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Boston Irish Honors celebrate four who honor their heritage

The city's top hotelier, a pioneering leader in education, and a couple who have led the transformation of Boston's waterfront will be the honorees at next month's tenth annual Boston Irish Honors, the season's premier celebration of Irish-American achievement in Massachusetts.

The luncheon, convened by the *Boston Irish Reporter*, will see hundreds of guests gathered at Seaport Boston Hotel on Fri., Oct. 18.

James M. Carmody, the vice president and general manager of Seaport Hotel & Seaport World Trade Center, will be honored for his distinguished career in hospitality and for his leadership in philanthropy. Carmody, who is the current chair of the Greater Boston Convention and Visitors Bureau, serves on the board of Cathedral High School.

Grace Cotter Regan is the first woman to lead Boston College High School and one of the nation's most highly regarded leaders in Catholic education. She previously served as head of school at St. Mary's High School in Lynn and as provincial assistant and executive director of advancement for the New England Province of Jesuits.

The daughter of the late legendary BC High football coach, Jim Cotter '55, she holds master's degrees in pastoral ministry, student affairs, and higher education administration from Boston College and the University of Vermont.

John and Kathleen Drew and their family have been on the vanguard of transforming Boston's waterfront and skyline for more than four decades through the Drew Company, which created the World Trade Center Boston and the Seaport Hotel. John and Kathy have taken on leadership roles in their ancestral home as well, developing property in Dublin and as a member of the American Ireland Fund.

The 35-member luncheon committee is chaired by Ed Forry, founder of the *Boston Irish Reporter* and BostonIrish.com. Serving as honorary chairs are US Sen. Edward Markey and Boston Mayor Martin J. 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 10th annual Boston Irish Honors luncheon will take place on Fri., Oct. 18, at 11:45 a.m. at the Seaport Hotel/Boston World Trade Center. For tickets, call 617-204-4221 or email bostonirish@conventures.com.



Introducing the Irish naval offshore Patrol Vessel L.É. Samuel Beckett #P61, which will be visiting Boston this month. Public visiting hours will be 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Charlestown Navy Yard on Fri., Oct. 4, and Saturday, Oct. 5. Plans are being made for a wreath-laying ceremony at the Deer Island Irish Memorial as the ship passes and leaves Boston Harbor on Oct. 7.

Johnson says Brexit proposal on tap; Varadkar wants 'guarantees' honored

By JILL LAWLESS
ASSOCIATED PRESS

MANCHESTER, England — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced on Oct. 1, that Britain will make firm proposals for a new divorce deal with the European Union within days, saying "this is the moment when the rubber hits the road." He has been insisting that Britain will leave the EU on the scheduled Oct. 31 date with or without a deal.

Leaders of the 28-nation EU are growing impatient with the UK's failure to



Irish PM Leo Varadkar and British PM Boris Johnson greet the press after their meeting in Dublin on Sept. 9.

set out detailed plans for maintaining an open

border between the UK's Northern Ireland and EU

member Ireland — the key sticking point to a deal. An open border underpins both the local economy and Northern Ireland's peace process.

In the week before his latest announcement, Johnson met up with Leo Varadkar, the Irish prime minister, at the UN General Assembly meetings in New York for some talk about Brexit.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, the Taoiseach, who will be in Boston on Oct. 16 to receive a Solas Award from the Irish International (Continued on page 19)

'From the Floor' tracks moods, feelings that go into Irish dance

By SEAN SMITH
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

A spur-of-the-moment creative impulse by two Greater Boston residents during a Thanksgiving sojourn has now, nearly four years later, culminated in a unique video project that offers a new perspective on traditional Irish dance.

"From the Floor" is the brainchild of Jackie O'Riley and Rebecca McGowan, performers and teachers who specialize in sean-nós and other older, "low-to-the-ground" styles of Irish dance, marked by improvisational stepping and footwork.

O'Riley is an original member of the touring sean-nós dance show Atlantic Steps who performed at the Abbey

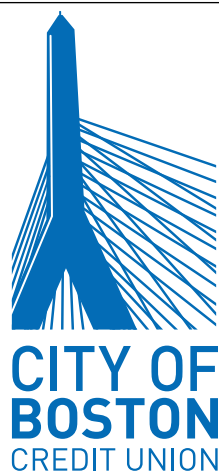
Theatre in Dublin as part of "The Sound of Ireland" production. She also runs a non-competitive Irish dance program for children and was a co-recipient of a 2017 Boston Foundation grant for choreographers. McGowan, co-founder of the contemporary step dance company Rising Step, has performed at the Kennedy Center, in WGBH's "A Christmas Celtic Sojourn," and at numerous festivals in the Boston and Washington, DC, areas. She has also taught at the Catskills Irish Arts Week, Pinewoods Camp, and CCE MAD Week, among other places.

McGowan and O'Riley describe "From the Floor" as a "visual album" of Irish music and dance: six separate but as-

(Continued on page 10)



A scene from the video "From the Floor," with (L-R) Jackie O'Riley, Rebecca McGowan and Chris Stevens.



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HAPPENING OCTOBER 2019

Thurs., Oct. 3 – The Irish Network (IN Boston) and the Boston Public Library present an evening with Jack Cashman, author of “An Irish Immigrant Story.” The Central Library, 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Fri., Oct. 4 –The Irish Network in Boston invite members to join them aboard the “L. E. Samuel Beckett” while it is docked at Pier 1, Charlestown (behind the USS Constitution) from 6.30 p.m. to 8 p.m. RSVP irish-networkboston@gmail.com.

Sat., Oct. 5 –The Irish Music club of Greater Boston has its monthly dance at the Viking Club, 410 Quincy Ave., Braintree. Music by the Andy Healy band from 7-11 p.m.

• The Irish Cultural Centre has country and western star T. R. Dallas at 7.30 pm for your dancing pleasure. Tickets are \$20; members \$15. Call 781-821-8291.

Sun., Oct. 6 – Mass at the Irish Cultural Centre. 11 a.m.

• The Irish Social Club’s Sunday evening dance will be held from 7 to 10 p.m. The Noel Henry Irish Show band will entertain.

Mon., Oct. 7 – The Sligo Association will have its monthly meeting at Waterford’s in Dedham at 8 p.m. All are welcome.

Thurs., Oct. 10 – IIIC – A 30th birthday celebration of the Solas Awards at 6p.m. at the Boston Harbor Hotel. The Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, will receive the “Leadership Award”. Information: mmiller@iiicenter.org.

• The Irish Cultural Centre will present Tara O’Grady at 7.30 p.m.

Fri., Oct. 11 – The Irish Social club features a comedy evening with Don Gavin & Friends. Admission is \$25.

Sat., Oct. 12 – The Irish Cultural Centre will present the Irish play “Boicini Bhothar, Kilburn” at 7.30 p.m. and again on Sunday the 13th at 2 p.m.

• The Knights and Ladies of St. Finbarr - Cork Club will celebrate their 115th anniversary with a dance at the Malden Irish American Club, 177 West St., Malden. Presentations will be made to Man and Woman of the year. Music by “Erin’s Melody.” Complimentary coffee, tea and deli-

cious Irish baked goods and Irish trifle. Donation is \$10. Cash bar. For information call President Mary at 978-664-4652.

Sun., Oct. 13 – Irish Social Club’s weekly dance will be held from 7 to 10 p.m., with John Connors.

Fri., Oct. 18 – The Boston Irish Reporter’s “Irish Honors” luncheon will be held at 11.30 a.m. at the Seaport Hotel. This year’s honorees are Grace Cotter Regan, James M. Carmody, and John Drew & Family. For information on the luncheon please call 617-436-1222, Ext. 11.

• St. Theresa’s Parish’s annual dance. Info: call 617- 325-1300.

Sat., Oct. 19– Norwood Irish Music Club holds its monthly dance at the Knights of Columbus Hall on Nichols Street in Norwood at 7 p.m. Music by Kathy and the Irish Americans.

• The Irish Cultural Centre will hold the Boston Beer Festival. Music all day, plus a writer’s workshop. Admission is \$15. Free event for members.

Sun., Oct. 20 – The Irish Social club features Erin’s Melody at its Sunday evening dance. 7 to 10 p.m.

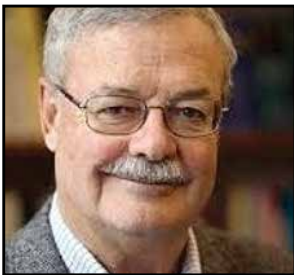
Sat., Oct. 26 – The North Shore Irish Association will hold its dance at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 23 West Foster Street in Melrose. Erin’s Melody will entertain from 7 to 11 p.m.

Sun., Oct. 27 – The Irish Social club will have Mossie for its Sunday evening dance. 7 to 10 p.m.

Tues., Oct. 29 – Join the Boston chapter of the UCD Alumni at the Boston Harbor Distillery for a tour and tasting. email: globealumni@ucd.ie.

Wed., Oct. 30 – The Irish Social Club will host the City of Boston’s Halloween Party for senior citizens sponsored by Mayor Marty Walsh.

Our sincere thanks the Boston Irish reporter, station WROL, and WUNR for keeping the Irish Tradition alive and well in the Boston area. “Happening” is a monthly list of functions by Irish Associations in the Boston area prepared by the Knights & Ladies of St. Finbarr - Cork Club. The items listed are accurate to the best of our knowledge. They are always subject to change.



Charles L. Donahue Jr



Michael Oliver



Anita P. Sharma

Charitable Irish Society honors three with its Silver Key Award, citing ‘Good Will Doing Service’

The Charitable Irish Society held its annual Silver Key Awards event last month at the Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel in Boston. As in the past, this year’s honorees – Charles L. Donahue, Jr., Mike Oliver, and Anita Sharma – come from the corporate and grass roots community sectors and have shown exceptional leadership in building co-operative links between civic, religious, and cultural organizations that welcome and serve the varied and immediate needs of the immigrant community.

• Charles Donahue has had a long career in health care planning, with particular emphasis on community based care and expansion of health care to all. He has been a loyal supporter of Irish philanthropic organizations such as the Irish American Partnership and the Boston Irish Business Association.

• For more than two decades, Mike Oliver has served the immigrant communities in Dorchester, Cambridge, and Boston. As director of the St. Mark’s Community Educational Program, he has organized English language classes and citizen preparation classes for adult immigrants and, in cooperation with Boston Cares, he has expanded that program greatly by training volunteers to

conduct citizenship classes at the Boston Public Library and its seven branches as well as in Somerville and Newton.

• Anita Sharma is the executive director of the PAIR (Political Asylum/ Immigration Representation) Project, which provides legal representation to asylum seekers, and matches pro bono attorneys with those in need of legal advice. She works closely with the Boston Bar Association’s Immigrant Services Section. She was recently honored as a Bar Foundation Fellow in recognition of her exemplary leadership in Greater Boston’s civic society. According to the Society, the honorees for 2019 “are the living embodiment of the society’s historic motto of “With Good Will Doing Service” and thereby carry on the tradition of generations of Boston’s Irish Diaspora to assist those immigrants who aspire to call Boston their home.”

Since 1997, this event has served as the Society’s chief fundraiser, enabling it to fulfill its historic core mission of providing aid and assistance to newly arrived Irish immigrants, and more recently some from other countries, as they face the multiple challenges of adjusting to and assimilating into a new city and country.

Presenting an evening of prose and poetry from across the sea

The Charitable Irish Society will be joined by the Scots’ Charitable Society of Boston and the British Society in co-sponsoring an informal evening of readings and recitations of poetry and prose passages from the works of the many great poets and writers from Ireland, Scotland and England.

This special cultural evening is planned for Fri., Oct. 25 – St. Crispin’s Day – at the Boston Harbor Hotel from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Anyone wishing to share a favorite poem or prose passage is invited to participate. Professors and students from area colleges and universities are especially invited to attend.

Special invitations have been extended to Ireland Consul General Laoise Moore; British Consul General Harriet Cross, British Vice Consul Jacqueline Greenlaw and Brian O’Donovan of WGBH.

Tickets are \$35 per person which includes hor d’oeuvres, crackers, cheese, fruit, wine, beer, and other refreshments, and an opportunity to share a love for poetry and literature with friends and new acquaintances. A special discounted rate of \$5 is available for college students who present an ID.

To register, visit charitableirishsociety.org/event-3520604/Registration.



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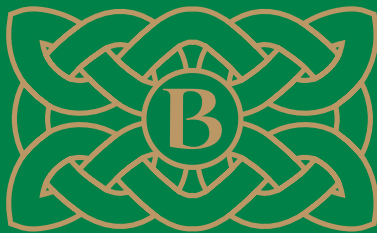
* cookies, cakes and pies!!

* lunch sandwiches and paninis!

Greenhills Bakery, 780 Adams Street, Dorchester, MA 02124 (617) 825-8187



The Irish American Partnership hosted a roundtable discussion at the Boston Harbor Hotel on Sept. 10 with Dr. Andrew McCormick, Director General of International Relations at the Northern Ireland Executive. Pictured, from left: Andrew Elliott, Director of the Northern Ireland Bureau, Dr. McCormick, Clodagh Boyle, VP of Development with the Irish American Partnership, British Consul General to New England Harriet Cross, Mary Sugrue, CEO of the Irish American Partnership, and Irish Consul General Laoise Moore.



Boston Irish HONORS

10TH ANNUAL LUNCHEON

Friday, October 18, 2019
Seaport Boston Hotel
Boston, Massachusetts

2019 Boston Irish Honorees



James M. Carmody



John Drew and Family



Grace Cotter Regan

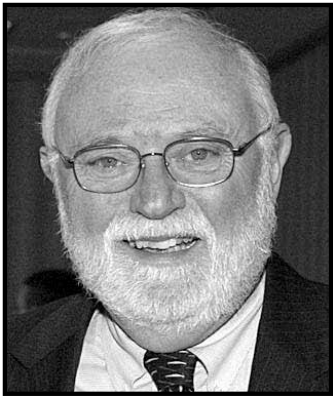
Marking a special anniversary of this celebratory luncheon, **Boston Irish Honors** recognizes the leadership and accomplishments of individuals and families of Irish descent who exemplify the very best of our values, legacies, and traditions.

For reservations, email BostonIrish@conventures.com or call 617-204-4221
Boston Irish Honors c/o Conventures, Inc.
88 Black Falcon Avenue, Suite 202 Boston, MA 02210

A quiet autumn at Fenway Park

By Ed Forry

The 2019 Red Sox season came to an unsatisfactory and unhappy end last month. Unlike last year, when the team won 108 games and swept into the playoffs for a historic World Series championship, this year the season started off poorly, and the team slogged through the season, finishing barely above the .500 mark. Sad to say, there will be no more baseball games at Fenway Park until next spring.



Also unlike last year, there will no Irish hurling games at Fenway Park in 2019. After two remarkable fall events in recent years at the old ballyard on Jersey Street, the Gaelic Players exhibition hurling matches have been moved to New York City this year. The GPA “Super 11s Hurling Classic” will be played in Queens in November at Citi Field, home of the New York Mets, on the weekend after Veterans Day.

In a message to local supporters, the Boston organizers explained, “This year, on the back of our success in Boston, our partners at Fenway Sports Management and the GAA will join Boston Friends of the Gaelic Players in bringing the 2019 GPA Super 11s Hurling Classic to New York at Citi Field on Sat., Nov 16.

“A total of 35,000 people has now seen Super 11s Hurling live. If this season’s thrill a minute, All Ireland Hurling Championship is anything to go by, then this year’s no holds barred Super 11s Hurling Classic, played to a packed stadium, promises to be spectacular in every way.

‘In this year’s tournament, Limerick will defend its Super 11s title and Players Champions Cup against 2019 All-Ireland Champions Tipperary, 2019 All-Ireland Runners Up Kilkenny, and hurling powerhouse Wexford. For those wondering about Super 11s, it is a modified version of hurling that was devised by the GPA and developed by the GPA and the GAA in collaboration. Played 11 a side and 20 minutes per half, it is an exciting, explosive game with non-stop action.”

Although there will be no matches at Fenway this year, the Boston Friends group will continue to support the series. This year, in association with the GPA Super 11’s Hurling Classic, the Friends will host a CEO Champions Luncheon at Fenway Park on Fri., Nov. 8 at noon at the ballyard’s State Street Pavilion.

“Leading CEOs and senior executives from the world of business and sport will be on hand to discuss topics of common interest, share insights, and make great connections,” the Friends group said. Keynote speaker will be Sam Kennedy, president and CEO of the Boston Red Sox and Fenway Sports Management. Featured guests will include All Ireland champion players.

The Boston committee making the plans include Aidan Browne, chair; Executive Committee members Brian O’Donovan, Jon Cronin, Walter Palmer, Ciaran Hynes, Brian Sugrue, Hon. Consul General Laoise Moore, and Sean Pairceir, 2017 Advocate. Other members include Dave Greaney, Trevor Parsons, David Doyle, Bill Forry, Declan Mehigan, Frank Gillespie, Gary Kerr, Joe Shea, Laura Cuddihy, Lisa McKelvey, Mary Sugrue, Michael Feighery, Padraig Moloney, Pam McDermott, Patrick Sarkis, Sam Browne, Sean Moynihan, Tom O’Brien, Trevor McGill, Valerie Schwab, Dee O’Callaghan, Marian Ward-Lent, Spencer Shagoury, Steve Connelly, Joe Dunne, and Clio Barr.

Sponsorship levels from \$2,500 to \$25,000 are available, with individual tickets at \$250 Tickets and sponsorship details are available online at irishap.org, or contact Lucia Guzikowski 617-723-2707, lucia@irishap.org, or for more information, contact Clio Barr 617-210-6910, cbarr@sullivanlaw.com

About my big brother Jim

By Dick Flavin

My brother Jim and I were Irish twins, born less than a year apart. He arrived on Dec. 9, 1935 and I showed up the following December, on the 7th. We were the middle two of four siblings; our sisters Marguerite and Marilyn were the bookends that kept us propped up and in line.

As the older brother, Jim was bigger, stronger, and – thankfully – more forgiving than I. Being the little brother, I viewed it as my mission to taunt and pester him at every opportunity, but he always treated me with patience and understanding - except on those occasions when I overstepped the bounds of common decency, such as by stealing a piece of candy that was rightfully his. When I did incite his rage, I resorted to the one physical characteristic at which I excelled; I ran. I knew that if I could avoid his grasp for just a few minutes he would cool down, his forgiving nature would come to the fore, and I would live to pester him another day.

Back then we called him Jimmie, spelled with an “ie” at the end, like Jimmie Foxx, the old ballplayer. I longed for the day when we both would reach full growth and I would be his equal in size and strength. But when that day finally came, he remained, and would be forever more, bigger, stronger, and more forgiving.

We both served as altar boys at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church in Quincy, Mass., but he was never a goody-two-shoes kid, not a holier-than-thou type. In fact he was capable of mischief; in one case at least, serious mischief. One Saturday morning he and another kid from the neighborhood went behind Merrymount School, where we all attended grammar school, gathered up some stones, and proceeded to break every window in the back of the school. The damage could not be seen from the street, so the kids thought they were safe from detection. They failed to calculate, though, that there was a big hill abutting the rear of the school property, and on that hill were several houses. When their occupants heard glass shattering, they looked out of their windows and were able make positive identifications of the guilty parties.

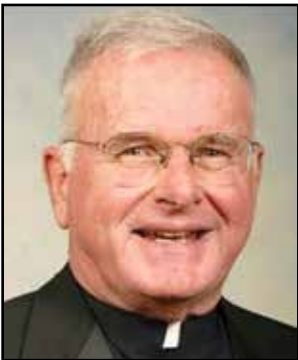
Jimmie paid a steep price for that transgression and Jim Sr. paid a steep price for the replacement of all those shattered window panes.

As he progressed through his high school years, Jim heard the calling for a vocation in the priesthood; he was interested in a missionary order. The calling was not something that he talked about much, but the word got around and soon priests from various orders started to show up at the house. They were like college football coaches on recruiting missions trying to sell their institutions to a talented quarterback.

The Oblates of Mary Immaculate gained the inside track, though, and after spending a year at Providence College to be sure of his decision, he was off to the seminary in September of 1955. Along the way earned a Doctor of Ministry degree. He was ordained a priest on May 31, 1963.

He spent 40 years of his priesthood serving in parish ministries in places as far-flung as Ashville, North Carolina, Mullins, West Virginia, Grand Rapids, Michigan, and several postings in and around the third world sections of Miami, Florida. We siblings were always aware of where he was and of the work he was doing to spread the word of God and the gift of his Catholic faith but we never witnessed it first-hand because he was always hundreds of miles away.

Then, on the 40th anniversary of his ordination, his parishoners at Christ the King Church in Miami honored him and we all went there for the occasion. It was eye-opening to see the ease with which he moved in the largely Haitian culture of the parish – so different from the Irish Catholic ways of his boyhood parish life – and to see the genuine affection that his parishoners had for him, and he for them.



Rev. James Flavin, OMI

Eventually his work took him back to Massachusetts, first as the director of Saint Joseph the Worker Shrine in Lowell, and then as superior of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Residence in Tewksbury, where he later became a satisfied customer in his retirement.

He used what spare time he had creatively and productively. As a young priest he became interested in aviation, took flying lessons, and was for the rest of his days an active pilot. He was an avid skier, an activity he pursued until into his eighties. A gifted writer, he authored two books on his experiences as a priest and on his observations of the people and the world around him. He was an enthusiastic gardener, and in the spring he tapped sugar maples on the Oblate property in Tewksbury, boiled down the sap, and made maple syrup that he distributed as gifts to friends and relatives. He even, late in life, learned to ride a unicycle.

All of which is not to say that his life was free from care and strife. He faced his share of it, including seeing his own reputation and the reputation of every good priest sullied by the sexual abuse scandals of the clergy. But when the storms came into his life, no matter how high the winds, how torrential the rains, or how choppy and dangerous the seas, he always kept his hand firmly on the tiller of the small boat he had chosen to take him on his mission in life. He stayed on course. He kept the faith.

This past Labor Day at lunch he seemed to be his usual good-natured self, but no one at the Oblates residence in Tewksbury remembers seeing him later in the day. Perhaps not feeling well, he had gone to his room. Sometime after midnight he called the nurse in distress and was rushed to Lowell General Hospital. It was too late. In the predawn hours of Sept. 3, he was pronounced dead. He was 83.

He has sailed his small boat safely into port, disembarked, and stepped ashore on the other side. He’s no longer with us in a physical sense, but all those of us who loved him and whose lives he touched need do is close our eyes for moment, and there he is and will always be – big, strong, forgiving, and faithful to his mission to the end.

We love you, Jimmie.

Dick Flavin is the poet laureate and senior ambassador of the Boston Red Sox and voice of Fenway Park, serving as public address announcer for Red Sox day games. A nationally known speaker, his television commentaries have won seven New England Emmy Awards. He is a member of the Massachusetts Broadcasters Hall of Fame.

Aside to Gen. Mattis: It’s not the time to withhold your judgment of Donald Trump

By James W. Dolan
Reporter Columnist

Few in the nation are admired as much as James Mattis, former Marine Corps general and US defense secretary. In many respects, he represents the best of us: dedicated, principled, loyal, and smart. He, along with another distinguished Marine and former assistant secretary of defense, Bing West, who is originally from Dorchester, recently wrote a book about leadership titled “Call Sign Chaos.”

Off the Bench

In it, Mattis describes the qualities he says a leader must have. While acknowledging that he resigned because he disagreed with some administration defense policies, he does not comment on the character and capabilities of President Trump, his former boss. While he views his silence as a duty, it also serves as a refuge, a way to avoid controversy

Is this a case of misplaced loyalty? Does he have a higher duty to express either his support for the commander-in-chief or his concern for the nation under Trump’s direction? Particularly when it’s obvious the president demonstrates none of the leadership qualities Mattis describes at great length in the book.

Why define leadership if you are unable or unwilling to apply that definition to a person you worked for? Is leadership an abstraction? Is it somehow disloyal or disrespectful to define leadership and measure someone to whom you reported by those standards? I believe it is important by way of illustration to cite examples of people who have or have not displayed those qualities.

Mattis apparently prefers to do it by indirection. Instead of coming right out and saying it, he criticizes the president by enumerating the qualities necessary for sound leadership, not just in the military but

anywhere. He then lets the reader draw what, in the president’s case, is the obvious conclusion. It’s a little like reciting the Beatitudes and then declining to say whether or not the president is or is not in compliance.

The general certainly expected his superiors in the Marine Corps to demonstrate character and competence. He also would have rigorously demanded that officers serving under him comply with those leadership tenets he so earnestly practiced himself. During his book tour, he declines all efforts to have him comment on the president’s leadership despite his unique position to evaluate the commander-in-chief. Now is not the time to withhold judgment.

Mattis has said his silence is not eternal and that there may occur circumstances when he will feel compelled to speak out. I suggest those circumstances already exist and have for a while. Leadership can be uncomfortable. It sometimes requires forthright candor when the nation is at risk and silence can be seen as, if not approval, at least acceptance. When does duty respond to a higher calling?

Some suggest Mattis’s reticence may be related to his recent return to the board of General Dynamics, the nation’s fifth largest defense contractor. It has long been a common practice for former defense officials and retired high ranking military officers to work in the defense industry. Another even more famous general, former president Dwight Eisenhower, warned us over 50 years ago of the “grave implications” of the nation’s military-industrial complex, a formidable union of the arms industry and the military that breeds conflicts of interest and lack of oversight. It also can make those involved reluctant to openly criticize powerful government officials.

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

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Point of View

William Barr has earned his niche in the Hall of Shame

As impeachment looms, Trump turns to his trusty phalanx of Irish Americans for cover

By PETER F. STEVENS
BIR STAFF

Political predictions are all too often a fool's errand. A month or two ago in this space, I asserted that President Trump would never be impeached, thinking that Democratic spinelessness and GOP fealty to, and fear of, the president would allow the administration of Donald Trump to profess his successful mantra to his cowed or irate foes: What are *you* — meaning Democratic leaders and many in the media — going to do about it?

Up until now, the Dems' answer has always been to scream and then hold their breath until they turn blue. Always, just as Trump counted on, the final response was a meek “nothing.”

That was until the president's hubris, narcissism, and belief that he is above any law or Constitutional edict forced the reluctant speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, to act. Donald J. Trump will be impeached by the Democratic-controlled House, and he has no one to blame but himself and the words that came out of his own autocratic-driven mouth during his “perfect” call with the new Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelensky. Even the president's lock-step defenders such as House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy have offered stammering, stumbling, preposterous denials that Donald Trump's own words are the issue. Instead, they say, the real problem is Joe and Hunter Biden and that it is Trump who is ferreting out corruption.

In truth, it is Trump and his legions of corrupt followers who have crossed the Rubicon/Potomac. The summary — not an actual transcript, as so many partisans and lazy media “experts” claim — of Trump's strong-arming of Zelensky reads as if had been lifted from the scripts of “The Godfather” and “Goodfellas.” The president, having ordered Mick Mulvaney, his Irish-American lackey and acting chief of staff, to hold back approved military aid to the Ukraine and to lie to Congress about the ploy, then he solicited “a favor” from Zelensky to dig up dirt on Biden, his possible rival in the 2020 presidential election. In short, the president violated his oath of office by using the power of that office in a scantily coded extortion scheme with international trappings.

Doubling and tripling down, the president has begun to threaten the “whistleblower” who brought his alleged violations of the presidential oath to light, denouncing the person as a “spy” or a traitor worthy of how “we used to” deal with them, i.e., execution. No one should have any illusions about what the president and his sycophants will do in an attempt to out the



William Barr, the Hall's new entry

whistleblower and bludgeon him into silence out of fear for personal and family safety.

For all that, who will Donald Trump employ to extricate himself from his self-imposed mess? The answer, in large measure, is his Irish-American underlings including Mulvaney, McCarthy, and, for goodness sake, William Barr, the US attorney general.

It's time to place Barr's name in the forefront of Trump's Irish-American Hall of Shame. This personal presidential counsel masquerading as the nation's attorney general is the son of Mary Margaret Ahern (married name Barr) whose ancestry is that of the old sod. Now, her son is truly Trump's “Roy Cohn,” laboring daily to buttress Trump's belief that a president stands above the law and the Constitution and that nothing he or she does can even be investigated.

Barr's maternal antecedents hailed from a land where the Crown, Westminster, and an Anglo-Irish ascendancy trampled those who dared raise their voices against the powerful. Every day, Barr, McCarthy, and Mulvaney aid and abet a man who is stomping on laws and constitutional, legal, financial, cultural, racial, religious, political, and moral norms. Every day, that sorry Irish-American troika sneers at the words of Daniel O'Connell, “The Liberator,” one of the greatest human-rights leaders Ireland has ever produced:

“Nothing is politically right which is morally wrong.”

For Donald Trump and his Irish-American enablers, facts pose the gravest threat to their corruption and the offices they hold so poorly. In 1770, just a few years before the British colonists in North America proclaimed their independence from King George III, a Massachusetts attorney named John Adams risked his reputation and his personal safety to defend the British soldiers charged with murder in the infamous Boston Massacre. At a pivotal juncture of the trial, he said: “I will enlarge no more on the evidence, but submit it to you, gentleman [that] facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passions, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence...”

The fact is that Donald Trump did pressure the Ukrainian president to unearth “corruption”—fabricated or not—so he could hang onto the White House next year. The fact is that Trump violated his oath and perhaps the law. Out of his own mouth, he spilled the words that will ensure his impeachment. How do we know that? We know, because the president himself released the excerpts of that explosive phone call. And once again, he said to his opponents: What are *you* going to do about it? This time, the answer was — an impeachment inquiry. He never expected that.

The president's acolytes often level the term “Trump Derangement Syndrome” against his critics. For sure, some of those critics truly are blinded by hatred of Donald Trump and anything he says or does. There is, however, another strain of Trump Derangement Syndrome, the one that has infected followers who believe that everything he does can be justified — politically and morally. In the coming months, the nation will learn whether a president impeached by the opposing party's House but “excused” by *his* Senate can win reelection.

As is the case with Presidents Andrew Johnson and Bill Clinton (Nixon resigned before impeachment), the scarlet letter of “I” for impeached could forever stain Donald Trump's reputation. Another “I” should similarly sully the records and sorry legacies of Mick Mulvaney, Kevin McCarthy, and William Barr—a crimson “I” denoting powerful Irish-Americans who placed a president above their country and their families' heritages.

Perhaps Daniel O'Connell's admonition that morality must supersede politics still has some meaning even in a nation and a world as fractured as ours. The looming impeachment proceedings and the 2020 election will reveal the answer to that timeless question.

BIR History

Recalling the deadly tempest off Cohasset in 1849

170 years ago, tragedy engulfed two coffin ships; and the local citizens braved the waves to help

By PETER F. STEVENS
BIR STAFF

On Memorial Day of this year, a throng of some 600 people gathered at the dedication of a permanent memorial on Deer Island to Irish emigrants who had fled the Great Hunger — *An Gorta Mor* — but perished of disease and malnutrition at the island's quarantine station. It is fitting to remember those ill-fated sons and daughter of the “old sod,” and it is equally fitting to recall the tragedy that struck two Boston-bound “coffin ships” 170 years ago this month.

The heartbreaking saga of how catastrophe engulfed desperate Irish immigrants off the Massachusetts shore — even as disaster hit, common humanity trumped nativist prejudice for an all-too-brief moment. — especially resonates in 2019, as America frays along political, nativist, racial, ethnic, and religious seams that mirror those of 1849.

Henry David Thoreau had never seen anything like it. On October 9, 1849, as he wandered the shore at Cohasset, he gaped at the wreckage 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 60 emigrant ships, or aptly named “coffin ships,” lost at sea or smashed upon crags off America's eastern coast.

As Thoreau surveyed the scene, he poured into his notebook a torrent of words that captured 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.’”

Just two days earlier, the brig, five weeks out of Galway Bay had been hurled by a gale onto the jagged rocks of Grampus Ledge. A second “coffin ship,” the Kathleen, grounded safely nearby on a sand bar.

As 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,” Elizabeth Lothrop wrote, 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, the rowers were unaware that numbers of people may yet have been desperately clinging to the remains of the St. John. 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 perished in the towering waves. Over the next few days, 45 bodies washed ashore, and the townspeople buried them in a common grave. An exact total was never possible to ascertain. 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. Sweeney, his wife, and their nine children had boarded the vessel in hopes of a new and better life in Boston. As the brig broke apart on the rocks, Patrick could do nothing as his wife and eight of their children vanished in the frothing waves. Clutching his three-year-old daughter, Agnes, he jumped into the water and swam frantically towards the longboat. A massive wave broke across father and daughter. They, too disappeared, their bodies never found.

Adding additional agony to the fate of the Sweeneys and so many of their fellow immigrants 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 pieces, 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.”

Soon enough, the matter of a proper ceremony for the Catholic dead was raised. As the Ancient Order of Hibernians records note: “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 Order of Hibernians raised a 19-foot Celtic cross near the victims' common cemetery. 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.

Many of the locals who had witnessed the tragedy and its aftermath could not shake the images. Elizabeth Lothrop would write that “such a set of half-drowned, half-naked...frightened creatures [survivors] my eyes never beheld. . . . This horrible shipwreck and the continual picking up of dead bodies on our beach has so excited my mind that I . . . shall never get over it.”

Today, in 2018, all too many Irish Americans have forgotten or simply do not care about their families' immigrant ancestors. They were once “the other,” the targets of nativist rage. Still, perhaps there is some historical hope in that long-ago tragedy when Yankee Protestants rowed into the gale, risking their lives to aid desperate, terrified immigrants floundering within sight of America's “Golden Door.”

On the 170th anniversary of the tragedy, the Irish men, women, and children who perished in the tempest off Cohasset deserve the same remembrance and reflection as their kindred immigrants who never made it off Deer Island.



IRISH INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRANT CENTER

An agency accredited by US Department of Justice

One State Street, 8th Floor, Boston, MA 02109 (617) 542-7654 Fax (617) 542-7655
Website: iiicenter.org Email: immigration@iiicenter.org

Faye Regan: Learning how to juggle in America

This year, Faye Regan chose to live in Boston as a part of the J-1 IWT program, accepting multiple challenges as she embarked on this adventure. She also found herself juggling multiple tasks once the visa application process began, such as finding an internship and adapting to a new culture. She has been learning to be both focused and pragmatic.

In handling the most difficult part of the J-1 experience, which according to many is finding an internship, Faye discovered the value of networking. Her advice for future exchange visitors on the same program is “try to meet up with someone in your field who did a similar course over here on the J-1 who can tell you how they found their position. See if they can look at your CV to see if there is anything that can make it more applicable to your field.” Ultimately, Faye was able to secure an internship here in Boston that will further her career, a biology research internship at Jnana Therapeutics.

Already reflecting back on the experience, Faye claims that “having American experience is a real competitive advantage. It shows you are adaptable but also that you can work



Faye Regan enjoying a laugh while focusing on her next steps.

hard, as there’s a strong work ethic here. Boston is home to incredibly innova-

tive science and I’ve gotten exposure to this in a way I could never at home.” Having been successful in this program, Faye will surely be prepared for whatever comes next.

IIIC attends South Boston Street Festival – The IIIC’s Irish Outreach Coordinator & Recruitment Manager, Ann Marie Byrne, attended the South Boston Street Festival on Sat., Sept. 14th. Ann Marie met many new friends and connected with old friends as well while spreading the word about our services and community. It was particularly wonderful to see many Irish families enjoying the event and to have the chance to tell them more about our Center and what is happening this fall. As always, the kids coloring competition was a big hit. Thank you to the organizers of the South Boston Street Festival for another fantastic year.

Recovery Month & Suicide Prevention Month – Every September we mark both Recovery Month and Suicide Prevention Month, two life-saving themes and critical wellness issues. Everyone has been either directly, or indirectly affected by suicide loss, a struggle with self-harm, the pain of substance use and the joy of recovery. The Wellness Services team at the IIIC is here to assist you and your families throughout the year with direct care, help, and resources. We celebrate this year’s recovery-month theme “Together we are stronger” and the critical message for 2019, the suicide prevention theme “Be The One To Ask.” As social workers we know that communities create change and that we all have a role to play in looking out for one another. We can help you have the difficult conversations, create change and find the hope. Please be in touch for any free and confidential questions you may have, or support you may need.

Rachel Reisman, LICSW; rreisman@iiicenter.org; 617-542-7654 Ext. 14

FB page: Irish Outreach & Wellness Services; [samsha.gov](https://www.facebook.com/samsha.gov); Be The1ToAsk.

IIIC marks 30 years at Solas Awards gala

Oct. 10, Boston Harbor Hotel

Seen as Boston’s Welcome Center to all newcomers, the Irish International Immigrant Center is celebrating 30 years of educating, advocating and caring for families coming to Boston from Ireland and around the world. The IIIC is proud to announce this year’s Solas Awards honorees: Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey, Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar, and Tony Rodriguez, a Boston Public Schools high school senior.

This year’s special event

on Oct. 10 will be a reception style evening that includes live music, food and drink from the Boston Harbor Hotel’s celebrated menu, and a standing program highlighting the stories of hope facilitated by our community’s support. Join us as we mark the occasion at our annual Solas Awards, and celebrate with the friends and partners who have made our journey possible! Visit iiicenter.org or contact Megan Miller at mmiller@iiicenter.org to learn more.

Since her election as the state’s attorney general, **Maura Healey** has led

efforts to protect immigrant communities, stop prejudiced efforts to add a citizenship question to the 2020 census, and end the family separation policy at our southern border. In 2017, **Leo Varadkar** was elected leader of Fine Gael and then appointed taoiseach, becoming the nation’s first openly gay head of government. During his years in office, Varadkar has proved a strong leader of inclusive Irish politics. **Tony Rodriguez**, a Boston high school senior, will now be able to pursue his dream of going to college and going into business.



One of the families that Ann Marie Byrne got to meet at the South Boston Street Festival.

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Upcoming Clinic Schedule

Clinics are in the evening – please do not arrive more than 30 minutes before the clinic begins for registration. Attorneys will meet with as many people as possible during clinics, but we cannot guarantee that everyone will be seen.

Downtown Boston
IIIC, One State Street, 8th Floor, Boston MA 02109
Tuesday, **September 17th and October 1st**, registration at 3.30pm
Monday, **November 11th**, registration at 5.00pm

Citizenship Clinics
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Traveling People

The spirt of the Celts’ Samhain thrives today as Halloween holiday

By JUDY ENRIGHT
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

October is a wicked and wonderful month of ghoulies and ghosties, black cats, jack-o-lanterns, witches, haunted houses, and so much fun as the world celebrates Halloween.

Don’t think for a minute that Ireland doesn’t know about Halloween because, after all, this annual spooky occasion actually started there as a pagan religious festival known as Samhain. There have been modifications down the centuries – such as carving pumpkins instead of turnips – but the basic traditions still exist.

In ancient Celtic times, Samhain signaled the end of summer and beginning of the harsh winter. It was time to celebrate the harvest and anticipate the darker half of the year. As the two time periods crossed, the dead were said to return, so large fires were lit to ward off any evil spirits. As the Middle Ages progressed, so did fire festivals, with bonfires becoming a tradition – to offer protection from fairies and witches. Ancestors might cross over during this time too, so Celts dressed as monsters and animals to ward off the fairies that might try to kidnap them.

Over the centuries, the popes in Rome worked long and hard to recraft Samhain as a Christian celebration of saints and souls. But Oct. 31 soon became known as All Hallows Eve, or Halloween. There is no mention of Halloween in America until the early 19th century - after the Irish came here to escape the Famine and brought along their ancient customs.

By the early 20th century, American commercialization of Halloween had begun, with postcards, figurines, masks and costumes, making Halloween one of the most profitable periods of the year for retailers – often more profitable than Christmas. America has had such an impact on Halloween that many people believe it is an American invention rather than from ancient Ireland.

BRAM STOKER FESTIVAL

The Bram Stoker Festival 2019 in Dublin promises something for everyone during its four-day/night program of events over the October bank holiday weekend, Oct. 25-28.

For the uninitiated, Bram Stoker, the author of Dracula, lived and worked in Dublin.

The Bram Stoker Festival celebrates the gothic, the mysterious, the after-dark and the supernatu-

ral. The program of events mixes family-friendly adventures with late-night antics.

There will be spectacles on water, seances in complete darkness, dress-up screenings in the dead of night and much more. Stay up-to-date on everything happening during the festival using #Bite-MeDublin and find the festival on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

WESTPORT HOUSE HALLOWEEN FEST

A Halloween Fest with many activities will be held at Westport House in Westport, Co. Mayo, from Oct. 26-31, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The 18th-century historic house will be transformed into a (not too) scary haunted house for the week (suitable for little ones), and the attractions and activities are guaranteed to cast a spell over witches and warlocks! Head to the Haunted Estate House, transformed into a spooky old mansion for Halloween Fest. For more information, contact: westport-house.ie

SPIRITS OF MEATH FESTIVAL

From Oct. 6 to Nov. 3, have fun by day and fright by night throughout Co. Meath at the Spirits of Meath Festival. The high kings once ruled from the Hill of Tara and there are

still many mysterious standing stones and ruins from pre-Christian times in the county, including Newgrange, a Neolithic stone age passage tomb listed as a World Heritage Site.

Newgrange is part of a complex of monuments built along a bend of the River Boyne known collectively as Brú na Bóinne. The other two primary monuments there are Knowth (the largest) and Dowth. Throughout the area, there are as many as 35 smaller mounds. See spiritsofmeath.ie for more details.

HALLOWEEN IN BELFAST

Belfast’s biggest Halloween event offers plenty of weird and wonderful activities and events at locations like The Slipways and Titanic Belfast from Oct. 26-31.

The entertainment features street theatre and walkabouts, wicked arts and crafts workshops, fairground rides, and a range of hot food, drinks, sweets and Halloween tasty treats. The evening draws to a close with the largest fireworks display in the city. See visitbel-fast.com for more.

AND THERE’S MORE

Wicklow’s Historic Gaol is a museum that gives visitors the opportunity to see what life was like behind bars for Irish pris-



Congratulations to lovely **Ashford Castle in Cong, Co. Mayo**, which was recently confirmed as the first 5-star hotel in Ireland to be awarded the GREENMark Plastic Smart Standard for its efforts in responsible tourism and its commitment to remove all single use plastics from the property by 2022.

Ashford Castle is owned by Red Carnation Hotel group, which in collaboration with the TreadRight foundation, is participating in the #MakeTravelMatter initiative to ensure that tourism has a positive impact on people and communities.

oners in the 18th century. Throughout the Gaol’s long history, inmates were subject to torture, starvation, and death for even the smallest of crimes.

The Gaol is a great setting for the museum’s eerie night tours, where visitors can mingle with ghosts in one of Ireland’s most haunted buildings. See wicklowhistoricgaol.com for more.

Greenan Museum and Maze in Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow, hosts “The Haunted Maze” Halloween event each year in addition to Greenan Museum’s ‘Nightmare at the Museum.’ This successful fun-day is frequently a sell-out, as tours for everyone in the family are available. The grounds include tea rooms, farm animals and

COUNTRY FAIRS

One of Ireland’s greatest rural events is the country fair. There are many around the country during the year and in the fall.

The historic Maam Cross Fair, a one-day event, is on Tues., Oct. 29 this year, at the Connemara crossroads by Peacocke’s hotel. It stems from the tradition of local farmers selling surplus produce there to supplement the meager living they had eked from the rocky landscape.

This fair has grown over the years to become a major event that features cattle, sheep, and farm produce, as well as the beautiful Connemara ponies. The years we’ve attended, we’ve also seen goats, ferrets, dogs and puppies, geese and ducks for sale. It’s a fascinating fair for visitors.

This year’s event features trophies and cash prizes for the best filly foal and colt foal of registered parents, along with the perpetual cup for the best pony of the fair. Horse-shoeing demonstrations and a horseshoe throwing competition are among many attractions planned for this year’s fair. For more information, email: info@peacockes.ie

Another fun fair is the Achill Island Sheep Show, which this year is Sun., Oct. 13, outside Patten’s Bar in Derreens, Co. Mayo. This is the 33rd annual show and it’s always jam-packed and interesting to attend.

There are many more agricultural shows around the country in the autumn and they’re great fun to attend.

Right: Fall fairs in Ireland attract hundreds and are fun to visit. This was in Connemara and seen from a hotel tower.
Judy Enright photos



You just might meet a new friend at an Irish fair.



Sheep fairs like this one in Co. Mayo are a popular attraction in Ireland in the autumn.


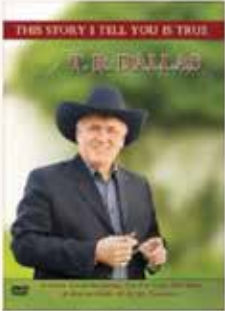
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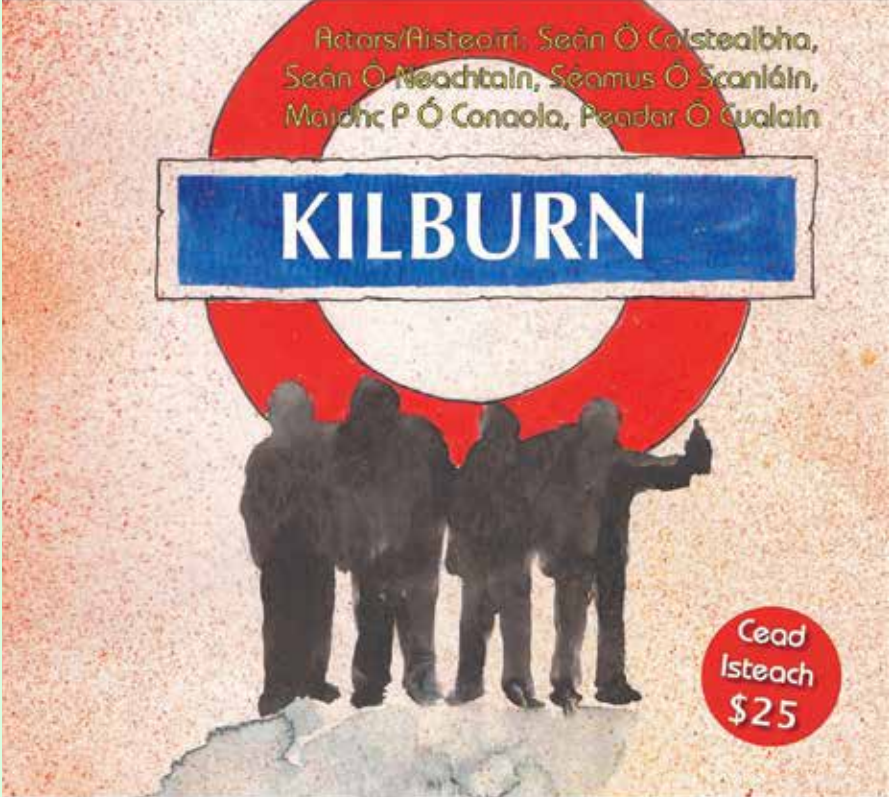
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IRISH CULTURAL CENTRE

A spiritual bond with nature is integral to Christine Hedden's music and dance

By SEAN SMITH
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

For Boston musician, singer, dancer, and composer Christine Delphine Hedden, memories don't always reside solely in the mind. The red bow adorning her fiddle's pegbox, for example, is a remembrance of her second visit to Ireland, where she attended "Willie Week" – the Willie Clancy Summer School, Ireland's largest traditional music summer program – and made some cherished friendships, including one with the bow's previous owner.

The music Hedden plays also is often an evocation of people, places, and events, or periods of her life, that have shaped her personal and artistic development. Perhaps it's a tune from Irish tradition, or from renowned Irish fiddlers like Tommy Peoples and Vincent Broderick. Or a composition of her own, drawing on her manifold interests and influences, including not only traditional Irish or American but contemporary classical, jazz and electronic music.

Hedden showcases the traditional/folk facet of her oeuvre on her recently released first CD, "When the Aster Blooms," comprised primarily of original tunes and songs. Other tunes include Peoples' "Black Pat's," Broderick's "The Milky Way," Sean Ryan's "The Nightingale" and a traditional reel, "Bea Mae's."

"It just seemed to make sense to put an album together," says Hedden, who moved to Boston four years ago and has performed locally at Club Passim, The Burren Backroom, BCMFest, and Somerville's Arts at the Armory. "I had all this material that I'd written over a long period of time, but there are not a lot of opportunities to share your own stuff in a session; it's just not the right place. And while I might perform them in concert, sometimes I don't specifically identify the tunes or songs I've written – besides, concert memory isn't always forever, so the audience might not recall the ones that are mine."

Some of Hedden's tunes and songs, such as the title track, convey a bucolic, rural impression just by their names: "The Firefly," "Rainwater's," "Downriver," "Catskill Mountain Road," "Cunnigar Blackberries," "Kellogg Street Peaches." And listening to "The Firefly," for instance, a leisurely paced jig played by Hedden in her characteristically lyrical style, it's quite easy to visualize a summer evening on the edge of a vast meadow; or, with the reel "Rainwater's," to imagine seeking shelter under a tree during a sudden shower – Hedden's



Christine Delphine Hedden's album "When the Aster Blooms" features many of her original tunes and songs.

Barbara Hedden photo

percussive dancing enriches the rhythm and sounds not unlike the spatter of rain drops.

These pastoral landscapes also form the backdrop – and sometimes become characters in and of themselves – in Hedden's songs.

*Here we are together
Walkin' slowly by the river
And down the hill from sunset
cliffs
And by the oceanside*

*Here we are together
Sittin' down beside the river
And in gardens full of roses
At the top of slow inclines
(from "When the Aster Blooms")*

*Lovely lady walk with me
Through the flowers and the fields
Take my hand and run around
And we'll see what time reveals
(from "Downriver")*

*Casting lots with ivory bones:
Acorns, flowers and old pine
cones.*

*You left me here upon the sea
With only angel's wings for
company.
(from "Ivory Bones")*

Taken together, these tunes and songs attest to Hedden's spiritual bond with the natural world, a component of her childhood in western Connecticut.

Growing up on a Christmas tree farm on the edge of a woodland, Hedden loved to run around in the fields and – inspired by her father Dan's readings of Tolkien – "pretend to be a hobbit." Having a pair of biologists for parents – and Dan in particular, with his knowledge of the area's geography – also helped inform her sense of place and appreciation for nature.

"That whole environment was just so important to me," she says. "Having the freedom to explore, literally and metaphorically, the world and its natural features became a big part of who I was, and am today."

But it's not just nostalgia of youth that explains Hedden's affinity for flora and fauna. Those romps in the fields also fueled her musical imagination, and early on in elementary school she began writing songs to help bring her fantasy adventures to life. This led to music lessons, and to her taking up viola. By then, having heard enough Irish traditional music to be thoroughly smitten, and "with a fifth-grader's logic," she says, Hedden thought she could play a viola just like a fiddle – despite the fact that the viola is tuned a fifth lower.

Not long afterwards, she and Dan, a guitarist whose musical background included a stint

with "Up with People," began going to a weekly slow jam session of New England contra dance and related music ("I would do my homework in the car," she recalls, "but I was allowed not to finish it"). Later on, when Hedden was in college and had become well immersed in traditional music, she and Dan formally began to play as a duo, Headin' Home; they still work together now and then, and Dan appears on three tracks on "When the Aster Blooms."

Over time, even as she became more engaged in Irish traditional music and the fiddle – studying with the likes of Martin Hayes and Boston-area fiddler George Keith, among others – Hedden found herself drawn to other genres, and to contemplate how their individual characteristics and traits might be more widely understood and appreciated: "Can the nuances of traditional music be translated in classical notation?" she says. "Can people in one musical community experience the dignity, complexity, and beauty of music from other communities?" These questions continue to energize her work as a musician and composer.

Another important strand in Hedden's life is dance. She started out very young on ballet, but at six she went to see the original

production of "Riverdance" and was captivated. The show was a major catalyst for her interest in Irish music, but also drew her to Irish dance.

"There was no way not to be stunned by seeing Michael Flatley, Jean Butler, and the others," she says.

Although it took several years before she was able to find an Irish dance school, Hedden danced competitively throughout high school. In college, she began learning the improvisational style of Irish dance, under the tutelage of Nic Gareiss and later Kieran Jordan.

It is these various experiences of artistic and personal growth – some that came with risks and costs – Hedden channels on "When the Aster Blooms." But the timeline also covers the recent, not just the distant past.

The album's two final tracks relate to the connection – one that goes beyond musical – that he has forged during the past few years with Caoimhín Ó Fearghail, a multi-instrumentalist from Co. Waterford and former TG4 Young Musician of the Year who is one of the more in-demand accompanists in Irish traditional music nowadays. On "When the Aster Blooms," he plays flute and bouzouki on two tracks and guitar on four others.

Principles, ambitions, self-deception on display in "Admissions" at SpeakEasy Stage Company

By R. J. DONOVAN
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Boston has been splashed across international headlines this year thanks to the "Varsity Blues" college admissions bribery scandal being played out in our waterfront courtrooms. Clearly, there should be no separate system of qualifications for the wealthy and privileged. Yet are other yardsticks being used, perhaps not immediately as marked?

Which brings us to "Admissions," presented

by SpeakEasy Stage Company from Oct. 25 through Nov. 30.

Written by the provocative playwright Joshua Harmon ("Significant Other" and "Bad Jews"), this timely, dark comedy tells of Sherri Rosen-Mason, a liberal admissions officer working for a small prep school in New Hampshire. She has spent 15 years diligently working to diversify the student body, and is enormously proud of her mission.

But then her son is denied a place at an Ivy League school in favor

of his best friend, whose grades are not quite as stellar. And whose mother is Sherri's best friend. And who just happens to be mixed-race.

Maureen Keillor takes on the role of Sherri at SpeakEasy. A much-loved talent on the Boston stage, she includes "The Little Dog Laughed," "Between Riverside and Crazy," "Nine," and "The Women" among her credits. She also holds an Elliot Norton Award as Outstanding Actress plus three IRNE Awards as Best Supporting Actress.

In August, she spent time in Ireland visiting family, many of whom are fairly well known. Her late father was raised on a farm in Bellharbour, Co. Clare. Her uncle, Chris Droney, is a legendary, nine times Senior All-Ireland Concertina Champion as well as an award-winning ambassador for the arts in Clare.

Her cousins are the Garrihy sisters – Aoibhín, Ailbhe, and Doireann. Aside from being prominent social media influencers in Ireland, all have been involved in the arts. Among other things, Aoibhín

came in second on the Irish version of "Dancing With The Stars" and Doireann is hosting a morning breakfast show on RTE 2fm.

Maureen's father came to the States in the mid-50s. "He grew up in a family of five boys," she said in a recent interview, "and of the five, four of them emigrated to the Hartford area. My uncle Chris stayed. He took care of the farm."

She remembers that there was "an Irish music station that we listened to every Sunday morning. My father was a mem-



Maureen Keillor plays Sherri Rosen-Mason in "Admissions."

ber of the Irish American Home in Glastonbury as were all of his brothers."

When she visited Ireland, she hadn't intended to use a car. "I was little nervous about driving on the other side of the

Continued on page 11)

‘From the Floor’ tracks moods, feelings that go into Irish dance



A scene from the video “From the Floor,” with (L-R) Jackie O’Riley, Rebecca McGowan and Chris Stevens.

(Continued from page 1) sociated videos of the pair dancing in tandem or solo to music provided by accordionist Chris Stevens – a member of the Maine-based quartet The Press Gang – and local fiddler Nathan Gourley; each video “track” consists of a tune or medley of tunes, to which O’Riley and McGowan dance traditional, improvised, or original steps.

“From the Floor” defies easy categorization. While O’Riley and McGowan’s stepping is often shown in full view or in close-ups of varying degrees, these are not instructional videos, per se. Sometimes, in fact, Stevens and Gourley, or their instruments, are the focus of a shot, and neither O’Riley or McGowan is visible. At a few junctures, dancers, musicians, and production crew members are shown at ease, or chatting about the next take.

There is a clear artistic intent to “From the Floor,”

one which has much to do with the venue. Instead of an artificially lit dance studio, the filming took place in a room of a Victorian house belonging to McGowan’s grandmother, Peg Wright, with trunks, suitcases, furniture, and other knick-knacks (some of which make cameo appearances in the videos) pressed against the walls. Thanks to several large windows, the room is fairly bathed in sunlight, projecting images of the window panes on the sturdy-looking wood floor; in some scenes, you can see flecks of dust floating gently over the dancers’ feet.

So perhaps the best way to think of “From the Floor” is that it depicts the holistic event of dance – not just the act, but the anticipation of it, the effect and influence of setting, and of course, the chemistry between dancers and musicians.

“Our over-arching motivation was to bring the

viewer into the ‘small parts’ of Irish dance and address how it’s presented,” says O’Riley. “A popular perception of Irish dance is that it’s high-energy pieces taking place on a big stage. But Irish dance is a smaller, more personal activity, too, and there are different moods and feelings that go into each dance – hornpipes, for instance, have a kind of solemnity to them. We also wanted to convey the language of sean-nós, which is focused on the knees and ankles, and so there are a lot of subtleties that may not be immediately apparent from a distance.”

Central to the project, she adds, was confronting the ephemeral nature of dance itself: “It’s difficult for dancers to share what they do beyond that moment on stage. How do you capture it in a way that really communicates what you do?”

This was the topic of a conversation O’Riley and

McGowan had while visiting Wright in Lexington during Thanksgiving of 2015. Finally, the two decided to put thought into action, so they collected their dance shoes, found a place on the house’s slate pathway that seemed right, and used an iPhone camera and CD player to make a prototype video. It was a start.

Having hatched the concept, McGowan and O’Riley began to think in earnest about the dances they wanted to put together, while looking in their circle of friends and acquaintances for help in producing high-quality videos. Among those they turned to were Gourley, who in addition to playing fiddle assisted with the audio recording and mixing, plus dancer Matthew Olwell and musician Katie McNally to aid the overall production.

Stevens was a key recruit, notes O’Riley: “We went up to Chris’s house, and talked about tune choices and transitions, what would work, what felt right. We collaborated with Chris early enough that he weighed in on our pieces as we were creating them, and that was a big help.”

Still, the process was a lengthy one, what with all the participants also having to make time for various other projects and priorities – and O’Riley had to wonder if “From the Floor” would ever get done.

“I look back at it as three years of self-doubt,” she laughs. “For most people

trying to create anything, whatever it is, staying focused and confident can be difficult. Preparing for a performance is one thing, because once it’s over, it’s done; making something that’s supposed to last entails a lot of responsibility and pressure. I’m usually pretty good at talking myself out of good ideas. But Rebecca and I supported one another, and just kept going.”

The most difficult decision, McGowan reveals, was where to do the filming. “We visited practically every concert, performance or assembly hall in the Route 128 area. And in the end, we finally went back to my grandmother’s house. It was a long road, but a good one, to get there. We often turn to what is the most obvious choice.”

One major advantage to using the house, she adds, was “that it was a home: a welcoming place for us to gather and talk and work. My grandmother is an artistic and creative person herself, so I think that helped make it all the more comfortable for us.”

Still, the space presented some challenges, such as limiting the variety of camera angles, which made one idea of McGowan and O’Riley difficult to execute. Then they had a brainstorm.

“We wanted to have just our feet and just Chris’ hands in the same frame, but we couldn’t get it right,” says McGowan. “So we piled up some cinderblocks and lay a board across them at just the right height, then we got up on the board to dance.”

The result, titled “Reels on the Board,” is arguably the most visually compelling portion of “From the Floor”: McGowan’s and

O’Riley’s feet are in the foreground, shuffling continuously in rhythmic patterns, juxtaposed against Stevens’ flying fingers as he plays a set of reels on concertina. After a while, the feet and fingers seem to become characters in and of themselves, as if presenting an order vs. chaos set piece. It’s not until the video’s last minute that you see dancers and musician in full.

This openness to creativity, and willingness to incorporate different kinds of images and tones, was at the forefront of “From the Floor,” says O’Riley.

“We not only wanted to show the dancing, we wanted to give a sense as to what we were feeling and experiencing in that time and place – what it was like to be in Peg’s house, what it was like to be with our friends, enjoying the moment. We also cherished the opportunity to put together something that’s associated with all the teachers, mentors, and friends who have inspired us through the years.”

The fact that her grandmother’s house became such an integral part of the project has taken on an added significance for McGowan, since her grandmother is in the midst of selling the property.

“I let Jackie and the crew take the lead in figuring out what aspects of the house would be featured, and seeing it through their eyes was very interesting – they keyed in on things I never would have thought of,” she says. “So this is a great memento to have.”

Information about “From the Floor” is available at fromthefloordance.com, where the video can be downloaded.





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Principles, ambitions, self-deception on display in ‘Admissions’

(Continued from page 9)

road. Not the *wrong* side of the road, the *other* side of the road,” she said laughing. Her cousin Decklin wound up driving Maureen, her sister, and niece around.

“Driving up the driveway to the farm, it was so emotional. To be back as an adult and really appreciate the absolute beauty of where my father grew up. It was so moving to me. So moving.”

Maureen grew up in Enfield, CT, and her first stage role was playing a squirrel in the third grade. She enjoyed performing, participated in school shows, did some community theater and went on to study theater at the University of Connecticut. She later moved to New York, but a difficult audition experience left her feeling lost.

“I said, ‘I don’t know what I’m doing here. What was I thinking?’”

She stayed in the city for four years, working at restaurants, until her sister suggested she move to Boston. “I was like, ‘Oh please! I’ll die of boredom,’” she said laughing. “And here I am, over 30 years later. I fell in love with it immediately.”

She studied hairdressing and took a position at a John Dellaria Salon but eventually tiptoed back into acting at the suggestion of a therapist who worked with several artists. “You’re not doing what you’re supposed to be doing. Take a class,” he told her.

“So I took a class,” she said. And I fell in love, really hard. *This* is what I love. *This* is what I want to do.” She lovingly credits her late husband Patrick with tremendous encouragement. He passed away just over a year ago following a long illness.

“I married a wonderful man,” she said. “He knew that I didn’t like doing hair. He said, ‘Look, if you really want to pursue this, I am here to support anything you want to do.’ So I am lucky that I had not only the emotional support, but also, my husband was able to take care of any bills we had while I started to try and get myself a name . . . It would have been our 20th anniversary this year. It’s extremely hard. He was a wonderful, wonderful man. He was my biggest fan. He saw everything I did.”

And during what turned out to be an overwhelming loss, her tight knit Boston theater colleagues drew her close.

“I can’t say strongly enough how incredible this community has been with me through this whole thing,” she said. “Through my husband’s illness. And through his passing. I always knew that the Boston theater community was really special, but when you go through something that is so brutal, and to know that you are completely in the arms of people who love you and get you . . . it’s truly humbling. Incredible.”

And now she’s preparing to open another show at SpeakEasy. “Speaking of having your back, they take such good care of their artists,” she said. “They are so respectful and really loving, and they do incredible work.” Last month she hosted the company’s annual fundraising gala.

In the current cultural climate, Maureen suspects audiences will have a multitude of personal issues to contend with in “Admissions.” She sees it as “a very funny play, but in kind of a cringe way. You’re laughing, but you’re like, ‘Oooohhh, should I be laughing at this?’ It’s really dark, but so, so funny. And I think it will really make people think about their own thoughts on how liberal they *think* they are. As opposed to, if they’re denied something, [do those same principles] still apply.”

R. J. Donovan is editor and publisher of on-stageboston.com.

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THE BIR'S CALENDAR OF CELTIC MUSIC EVENTS

The Irish Cultural Centre of New England in Canton will feature a combination book launch and concert with **Tara O'Grady**, a multi-genre singer who recently published an on-the-road memoir, "Migrating toward Happiness: The Soundtrack to My Spiritual Awakening," on Oct. 10 at 7:30 p.m. The daughter of Irish immigrants, and past winner of the *Irish Voice's* Most Influential Woman honor, New York City-based O'Grady has released five albums, with original music and traditional Irish songs marked by arrangements that evoke the Jazz Era.

"Migrating Toward Happiness" recounts O'Grady's effort to renew her life – at a time when she was at a low ebb – by retracing her grandmother's 1957 road trip across America in a Chevy Bel Air. The book intertwines her impressions, thoughts and observations of Americana with memories of her childhood summers at her grandparents' farm in Donegal, and how these all contributed to her personal soundtrack – which she and guitarist Vinny McElhinney will recreate at the ICC.

Also at the ICC this month is popular Irish country singer **T.R. Dallas**, on Oct. 5 at 8 p.m. With a career spanning more than three decades, Dallas – who has also appeared locally at the Dorchester Irish Heritage Festival and other venues – has made numerous radio and TV appearances and toured with such notable performers as Johnny Cash, Boxcar Willie, Don Williams, and Foster and Allen.

And on Oct. 19, the center will host its first-ever **Boston Irish Beer Fest**, which will include two stages of Irish music, and activities and entertainment for children and families.

Details on ICC events are available at irishculture.org.

• **Tommy Sands**, the Northern Irish singer-songwriter widely hailed for memorable anthems to peace, fellowship and human rights like "There Were Roses," "Daughters and Sons" and "Carry On," will perform twice in the Boston area this month, at the Boston College Gaelic Roots series on Oct. 16 at 6:30 p.m., in the Theology and Ministry Library on BC's Brighton Campus (see bc.edu/irish.html); and on Oct. 19 at 8 p.m. at the New Moon Coffeehouse in Haverhill [newmooncoffeehouse.org]. Read a recent *Boston Irish Reporter* interview with Sands at <https://bit.ly/2m6vLMN>.

• **Scotland's Talisk**, whose propulsive, tightly-knit blend of Scottish and Irish music elements has earned them widespread critical and public acclaim, kicks off Club Passim's October schedule on Oct. 1 at 8 p.m. The enthralling melodic chemistry between Mohsen Amini (concertina) and Hayley Keenan (fiddle) is bolstered by Graeme Armstrong's canny guitar-playing, creating a sound that pushes beyond tradition while maintaining ties to it. Talisk's honors include the BBC Radio 2 Folk Award and Folk Band of the Year from the BBC Alba Scots Trad Music Awards; Amini also was the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards' Musician of the Year for 2018.



Singer and author Tara O'Grady will be at the Irish Cultural Centre of New England October 10 for a concert and launch of her book *Migrating toward Happiness: The Soundtrack to My Spiritual Awakening*.

Go to passim.org for tickets and information.

• The Burren Backroom's characteristically full and diverse program of events begins Oct. 2 at 7:30 p.m. with **The Jeremiahs**, who since emerging several years ago from Dublin's music scene have gained an enthusiastic following for their brand of urban folk, immersed in Irish instrumental tradition while evincing a decidedly contemporary lyrical style. Joe Gibney's vocals have a true gravitas, edgy in one moment or incredibly tender in another, supported by James Ryan (guitar, bouzouki, harmonica) and Frenchmen Jean-Christophe Morel (fiddle, bouzouki) and Julien Bruneteau (flute, whistle) – crisp rhythm, superbly delivered fills and breaks, and flat-out gorgeous harmonizing. The band has brought its songwriting talents – with a keen sense of language, humor, and turn of phrase – to the fore of late; no less an authority than Christy Moore singled them out as winners of the 2015 Trad-Connect Songwriter Showcase. The band's 2018 album "The Femme Fatale of Maine" has brought them further praise.

Opening for The Jeremiahs will be the Boston-area duo of **Colleen White** (vocals, flute, whistle) and **Sean Smith** (vocals, guitar, bouzouki), presenting mainly traditional music from Ireland, Scotland, and England with an abundance of good cheer and taste.

White and Smith also will perform on October 27, 2 p.m., at the Wellesley Public Library [wellesleyfreelibrary.org].

Two generations and two iterations of Scottish music are at the Backroom on Oct. 9 at 7:30 p.m. Local fiddle-harp duo **Jenna Moynihan** (from New York) and **Màiri Chaimbeul** (Isle of Skye) have forged a collaboration that fuses Scottish and Appalachian/old-timey music, with elements of classical and jazz, as captured on their widely praised 2017 album "One Two." **Alan Reid** first captured attention in the 1980s with groundbreaking Scottish group the Battlefield Band, skillfully blending synthesizers, electric piano and organ with fiddle, bagpipes, whistles, and other acoustic instruments. But he has long been a songwriter of considerable merit, his compositions exploring Scottish history and historical figures but also the life and times of "common" people.

• **Steph Geremia**, who plays on Oct. 13 at 4 p.m., combines trad Irish flute and whistle with a background marked by, among other things, forays into world music – such as a sojourn in India learning the bonsuri flute – and collaborations with experimental jazz multi-instrumentalist Anthony Braxton. Her virtuosity and creativity were in full flower on her 2018 album, "Up She Flew," on which her accompanists included bouzouki player

Aaron Jones and fiddler Ben Gunnery, who will join her as **The Flyaways**.

• Celtic/Americana singer-songwriter **Ashley Davis** returns to the Backroom on Oct. 16 at 7:30 p.m. with her band, whose members include Lúnasa fiddler Colin Farrell and multi-instrumentalist Dave Curley. Davis's songs often plumb myths and folklore, and elements of the natural world, to make for an oft-otherworldly presentation of stories and set pieces. Her recently released new album, "Burning Down," sees Davis make a significant departure in style, utilizing samples and electronic sounds.

• Singer-songwriter **Bob Bradshaw**, a Cork native now residing in Boston, will showcase his latest album, "Queen of the West," on Oct. 18 at 7 p.m. Bradshaw's brand of country-rock/acoustic folk-pop is enriched by a songwriting approach that can be observational, introspective, economical yet eloquent, sly, and endearingly tender. "Queen of the West," his eighth release, represents a new direction for Bradshaw – it's a modern-day concept album built around the title character, who assumes many forms as the songs unfold.

Also on the bill is **Carla Ryder** and **The Blue Ribbons Trio**.

Two distinguished members of the Irish music revival, **Gerry O'Beirne** and **Frankie Gavin**, will join forces with

another accomplished pair of musicians, **Tommy McCarthy** and **Louise Costello** – spouses who happen to be The Burren's owners – on Oct. 23 at 7:30 p.m. O'Beirne is a highly lauded singer-songwriter and guitarist who, in addition to his solo work, has played with the Sharon Shannon Band, Patrick Street, Midnight Well, Andy M. Stewart, Kevin Burke, Andy Irvine, and the Waterboys. A founding member of one of Ireland's most beloved traditional music bands, De Dannan, Gavin has established himself among the finest fiddlers of his generation. McCarthy (fiddle) and Costello (banjo) both took up music in childhood – McCarthy spent his in London, where his parents had emigrated, while Costello grew up in Galway – and have played together for more than 30 years. In addition to running The Burren and The Bebop (near Berklee College of Music), the two have spearheaded and supported numerous causes, such as the St. Patrick's Mental Health Foundation and its Walk in My Shoes campaign.

Quebecois trio **Genticorum** will play at the Backroom on Oct. 27 at 4 p.m. – and they won't be alone. Pascal Gemme (fiddle, foot percussion, vocals), Nicholas Williams (flute, accordion, piano, vocals) and Boston-area resident Yann Falquet (guitar, jaw harp, vocals) present 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. For this occasion, they will celebrate the various musical friendships and alliances formed over the years, inviting some special guests to join them.

Winifred Horan, a member of two landmark Irish-American bands – Cherish the Ladies and Solas – will play excerpts from her new album, "The Memories of Magic," when she comes to the Backroom on Oct. 30 at 7:30 p.m. Classically trained (she studied at the New England Conservatory), Horan went on to become a talented Irish-style fiddler who, in addition to recording 12 albums as part of Solas, released three solo albums and several other duo and trio recordings. On "The Memories of Magic," she connects her Irish and classical backgrounds, sharing melodies and tunes going back to her childhood as well as newly composed and more obscure tunes and musical soundscapes. Accompanying Horan at the Backroom show will be Utsav Lal on piano and Dan Faiella on guitar.

Tickets, details for Burren Backroom concerts are available at burren.com/music.html.

• The Gore Place Carriage House series in Waltham hosts **O'Carolán Etcetera** on Oct. 8 at 7:30 p.m. This local trio draws on three centuries of instrumental folk music, from early English dance tunes to selections from the traditions of Ireland and Scotland, as well as flavors of New England, Appalachia and Quebecois, played on fiddle, flute, guitar and hurdy-gurdy.

Go to goreplace.org for information and tickets.

A special-issue CD release from Celtic Woman: 'Ancient Land Deluxe'

On the success of Celtic Woman's "Ancient Land" CD release and the 2019 tour, the group – Megan Walsh, Máiréad Carlin, Eabha McMahon and violinist Tara McNeill – last month released

"Ancient Land Deluxe" featuring 11 tracks never before available on the original digital version of the album: 2 from Ancient Land the CD; 5 from the Ancient Land the DVD; and 4 from the

current Ancient Land Tour.

Songs include the brand new compositions "Newgrange" and "The Enchanted Way," renditions of classics "Over The Rainbow" and "Fields of

Gold," traditional songs "Siúil A Ruin" and "Ballroom of Romance" and "Bean Phaidin" alongside brand new versions of timeless favorites "Amazing Grace" and "Danny Boy" and "The Parting

Glass" along with "Orinoco Flow."

Ancient Land was recorded in Real World Studios in the UK the summer of 2018 with the group's accompanying live performance filmed

against the backdrop of the historic Johnstown Castle in County Wexford, Ireland. It was a concert spectacular that is still running on PBS nationally.

CD Reviews

By SEAN SMITH

This month's column focuses on recent recordings by a pair of Irish/Celtic trios with Massachusetts and New England connections.

New Leaf, "New Leaf" • Based in Western Massachusetts, this band comprises fiddler Kira Jewett, a former pupil of Sligo-style master Brian Conway who has performed and taught in the Greater Boston area; accordionist John Tabb, part of singer-songwriter Sean Tyrell's short-lived band Apples in Winter and long a mainstay of the southern New England Irish scene; and vocalist Adam Braunschweig, who also plays guitar and banjo and has been active in several music genres, including as a songwriter.

Much as its very name conjures up a New England landscape, New Leaf's sound and repertoire, while predominantly Irish, reflects the polyglot character in New England traditional music. Alongside solid Irish trad material like "Lad O'Bierne's," "My Love Is in America," "The Blackbird" and "The Rainy Day" are a set of Quebecois tunes, for example, and "The Bluemont Waltz," written by New Hampshire fiddler and tunesmith Rodney Miller. "Sarah's Valentine," a jig composed by Limerick-born and onetime Boston resident Eamon Flynn, points up the continual infusion immigrants have provided to American music, in New England as elsewhere. The Americana thread, meanwhile, is underlined by Braunschweig's excursions into flatpicking and jazz-flavored accompaniment, notably on the hornpipe set "The Hawk/The Golden Eagle," and by the three songs he contributes.

There's a very pleasing, unhurried spaciousness to New Leaf and their approach to the music. Tabb does a slow solo to begin the "Bluemont Waltz," showcasing its lovely nuances, before Jewett and Braunschweig enter to perk up the tempo; the trio takes some time to explore the waltz in its fullness, Jewett adding some well-crafted harmonies and counter-melodies. Similarly, Jewett plays "The Blackbird" as an air, then in its more familiar set dance incarnation with Tabb. Elsewhere, the jig combo "Sarah's Valentine/Caledon Line" is about as sweet, relaxed, and tender as they come, and a quartet of polkas is simultaneously sprightly and temperate.

Which is not to say New Leaf doesn't play with intensity – the medley of reels, "The Rainy Day/The Penny Candle/The First Year in Buncrana," is an excellent primer on how to construct and arrange a tune set with an ear to building tension and anticipation. The band also experiments with putting together a set of seemingly disparate elements: "Memories of France," an unusual jig penned by Eddie Kelly, segueing into Billy McComiskey's "The Music Teacher," and finishing off with the traditional "My Love Is in America."

The song tracks are charming and affable, thanks to Braunschweig's mellow, understated delivery: "Johnny Todd," most recently associated with the late Scottish singer Tony Cuffe, who spent his last years in the Boston area; "Handsome Molly," to which Braunschweig lends an Appalachian/old-timey flavor; and his own pensive "Nightingale," which has a singalong-ready chorus: "Gonna find my way, find my way/Gonna find my way by the nightingale's song." An ode to one of the most celebrated songsters in the natural world seems quite apt for a band so strongly rooted in the New England terrain. [newleafirishband.com]

Will Woodson, Caitlin Finley, and Chris Stevens, "The Glory Reel" • Although this trio hails from Maine, its members are familiar to many in and around Boston, whether appearing at local sessions, performing at area festivals and other events or, in the case of Stevens, teaching at the Boston Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann Music School. Woodson – who also plays as part of another trio, Daymark – is renowned

for his phenomenal work on flute and uilleann pipes; Finley, a Philadelphia native whose collaborations include Mick Moloney and Dylan Foley, has studied with such exponents of the Sligo fiddle tradition as Rose Flanagan and Brian Conway; Stevens, an accomplished melodeon and concertina player and member of The Press Gang, here unveils his heretofore lesser-known talent on piano.

If New Leaf [see above] evokes a rural New England panorama, "The Glory Reel" is suggestive of longtime northeast urban hot spots for Irish-American traditional music, namely Boston, New York City, and Philadelphia. The tight, brisk playing of Woodson, Finley, and Stevens often recalls Irish dance bands from bygone eras, and a lot of their repertoire testifies to the venerable legacies of Sligo-born New York fiddlers Michael Coleman, Paddy Killoran, and James Morrison, as well as Donegal fiddlers Mickey and John Doherty, and Leitrim-born flute player John McKenna, among others. At the same time, these three are mindful of, and open to, more recent influences and developments within the tradition, distilled through recordings or interactions with friends and acquaintances – many of them in the aforementioned three cities.

As melody players, Woodson and Finley display a striking contrast and chemistry. Woodson's flute-playing often has an almost percussive quality to it, while Finley's fiddling exhibits the Sligo/New York push on rhythm and tempo, all quite prominent on the "Flood on the Holm/Glory Reel" set – the command both show on the B part of the latter reel in particular is breathtaking, literally so in the case of Woodson. A combo of marches features a lovely harmony by Woodson at one point on the first ("My Love Has Deceived Me") and his addition of piccolo on the second ("Battle Cry of Munster"), while Finley provides a veritable bounce to their rendition of the slip jigs "Kitty Come Down to Limerick/Gusty's Frolics." Broadening the canvas, the three also have a go at a trio of highlands (kind of a Donegal take on the Scottish strathspey), including

the jaunty "Dúlaman Na Binne Buí," and another of hop jigs, "The Promenade/The Surround/Comb Your Hair and Curl It," both sets enlivened by Boston-area step dancer Jackie O'Riley, who appears on two other tracks.

Both Woodson and Finley get solos on the album: Woodson goes to the repertoire of Donegal John Doherty for the highland "Lady Ramsay" and reel "Trim the Velvet"; Finley revisits a pair of reels recorded by Morrison, "Paddy on the Turnpike" and "Jackson's," which is an expanded version of the splendid "Dublin Reel."

The dynamics are somewhat different when Woodson switches to pipes, of course, but no less enjoyable: Check out the jig set "Repeal of the Union/Scotsman Across the Border," for example, or the reels "An Bhean Tincéara/High Road to Galway" – both associated with the legendary piper Willie Clancy – or the concluding track, a meshing of "The Jolly Tinker" with good old reliable "The Wind That Shakes the Barley."

And there's no overlooking Stevens through all of this, who keeps things moving along with alacrity while giving Woodson and Finley plenty of space. He also makes a welcome cameo on melodeon for the reels "The Enchanted Lady/The Holy Land/Sailor on the Rock."

The challenge, and the joy, when musicians play together is merging individual repertoires and influences. It's a process Woodson, Finley and Stevens have clearly warmed to, as indicated by their sleeve note for "The Wind That Shakes the Barley": Woodson's version comes from Seamus Ennis, the description reads, Finley's from Michael Coleman, and "The way we play it here meets somewhere in the middle." That middle ground is a glorious place. [thegloryreel.com]



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Four honored with Tip O'Neill Diaspora Award



Front row, from left, Diaspora Award winners Daniel Hilferty and Frank McGuinness, Tom O'Neill and his wife Shelley, Pat Doherty, and Patrick Dunican. Gathered in back are Donegal councillors and members of the Tip O'Neill Diaspora Awards committee.

DONEGAL – There was a packed house in the Inishowen Gateway Hotel on Friday night, Sept. 27, as four notable members of the diaspora were honored with the 2019 Tip O'Neill Irish Diaspora Awards at a gala ceremony hosted by Donegal County Council.

RTE presenter Sean O'Rourke was the master of ceremonies at the event as the playwright and author Frank McGuinness, the developer Pat Doherty, the lawyer Patrick Dunican, and the businessman Daniel Hilferty were cited for their outstanding achievements in their chosen fields.

Cathaoirleach of Donegal County Council Councillor Nicholas Crossan explained that "these awards were founded as a way to pay tribute to the great deeds of Tip O'Neill, to honor his family connection to this part of the world, and to celebrate not only the outstanding achievements of Tip himself but to recognize, to acknowledge, and to honor the millions of Irish people or people of Irish decent across the globe who through hard work and dedication have excelled in their chosen fields and who through their own generosity of spirit continue to champion and support our diaspora."

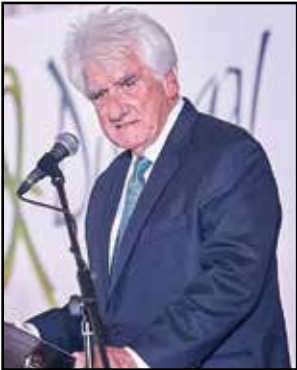
Paying homage to this



Tip O'Neill Irish Diaspora Awards Ceremony in the Inishowen Gateway Hotel on Friday night.

year's recipients Tom O'Neill, son of the late Tip O'Neill, described Patrick Dunican as a "real Irish leader" and described how he "created a national powerhouse of a legal firm situated along the East Coast of the United States. His Irishness is recognized and appreciated for the leadership he gives all Americans but especially the Irish American community."

In response, Patrick Dunican spoke of his strong Irish ancestry saying "I am Irish, I am American, I am Irish American" and promised going forward that he would talk about Donegal and encourage tourism and travel to the county.



Tom O'Neill addresses the gathering at the Irish Diaspora Awards dinner.

O'Neill spoke of Dan Hilferty's achievements in the healthcare sector and how since 2010 he has by three times built the size of his company adding that "he is really known for the public health policy element that he brings to the



Sean O'Rourke emceed the proceedings.

job. A true Irish man and a great leader in healthcare".

Hilferty also spoke emotionally about his Donegal connections and said "I leave here tonight a very proud son of Donegal. I am very excited to be part of the fabric



Councillor Nicholas Crossan, Cathaoirleach of the Donegal County Council talked about Tip O'Neill's "great deeds."

of this community and I promise you that I will be back and that I will spread the word to all the diaspora that there is no place like this beautiful place called Donegal."

Tip's son believes that Frank McGuinness "captures the very soul and

spirit of what it is to be Irish, adding that "he has been read and witnessed by tens of thousands of people here and abroad and he carries with him the impact of what it means to be a true Irish man."

Describing Tip O'Neill as "a complex and high achieving benevolent man" and a man of "great eloquence" McGuinness said that he believed that "kindness was at the root of all that Tip O'Neill did, it was also at the root of the greatest Irish man of my generation and as far as I am concerned of the 20th century, John Hume."

"Pat Doherty worked for his dad for four years in Donegal before he left to go to London where he began to make his fortune in development" said O'Neill. "But more importantly and this is what diaspora is, don't ever forget where it is you are from, don't ever forget what God's gift has given you so you take that gift and give back." And that is exactly what Pat Doherty did, said O'Neill. "What he did to the Titanic Quarter in Belfast, what he has done in the last ten years back here in Donegal, taking 100 million euro and investing it and employing hundreds of people doing nothing else but good".



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Martin Richard Dorchester Field House pitched for Mt. Vernon Street property

By BILL FORRY
EDITOR

Two well-respected Dorchester institutions have joined forces to plan a new, \$30 million indoor sports and community center that would be built on what is now a little-used field next to the McCormack Middle School on Columbia Point. The Boys and Girls Clubs of Dorchester and the Martin W. Richard Foundation submitted their plan for the proposed facility — named the Martin Richard Dorchester Field House — to the Boston Public Schools (BPS) this summer.

The new building, if approved by city officials, would house a turf field for soccer, lacrosse, rugby, football and other sports; an elevated, three-lane running and walking track; a fitness center with locker rooms, classrooms and a nutrition center, along with some open space outside. The building would be managed and programmed by the Boys and Girls Clubs of Dorchester, but would be fully accessible to the Boston Public School students at the neighboring McCormack-Dever campus. The facility would also be open to the larger community, and to adult sports teams, for example, that could rent the space for games and practices when not in use by children and teens.

The project is largely the brainchild of Bill and Denise Richard, who created the Martin Richard Foundation — named for their 8 year-old son who was killed in a terrorist bombing at the Boston Marathon in 2013. They enlisted the Boys and Girls Clubs of Dorchester — led by Bob Scannell and his wife Mary Kinsella — to bring their vision of an indoor recreation facility for city kids in particular to fruition. Together, they have been seeking an appropriate site — ideally in Dorchester — for the past four years.

“This is a space that

will bring us together as neighbors for sporting events, birthdays, all sorts of events. It fits our mission of helping kids,” said Bill Richard. “The idea goes back a number of years and it comes from talking to parents here in Dorchester over the years at games and practices for our kids. So many times we’ve been on the sidelines or in the stands and the rain comes we we’d say, ‘We wish we had something indoors like they have in the suburban towns.’”

“Dorchester deserves this facility,” said Scannell, who has led the BGCD for 35 years and supervises two campuses — one on Dorchester Avenue and a second in the Harbor Point development, right across the street from the proposed Martin Richard Dorchester Field House. “There is nothing like this in the city of Boston.”

In their response submitted to the BPS in July, Richard and Scannell added: “The vision for the [field house] is to create an inclusive, welcoming space unprecedented in the Dorchester community and indeed in the city as a whole... The [Field House] will be a symbol of inclusion to all of Boston.”

This current proposal came in response to a BPS Request for Proposals (RFP) for the site along

Mt. Vernon Street, an open space that is tucked in between the McCormack school building and a parking lot owned by the Archdiocese of Boston, which owns St. Christopher Church. The field goes largely unused most of the year.

As first reported in the Reporter last March, BPS officials sought and received unanimous consent from the School Committee to issue the RFP last spring. The concept, according to Rob Consalvo — a special advisor to the BPS Superintendent — is to activate and improve the BPS owned land. The RFP sought a private development team that would lease the land and create a new use that would benefit the school community and the larger Columbia Point and Dorchester neighborhood. “Normally, this would be an expense [to the city] in the capital budget, but we think there’s an opportunity to partner with an outside private entity to build some sort of athletic facility at little or no cost to the city of Boston,” Consalvo told the Reporter.

In fact, under the terms of the proposal, any lease agreement would include no payment to the city of Boston for the land. However, the BGCD and Richard Foundation would be responsible for financing



A rendering shows the exterior of the proposed Martin Richard Dorchester Field House, which would be sited on land owned by the Boston Public Schools on Mt. Vernon Street. The \$30 million indoor sports and community center would be operated by the Boys and Girls Clubs of Dorchester in partnership with the Martin W. Richard Foundation. Image courtesy RODE Architects

the construction and ongoing maintenance and operations of the building.

“The facility will be able to be used by any age groups,” said Consalvo. “The neighborhood will be able to use it, just as we encourage the communities around our schools to use our gyms and playgrounds. That’s a benefit for everyone, not just BPS kids.”

The proposal from the BGCD and the Richard Foundation was the only one that was submitted. The RFP was published and publicized — as all city RFPs are — in the City Record and the Boston Herald. The time frame for responses was June 24-July 19.

This month, as out-

lined in the RFP, the proposal will be presented to community groups, including a Harbor Point tenant organization, the school community and McCormack-Dever and the Columbia-Savin Hill Civic Association, which will see the full proposal at their next meeting on Monday (Oct. 7, 7 p.m.) at the Little House on East Cottage Street.

“What we agreed to do with the community was that before awarding it, we would come back out and see all of the RFPs. We are honoring our commitment. We will take all that feedback back to an evaluation committee inside BPS.”

Scannell and Richard say that — if approved by BPS — they are eager to hold even further community meetings to solicit detailed input about what sort of programming and amenities should be built into the field house.

The Martin Richard Dorchester Field House project represents the first phase of what Bob Scannell says is a two-phase capital campaign that the BGCD will launch this fall that will likely require more than \$50 million in contributions. The second phase will include the construction of a new clubhouse on Deer Street, where the BGCD has been based for nearly 50 years.

“As an organization we

have been serving the kids and families of Dorchester for almost 50 years and we’ve made a measured and thoughtful decision to plan for the next 50 years,” said Scannell.

Two other businesses with deep roots in Dorchester are key partners in the Field House proposal: Lee Kennedy Company, a construction management company; and RODE Architects, whose principal owners are Dorchester residents. Lee Kennedy serves as the chairman of the board of the BGCD.

The Richard Foundation has most recently been the key non-profit entity behind the creation of Boston’s newest public space, Martin’s Park, an inclusive play and open space which opened to rave reviews last summer. The experience, Richard said, gave the organization new insights into how it can fulfill its mission of helping kids of all abilities in his home neighborhood.

In a short time span, the foundation has emerged as a major supporter of youth organizations, including the Martin Richard Challenger Sports Program, launched in partnership with BGCD, which engages children and young adults with cognitive and physical challenges in sports leagues.



The Martin Richard Dorchester Field House, depicted above in an architect’s graphic, will be located next to what is now the McCormack Middle school, at left above.

L Street Center likely will close for up to 18 months during rehab

By JACK GOLDMAN
REPORTER CORRESPONDENT
The Curley Community Center in South Boston — known to many as the L Street Bathhouse — will likely close for up to 18 months beginning as soon as next fall as the 80-year-old beachfront property undergoes a \$15 million renovation designed to modernize and protect the well-used facility.

That was the message from city officials to center members and community residents at a public meeting on Monday evening.

More than 200 people packed into one of the center’s larger rooms to hear a presentation from officials with the Boston Centers for Youth and Families (BCYF) and the Public Facilities Department, which will oversee the project.

Patrick Brophy, the city of Boston’s chief of operations, led off the

meeting with an effort to ease anxieties about the center’s future. “There’s been a lot of rumors, a lot of innuendoes... We are not building condos on top of L Street,” he said. “What’s going to happen here is going to be the nicest community center in all of Massachusetts.”

Brophy and other officials frequently reminded the standing-room-only crowd that this was the first meeting in a design process that will stretch into 2020. No decisions have been set in stone. Regarding the exterior, attendees were told, the city is planning on restoring it without changing any of the classical aspects of the facade.

Members raised concerns ranging from the duration of a construction shutdown, what it will mean for programming, and whether the budgeted \$15 million will be enough to do the job.

Officials offered ballpark answers on how long the design process will likely take before construction can begin — about a year — and provided a projected range of how long construction will take: an estimated 12-18 months.

Throughout the meeting, every administrator in the room could be seen with a pen in hand noting what residents were asking for — from more saunas to ensuring that women members retain their locker rooms.

Brophy noted that the renovations are intended to target “inefficiencies” in how the current building works and what programming is available. In addition, he noted there is the matter of protecting the bathhouse from rising sea levels, increased flooding risk, and other climate change-related issues.

“We think that some of the work that has been

done here over the course of time has been lipstick, more moderate facelifts,” said Brophy. “What we’re looking to do is preserve this facility for the next generation of kids who are going to be here, and for everyone in between.”

BCYF Director Will Morales said that the renovations will be “a triple-bypass” rather than a facelift, the intent being to completely modernize the interior of the facility. To illustrate his point, Morales asked how many members in the room had been a part of the L Street community for over 30 to 50 years, and a majority of attendees raised their hands. The city’s vision for the center’s future is to create a facility that earns the same type of loyalty from future members that the L has engendered from its current membership, he said.

City Councillors Michael Flaherty and Ed

Flynn addressed the audience, both vowing to keep fighting for more funding from the city for the project.

Congressman Stephen Lynch, a longtime member at L Street, commended Andrea Flaherty’s leadership not just as an administrator of the

center but also as an advocate for female members. He also assured seniors whose social lives revolve around the rhythms of programming at L Street that officials would be paying particular attention to ensure senior programming continues.

BIBA mission to Eire set for late November

The Boston Irish Business Association (BIBA) is planning a trade mission to Ireland next month. Built on a foundation of transatlantic relationships, BIBA members will return to Ireland for six nights beginning Nov. 29 through Dec. 5.

Members will meet and engage with business delegations, elected officials, and professionals across sectors such as life sciences, technology, media, professional services

and more in Belfast, Donegal, Dublin, and Cork.

In Belfast, the delegation will attend the 23rd annual Aisling Awards dinner at Belfast’s Europa Hotel. Other plans include a tour the Bogside Murals in County Derry and visits to Slane Castle and Distillery and the Rock of Cashel.

More details and registration materials are available online at caragrouptravel.com/biba-ireland-2019.

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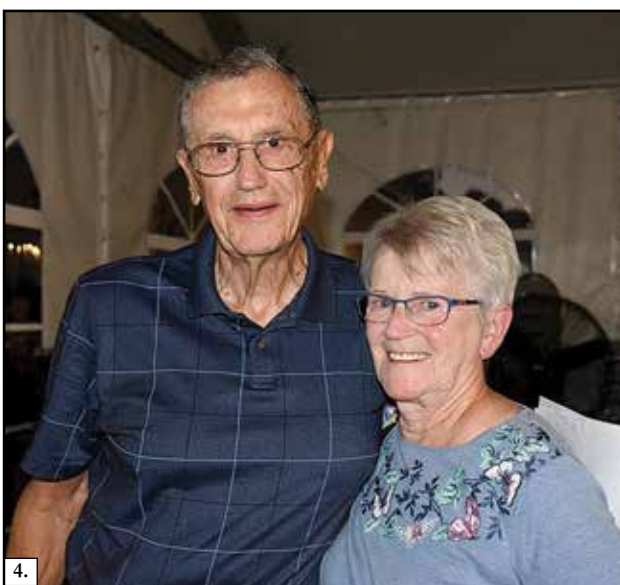
BRETT'S BOSTON

By Harry Brett

Exclusive photos of Boston Irish people & events

A fine gathering came out on Sat., Sept 21, at the Irish Cultural Centre for an end-of-summer performance by the Celtic Angels of Ireland. The five women singing group features Victoria Kenny, Emily Carroll, Tammy Browne, Amy Penston, and Ellie Mullane, Irish to the core and seasoned entertainers all. The performance also featured Celtic Knight Dancers, with two former lead dancers of Riverdance.

1.) Celtic Angels; 2.) Andy and Tansy Davis, Hopkinton; 3.) Patrick and Karen Mulvey, Dedham; 4.) Bog and Barbara Bierig, Hopkinton; 5.) Sarah Roux, Stoughton; Betty Dowling, Canton; 6.) Dave Harper, Mansfield; Siobahn Mulready, Carver; 7.) Seamus Mulligan, ICC President; Margie Delaney, Arlington; 8.) Rob Cardin, Barrington, RI; Danielle Brennan, Providence, RI; Mike Webber, Providence, RI; 9.) Maudy Dooher, ICC; 10.) Kerrin Botte, Norfolk; Amanda Guidoboni, Walpole; 11.) Dancers; 12.) Kaylee Hargreave, Medway, Sean Curran, Hyde Park.



Johnson rebuffs critics of his language in Brexit debate

By JILL LAWLESS
AND DANICA KIRKA
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON – British Prime Minister Boris Johnson continues to deny allegations that he is inciting violence by accusing his Brexit opponents of “surrender” and “betrayal,” saying

Johnson says Brexit proposal on tap; Varadkar wants ‘guarantees’ honored

(Continued from page 1) Immigrant Center, said: “We are very keen that there be a deal, that the UK should be able to leave the European Union in an orderly fashion. That’s in Ireland’s interest; it’s in Britain’s interest, too.

He added: “But there are certain guarantees that we expect to be honored, that there won’t be a hard border between North and South, that North-South co-operation will continue as envisaged by the Good Friday Agreement - that what was given to us by the British government back in December 2017.”

In reply, Johnson said, “It certainly will.”

“It’s the second time we have met in person,” said Varadkar. “I think the first time was an opportunity to build relationships, which happened in Dublin three weeks ago. We got to talk about some of the detail of the Withdrawal Agreement and the backstop. I think it was a good meeting in the sense that we

the only way to calm the simmering tensions was to stop delaying and leave the European Union.

With talks between the UK and the EU showing little sign of progress, Johnson’s foes in Parliament are determined to avoid a no-deal exit. During raucous, ill-tempered

were able to get into more detail this time. However, there is still a very wide gap between the EU and UK in terms of achieving what we need to achieve before October 31.”

Later that week, the UK’s Express papers were among those reporting that “the Fine Gael leader was demanding that Johnson send detailed written proposals within 10 days to Brussels or “it’s very hard to see how we could agree something” at the next EU summit in October. He said the current deal should not be “amended or cobbled together late at night” when EU leaders gather for a crunch Brexit summit on October 17. The leader for the Republic of Ireland added: “It’s essentially the way the EU works.

British Brexit supporters oppose the so-called “backstop” provision because it would keep the UK tightly bound to EU trade rules in order to avoid customs checks, limiting the country’s ability

parliamentary debates late last month, Johnson said postponing the country’s departure would “betray” the people, referred to an opposition law ordering a Brexit delay as the “Surrender Act” and brushed off concerns that his forceful language might endanger

to strike new trade deals around the world. “There is no point in doing Brexit if you stay locked in the EU customs union and locked in the single market with no say,” Johnson told the BBC. He didn’t say what Britain’s proposed alternative is.

Ireland’s deputy prime minister has already rejected an idea raised in preliminary UK proposals for customs posts 5 to 10 miles away from the border. Simon Coveney called the idea a “non-starter” and tweeted: “Time the EU had a serious proposal from the UK Govt if a Brexit deal is to be achievable in October. NI and IRE deserve better!”

Said Johnson, “That’s not what we’re proposing at all.” But he added that it was a “reality” that some checks would be needed to create a “single customs territory” for the UK.

legislators as “humbug.”

In Parliament, Johnson was repeatedly reminded that a Labour lawmaker, Jo Cox, was stabbed and shot to death a week before the 2016 Brexit referendum by a far-right attacker shouting “Death to traitors!” Many British lawmakers say they routinely receive death threats now.

Amber Rudd, who served in Johnson’s Conservative Cabinet until she quit three weeks ago, said she was “disappointed and stunned” by Johnson’s dismissal of their concerns. She told

the Evening Standard newspaper that the incendiary language used by Johnson and his aides “does incite violence.”

Johnson said that all threats to politicians were “absolutely appalling,” but defended his use of the term “Surrender Act,” saying, “The use of that kind of metaphor has been going on for hundreds of years.”

Johnson argues that he is safeguarding the will of the public against the interests of the political establishment, which wants to remain in the EU. In truth, the British

public and its politicians are both bitterly divided over how, or even whether, to leave the 28-nation bloc.

Church of England bishops appealed for calm amid the growing acrimony.

“We should speak to others with respect,” the bishops said in a statement. “And we should also listen ... We should not denigrate, patronize or ignore the honest views of fellow citizens, but seek to respect their opinions, their participation in society, and their votes.”



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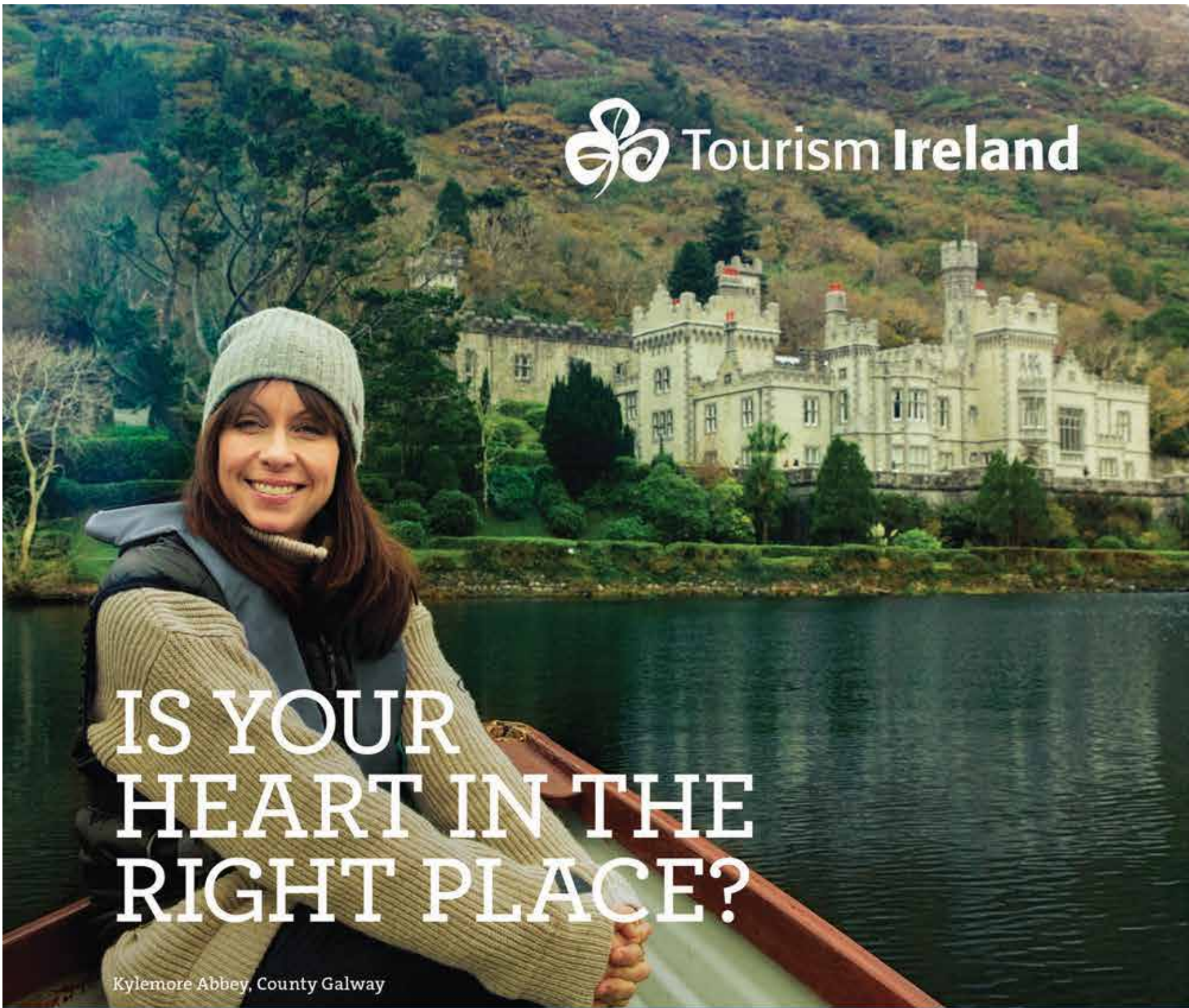
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