots and to connect families in the Portland, Maine, area,

many of whom can claim family origins in the Galway region of Ireland. The center itself hosts an online database where those searching for long-lost cousins can register and find other like-minded individuals who’ve spent time researching family trees.

The database contains over 130,000 names and the Maine project boasts over 1,000 participants.

The presentation showed that with bud-

ding genealogists now having science at their very fingertips, today’s studies are a far cry from the old days of tracing correspondence and trying to recall family lore. Family Tree DNA, the preferred testing company of the Maine DNA Project, offers At-Home Autosomal Test kits that allow users to take a simple swab test that is then analyzed in the Family Tree lab for genetic markers that can be pinpointed to specific loca-

tions around the world.

This reporter was on hand at the presentation and participated in a demonstration meant to show the ease of the testing: a simple one-minute swab of the inside of the mouth collects enough DNA to give deep insight into one’s genetic makeup.

There are several other home DNA test kits available to consumers, such as “23 and Me” and “Ancestry,” both of which offer autosomal testing.

It costs about \$80 for a basic test, and all results will be stored for a number of years.

Deb Sullivan Gellerson of the MIHC stresses the importance of testing older generations while their members are alive. “If funds are limited, it is always best to test the oldest living relatives as they will carry more of the DNA of the previous generation. With every generation, we lose up to 50 percent of our DNA

from ancestors.”

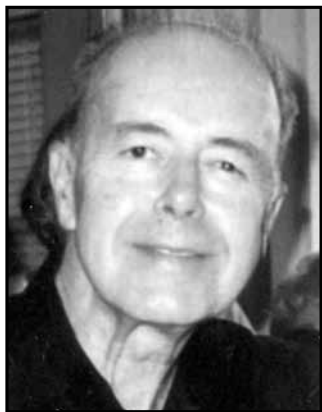
For many, genetics testing – essentially a treasure map back to the lives of grandparents, great grandparents, and beyond – offers an opportunity to connect future generations with living relatives they may not know exist.

For more information on this project, which is free to join, contact Margaret LaCombe at irishhmc@maine.rr.com.

Boston Irish Reporter's Here & There

By BILL O'DONNELL

Democrats & Trump May Have DACA Agreement – The Democratic leadership in Congress, **Sen. Chuck Schumer** and House Minority Leader **Nancy Pelosi** have apparently come to an agreement



Bill O'Donnell

with President **Donald Trump** to look to legislation to protect some 800,000 undocumented young immigrants who came to the US as infants and toddlers in exchange for stiffening US border protections. The plan did not specifically include any Trump promises on building a border wall.

There are many reasons to compromise on the DACA immigrants, although the president will pay a heavy price for not pushing the wall,

a core issue of his. The twin goals sought by Trump when he announced his original plan on the DACA immigrants included solidifying his political base, the hard-core supporters, while one-upping Barack Obama.

Those benefits will have to wait now as a fire storm of Republican criticism confronts Trump back-pedaling on a key GOP issue like immigration. Conservative allies of the president, roughly 30-35 percent of the voting public, are outraged, sending an avalanche of shock and anger and feelings of betrayal to the White House. “A blaring political fire alarm” was the charge among the core faithful. GOP Rep. **Steve King** of Iowa, an immigration hardliner, issued a dramatic warning to the president, “The Trump base is blown up, destroyed, irreparable, and disillusioned beyond repair. No promise is credible.”

One of the right wing's most ardent supporters, **Ann Coulter**, who wrote a book titled “In Trump We Trust,” said, “At this point who doesn't want Trump impeached?” And Breitbart News, the ultra-conservative website now edited by former White House strategist **Stephen Bannon**, ran an article with a crimson-red headline: “Amnesty Don.”

However, a word of caution for the rest of us who have seen Trump's mind-changing and shifts of policy direction, lies, etc.: The president may have further news, real or fake, on the DACA issue. As always, we await the latest news alert from the Fox News broadcast signal at Trump Tower.

Airbnb is Popular NI Lodging Spot – News out of the North and the smiling faces of those there who offer Airbnb couldn't be better. Reports from government agencies that track housing usage show a red hot success story in the statistics from Northern Ireland. Figures show there have been 132,000 guest arrivals booked through Airbnb since July, 2016, and 53 million British pounds spent by them. Across the UK, there has been guest growth of 81 percent in the past year, providing 3.5 billion British pounds for local residents. Throughout the past year, the North has seen the fastest growth in the UK, up about 144 percent in increased revenue.

John McClure, general manager for northern Europe said recently, “The UK continues to break records on Airbnb, both as a world-leading destination, and for the benefits that hosting generates for local families and their communities. From Exeter to Edinburgh, millennial to seniors, apartments to tree houses, there's something for everyone while helping global visitors feel at home here.

A Tribute to a Woman Who Knew What Peace Was – The late secretary of state for Northern Ireland, **Mo Mowlam**, had more friends and supporters, many contend, than most of her colleagues in the Unionist hierarchy and in the Belfast row houses. She was frequently cited as Britain's most popular politician. And she won that reputation by talking straight, and dealing in hard truths, unlike some of her seatmates in Parliament.

I had the opportunity to watch her in action on several occasions and she had her facts right and her morality and fairness on target. She knew that Sinn Fein was the key to making peace happen and for that she earned Unionist brickbats. But that never slowed her down.

Mo Mowlam was the first woman to hold the high-profile Northern Ireland post, yet she never hesitated to take the political risk or something new or unprecedented as when she made a solo visit to loyalist prisoners in the Maze Prison.

During her last months as secretary of state, she was often deathly sick with a brain tumor, but she had a lion's heart and a job to do. Her efforts helped to restore an IRA cease-fire and to include Sinn Fein in multi-party talks about the North's future. Her former constituents and her successor are working to get a monument up, a permanent tribute in the north of Ireland on her anniversary.

Mo Mowlam was only 55 when she died, and God knows we need more like her. She was the goods.

What's The Story on the Bishop & Hospital Pensions? – Blackstone Valley in Rhode Island and, in particular, the former St. Joseph's Hospital and Our

Lady of Fatima Hospital, were placed in receivership in early August and the pension fund for nurses faced insolvency. Three years ago the hospitals were sold to a California-based for-profit company. As of June 2016, the pension fund had assets valued at \$95.5 million and liabilities put at \$126 million.

In a closer look in the weekly *Valley Breeze* newspaper on Sept. 7, columnist **Arlene Violet**, a former nun and a former attorney general of Rhode Island, dissected the serious problems that had beset the hospital pension fund and faults **Thomas Tobin**, the bishop of Rhode Island's Providence diocese, for not paying into the fund, thus allowing it to post a shortfall of at least \$160 million.

One of the complaints that Violet has with Tobin is that the diocesan website highlights the financial difficulties of the priests, without properly noting or supporting the female staff at the hospital. In her column, she wrote: “Shortly after he became the bishop, Thomas Tobin made contributions to the pension fund that fell far short of the actuarial advice he was provided, and then the bishop stopped making payments altogether. The highest amount was a paltry \$425 per month or lower; it went out from the pension fund for nurses without any money going in.”

The *Valley Breeze* and columnist Violet contend that Tobin “did not let the retirement fund participants know that he had ceased making payments or had underpaid the suggested \$3 million plus that the actuary was suggesting. The board overseeing the fund apparently acquiesced to the bishop's arrangements. The contributions which were made and then stopped by the bishop were part of a negotiated contract with the workers at the hospital. The bishop chose to treat [the contract] as a paper tiger.”

Violet, who is familiar with the hospital work force, says, “They worked overtime without pay because, well, that's what you do when people are sick. Now there are about one thousand of them in their '70s to '90s, [and] the church failure to honor its word on the pensions will probably cut in half the paltry sum they receive.” She added, “The bishop delivers homilies on justice but neglects his obligations to retirees and those eligible for the pension.”

The column concludes by noting that Tobin “hasn't spoken a peep about the malfeasance. He is hiding behind the exemption in federal law for church-related pensions which escape federal scrutiny. My retiree clients and others who have been conned are now forced to sue the diocese.”

As of mid-August, not a word has been heard from Bishop Tobin, who essentially administered the hospital pension fund for the nurses. Since the receivership petition was filed, not one of the current or former managers of St. Joseph has acknowledged any responsibility for the plight facing the pensioners.

Trump's Weird Advisers Have Tales to Tell – Don't look now, but aside from the members of the Cabinet who make up the White House management team, there are two radio/TV personalities the media identify as close “confidants” and “advisers.” to the president. They swap ideas and conspiracies, some say, and are gung ho Trump fans. These two media veterans, **Alex Jones** and **Roger Stone**, both lucid and confirmed fantasy-believers, have in recent days been sharing some alleged inside details about Trump, saying he has been slurring his speech (the president does not drink alcohol), mostly in the evenings. Neither Jones nor Stone admits to having seen the slurring but say they have been told about it or have “high-level sources” that disclose Trump's behavior to them.

The Jones scenario goes like this: His sources are saying that “they” (?) are putting a slow sedative in Trump's Diet Coke and in his iced tea, so that about six or seven at night he is drugged and slurring his words. One name that keeps popping up in conspiracy reports as a player in the drugging operation is that of new White House Chief of Staff **Gen. John Kelly**, a favorite villain of the far right as he attempts to rein Trump in and bring some order to the dysfunctional and unproductive West Wing.

I leave this all with you folks out there. I think it's destructive bilge and these two wing-nuts deserve each other. Still, both enjoy large audiences and are notorious conspiracy buffs who keep an eye on their radio and TV ratings. Wait for the book or the indictments, I guess.

Jeff Sessions and His Trouble With Truth – After a reported severe tongue-lashing from the president about his problems over the **James Comey** controversy, it's clear that **Jeff Sessions** is doing his best to show Trump that he can take orders and follow the party line. Sessions has been traveling the country making false claims about funding for the sanctuary cities and its supposed impact on crime in places like Miami-Dade and Chicago. Sessions continues to try to link Chicago's increase in violent crimes to immigration issues when there are no facts to support such a scenario. In Florida, Sessions credited a reduction in crime in Miami-Dade county to its policy reversal on sanctuary cities. This claim is also unsupported.

Studies show that immigrant-friendly strategies help reduce crime, not increase it. However, the Sessions train continues moving along, spreading his false claims across the country.

Part Two of the AG's war with the truth came up

when he, using questionable arguments, engineered the reversal by the Justice Department of Obama-era restrictions against civil asset forfeiture, a practice that allows police to confiscate property from individuals who have not been convicted of a crime. Early last month, a bipartisan group of Congressmen filed legislation to bar the Justice Department from moving forward on enforcing forfeiture and it is moving through Congress. The question that should be asked is when will the attorney general stop trying to show his loyalty to Trump by showcasing bad facts and bad law and begin to respect our civil liberties?

Of Leadership – Well back in the day – 1969, to be precise – **Dr. Hugh L'Etang** wrote a ground-breaking book called “The Pathology of Leadership,” and he would later add to this work in several other scholarly tomes that explored how leaders coped with, and displayed, their leadership skills through good times and bad.

The first book discussed the health of leaders like **Winston Churchill**, **Franklin Roosevelt**, eleven out of thirteen other British Prime Ministers and six of ten American presidents. Later books (“Fit to Lead?”) would take a deeper look at the mental side of health in Western leaders as well as their physical conditions.

Now, given the election of Donald Trump, L'Etang's writings may be gravely and persistently relevant.

There are ample examples in the literature of how leaders suffered physical and mental issues and how they dealt with them, and about the processing of health issues with regard to the leaders' relationships with the media and the citizenry. Yes, there are ethical restraints on how deep and morally right it is to assess from afar a person's health, physically and mentally. The medical profession generally agrees that any assessment of a person's condition should rarely be made public and that an assessment on a person's well being should only be made by a physician who has personally examined the individual.

With that in mind, it still can be helpful to look at some 20th century leaders and their health issues, particularly the mental challenges that they faced:

Margaret Thatcher: She was 62 when she won the general election in 1987, and her third term was not a success. The “Iron Lady” showed increasing rigidity in her thinking; she was contemptuous and rude to her ministers; she would brook no dissent; and she was apparently unaware of the great public dissatisfaction with the poll tax. Her daughter would later confirm her mother's dementia, which was severe. How many of her actions were impacted by that dementia?

Ronald Reagan: A very popular governor of California and two-term president, Reagan suffered, we would learn much later, from dementia in the closing months of his second term when the Iran-Contra arms deal became public. There has been speculation about beneficial actions by a loving staff that minimized public knowledge of his dementia until after his death.

French President Georges Pompidou: A very sick man, he was unable to remember the six-digit PIN code for the nuclear option, so it was marked on a tag that he wore round his neck.

Franklin Roosevelt: At the start of his fourth term he was mortally ill from severe hypertension and heart and kidney failure. It is accepted that the wartime president was very ill at Yalta where he was outmaneuvered by **Joseph Stalin**. Roosevelt died two months later. The morbid details of his poor health had been kept hidden from the American public, particularly during the presidential campaign of 1944. How his health affected the outcomes of the Yalta talks and the country's future remains a question for the ages.

Woodrow Wilson: An inflexible man, he suffered a severe stroke in 1919 and a number of follow-up episodes. For the remainder of his second term, Wilson's presidential duties were conducted by the First Lady, his doctor, and his secretary working together.

There are many other such examples in contemporary times and in history. Common features include sociopathic, or even psychopathic, tendencies; severe mood swings; dementia; and age-related illness. The author of “The Pathology of Leadership” wrote that ill-health and the incapacity of Presidents and Prime Ministers was “horrifying.”

It is a given today that a gradual decline in mental abilities accompanies aging. This can include increasing rigidity of attitude, a reduced ability to comprehend new information, and to process it and some memory loss. What we do not know at this moment in time is how narcissism, megalomania, sociopathy, or related mental illness have impacted, or will have an ongoing effect, on someone like Donald Trump. What most Americans believe they know is that he has exhibited a range of behavior in his public actions and words that veers dramatically from the norm.

This unknown will likely remain unknown with regard to how a President Trump will deal with highly dangerous challenges such as the North Korean situation, and long-term, day in and day out, the threat of a nuclear attack by North Korean leaders.

These are extremely consequential matters and very possibly there is scant wriggle room for a president who should know that he has the fate of the world at his fingertips.

IRISH INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRANT CENTER



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Website: iiicenter.org Email: immigration@iiicenter.org

Irish students arrive for internships in Boston



Pictured here between staff members Lisa-Marie Nathan and Paul Pelan are Shannon Quinn (interning at Norbella) and Tommy Murphy (interning at Faithful+Gould). Welcome, and we hope you enjoy your time in Boston!

The IIIC has recently welcomed 20 newly arrived students from Ulster University and Queen's University Belfast to Boston. These students will intern with local employers for a 12-month program that complements their university studies and provides them with a life-changing year in the United States.

Over the past several years, the IIIC has cultivated meaningful relationships with Boston area employers to create opportunities for these high achieving Irish university students, enabling them to live and work

in the United States in conjunction with their studies. Employers for students this year include Liberty Mutual Group, State Street, Ironshore, Choo and Company, Faithful+Gould, and Wicked Good Cupcakes. Students are working in marketing, business, architecture, finance, and engineering fields.

These students have quickly become a part of the IIIC community – enjoying a Red Sox game with IIIC staff and attending BIBA and Irish Network Boston events to increase their professional opportunities. They

live in a number of neighborhoods across the city, and are taking in all of the opportunities that Boston has to offer. Students have formed new friendships with other local and J-1 students, have traveled across the state, and even spent a few warm days on the beach!

The program affords young people in Northern Ireland an opportunity to travel to the United States, to widen their horizons, to learn, and to use the experience to build successful lives. The internships count towards student university credit, enabling them to achieve

individual, academic, and professional goals.

Employers note that the program adds important diversity and international perspective to the workplace. The students are highly ambitious and eager to make the most of their internship year. The program is easily adapted for employers and complements philanthropic goals.

If your organization would like to benefit from this cultural exchange program please reach out to IIIC's Thomas Dalton at tdalton@iiicenter.org or call 617-542-7654.

IIIC will salute three with Solas Awards at annual gala on Oct. 12

The Irish International Immigration Centre has announced the details of our 2017 Solas Awards Gala. As the IIIC's signature annual fundraising event, the gala honors the many ways immigrants contribute to our society, while supporting the immediate needs of those coming to our shores from across the globe.

Said IIIC Executive Director Ronnie Milla: "The IIIC is thrilled to present the Solas Leadership Award to John F. Donohue, chairman, president and chief executive officer

of the Arbella Insurance Ground, and the founding chair of the IIIC's Advisory Board. John Donohue fully embodies the vision, mission, and values of the IIIC, and for over two decades he has been our closest friend, benefactor and ambassador.

"We are honored to present the Solas Service Award to the Honorable John F. Kerry, former Secretary of State and US senator. Secretary Kerry, a strong proponent of Comprehensive Immigration Reform and a pathway to citizenship for

immigrants, served as the 68th US Secretary of State from 2013 to 2017 under President Barack Obama, and served as a senator from Massachusetts from 1985 to 2013.

"Finally, we are delighted to present the first ever Solas Courage Award to Noon Elhassan, a young woman from Sudan who has overcome great odds to build a life here in the US. The IIIC assisted Noon and her family in becoming permanent United States residents and today she is studying at the University of

Massachusetts Boston, pursuing her dreams of becoming a doctor and a US citizen."

The event will be held at the InterContinental Boston on Thurs., Oct. 12, beginning with registration and reception at 5:30 p.m., followed by dinner and program at 6:30 p.m. For tickets, visit accelevents.com/events/Solas2017.

Immigration Q&A

Overstaying a visit to the US – bad idea

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

A. Yes. If you entered the US under the Visa Waiver Program, as most visitors from the 38 eligible countries (including Ireland) do today, you normally are given up to 90 days to remain in this country. The Visa Waiver Program is also commonly referred to as "ESTA," an acronym for the Electronic System for Travel Authorization, which is the online application system that prescreens travelers entering under this program. However, if you enter the US under the Visa Waiver Program, you are *not* allowed to work during that time. If you overstay this 90-day period by 180 days to one year, you face a three-year bar from reentering the US. Overstaying the 90-day period by more than one year subjects you to a ten-year reentry bar. This is the case irrespective of whether you work in the US without authorization.

Don't misinterpret the 180 days as any kind of "grace" period that allows you to remain in the US beyond the 90 days granted under the Visa Waiver Program. Any period of overstay at all may affect your ability to re-enter the US at a later date.

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

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

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

If you have questions about this or any other aspect of immigration law, you can have a free, confidential consultation at one of our weekly legal clinics as noted elsewhere on this page.

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



IRISH INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRANT CENTER
IMMIGRATION LEGAL ASSISTANCE

The Irish International Immigrant Center's immigration attorneys and social workers are available for all immigrants during this time of uncertainty and concern in our community. We are closely following the changes in immigration policies, and are available for confidential, legal consultations, and case representation. At weekly legal clinics, you can receive a free and confidential consultation with staff and volunteer attorneys. For information, or if you or anyone you know would like to speak to an immigration attorney, please call us at (617) 542-7654.

Upcoming Clinic Schedule

Clinics are in the evening – please do not arrive more than 30 minutes before the clinic begins.

Downtown Boston

IIIC, One State Street, 8th Floor, Boston MA 02109
Tuesdays, October 3rd and October 17th at 4:00pm

South Boston

South Boston Labouré Center, 275 West Broadway, South Boston MA 02127
Tuesday, October 24th at 6:00pm

Citizenship Clinics

IIIC, One State Street, 8th Floor, Boston MA 02109
Every Wednesday from 10am-1pm
Walk-ins are welcome!

Our Downtown Boston location is fully accessible by public transportation.
Phone: 617.542.7654 | Fax: 617.542.7655 | www.iiicenter.org



County Donegal Association
of Greater Boston

109th ANNUAL REUNION & BANQUET
Saturday, November 4, 2017

at Florian Hall, Hallet Street, Dorchester, MA

Family style roast beef dinner
served at 7:15 p.m.

Music by Erin's Melody with Margaret Dalton

All profits from the Banquet will go to Donegal flood victims.

Call President Maryann McGonagle at 781-521-9001 or
our Chairman, Michael McLaughlin at 781-585-3230

Donation \$60 per person

Insurance and Investments

A good financial strategy is not just about “making money;” it is also about protection.

Provided by Brian W. O’Sullivan, CFP, ChFC, CLU



Some people mistake investing for financial planning. Their “financial strategy” is an investing strategy, in which they chase the return and focus on the yield of their portfolio. As they do so, they miss the big picture. Investing represents but one facet of long-term financial planning. Trying to build wealth is one thing; trying to protect it is another. An effort must be made to manage risk.

Insurance can play a central role in wealth protection. That role is underappreciated - partly because some of the greatest risks to wealth go unnoticed in daily life. Five days a week, investors notice what happens on Wall Street; the market is constantly “top of mind.” What about those “back of mind” things investors may not readily acknowledge?

What if an individual suddenly cannot work? Without disability insurance, a seriously injured or ill person out of the workforce may have to dip into savings to replace income. As the Council for Disability Awareness notes, the average length of a long-term disability claim is nearly three years. Workers’ compensation insurance will only pay out if a disability directly relates to an incident that occurs at work, and most long-term disabilities are not workplace related.

What if an individual suddenly dies? If a household relies on that person’s income, how does it cope financially with that income abruptly disappearing? Does it spend down its savings or its invested assets? In such a crisis, life insurance can offer relief. The payout from a policy with a six-figure benefit can provide the equivalent of years of income.

Why do people underinsure themselves as they strive to build wealth? Partly, it is because death and disability are uncomfortable conversation topics. Many people neglect estate planning due to this same discomfort and because they lack knowledge of just how insurance can be used to promote wealth preservation.

The bottom line? Insurance is a vital, necessary aspect of a long-term financial plan. Insurance may not be as exciting to the average person as investments, but it can certainly help a household maintain some financial equilibrium in a crisis, and it also can become a crucial part of estate planning.

Brian W. O’Sullivan is a registered representative of and offers securities, investment advisory and financial planning services through MML Investors Services, LLC, Member SIPC (www.sipc.org). Supervisory Address: 101 Federal Street, Suite 800, Boston, MA 02110. He may be reached at 617-479-0075 x331 or bosullivan@financialguide.com.

Film depicts Hume’s path to Irish peace

(Continued from page 1)

Hume was able to exert his influence at the uppermost levels of American politics. Significantly, he worked with Tip O’Neill to indirectly win the favor of then-President Ronald Reagan, who in turn demanded action from British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher on the Irish-Anglo Agreement of 1985. As Fitzpatrick pointed out, Hume was among the first to tap into the power of US foreign policy as means to enact change.

“This man really was the first person to focus on Washington, and he understood how important the power of Washington was when it could be unleashed,” explained Fitzpatrick. “He plotted out the formula and the strategy for how senior American politicians could get involved.”

Following the premiere, a discussion panel that included Fitzpatrick, Tip’s son, former Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor Thomas P. O’Neill III, MSNBC’s Chris Matthews, and Kevin Cullen analyzed the film and its connection to Boston. O’Neill and Cullen recalled the fervent local

Irish-American support of the North’s nationalists throughout the conflict, citing a time when “the IRA were the good guys” and when Boston bars had “jars collecting funds for NORAID.”

The film shows how Hume was able to navigate a highly complex political and social situation and find a path to peace in the face of the simplistic view of some Irish-Americans that the struggle in the North was one of good vs. evil. Hume emphatically dismissed that viewpoint.

That dismissal is a facet of Hume’s legacy that Fitzpatrick emphasized throughout the panel discussion, noting that his penchant for logic and rationality served his cause well at a time when impulsive, rash violence could have doomed any hope for peace. As Bono put it: “John Hume took down the emotional temperature of the Troubles so that reason could be heard.”

The film also lays out a comparison between Hume’s civil rights movement in Ireland and the movement led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the United States by

juxtaposing images of their marches in Derry and Selma, respectively. Hume was “a student of Martin Luther King who quoted him all the time,” said Thomas O’Neill. Hume followed the minister’s example by using nonviolent protest as a catalyst for change. In the film, the iconic footage of Hume leading protesters with locked arms singing “We Shall Overcome” visually cements the link between the two men.

Hume grew up poor in Derry, a city divided between unionists and nationalists, and a locus of the Troubles rife with unemployment, restlessness, and violence. Fitzpatrick believes this upbringing shaped Hume’s outlook on life and his mission of peace.

“He saw what poverty did to people in Derry,” Fitzpatrick said. “He saw the social malaise that affected people.”

Fitzpatrick’s adept storytelling weaves several subplots together, touching on Hume’s youth, his presence on the front lines of the conflict, and his campaigns in America. But some of the film’s most poignant moments come when Fitzpatrick

lets raw footage do the storytelling for him.

A series of unedited clips from Irish newsreels gives the audience a dramatic, visceral perspective of a larger-than-life John Hume. Black and white footage captures the moments when an interview with Hume was interrupted by a skirmish with police, or when he confronted a British army commander on Magilligan beach.

The haunting sounds of a Celtic flute scored by Riverdance composer Bill Whelan accompany stunning images of the Irish landscape in giving the film its sense of place.

“In the Name of Peace,” the first feature-length documentary to be made about John Hume, “had to be made,” Fitzpatrick said in the *Reporter* interview. That exact sentiment was given voice by an audience member during the Q & A portion following the film’s showing at the Boston Film Festival. Thanking Fitzpatrick, he said, “It had to be made.”

The JFK library event on Tues., Oct. 10 begins at 6 p.m. Go to jfklibrary.org to register.

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Bringing history to life with a flair for the dramatic

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

Evan O'Brien is a man steeped in history. As creative director of the award-winning Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum, he manages the creation and maintenance of all exhibits, programming, tour scripting and special events for the museum. He also oversees the direction and hiring of all the actors and interpreters who bring the unique museum experience to life.

The Boston Tea Party was a political protest by Boston's Sons of Liberty in reaction to the British Tea Act of 1773. The defiant dumping of 340 chests of tea (with a 2017 value of \$1.5 million) into Boston Harbor is considered by many the single most important event leading to the American Revolution.

Of special note, one Son of Liberty, Thomas White, a tailor, was born in Kilkenny.

Owned and operated by Historic Tours of America, the complex along Boston's Waterfront includes the museum, a Tea Room (where you can sample all five teas destroyed during the Boston Tea Party), a meeting house, film presentation, replicas of the Eleanor and the Beaver (two of the three original ships) and more.

A museum highlight is The Robinson Chest, the only known surviving tea chest from the original uprising.

With character tour guides and historical interpreters, the museum draws visitors from around the world. Guests are invited to recreate the original protest by tossing pseudo-crates of tea into the harbor themselves. School groups participate in special educational programming.

In an interview with the BIR, O'Brien said, "There is nothing more Boston than the Boston Tea Party. All around the world, people know, at least loosely, what happened . . . What we try to do, through immersive story telling, historical reenactments and recreation, and high tech interactive exhibits, is fully il-



Evan O'Brien is Creative Director at the award-winning Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum.
Courtesy Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum

lustrate this complex and comprehensive chapter of American history that really was the catalyst to what we know now as the American Revolution."

He feels a special responsibility when auditioning new actors. "Every single interpreter at the museum is playing the character of someone involved in the destruction of the tea, or a relative of that person," he said. "The people that we're portraying were real people, flesh and blood. They had a life, and we have to do good service to that life and pay homage to them . . . The Boston Tea Party was a treasonous event and anyone caught destroying the tea could have been killed as a traitor to the Crown."

In addition to the daily tours and reenactments, O'Brien also stages special events. Currently, that includes Tavern Nights, which he describes as "a



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(Continued from page 10) fully immersive dinner theater experience and Boston's only colonial tavern night."

The Tea Room is converted to an 18th century tavern with live music. Guests enjoy a rustic dinner with a Son or Daughter of Liberty, sing, dance and play tavern games. Tavern Nights occur the second and fourth Friday of each month.

The biggest event of the year for O'Brien is the museum's annual anniversary reenactment on Dec. 16, in the same location where the course of America changed 244 years ago.

The evening begins with a ticketed event at the Old South Meeting House with a reenactment of the fiery town meeting where the secret signal was given by Samuel Adams for the colonials to destroy the tea.

Then, in one of the largest theatrical moving performances in the United States, more than 1,000 people are led by fife and drummers to the waterfront for a free event, which O'Brien describes as a "professionally produced (spectacular) – supported with light and sound and special effects."

Re-enactors storm aboard the Beaver and throw tea, specially imported each year from London's East India Company, into the harbor.

With a BFA from Emerson College, O'Brien traces his own history in performing to his childhood in West Roxbury. One

day he walked in while his Mom was watching a talk show. "I stopped in my tracks in the middle of my living room and I told my mother, 'I want to sing. I want to do what this person is doing on TV.'"

She enrolled him in the acting program at Riverside Theater Works in Hyde Park. His first stage appearance came in the musical "The Point."

"I played a farmer, and that's pretty much all I remember," he said, laughing. "The first major production I was in was 'Oliver Twist.' I was one of Fagan's boys."

A shift came when O'Brien was performing in "Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" in Norwood.

"One of the cast members was talking about this crazy part time job they had playing a grave digger in Boston's burial grounds," he said. "I had always liked ghost stories and I was looking for something more theatrical to do with my time and get paid for it, rather than just community theater."

He auditioned for Old Town Trolley's Ghosts & Gravestones Tour (also owned and operated by Historic Tours) and was hired on the spot. The fully narrated, citywide ghost tour takes a theatrical look at Boston's mysteries and eerie legends.

O'Brien's first few years on the tour were part time – just a way to earn extra money during college. But he fell in love with the history. "I've

always loved Boston," he said, "but being able to be there after hours in these historic sites, these beautiful grounds, was something that I really embraced. I've been very lucky ever since that first interview."

His hard work and creativity were noticed and he was eventually promoted to Entertainment and Productions manager for the company's specialty tours, including Ghosts & Gravestones, The Sons & Daughters Of Liberty Tour, and The Original Boston Chocolate Tour.

Later, he was the first person hired for the Tea Party Museum, before construction had even commenced. O'Brien says it was a "huge honor" to be given a clean slate to work with Historic Tours to develop what has become one of Boston's most substantial attractions.

In an ironic but appropriate twist, he and his wife live in one of the more historic homes in Weymouth – originally owned by someone born in 1773, the year of the original Tea Party.

When it was noted that he has come a long way since that initial gig as a part-time gravedigger, he acknowledged modestly, "I have."

R. J. Donovan is Editor and Publisher of on-stageboston.com.

•••
Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum, 306 Congress Street, Boston. 866-955-0667, or bostonteapartyship.com.



Evan O'Brien participates in a colorful reenactment at the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum. Photo courtesy Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum

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Colin Kadis: Accordionist on the make who is fully invested in the local Irish music scene

By SEAN SMITH
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Newton native Colin Kadis may look like your average, happy-go-lucky, unassuming college freshman. As his friends will tell you, however, he's about as serious an Irish musician as there is: Someone who doesn't just play the notes but who is a dedicated student of the tradition, and willing to take on leadership in the local Irish music community.

Oh, yes, and he qualified for the All-Ireland Fleadh accordion competition this past summer, too – not two years after he started playing the instrument – and has shown a special interest in learning styles and tunes long associated with Boston's Irish music scene.

In recognition of his accomplishments thus far, and the potential for even more, Boston's Hanafin-

Cooley-Reynolds branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann awarded Kadis this year's Larry Reynolds Memorial Scholarship.

Named for the branch co-founder and longtime mainstay of Boston's Irish community, the scholarship supports the enrichment of young (under-21) people who are active in New England Irish music, dance, song, and other cultural activities.

Kadis plans to use his scholarship to attend classes and workshops next summer at two of Ireland's most prominent traditional music events, the Willie Clancy Summer School and the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann Scoil Eigse.

"I'm very pleased and honored to have won the scholarship," said Kadis, in his first semester at the University of Vermont-Montpelier. "I'm really grateful to the Hanafin-Cooley-Reynolds branch

for choosing me, and to everybody who's helped and encouraged me in my musical activities."

Among Kadis's enablers and friends, one of the most important is fellow accordionist Tommy Sheridan, who has been active in Boston Irish music for decades, including as a member and later the leader of the Connacht Ceili Band. Sheridan has been a mentor for Kadis since encountering him at the weekly session in Brighton's Green Briar Pub.

"Colin is an absolute treasure," said Sheridan, whose recommendation accompanied Kadis's application for the Reynolds Memorial Scholarship. "His positive attitude, his friendliness, his willingness to learn – all these things and more make him a great musician, and a great person."

Kadis has roots in both Ireland and Irish music: His great-grandfather

was a fiddle player in the storied Sliabh Luachra tradition, and his grandfather had plenty of songs and stories from the old country – not to mention a strong opinion on what his grandson should do with his time. So, Kadis, who'd been playing trumpet through much of his school years ("I actually tried reels on it during middle school"), began to contemplate switching to an Irish music instrument. He tried tin whistle for a year, but then decided on accordion.

Classes with Natasha Sheehy and Dan Accardi at the Comhaltas music school put him on the right path, and going to sessions at The Green Briar and Hennessy's in Boston, as well as playing for the ceili dances at the monthly Comhaltas gatherings, broadened his understanding of the music.

"Playing for dancing is a great experience," said



Colin Kadis, winner of this year's Larry Reynolds Memorial Scholarship, performing with friend and mentor Tommy Sheridan at BCMFest earlier this year.
Sean Smith photo

Kadis, whose visits to Ireland – where he still has relatives – have further enhanced his musical progress. "So much of what I had been learning made sense all of a sudden: 'Oh, that's why you play the triplet there.'"

His friendship with Sheridan, though, has unquestionably been a major part of Kadis' musical development. Besides working with Kadis privately, Sheridan has nudged him into the public sphere, whether playing at sessions or other events – including at BC-

MFest this past January, where he and Sheridan teamed up with keyboardist Rosanne Santucci for a performance – or helping him prepare for the All-Ireland.

"Tommy's been a great mentor, and I really enjoy working with him," said Kadis, adding with a laugh. "He won't quite admit that I learn from him, even though I tell him that all the time."

Most of all, it's through Sheridan that Kadis came to learn the style of accordion special to Boston, as practiced by legends such as Joe Derrane and Billy Caples.

"I love being able to get at the history of the music here, and having a connection with the musicians from an earlier age," he said. "It helps you remember that the music is bigger than you – and the only thing stopping you from learning is you."

To hear Sheridan tell it, meanwhile, working with Kadis has been an equal opportunity learning experience.

"I tell Colin all the time how much he challenges me – he'd sit and watch me play, and ask 'Why do you do that part this way?' – and how much I appreciate it. He researches the tunes and how they're played, but not just by accordion players – he's chasing down the fiddlers and pipers, too, because he wants to know they way they play the tunes."

Sheridan has been particularly gratified by Kadis' interest in the Boston accordion style, and his respect for Boston's Irish music legacy.

Kadis also has taken ownership of a former Green Briar session staple, the "Tune of the Month," Sheridan added, which involves putting together a common set of tunes for musicians who regularly attend the earlier part of the session, one intended for players still getting the hang of the music.

"The 'Tune of the Month' had lapsed, but Colin restarted it and took it to a whole new level," said Sheridan. "He solicits suggestions, puts together a brief narrative and audio sample for each suggestion, and holds a vote so everyone can choose the one they want. When the vote is complete, he provides both sheet music and audio for the winning tune, and he even includes suggestions of which tunes the winner might be played with."

Kadis, for his part, knows he's got plenty to learn, and taking part in the All-Ireland served as a useful benchmark: "I played without mistakes, but I could tell I'm not there yet. It's good motivation."

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The spirit of John Joe Somers lives on in Boston’s pubs

Commentary

By DANIEL SHEEHAN
REPORTER CORRESPONDENT

I'm new to Boston. I moved here at the beginning of September from a small town in western Connecticut. I've always had familial roots in the area, so I'm somewhat familiar with the city. But I feel a new level of appreciation for the spirit of the town and its people, as well as its deep connections to Ireland, after spending a few hours at Hennessy's Pub for the celebration of the second annual John Joe Somers Day.

The aesthetic of an Irish pub is uniquely mythic. Upon hearing the phrase, the mind conjures flowing spirits, the clinking of glasses, hearty laughter, dancing, pulsating live music, and that distinctively Irish quality of unbridled joy mixed with sweet nostalgia. All of these were present on the evening of Sun., Sept. 17th at Hennessy's.

The bar was packed with family and friends, adults and children, as well as musicians from

the dozen bands that performed throughout the afternoon and evening, all there to fundraise for Cops For Kids With Cancer and to celebrate the life of John Joe Somers, who was born on a farm in Co. Kerry, and came to America "with seventy dollars in his pocket," according to his son, Sean Somers.

Sean explained how his father, "a musician at heart and a businessman by nature," worked hard to earn his success. "He was painting houses, he was cleaning chimneys. Some of my earliest recollections of my dad are him coming home covered in soot, from head to toe."

From humble beginnings, John Joe became one of the most successful pub owners in Boston, managing several establishments, including Mr. Dooley's, The Green Dragon, Durty Nelly's, and Hennessy's. But Sean says he never changed, even after his business accomplishments.

"One of the unique things about my father was he had the ability to stay humble throughout his successes," said Sean.



John Joe Somers

"He would talk to a stockbroker the same way he'd talk to a guy who stocked shelves. That takes a unique person, to make you feel engaged, to make you feel like you have a transparency, that you could tell him anything, and that you were important. That was the kind of man John Joe Somers was."

During a break in the music, Sean gave a short speech eulogizing his father, who passed away in 2015. He spoke to this spirit of kinship, an air of camaraderie and warmth that John Joe instilled in the pubs he opened.

"He created atmospheres where people could connect," Sean said. "In Mr. Dooley's there is no television. He did that so you could come in and sit down and talk to the guy next to you. Instead of being sucked up into your iPhone or iPad or TV or sports, he wanted people to connect. And if anything, with my father's legacy, he's left places where you can come and connect. You can walk in a stranger and walk out with friends."

John Joe's legacy was tangible that night at Hennessy's, where Sean has taken the torch and continued to bear it in his dad's name. I was an outsider with no idea what the day was about, and yet I left the celebration with a connection to the people around me and feeling as if I had known John Joe himself. Which is what, Sean said, his father would have wanted.

John Joe's story is an archetypically American one, about an immigrant who, through hard work, a song, and a dream, made an immeasurably positive impact on his community. I'm

glad to learn and share his story, and I'm honored to have been welcomed to Boston by a Somers pub. I wish the same experience for all newcomers to Boston, or newcomers to our country, for that matter: that they be treated the way John Joe Somers would have treated them.

Toward the end of Sean's tribute, his voice began to choke with emotion. His tone became more melodic, his phrases more lyrical, and he slipped into what was almost an Irish brogue. If I had known him, maybe I'd have written that he sounded a lot like his father.

"...and every note you hear strummed today, from the bass guitar to the rebel drum, his voice is in those notes," Sean intoned. "His voice is behind the guitar, behind the voices singing the song; that's my father. That's John Joe. So if you listen hard enough folks, he's in the music, he's in the song. Raise it up lads, let's have a bit of craic and have some fun!"

THE BIR'S ARTS CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER

A look at some Irish/Celtic events in Greater Boston (and slightly beyond) for the next few weeks:

- The Burren Backroom series will host a CD release party on Oct. 11 for **Night Tree**, a sextet of New England Conservatory musicians (**Lily Honigberg**, violin; **Chris Overholser**, violin, viola, and mandolin; **Zach Mayer**, saxophones, vocals; **Sunniva Brynnel**, accordion, vocals; **McKinley James**, cello; **Julian Loida**, percussion) that pulls together Irish and Scandinavian music with classical, jazz, klezmer and Afro-Cuban influences, playing in ensemble style while also leaving room for individual improvisation. Their recently released first album was produced by Solas' Seamus Egan.
- Irish music in a more traditional vein will be in the spotlight on Oct. 18 with the duo of **Caitlín Nic Gabhann and Ciarán Ó Maonaigh**. A native of County Meath, Nic Gabhann is a three-time winner of the All-Ireland Fleadh Cheoil on concertina, a talented step dancer who was in the "Riverdance" troupe, and has performed with the RTE Vanbrugh Quartet, Paddy Keenan, Liam Ó Maonlaí, Cherish the Ladies, and the Kilfenora Ceili Band. Ó Maonaigh, a former TG4 "Young Musician of the Year" award winner, grew up steeped in the Donegal fiddle style, part of an extended family that includes Altan members Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh and Frankie Kennedy, and Donegal fiddle legend John Doherty. The two have appeared locally as part of the "A St. Patrick's Day Celtic Sojourn."
- October 22 will be a homecoming of sorts for **Don Stiffe**, a Galway singer-songwriter who lived in the Boston area during the 1990s. Stiffe, winner of "The All-Ireland Talent Show"

in 2011, has attracted an ever-larger following on the strength of his compositions like "Missing Galway" and "Grosse Isle" and interpretations of other contemporary as well as original songs, and tours with Cherish the Ladies and the Kilfenora Ceili Band, among others. His debut 2006 album "Start of a Dream" – which in addition to Stiffe originals includes his covers of Richard Thompson's "Waltzing for Dreamers," Jay Livingston's "Mona Lisa" and Brieger Murphy's "Hills of South Armagh" – featured an all-star cast of guest musicians such as Sharon Shannon, Frankie Gavin, Cathal Hayden, and Arty McGlynn. His 2016 song, "You'll Always Be My Mother," was inspired by his search for his birth mother.

On Oct. 25, the Backroom will present a double bill: **The Fretless** is a Canadian string quartet (Karrnel Sawitsky, Trent Freeman, Eric Wright and Ben Plotnick) that has garnered a host of honors for its intricate, often propulsive arrangements of fiddle tunes and folk melodies – full of harmonic and rhythmic innovation. The members of the trio **Low Lily** (formerly known as Annalivia) are all familiar to the local Irish/Celtic music scene – Liz Simmons, vocal, guitar; Flynn Cohen, vocal, guitar, mandolin; Lissa Schneckenburger, vocal, fiddle. Low Lily's brand of American folk music is built on traditional influences and modern inspiration, yet also mindful of the Irish, Scottish and New England roots.

Maine's **The Press Gang** comes to the Backroom on Nov. 1. The trio of Christian "Junior" Stevens (accordion, concertina), Alden Robinson (fiddle) and Owen Marshall (guitar, bouzouki) has now expanded its sound with the addition of Hanz Araki (flute, vocals). Firmly established as one of the more

compelling New England trad bands to emerge in the past several years, the band displays a love of, and respect for, tradition, and are known for the sheer ebullience with which they play – and the overall joviality they bring to the whole enterprise, in their sometimes adventurous approach to material and arrangements, and their good-natured sense of humor.

All Backroom shows start at 7:30 p.m. For tickets and other information, see burren.com/Backroom-Series.html.

- Quebecois trio **Genticorum** will perform at Club Passim on Oct. 8 at 8 p.m. Pascal Gemme (fiddle, foot percussion, vocals), Nicholas Williams (flute, accordion, piano, vocals) and Boston-area resident Yann Falquet (guitar, jaw harp, vocals) deliver a polished yet potent sound, fully rooted in the instrumental and song traditions of Quebec while also mindful of North American and European folk influences. They are currently at work on their sixth album.
- Another trio, **MAC** – Ryan McKasson, fiddle; Elias Alexander, bagpipes, vocals; Colin Cotter, guitar, vocals – is at Club Passim on Oct. 21 at 3 p.m. Born more than three years ago during a Boston snowstorm, MAC reflects the gradually unfolding symbiosis that has occurred between Celtic and American music over decades: attuned to the traditional styles and melodies while also blending in original material, and multiple influences that include rock and classical.
- For tickets and other information on Club Passim events, see passim.org.
- Acclaimed as one of Ireland's most popular country singers, **T. R. Dallas** makes an appearance at the Irish Cultural Centre of New England in Canton on Oct. 7 at 7:30 p.m. A frequent visitor to the Boston area – including at

the Dorchester Irish Heritage Festival – the Co. Westmeath native has recorded several hit records, including "Who Shot JR Ewing," "Hard to Be Humble," "Daddy's Girl" and "This Story I Tell You Is True," made numerous radio and TV appearances and toured with such luminaries as Johnny Cash, Boxcar Willie, Don Williams, and Foster and Allen.

Go to irishculture.org for details.

- Fiddler, singer and step-dancer **April Verch** will perform at the Circle of Friends Coffeehouse in Franklin on Oct. 14 at 8 p.m. Born and raised in Canada's Ottawa Valley, renowned for its fiddle and dance traditions, Verch has gone on to explore roots music in Canada and America – including old-timey, bluegrass and country – while developing her talents as songwriter and storyteller. Earlier this year, she released "The April Verch Anthology," an 18-track collection celebrating her musical career.
- Go to circlefolk.org for more information.
- Accomplished Irish tenor **Ronan Tynan** brings his widely praised voice and inspirational presence to two area venues this month: St. Richard's Parish in Danvers on Oct. 8 at 7 p.m. (smadanvers.org/pages/StMaryoftheAnnunciation), and Norwood Theatre on Oct. 14 at 7:30 p.m. [norwoodstage.com]. Born in Dublin and raised in Kilkenny, Tynan has toured internationally and sung at such landmark events as the state funeral for Ronald Reagan, the Belmont Stakes, benefits and memorial services for 9/11 first responders, and the inauguration of Boston Mayor Martin Walsh. He has released five albums as well as a DVD of his motivational speaking.
- Two special events highlight this month's schedule at the

Canadian American Club of Massachusetts in Watertown. On October 7 at 7 p.m. will be a performance by **Nicolas Brown and Alison Perkins**, hosted by the Boston Uilleann Pipers Club. Brown, influenced early on by Seamus Ennis and Willie Clancy recordings, is not only a talented uilleann piper and flutist but also a connoisseur of Irish music history. Perkins, who has played in her family's band Finvarra's Wren and toured with singer Sean Keane, is a Clare-style fiddler with six Fleadh Cheoil gold medals to her credit. Their debut recording, "All Covered with Moss," has drawn rave reviews as a showcase for their tremendous ability and chemistry as a duo.

Another twosome, **Richard Wood and Gordon Belsher**, makes a return visit to the club on Oct. 21 at 8 p.m. Wood is an award-winning Prince Edward Island fiddler noted for melding his traditional style with rock-and-roll energy, and his appearances with The Chieftains, Shania Twain, and former "Riverdance" star Jean Butler, among others; Belsher has featured his guitar, mandola, bodhran, and vocals on two CDs, both nominated for the "Roots/Traditional Solo Recording of the Year" category of the East Coast Music Awards.

For more details, including ticket prices, go to canadianamericanclub.com and click on the "Calendar" link.

- The Boston College Gaelic Roots series hosts an Irish ceili on Oct. 3 at 6:30 p.m. in the Gasson Hall Irish Room. Area Irish dancer and dance teacher **Kieran Jordan** will teach and call the dances, with music provided by fiddler **Sheila Falls**, director of BC's Irish music programs, and area musicians. No experience is necessary. Details at bc.edu/gaelicroots.

Dot's Irish Heritage festival set for Oct. 8

(Continued from page 1)

community in the wake of the Marathon bombings.

Now, after the disappointment of last year's cancellation, the festival is ready to bounce back. Two stages, one outdoors and another inside Florian Hall, will provide for continuous entertainment throughout the day. In addition to the music and dance, the festival offers family entertainment, and cultural activities, as

well as food and vendor booths selling clothing, souvenirs, novelties and various other items.

Mairin Keady, who runs the festival with Sean Weir and Patrick McDonagh, notes that the 2016 rainout made it impossible to recoup the up-front fees and costs necessary to produce such an event. But with so much community enthusiasm and support for the festival, the co-organizers

decided to "keep the party going" even though it meant streamlining the program a little.

"We're determined to keep this festival going, because it celebrates the best of our community," says Keady. "We've tried to keep the focus on our local talent, especially musicians who support charity and fundraising efforts that take place locally and beyond. And as always, we seek to encour-

age the next generation by putting a spotlight on young musicians and dancers, who always delight our audiences. The Dorchester Irish Heritage Festival is an important cultural contribution to this city, and we look forward to making it stronger than ever."

For news, updates and details concerning the festival, go to dorchesterrishheritagefestival.com.



A dance performance at the 2015 Dorchester Irish Heritage Festival. The event has proved to be a hit with the local community since it began in 2009.
Sean Smith photo

CD Reviews

By Sean Smith
Kevin Crawford, Dylan Foley and Patrick Doocey, “The Drunken Gaugers” • Two-thirds of



Lúnasa (Crawford and Doocey) meet one-third of The Yanks (Foley), but of course, there’s more to it than that. All three are supremely accomplished musicians who are active in the New York City area Irish scene, and each one embodies a different dynamic in the Irish-American relationship: an Irish ex-pat (Crawford, on flute and whistle); an American of Irish descent (Foley, fiddle); and someone who’s technically both – Doocey, a Worcester-born guitarist who moved with his Irish-born parents to County Mayo as a boy, and is now living in New York City. So along with its other virtues – of which there are many – this album perhaps also projects as a sampling of early-21st century styles, influences, and experiences from across the Irish-American spectrum, all met in a major hub of Irish-American music.

Obviously, the socio-historical stuff wouldn’t matter very much if the music wasn’t so good, which it most assuredly is. The album contains a mix of traditional tunes with more recent, in-the-tradition compositions by distinguished musicians like Charlie Lennon (“Step It Out Joe”), Randal Bays (“Friday Harbor”), Billy McComiskey (“Ratholdran Castle”), James Kelly (“The Sloping Meadow”), and Crawford himself (“An Giúdach Fánach”). For the most part, the trio plays

all of these with little variance in arrangement, but you can certainly hear the gifts they all bring to the music. A perfect illustration of this is the “Drunken Gauger” set: On the set dance that begins the medley, Doocey employs a very spare, mellow backing that allows one to fully appreciate the capabilities of his two colleagues and their instruments, but even with the transition to the jigs “O’Sullivan’s March” and “Humours of Aylehouse,” you’re keyed into the qualities that make Crawford and Foley the top-shelf players they are – phrasing, ornamentation, and more, all in sharp relief (Crawford’s equally prodigious flute playing, meanwhile, can be heard on, among other tracks, “The Flat House” and “Step It Out Joe” sets).

One of the more ear-catching tracks is “An Giúdach Fánach,” which begins with Foley playing the air “Máirtín O’Connor’s,” slowly teasing out the melody, then picking up the tempo slightly to be joined by Doocey and Crawford; Crawford (playing whistle) takes over the lead with the reel “Moving in Decency” (he throws in a few delightful flourishes after Foley comes in) and then it’s full steam into the concluding tune, where Doocey’s chording is particularly outstanding; the set as a whole is just so well put together, and demonstrates the sophistication of hues and shading to be plumbed within the music.

Crawford, Foley and Doocey each get a solo track: Foley on the reels “Ratholdran Castle” and “The Abbeyleix Reel,” the latter showing his double-stop prowess; Crawford plays whistle with Doocey on “Adam’s Apple,” a jigs-and-reel combo; and Doocey offers up the tremendously expressive air “An Ciarraíoch Mallaithe (The Cursed Kerryman).” One could get caught up in the question of whether the whole of “The Drunken Gaugers” manages somehow to be even greater than the sum of its parts – which are so great on their own – but, really, it’s best just to stop thinking and listen. [thedrunkengaugers.bandcamp.com]

Nordic Fiddlers Bloc, “Deliverance” • Improved

technology and transportation have made formerly remote lands seem less distant, but music has a way of doing that, too – especially, so it would seem, Celtic music. Just as Andy Irvine and Planxty helped bring the Balkans a little closer to western audiences, recent years have seen a broadened awareness of Scandinavia culture, thanks in part to Celtic musicians’ appreciation for performers like Annbjørg Lien and Väsen (it bears mentioning that Greater Boston has had no small part in this trend, what with bands like NØIR and Blue Moose & The Unbuttoned Zippers).

The Nordic Fiddlers Bloc refines the Celtic-Scandinavian connection with a focus on the titular instrument, as represented by its three members: Kevin Henderson (Shetland/Scotland), Olav Luksengård Mjelva (Norway) and Anders Hall (Sweden), all mainstays in their respective music communities (Henderson, for example, is a member of The Boys of the Lough); the trio supplements its instrumentation with viola, octave fiddle and the Norwegian hardanger fiddle.

To say the sound is glorious is an understatement. With no guitars, bouzoukis, keyboards or other accompanying instruments, Mjelva, Hall and Henderson use their various iterations of the fiddle for everything: melody, harmony, rhythm, counterpoint, and ambient noise. “Deliverance” – their second release – was recorded in a church, which adds a resonance and depth to that already produced by their instruments. Most of the material was composed by Mjelva and Henderson, and aligns very well with the older, more traditional tunes.

You don’t have to be a fiddler, or versed in the Norwegian, Swedish and Shetland traditions and their relationship to one another, to appreciate this music. Some tracks, like “Deliverance” and “Flinken,” conjure up the contemplative, sometimes dark, almost bleak beauty that corresponds to many people’s impressions of the Nordic region. Others are beguiling and festive: “Talons Trip to Thompson Island” – penned by Henderson after his sojourn at the Boston Harbor Scottish Fiddle Camp – “The Hen Hunt” (though it’s intended to memorialize a natural disaster) and the traditional “Djävulspolskan (Devil’s Polska).” And there are pleasures in contrasting the familiar steadfast jig and reel pulses of Shetland/Scotland with the “crooked” rhythms of polskas, hallings, and other staples of Scandinavian music, as Mjelva’s “In the Lounge” demonstrates.

Snow, ice, polar darkness, midnight sun – all part of Nordic life, to be sure. But as “Deliverance” shows, so is music, rich and multifaceted. [thenordicfiddlers-bloc.com]

Kyle Alden, “Down in the West Vol. 2” • Californian multi-instrumentalist and singer-songwriter Alden has had quite the wide-ranging musical career, one that covers pop and rock as well as folk, but his Irish cred is not in doubt: He has played with the likes of Tommy Peoples, Paddy Keenan, Liz Carroll, and Athena Tergis and hosted regular sessions in San Francisco and environs. Alden has also explored the Irish-American musical relationship in quite inventive and thoughtful ways, notably his 2011 release “Songs from Yeats’ Bee-Loud Glade,” in which he set 13 W.B. Yeats poems to his distinctively Americana melodies – by conspicuously avoiding attempts at “Irishness,” Alden’s adaptations made the emotional and spiritual qualities of Yeats’ poems seem all the more universal.

“Down in the West Vol. 2” (along with its first volume) has a similar feel – soft mandolin riffs and acoustic guitar strokes under Alden’s laidback, mid-range vocals, with the occasional bass, electric guitar and backing vocals. Most of the songs and tunes are Alden’s (one exception is the W.H. Auden poem “As I Walked Out”) and there’s a bucolic character to them, evoking small-town crossroads, quiet pastures, and lonely prairies: “White-wash boards cupped from the sun/two-by-six walls all out of plumb/sagging rafters and a swayback bench/like a mare left out to pasture” (“Better Than New”); “Faded red striped awning/the old town five-and-dime/flaps feebly in the yawning/relentless winds of time” (“These Days”).

Those excerpts may sound like Cormac McCarthy set to music, but Alden also drops in traditional music references: some overt, like his renditions of “Sail Away Ladies” and the condemned-man confessional “Sam Hall,” and two sets of tunes (most penned by him) that feature Fergus’s lively fiddle; and some more subtle, like the melody on “Fall Day Gone” and the “Buffalo Gals”-like structure of “Child to Me,” or the reflective “George’s Street” (written by his longtime collaborator Vince Keehan), which has echoes of a Sean O’Casey reminiscence, Tergis’s fiddle like some comforting nostalgic embrace.

Whatever the source or the inspiration for his material, Alden conveys the stubborn persistence of place and person amidst inevitable decline, quite like the much-romanticized West itself. [kylealden.com]



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BRETT'S BOSTON

By Harry Brett
Exclusive photos of Boston Irish people & events

Boston's Charitable Irish Society hosted a president's reception on September 8 at the Union Club of Boston on Park Street overlooking Boston Common, to welcome Seamus Woulfe, SC, Attorney General of the Republic of Ireland. Pictured are:

1.) Michael Mullaney, West Roxbury, Leslie Rothwell and Murray Forbes, Beverly Farms; 2.) Hilda Landry, Wayland, Maureen Connolly, Hingham, Deirdre Wirzbunger, Whitman; 3.) Richard and Kathy Williams, West Roxbury, Ronnie Millar, Cambridge; 4.) John Rattigan, Newton, Ed Kirby, Brookline; 5.) Ed Duffy, Milton, Seamus and Mary Ellen Mulligan, Randolph, Barbara and Bill Fitzgerald, Milton; 6.) Mike and Liz O'Connor, West Roxbury; 7.) Jean and Paul Conley, Quincy; 8.) Chris Duggan, Acton, Ireland Consul General Fionnuala Quinlan, South Boston; 9.) Ireland Attorney General Seamus Woulfe, CIS president Chris Duggan, Acton; 10.) Kathy Egan, Hon. Dennis Curran, Wellesley; 11.) Carleton LaPorte and Maryellen Lyons, Back Bay; 12.) Eric Wilde, Norwood, Peter Roche, Southborough; 13.) Camden Howe, Julia Duggan, North End; 14.) Nancy Duggan, Acton; Dr. Dorothy Curran, Wellesley.





Moon over Clew Bay in Co. Mayo, which is home to Ireland’s first Dark Sky Park. A 3-day dark sky festival will be held from Oct. 28-30 in Newport, Mulranny and Ballycroy National Park. *Judy Enright photo*

Co. Mayo: ‘Where the darkest skies reveal the brightest stars’

By JUDY ENRIGHT
SPECIAL TO THE BIR
You might expect Ireland to be quiet now that summer and tourist traffic

Traveling People

have fled. But the country is positively hopping. There is no end to the fun and fascinating activities on deck for October – fairs, festivals, Halloween/Samhain happenings, and more are in the lineup.

CO. MAYO DARK SKIES
This is an era with increased emphasis on the environment, global warming, pollution, and the kind of a world we want to leave for our heirs. With that in mind, light pollution is the focus this month in Mayo, “where the darkest skies reveal the brightest stars.”

From Oct. 28 through Oct. 30, there will be walks, talks, workshops, and stargazing at the second Mayo Dark Sky Festival in Newport, Mulranny, and Ballycroy. The first ever Mayo Dark Sky Festival was held last October. See [mayodarkskyfestival.ie](#), [mayodarkskypark.ie](#), or [ballycroynationalpark.ie](#) for details on this year’s events.

Co. Mayo, on Ireland’s western seaboard, is home to Ireland’s first International Dark Sky Park. The designation recognizes the region’s pristine skies and enhances its protected landscapes and wilderness regions.

This is Ireland’s second Dark-Sky Association designation. The first was the Kerry International Dark Sky Reserve on the Iveragh Peninsula that is home to nearly 4,000 residents. The Reserve incorporates some 700 square kilometers along the Wild Atlantic Way tourist route. Its

location between the Kerry Mountains and the Atlantic Ocean gives natural protection from light pollution.

Last year the Dark-Sky Association gave Gold Tier status to the Mayo Park, which includes Ballycroy National Park and the adjoining Wild Nephin wilderness. This is the highest possible award and means Mayo is now “recognized internationally as one of the best places in the world to view the wonders of the night.”

Ballycroy National Park and the Wild Nephin wilderness cover more than 110 square kilometers of mountainous Atlantic blanket bog and forest. Viewing sites for visiting astronomers have been designated and graded by ease of access and facilities available.

Said Dr. Aoibhinn Ni Shulleabhain: “This region provides unique opportunities for people to marvel and wonder at all our night sky has to offer from the Northern Lights to the Milky Way.”

The Dark Sky Park brochure says, “Millions of children throughout the world will never see the Milky Way because of light pollution (an inappropriate or excessive use of artificial light.) Light pollution steals our view of the stars, wastes money, and has adverse effects on our health, wildlife, and environment. Dark Sky places preserve the starry skies, inspire creativity, and reconnect us with the natural beauty of the night.”

Mayo’s County Council has committed to dark-sky-friendly lighting in the area and is working with the Friends of Mayo Dark-Skies to reduce light pollution where possible.

The International

Dark-Sky Association, a non-profit based in the US, has worked since 1988 to preserve and protect night skies from light pollution for current and future generations around the world.

SCARE YOURSELF SILLY

It’s that frighteningly spooky time of year, so while you’re in Mayo for the dark skies, be sure to stop at Westport House to enjoy ghosties and ghoulies at the annual Halloween Fest from Oct. 28 to Oct. 31.

Westport House’s Pirate Adventure Park will offer rides on the Pirate Swinging Ship, Log Flume Ride, Chair-O-Planes, and Helter Skelter! Then head up to the “haunted” main house for wicked tales during Scary Story Time. You can also carve a creepy pumpkin, visit the dark dungeons where the Pirate Queen Grace O’Malley once secured her prisoners, decorate ghoulish goblin cupcakes during the Spooky Spoons workshop, and learn how to dance like a zombie at the apocalyptic kiddie’s disco!

There are more Halloween events on tap in Ireland this month. See [2017.spiritsofmeath.com](#) for details on having “fun by day and fright by night” at the Spirits of Meath Halloween Festival, which runs from Oct. 7 to Nov. 5. Information is also available at [discover-boynavalley.ie](#).

Events will be held all across Co. Meath, which is part of the Boyne Valley. There will be haunted hills, eerie graveyards, friendly witches, terror houses, and more.

BRAM STOKER FESTIVAL

Whether you’re a visiting or resident vampire, the Bram Stoker Festival

2017 in Dublin from Oct. 27 to Oct. 30 promises to have something for everyone in its gothically inspired program of events.

According to the festival website, Abraham “Bram” Stoker was born Nov. 8, 1847, in Clontarf, Dublin, and educated at Trinity College from 1864-1870.

Stoker began writing novels while in London – the most famous of which is “Dracula,” published in 1897. The global importance of that novel is one of the many reasons why Dublin is internationally recognized as a UNESCO City of Literature.

As part of the Bram Stoker Festival, there will be a rare screening of the 1932 French-German horror movie “Vampyr” in the gothic surrounds of St. Patrick’s Cathedral on Oct. 27.

Thrill seekers will want to take in Turning Vampire Mixtape in Vicar Street on Oct. 29 for music, giggles, and ghouls with a night of songs and collaborations celebrating music from the best-known horror movies.

For details on this extensive program of theatre, visual arts, and music in haunting loca-

tions across the city that celebrate Dublin’s gothic and supernatural traditions, visit [bramstoker-festival.com](#)

There are Samhain (a pagan festival marking the end of harvesting and beginning of winter) and Halloween events all over Ireland so be sure to visit the tourist office wherever you visit for more information.

FALL FAIRS

One of my favorite things to do in the autumn is attend a country fair and there are many across Ireland at this time of year.

Probably the most famous is the Co. Galway’s Ballinasloe Horse Fair, Europe’s oldest and largest horse fair that dates back to the 18th century. It’s a fascinating slice of Irish and European life with much more than horses to see. The fair is Oct. 1-8 this year and the town totally has a carnival atmosphere with hawkers and vendors, food carts and equestrian events of all sorts.

We’ve also attended the popular Maam Cross fair in Connemara where farmers/breeders sell horses but also offer all

kinds of farm and domestic animals; we even saw a cage of ferrets for sale one year. The Maam Cross Fair is outside Peacocke’s Hotel and Complex on Tues., Oct. 31, and it’s great fun.

CONNEMARA EVENTS

The 3d annual Connemara Green Festival will be held in Letterfrack from Oct. 6 to Oct. 8. This festival celebrates Mother Nature, aims to raise awareness of Connemara’s unique ecology, and raises funds for biodiversity projects. See [connemaragreenfestival.ie](#) for more details.

“Conamara Sea Week” brings Letterfrack to life again over two weekends from Oct. 22-Oct. 30 with music workshops, art exhibits, concerts, talks, walks, children’s activities, sports events, and something for everyone in the family. For details, see [ceec.org](#)

DEALS

Now that summer has ended, look for air and land bargains online or call your favorite travel agent. And visit [Ireland.com](#) for details on what’s happening in Ireland while you’re there.



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The Irish Language

by Philip Mac AnGhabhann

It is time to review some rules of Irish pronunciation. The easiest are the common **vowel-sounds**, although about a third of the written vowels are “dummy”, silent. “Dummy” **vowels** are there to show you how to pronounce a preceding or following **consonant** or to prevent the mispronunciation of one.

For now let’s look at the simple **vowel** pronunciations. For starters recall that **vowels** are syllable centers and are separated into groups, traditionally called “Broad” and “Slender”. These terms from the shape of the lips as the old time observers saw them. “Broad” vowels are **a, o, u**; “slender” vowels are **e, i**.

“Broad **vowels**” are pronounced a /ah/, o /oh/ and u /oo/; “Slender vowels pronounced as e /eh/ and i /ee/.Strangely, the combination ao is pronounced as if it were i /ee/.

All of the **vowels** except the **ao** combination, can have an accent mark, **á,ó,ú** and **é,í**. This accent mark can have two functions. The first is to show the reader which vowel is to be pronounced. A good example is the Irish for “John” which is **Seán**. Without an accent mark it would be badly mispronounced as /sheen/, /sehn/, /sahn/ or /shan/. The **e** is there to tell the read that the **s-** is to be an /sh/ -- remember the “dummy” **vowels** tell you how to pronounce the consonants – and the **á** is the meaning carrying letter. Seán is then pronounced as if it were written /shahn/.

Another word which shows the same thing is the Irish word for “woman” – and “girls” are considered “women” earlier that they are in America. The word is **cailín**. The letter c- is a /k/ and the following –**a** are meant to be pronounced /kah/. The first **i** is there to tell you how to pronounce the **l**. Terminal vowels, **vowel** letters which come on the ends of words, are always pronounced as what linguists call a “schwa” – as in the American pronunciation of the -e in “the” as /uh/. However, if it has its “true” value then it will have an accent mark. In other words, If Irish places an accent mark on the terminal vowel it is to have its full, regular, pronunciation.

The second **í** in **cailín**, which has an accent mark, is sounded as well as the ending, -n to form the combination –**ín** /een/. The Irish word for “woman”, **cailín**, has been adopted by English speakers as the name “Colleen”.

Recall the Irish phrase “Broad to broad and slender to slender”. This means that if a **consonant** is in contact with either a “broad” or “slender” **vowel** it must be preceded or followed, bracketed, by a **vowel** letter of the same quality even if one of them is silent. In the spelling reform, Irish language specialists decided that if the consonant began with the letter a- then the following “broad” letter should be -o- and vice versa. This makes Irish spelling somewhat complicated.

For example, the word for “here” is /uh-neesh/, the particle a and the word /neesh/, never separated. Due to the spelling rule “here” in Irish is spelled **anois**. Scottish Gaelic, which has a similar phrase for “here”, simply spells it **a-nis**.

The pronunciation of a number of **consonants** depends, one, on their position in the word and, two, on the vowels with which they are in contact. You already have seen that s in contact with a “broad vowel” (a, o, u) is pronounced /s/. In contact with a “slender vowel” (**e, i**) it is /sh/. Examples are **Seán** and **anois**.

You will notice above that I said that the letter s in contact with e or i has a different pronunciation than an l in contact with an a, o, or u. But I didn’t tell you how. If an **l** is in contact with an **a, o, or u** the pronunciation is roughly the same as the **l-sound** in English “tell” where the **l-sound** is in the middle of the mouth. In contact with an **e or i** the **l-sound** is in the front of the mouth, tip of the tongue touching the back of the front teeth – or almost touching as in English “till”.

Standard American English speakers usually pronounce the **l-sounds** of “hill”, “hell” and “hull” differently. Try it yourself, slowly, and see where your tongue is. It is the first of these, **l** as in “hill”, that Irish uses when contact with **e or i**; the second, English “hell”, that the one that Irish uses for **l** in contact with **a, o, or u**. The **l-sound** of “hull” never appears in Irish.

There are a few **diphthongs**, combinations of **vowels** with a single pronunciation. These are always combinations of **u** and **i**, termed “weak” with a, e, or **o**, called “strong”. The way to remember **diphthongs** are that “You and I are weak”.

There are also “dummy” **consonants**, not pronounced, used as syllable dividers to keep similar sounding vowels from running together and as word endings. Sometimes consonant clusters are used to distinguish homonyms and at other times for “historical reasons”. We’ll deal with these later.

Meantime, see if you can tell which of these Irish words the correct vowel or vowels are sounded. Underline the vowel.

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. agamsa | 7. maith | 13. gasur |
| 2. gardaí | 8. inniu | 14. siopa |
| 3. bhfuil | 9. buachail | 15. gealach |
| 4. pionta | 10. raibh | 16. geata |
| 5. múinteoir | 11. leapa | 17. Sasana |
| 6. mada | 12. ceart | 18. anachain |

Answers:

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. agamsa | 7. maith | 13. gasur |
| 2. gardaí | 8. inniu | 14. siopa |
| 3. bhfuil | 9. buachail | 15. gealach |
| 4. pionta | 10. raibh | 16. geata |
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| 6. mada | 12. ceart | 18. anachain |



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Irish PM: Abortion vote expected next spring

Ireland's prime minister says the country will hold a referendum on lifting its constitutional ban on abortion in May or June.

Leo Varadkar told lawmakers on Sept. 26 that the government has agreed an "indicative timeline" for the vote on the Eighth Amendment to the Irish constitution.

The 1983 amendment commits authorities to defend equally the right to life of the mother and unborn child, giving largely Roman Catholic Ireland the strictest

Irish survey ex-pats who plan on moving back

The Irish government has commissioned a report on the various obstacles facing Irish people living in the U.S. who wish to return to live in Ireland. Those attempting a return to the motherland have reported regulation-based difficulties in regards to transferring insurance, obtaining driving licenses, and transporting pets.

The report seeks to collect information that will inform government policy and action, with the goal of making this transition back to Ireland as easy as possible

– DANIEL SHEEHAN

abortion ban in Europe. Abortion is legal only in rare cases where the mother's life is in danger.

Several thousand Irishwomen travel each year for abortions in neighboring Britain.

Ireland's parliament

still has to approve a bill authorizing the referendum. Varadkar also announced plans for referendums on issues including Ireland's blasphemy law and its restrictive divorce laws. (AP)

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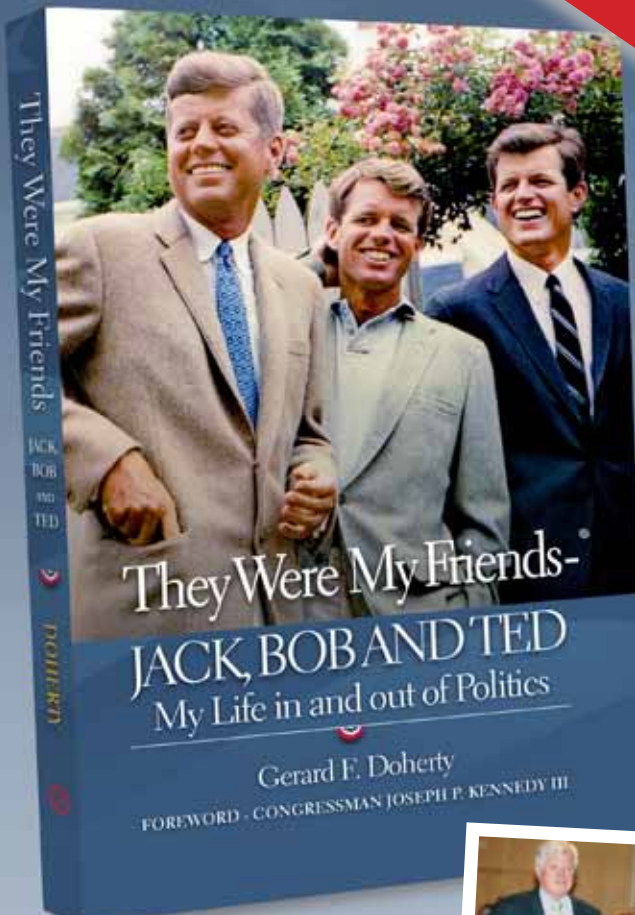
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