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# BOSTON IRISH REPORTER

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## BIR cites Rep. Neal, Muses, and Feeneys

The *Boston Irish Reporter* hosted its third annual Boston Irish Honors on Fri., Oct. 19, at the Seaport Hotel on the South Boston waterfront. The event, which marked the 22nd anniversary of the BIR, drew more than 350 persons to the mid-day luncheon.

In his prepared remarks, publisher Ed Forry said, "In honoring these exemplary families and individuals who embody the finest qualities of our people, we seek to honor the memories of our ancestors



who came here in bygone days when it was far from clear that we could make this place our home. How proud those early immigrants would be of their descendants, who have made Boston a welcoming place—not only for new waves of Irish entrepreneurs and workers, but for people from around the globe.

"Today's honorees—the Muse family, the Feeney brothers and US Rep. Richard Neal—are agents of idealism and ingenuity who represent the best of the Boston Irish experience. They are devoted to a level of professionalism in their chosen fields that makes us proud to call them our own. Their commitment to public service and civic-minded philanthropy serve as models for us today and harken back to our own roots as a people who—even in times of need—dug deep to help others."

A package of photos and stories about the Honors luncheon begins on Page 18.



Larry Reynolds leading a session at the Green Briar Irish Pub in Brighton.

Photo courtesy of Bill Brett, from "Boston: An Extended Family" © 2007

## Remembering Larry Reynolds, fiddler: 'He never, ever got tired of the music'

By SEAN SMITH  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

He was the big, amiable fellow from Galway who worked with wood in his profession and in his music, and who seemed to know, personally, just about anybody who'd ever so much as touched a fiddle, accordion or flute, or sang an Irish song.

In fact, Larry Reynolds knew, and touched the lives of, so many people that there was literally

no room for all of them to come and say goodbye to him.

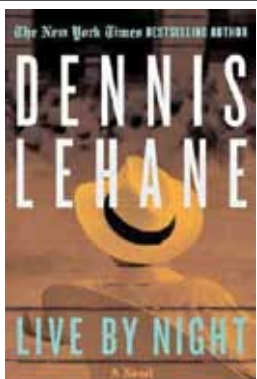
Reynolds died on Oct. 3, leaving behind an extraordinary six-decade legacy as musician, organizer, and pioneer in the Boston Irish music scene. The Waltham resident, a carpenter by trade and fiddler by inclination, was 80 years old.

Within mere hours of his death, tributes and reminiscences began flooding the Internet and social media, or were

simply passed along by word of mouth. The planned six-hour wake for Reynolds at the Joyce Funeral Home in Waltham went into overtime by three hours. His funeral, held on Oct. 11 at Saint Jude Church in Waltham, was equally well-attended: The crowd—including a bevy of musicians with instruments in hand as well as a columnist and photographer from the *Boston Globe*—spilled outside onto Main Street. His friend Mairin

Ui Cheide, a sean-nos singer from Leitrim, sang "Coming Home" as the pallbearers slowly walked the coffin down the aisle. They paused while the musicians, spanning several generations, played the air "For Ireland I'd Not Tell Her Name" before launching into a set of reels, beginning and ending with "The Galway Rambler."

Reynolds's lifetime coincided with a remarkable renaissance (Continued on page 11)



See page 3

## US Supreme Court halts handover of IRA tapes – for now

By ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON – The US Supreme Court has temporarily blocked Boston College from turning over to the government of Northern Ireland interviews that academic researchers recorded with a former Irish Republic Army member.

On Oct. 17, the high court stayed a lower court order that

the school give the Justice Department portions of recorded interviews with convicted IRA car bomber Dolours Price. Price and other former IRA members were interviewed between 2001 and 2006 as part of The Belfast Project—a resource for journalists, scholars and historians studying the long conflict in Northern Ireland known as "The Troubles."

The stay granted by Justice

Stephen Breyer ends Nov. 16 if there is no formal appeal to the Supreme Court.

Citing international mutual assistance treaties, the Justice Department wants to turn the records over to the Northern Ireland police, a move that has evoked strident opposition from those who fear that such a move will damage the peace process in the North.

Technically, according to a Re-

uters dispatch, the matter before the Supreme Court concerns only interviews with Dolours Price, an IRA member who was jailed for her part in the 1973 bombing of London's Old Bailey courthouse that injured more than 200 people. The court's decision in her case will likely determine the fate of the other interview material, said Eamonn Dornan, an attorney for the researchers.

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# Lehane takes on the Roaring Twenties in new novel

BY BILL FORRY  
MANAGING EDITOR

"South Boston punk becomes a Florida crime boss." That's how one newspaper boiled down Dennis Lehane's latest novel. Sure, that's one way of summarizing "Live by Night," the Roaring Twenties gangster page-turner that will also be a big-studio film some day soon, but any stinging that Lehane might suffer from the blunt summary is soothed by the source: The New York Times Book Review noting that his latest novel has debuted at No. 8 on the paper's bestseller list.

No big surprise there. Dorchester's most celebrated man of letters since old Eddie Everett himself has developed a loyal — some might say crazed — international fan base after ten books, three of which have become celluloid blockbusters at the hands of Scorsese, Eastwood, and Affleck. (How many other writers have to take to Facebook to tell their fans to chill the hell out over an ill-advised Globe review?)

Lehane's fan base will get bigger still with the release of "Live By Night." In a United States enflamed yet again by bootleggers, Tommy guns, and flapper chicks, Lehane has tossed a barrel-full of choice Havana rum onto the bar.

"Live By Night" is not a sequel, but two key characters from his Boston police strike epic "The Given Day" (2008) make important cameos. A third, the aforementioned Southie "punk" Joe Coughlin, is the main character — a 20-year-old wiseguy who early-on sniffed out that his two-toilet, lace-curtain Broadway existence was made possible by the graft of his Boston police department superintendent father.

The future crime boss Coughlin is an upstart stick-up kid who comes of age in a decrepit prison in Charlestown. He gets fully groomed for the bootlegging racket by a North Shore mafioso, Maso Pescatore, who uses Coughlin to corner the Florida end of the triangular rum trade. Coughlin uses him to build a south coast syndicate that eventually extends to Cuba, while he fends off half-wit yokels of the KKK variety and, more menacingly, old rivals who want more than a taste of the Sunshine State action.

Lehane says he was drawn to the lesser-known rum trade precisely because he wanted to avoid a hackneyed take on the Nucky Thompson-type whiskey racket. Florida is also familiar turf for Lehane, who left Dorchester after BC High for college there and has kept a residence in the state ever since. (He and his young family divide their time between Massachusetts and Florida when he's not on a book tour.) So Lehane was vaguely aware of the charms and dangers of Ybor City, the Tampa neighborhood that was once the epicenter of cigar manufacturing and rum-running in the 1920s. "I respond to older things and places with a lot of history attached. And Florida in general is not known for that, but Ybor City is an exception," Lehane told the *Reporter* in an interview.

"It's very much as described in the book. It looks very much like New Orleans," he said. "It was built around cigar manufacturers and it was Cuban, Italian, and Spanish back in the day. That's why I was fascinated by it. It's a little dangerous right now, but still preserved, and there are still the same Cuban social

clubs. It has all those things I really love about America at the end of the day — areas where the melting pot melted."

The first third of the "Live by Night" satisfies our local fix. Characters dart off streetcars and into flophouses in Scollay Square. They frequent speak-easys in Charlestown and on Dot Ave. and they rip off warehouses and card games on Northern Avenue. But the Roaring Twenties era is what captivates Lehane's imagination most, so there are also tipsy peeks into high-society preserves, including a pivotal scene from opening night at the old Statler Hotel (now the Park Plaza.)

Lehane has his usual fun with the hometown crowd, too. He transports a certain well-known restaurant from Lehane's boyhood days in Dot, plopping it into the swank lobby of a downtown hotel — a deliberate dope slap for the local crowd who think this is all on the level. "I like to do an inside joke. If I want to move a restaurant, I can. This is fiction," Lehane explains. And because it's fiction, Lehane can resurrect whole sections of Boston that were bulldozed and buried in the name of urban renewal. In "Live by Night" he reconstructs whole blocks of the West End — the stomping



grounds for Coughlin's Boston crew.

"It's fun, because it's a great tragedy," said Lehane. "When I see pictures of it or my old man used to talk about it, it was shredded and turned into a hideous complex of ugly buildings. The Hurley building is the worst of them all, but it makes you hate all of it, City Hall, the plaza, all of it. You have to go to pictures to see what was there."

Even so, one of the reasons Lehane "comes home" in his books so frequently is because Boston remains a city whose past is a constant feature of its present — from the neighborhoods to downtown.

"I can be a bit of homer," Lehane admits. "I have traveled extensively now and Boston remains one of the unique places in the country. It's emblematic and very distinct. Those places have become so rare in this country. But Boston is not in danger of losing its Boston-ness, not in my lifetime."

The Coughlin story will go on, Lehane says, for at last two more installments — including one that he's busy writing now. The road, almost certainly, will wind back to Boston and also to Havana, since the family now has important blood ties to Cuba.

In the meantime, Ben Affleck has already bought the rights to turn "Live By Night" into a film. Affleck won praise from Lehane and most Boston critics for his adaptation of "Gone, Baby Gone," one of Lehane's acclaimed Patrick and Angie detective stories with a strong Dorchester hook.

So who'll play Joe Coughlin? Don't bother asking the writer. If Ben needs some advice, he has Dennis's number.



The Boston branch of Friends Forever, a nonprofit organization that seeks to create trust, empathy, and friendships among cultures in conflict, recently hosted a group of Catholic and Protestant teenagers from West Belfast. Among other activities, the young leaders visited Boston College [above], made speaking presentations at local Rotary Clubs in Westford, Salem, Marblehead and Haverhill, got a tour of the Statehouse and South Boston with State Senator Jack Hart, worked with the Salem inner-city group "Youth Rising," and helped prepare and serve meals at the Open Heart soup kitchen in Haverhill.

Sean Smith photo

## Charitable Irish to honor five

The Charitable Irish Society will host its 14th Silver Key Awards reception on Thurs., Nov 29, from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Boston College Club in downtown Boston.

The 2012 honorees are Lynn Finn, Connell Gallagher, Siobhan Gallagher, Mary E. Kelleher, and Kevin Leary.

Advance reservations are required, and the cost is \$125 per person. Reservations may be made by mail to The Charitable Irish Society, c/o Sandra Moody, 56 Thomas Park #3, South Boston MA 02127. No tickets will be issued; reservations will be held at the door.



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# Forward with Obama

If only every decision in life were this easy.

President Barack Obama has earned re-election with an impressive first term that will come to be viewed as one of the most productive, progressive, and — ultimately— successful periods in the history of the modern US presidency. Obama has done so in spite of an inherited economic crisis that would have upended lesser leaders and in the face of a Republican Congress whose sole reason for existence over the last two years has been to undermine the president and his initiatives at every turn. The GOP has failed, the president has prevailed, and we enthusiastically endorse his re-election next Tuesday.

The president's health care reform initiative is a milestone achievement. (In a great irony, his detractors quickly labeled the Affordable Care Act measure "Obamacare", a term that the president came to embrace and one that will no doubt come to carry his name, to positive effect, through the ages.) Rarely has a president so effectively used his election mandate to such far-reaching and substantive effect. Tens of millions of our fellow Americans— and untold generations to come— will benefit from the reforms. That includes young Americans struggling to find a foothold in the workforce and seniors who will benefit immediately from enhanced prescription drug benefits.

The president injected life-saving government dollars into the economy at a moment of great gravity at the dawn of his tenure. He saved the American automotive industry— against the advice of Romney— and has begun to rebuild the economy, add jobs, and rebuild confidence and sales activity the housing market— a gradual turnaround that is now in clear evidence in the Boston area.

The president has struck important blows for civil rights, especially for gay Americans. He has ended the military's ridiculous half-measure— 'Don't ask, don't tell'— and has affirmed his own support for gay marriage, a civil right that will one day be as commonplace as interracial marriage, which was also banned (even criminalized) in this president's lifetime. Critically, the president is, and always has been, a stalwart supporter of a woman's right to make her own reproductive decisions and as such he has, and will, appoint Supreme Court justices who will reject efforts from the right to turn back the clock on this essential civil liberty.

The president has been decisive and impressive on foreign policy. He followed through on his campaign pledge to kill Osama bin Laden if we had the opportunity, pulled US forces from Iraq, and set a reasonable timetable for a withdrawal from Afghanistan by the end of 2014. He has kept ground troops out of further entanglements in the quicksand of the Middle East while assisting Libya in the overthrow of Khadafy. His even-tempered approach to staring down nuclear proliferation in Iran with unprecedented sanctions is the rational, most viable way forward without a costly war involving Israel.

Obama's second term offers great promise. The president has laid the groundwork for a robust economic comeback fueled by the nation's energy sector. By extricating us from two meandering foreign wars, he will have new resources to allocate into state and local spending and pay down the national debt.

A note about his competitor: Bain and Company's Mitt Romney (who moonlighted as a "moderate" Massachusetts governor for four years) is a fraud. Like the aging utility infielder who's willing to take any position — no matter how far afield from the last one he held— Romney has proven in this campaign that he'll say and do anything it takes in order to stay in the game. There is no lie that he won't tell in a desperate attempt to win the White House, even if comes at the expense of our own economy. Witness his latest assault on the facts this past weekend: an out-and-out whopper intended to scare Ohio voters into thinking that their car jobs with Chrysler were about to be outsourced to China. The false claim resulted in a sharply worded rebuttal from Chrysler, the corporation that makes the Jeeps that Romney lied about. All this from a man who two years ago announced that it was his policy— in ruthless slash and burn fashion— to force the American car industry into bankruptcy.

Take it from Massachusetts voters who've seen in action the sneering, jaded shape-shifter exposed in the now infamous "47 percent" video that everyone watched gape-mouthed this fall: Yes, that is the Mitt Romney you can expect to govern the country if he is elected. That said, we wish him well in his political retirement, which will begin around 9:30 p.m. EST next Tuesday night.

Our president stands his ground, takes principled and decisive action, and is a steady hand at the helm of a complicated, diverse but still-optimistic country that finds in their president an equal. He is a leader, and our children and grandchildren will be proud of us for supporting him as we go to the polls enthusiastically to return him to office.

— Bill Forry and Ed Forry

# As the wide world watches us, the Irish say, 'Obama's the one'

BY JOE LEARY  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

The United States is the most powerful, resourceful nation in the world, so what goes on here is of intense interest to all other countries, especially Ireland.

In fact, there is so much attention paid to American elections in English-speaking Ireland that two organizations conducted polls of its citizens to determine who they would choose (if they could) between Barack Obama and Mitt Romney.

The results are quite interesting.

In the Gallup International Irish poll, reported on the Irish Central News website, the Irish would vote for Obama over Romney by 96 percent to 4 percent. The *Irish Times* newspaper survey showed it 79-5 for the president with 16 percent having no opinion.

As a general rule, the Irish media, print and broadcast, report on events in the United States far more than the American media mention news from Ireland. This is particularly true with our elections.

Newspaper and television coverage of the three debates was extensive — even front page news in Dublin. In Belfast, with the British press, the coverage was less so. Events like Missouri senatorial candidate Todd Akin's comments on the distant likelihood of pregnancy resulting from "legitimate rape" because a woman's body can somehow prevent it, or the more recent Indiana senatorial candidate Richard Mourdock's belief that a pregnancy resulting from rape is "God's will" have received major press coverage. Sara Palin's malicious, over the top



Joe Leary

## Off the Bench

# Let's call political debate winners by tallying the vote at ringside

BY JAMES W. DOLAN  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Saturday Night Live should come up with a new formula that combines debating and prizefighting as a way to give viewers a definite winner and loser instead of the endless "spinning" that occurs under the traditional debate formula. Both sides now claim to be victorious.

This process would at least provide some finality to the annoying speculation that now surrounds political debates. Something like what follows would make future contests more amusing:

The venue is a boxing ring at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas. The candidates stand at podiums with the moderator/referee sitting at a desk in front of them. At the outset, he introduces the combatants.

"Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to this heavy-weight prize debate scheduled for 10 rounds. Let me first introduce the combatants:

"In the corner to my left wearing a blue tie is the incumbent, the 'Dronerator,' Barack 'Bam Bam' Obama, of Washington by way of Chicago. To my left in a red tie is the challenger, the 'Stormin Mormon,' Mitt 'Turnaround' Romney, of Boston by way of Michigan and Utah.

"This will be a 10-round debate, each round being 10 minutes, at the end of which each contestant will retire to his corner where he will have one minute to be instructed and refreshed by his handlers.

"There are 5 judges, selected at random by me, sitting at ringside. They will grade the performance of each participant in each round on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being the lowest score and 10 the highest. Assuming neither side scores a knockout, the votes will be tabulated at the end of the bout and I will declare a winner.

"As the moderator/referee I will ask questions of both candidates and make sure the candidates remain calm and the discourse is civil.

"Should there be a verbal smackdown, I will order the party delivering the blow to return to a neutral corner until I can determine if his opponent is able to continue.

Before each round a bikini-clad woman, selected by



James W. Dolan

racial comment regarding "shuck and jive" was well reported in Ireland.

In today's hi-tech atmosphere, what goes on in Missouri or Indiana or Alaska is immediately available to the world. Well more than 50 percent of all citizens in developed countries carry cell phones that instantly record still pictures and videos complete with sound.

Romney's comments dismissing 47 per cent of the American people who don't pay taxes as unworthy of his attention would never have been public 20 years ago. And the average Irishman or woman is also well aware of Obama's poor performance in the first debate where he tried to appear presidential and above it all but came off as an unwillingness to engage Romney.

Ireland's population is estimated to be some 4.5 million; it remains a very small country, with fewer people than Massachusetts and New York City. It is difficult if not impossible for the average Irish citizen to appreciate the size and complexity of the United States. To be sure, there are very few Americans who understand it all, but we have a better chance of doing so by living here, studying here, and travelling here to appreciate some of our major issues.

What the Irish and many Europeans see is an America that is a very large country thousands of miles away with a hugely powerful military that can sometimes be a bit of a bully. President Bush's invasion of Iraq mistakenly looking for weapons of mass destruction with only Great Britain as our major ally offers a good example of that assessment. Even American success in winning Olympic medals can bring out some of the same feelings that many Bostonians have about the New York Yankees.

The Irish and most Europeans seem to want to continue the same friendly relations that have begun under President Obama, and they are watching us carefully. When the Irish wake up on Wed., Nov. 7, among the very first things they will do is check on our election results.

me, will parade around the ring holding a card with the number of the round. Please refrain from hooting or hollering at either the combatants or the model.

"To defray the costs of this event, each round is being sponsored by a supporter of one side or the other. For example, the first round is sponsored by Bain Capital and the second by the United Auto Workers.


"I reserve the right to stop the debate on a TKO if I determine that one side or the other has been so badly damaged he can no longer defend himself. Also, the handlers for each may forfeit by throwing a towel into the middle of the ring, if they determine their fighter is unable to continue.

"At the end of the contest I will ask both parties to come to the center of the ring where, after the votes have been tabulated, I will declare a winner, be it a unanimous or split decision. To make the contest more exciting, the winner will be awarded 10 electoral votes.

"Refreshments and debate souvenirs are available in the foyer. I ask your cooperation in not swearing or throwing things at the combatants during the bout.

"Show your support by placing a bet on your candidate. Good luck and enjoy the spectacle!"

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



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## Point of View

Mitt Romney as our *Shanachie*-in-Chief

BY PETER F. STEVENS  
BIR STAFF

Bear with me here, but I'm wondering if somewhere, somehow on the Romney family tree, an Irish branch stretches out. Why is that? Whether or not Mitt Romney wins the Oval Office this month, a question will remain. Who is Willard Mitt Romney? *Boston Globe* contributor Tom Keane chides the Obama camp for deriding Mitt as a fool. Keane is right – Mitt is no fool. Renee Loth, once the *Globe's* editorial page editor, views Mitt as a coreless delegator who will allow running-mate Paul Ryan to shred the nation's safety net.

For all that, there is one indisputable fact here: Mitt Romney has a curious relationship with facts and the truth. At first, he seems like some creation sprung from the pages of Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland," a polished chap who tells distortions so earnestly and relentlessly that they somehow seem true. After all, he *did* save the auto industry, right?

All this has me thinking that we're looking at Mitt the wrong way, trying to determine if he's a man who actually believes his own contradictions or simply a cynic who will say anything to anyone at anytime to claim his rightful inheritance as president of the United States. Mitt *has* to have some Irish blood in him somewhere, for he may well be the greatest *seanchaí*, or *shanachie*, ever to run for the presidency. The *shanachie*, "a bearer of the old lore," the Irish storyteller, preserved in his memory the unwritten history, laws, culture, and traditions of the land and reminded rapt listeners who they really were and are. If distortions and myths color the speaker's words, so what?

Mitt's quintessential turn as the potential *Shanachie*-in-Chief may well have come about in Boca Raton a few months ago. In a manse packed with right-wing donors, including a convicted income-tax cheat, Mitt spun his tale of the "47 percent." He ridiculed the poor, the elderly, the sick, the young, the old, and veterans – you know, the

## It's hard to believe that the candidate's family tree lacks some Irish branches

losers who live "the good life" at the government trough, refuse to take "personal responsibility" for such trifles as illnesses that create bankruptcy and make life infinitely harder somehow for the richest among us. Ever the storyteller, though, Mitt entered the final stages of the campaign telling another tale, that of a man consumed with concern for the 100 percent. *That* shift is the trademark of a gifted *shanachie*. You have to understand that in Boca, Mitt was regaling the lofty; on the campaign trail, he's courting the lowly. Few pundits on any network or in print have much of a problem with this; they coat candidates' false claims as a euphemistic "pivot to the middle in the general election."

Mitt's skillful (or tortured) wordplay has worked far better than Democrats thought possible even with the nation's ongoing economic woes. If Barack Obama limps back into office, he will be the first president to do so with such troubling job numbers. If Romney wins, he might well be the first to do so by so staring straight into the collective eye of voters and baldly shifting the facts of his record, his views, and his plans.

While it matters not a bit to our presidential election, it is to wonder how well Romney's storytelling might play on the very turf of the *shanachie*. Suffice it to say that Obama could only wish for the Emerald Isle's view of Romney, according to a recent Gallup International poll that claimed 98 percent of the Irish would vote for Obama. An *Irish Times* poll put the number at a still-stratospheric 79 percent.

Still, Romney's storytelling knack has earned him the rave reviews of Irish economic commentator

and *Irish Independent* columnist Marc Coleman, who noted his nation's bias against Romney. Coleman wrote: "Obama and his cheerleaders live in an economically illiterate world where Ireland's loss is America's gain....The Democrats – who gave America segregation, corrupt Tammany Hall politics, and the Vietnam War – are, according to this narrative, nice, enlightened and competent. The Republicans – who created jobs for our emigrants in the Eighties, facilitated foreign investment in Ireland, and freed the world from totalitarian rule – are greedy, backward and stupid." Coleman then goes on to blame the Democrats for creating the entire US debt and the collapse of the mortgage market since 2006.

There's not enough space here to correct Mr. Coleman's historical revisionism. LBJ might be surprised to learn that he helped give America segregation; for that matter, the same with JFK. As far as Vietnam, JFK and LBJ did escalate the war, but rumor has it that a certain Republican named Nixon upped the bloody ante to its worst levels from 1969 to 1973. Bill Clinton might be interested to know that he had no role in "facilitating foreign investment" in Ireland. Coleman conveniently forgets Clinton's role in the peace process in Northern Ireland, too. If Coleman is contending that Republican presidents alone "freed the world from totalitarian rule," I'm assuming he means Reagan and the Bushes, father and son. I guess he somehow overlooked FDR and Truman. If memory serves me right, both of those Democratic presidents had some hand in the defeat of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. Could be that Presidents Truman and Kennedy also played their part in the Cold War.

As I wind this column to a close, we still don't know if it's President Obama or President Romney. A thought: There's still time for the Romney campaign to hire Mr. Coleman to help Mitt's quest for *Shanachie*-in-Chief. They're definitely on the same page – or historical etch-a-sketch.

## As Abbey Theatre looks ahead, it is asking for help fulfilling its mission

BY ED FORRY  
BIR PUBLISHER

Officials and two artists from The Abbey Theatre were in Boston last month for the launch of a support group for a charitable foundation to support the enterprise.

The Oct. 18 launch was held at the Beacon Street home of Tom O'Neill, who has been named the first president of the Boston Irish Abbey Theatre Association as the Dublin-based theatre approaches its 110th anniversary next year.

The Abbey Theatre Foundation is a New York-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that supports the work of the Abbey Theatre in Ireland and in the United States.

"We are delighted to be here with you this evening," said Fiach Mac Conghail, director and CEO of the theatre. "Three remarkable visionaries, W. B. Yeats, Lady Augusta Gregory, and Edward Martyn founded Ireland's national theatre, the Abbey Theatre, before the foundation of the Republic itself. They created a theatre 'to reflect the deeper emotions of Ireland,' and founded a theatre tradition in Ireland that would have a lasting impact throughout the world." He was joined in his Boston visit by Bryan McMahon, Abbey Theatre chairman of the board.

"We remain true to their vision today, and continue to create world-class theatre, nurture new talent, and bring artists and audiences together," Mac Conghail said. "Boston has been very important to the Abbey Theatre at key points in our history and tonight is another important moment in that history. We look forward to sharing some of our many stories with you this evening."

In brief comments to some 30 invited guests, Tom O'Neill said, "We are delighted that so many neighbors and friends could join us tonight to welcome the national theatre of Ireland, the Abbey Theatre, to Boston to reestablish the kinship between our great city and this historic theatre. Rich in history and culture, the Abbey Theatre is committed to the vision of its founders and its tradition of preserving the arts."

"Over the summer, our family had the opportunity to visit the Abbey and see an outstanding performance of 'The Plough and the Stars' by Seán O'Casey. An Irish classic, this was staged brilliantly by the Abbey Theatre. Please join us in welcoming our friends from the Abbey Theatre to Boston and we hope you enjoy



Director and CEO of the Abbey Theatre, Fiach Mac Conghail, Shelly O'Neill, the Irish actor Bosco Hogan, the Irish actress Brid Ni Neachtain, Tom O'Neill, and Bryan McMahon, chairman of the board of the Abbey Theatre.

this special performance."

Two members of the theatre's ensemble, Brid Noughton and Bosco Hogan, gave a performance in the O'Neill's parlor, reading a series of letters exchanged among Yeats, Lady Gregory, Martyn, and others detailing the founding of the Abbey.

The Abbey Players gave their first performance in Dublin in 1904. Their first international tour brought them to the United States in 1911, and the first American performance took place in Boston on Sept. 23 of that year, at the Plymouth Theatre on Eliot Street, now part of Stuart Street in Boston's theater district.

During that first Boston visit, the Abbey performed 18 plays, including works by J.M. Synge, George Bernard Shaw, Lady Gregory, and W.B. Yeats. Before sailing home in March 1912, the company returned to Boston and performed four additional plays.

In a mission statement posted online at [abbeytheatrefoundation.org](http://abbeytheatrefoundation.org), the foundation explains its goals: "Today, under the leadership of Senator Fiach Mac Conghail, the artistic imperative for the Abbey Theatre in the 21st Century remains that of the vision and ambition of our founders with their manifesto 'to bring upon the stage the deeper emotions of Ireland.' To initiate and participate in a national conversation is what W.B. Yeats and Lady Gregory achieved and what we aspire to sustain."

"Our mission is to create world-class theatre that

actively engages and reflects Irish society, and to place the writer and the theatre artist at the heart of the Abbey Theatre. The Abbey produces an annual programme of diverse, engaging, innovative Irish and international theatre and invests in and promotes new Irish writers and artists."

We do this by placing the writer and theatre-maker at the heart of all that we do, commissioning and producing exciting new work and creating discourse and debate on the political, cultural and social issues of the day. Our aim is to present great theatre art in a national context so that the stories told on stage have a resonance with artists and audiences alike.

"Over the years, the Abbey Theatre has nurtured and premiered the work of major playwrights such as J.M. Synge and Sean O'Casey as well as contemporary classics from the likes of Sebastian Barry, Marina Carr, Bernard Farrell, Brian Friel, Frank McGuinness, Thomas Kilroy, Tom Mac Intyre, Tom Murphy, Mark O'Rowe, Billy Roche, and Sam Shepard. We continue to support new Irish writing at the Abbey through our commissioning process and our New Playwrights Programme."

If you wish to support the Abbey Theatre Foundation please contact – [info@abbeytheatrefoundation.org](mailto:info@abbeytheatrefoundation.org), Abbey Theatre Foundation, 420 Lexington Avenue, Suite 356, New York, NY, 10170-0247



### The Kraft Center: Investing in the next generation of leaders in community health...



The Kraft Center for Community Health aims to draw talented clinicians to the field of community health – and, so far, for Dr. Julia Takahashi McManus of Neponset Health Center in Dorchester, its approach has been right on the mark.

“I was trying to figure out what I was going to do next,” recalls Dr. Takahashi McManus, who was at the time finishing up a residency in family medicine in Texas. “And then Dr. Kam from Neponset called to see if I would be interested in the Kraft program.”

“Dr. Kam” is Dr. Lily Kam, the Medical Director at Neponset, with whom Dr. Takahashi McManus, a native of Mexico City, had worked briefly on an electronic medical records project before departing for Texas. And “the Kraft program” in question turned out to be the Kraft Practitioner Program, an innovative new endeavor aimed at helping community health centers recruit and retain top notch physicians and nurses – a proven strategy for ensuring the availability of high-quality, cost-effective health care for the low-income populations that community health centers typically serve.

Indeed, the Kraft Center for Community Health, which was established earlier this year by a generous gift from the Kraft family to Partners HealthCare in Boston, has the explicit goal of expanding access to high quality health care in underserved areas by building a strong workforce of physicians and nurses dedicated to community health. The Kraft Practitioner Program, one of the Kraft Center’s two main “signature” programs, frees up a day per week of time for physicians and nurses already employed by community health centers, which enables them to step away from their clinical responsibilities and take part in leadership and career development activities. Program participants also pursue an independent “quality improvement project” that is of interest to them and a priority for their health center.

For her project, Dr. Takahashi McManus is tackling the problem of prescription medication abuse, which leaders at Neponset have identified as a major issue, particularly among patients suffering from chronic pain.

She is also gaining a lot from the Kraft Practitioner Program’s structured learning opportunities.

“It’s been good,” she said, following a recent day of Kraft Center-organized presentations and discussions. “There are so many things that you want to do, but even in medical school, you never get the chance to learn how.”

It is her hands-on clinical work at Neponset Health Center, however, where approximately 80% of patients live in poverty, which is making the biggest impact.

“You won’t change someone’s diabetes when groceries at the supermarket are \$60 and McDonalds is \$3,” explained Dr. Takahashi McManus, who trained as an ENT specialist in Mexico.

She added: “I always knew the social part of medicine was important, but now I live it.”

#### About the Kraft Center for Community Health

With the support of Partners HealthCare and its founding academic medical centers—Massachusetts General and Brigham and Women’s Hospitals—The Kraft Center for Community Health helps develop the careers of physicians and nurses from throughout the country who are committed to improving the health of our communities. The Kraft Center’s multi-disciplinary programs emphasize an academic-community partnership that integrates clinical, management, policy, and research activities. By taking part in these programs, participants are better equipped to take on the challenges of health care inequality and serve as leaders in the delivery of health care services to the community. To learn more about the Kraft Center for community health visit us at <http://www.kraftcommunityhealth.org>

#### About Neponset Health Center and Harbor Health Services, Inc.

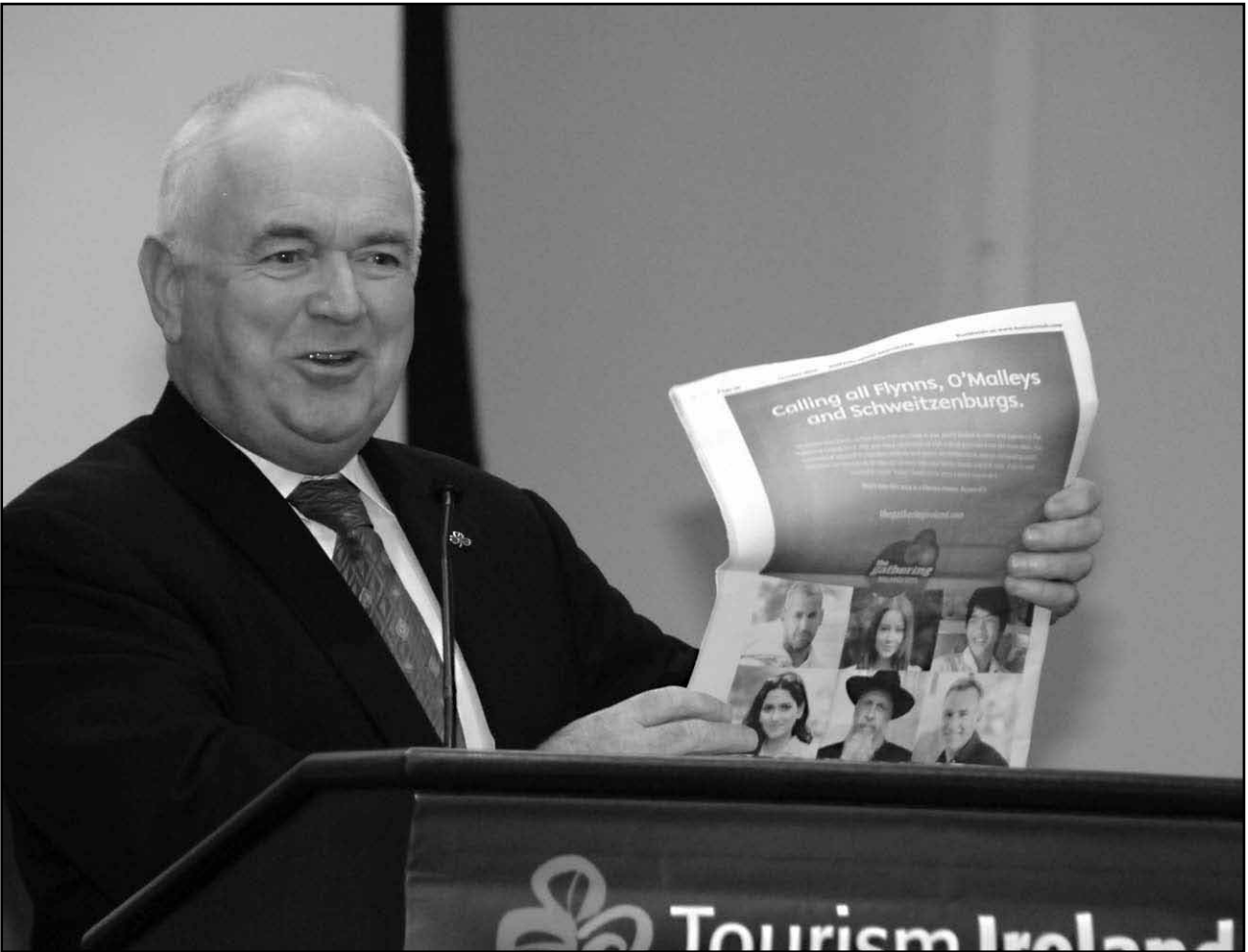
Harbor Health Services, Inc. is a nonprofit, public health agency committed to providing quality, comprehensive health care in urban Boston neighborhoods, the South Shore and Cape Cod communities. Harbor Health owns and operates three community health centers: Geiger Gibson Community Health Center, Harbor Community Health Center-Hyannis and Neponset Health Center. In addition, Harbor Health administers the Elder Service Plan, a program providing care to frail elders in their place of residence, the Women Infant Children Nutrition Program of Dorchester South and the Ellen Jones Community Dental Center. To learn more about Harbor Health Services, Inc. visit us at <http://www.hhsi.us>.



## Touting ‘The Gathering Ireland 2013’

Ireland’s top tourism officials were in Boston this fall to launch an extensive effort to promote Ireland as a vacation destination in the coming year. Minister of Tourism Leo Varadkar was joined by Tourism Ireland chief executive Niall Gibbons and Executive Vice President US and Canada Joe Byrne at a Sept. 28 Boston luncheon attended by some 150 business and Irish community leaders to promote “The Gathering Ireland 2013.”

Described as “the biggest tourism initiative in the history of the state,” the campaign is designed to encourage some of the estimated 44 million Americans with Irish ancestry to plan a trip to their ancestral roots next year. At the luncheon, the tourism officials described an array of plans for special events and festivals, highlighted by an invitation for visitors to march in the annual St. Patrick’s Day parade in Dublin on March 17.



Tourism Ireland chief for North America Joe Byrne displays a copy of the *Boston Irish Reporter* which featured a back page ad promoting The Gathering. *Photos by Margaret Brett Hastings; Tourism Ireland.*



Irish tenor Ciaran Nagle and his wife, Tara Novak entertained at the luncheon.



Leo Varadkar salutes a musical performance.



John McCabe and Jack Forbush, Mt. Washington Bank, Minister Leo Varadkar T.D., and Ireland Consul General to Boston Michael Lonergan.

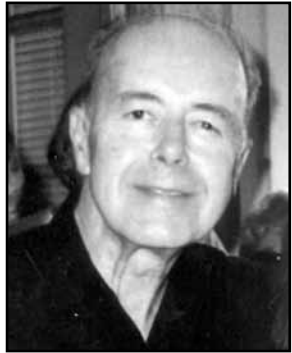


# Boston Irish Reporter's Here & There

By **BILL O'DONNELL**

## Irish Role In Australia Changes –

Almost a century and a half has passed since those early convict ships filled with the Irish sailed from English prisons like Dartmoor and Portsmouth bound for Australia. The Fenians constituted the first wave in the 1860s of a British solution to a British problem: What to do with the overcrowded prisons filled with



**Bill O'Donnell**

minor criminals, many of whom were Irish convicted of petty crimes amidst the anti-Irish fervor of the day? The answer was to create a prison colony in distant Australia to accommo-

date the criminal Irish, in a phrase: to “export” the problems at home. And they did it with a vengeance.

The Irish of today in Australia are no longer in chains, no longer part of a dubious and unjust criminal class. They have emerged as top government officials, prime ministers, and leaders in developing the social and economic dynamic of the country. Adding to the success story of the land down under is a new ingredient direct from Ireland: emigrants freshly arrived with extensive expertise and sophisticated street experience, i.e., former members of the Irish Garda Siochana.

These ex-Garda are fleeing depression-hit Ireland and using their police experience and Aussie good will to join the local police departments. Long decades after their beginnings in the prison colony the Irish are now highly sought after as police officers ready to serve in a growing and healthy economy. Their service time in the garda is recognized with extra pay and swift promotions.

Generally speaking, Australian police pay is better than it is in Ireland and the Irish who sign up and stay in Australia report that the quality of life is equal to or better than that in Ireland. Recruiting for the Aussie police stopped last month but a new drive is expected to start in the new year. Not a bad deal for the descendants of the former prison colony and the people of Australia.

**Top Utah Paper Opts For Obama** – In a stunning announcement ten days ago, Utah's largest paper, the Salt Lake Tribune, blasted fellow Mormon **Willard Romney** and endorsed **President Obama** for reelection. The paper said, “We have watched [Romney] morph into a friend of the far right, then tack toward the center with breathtaking aplomb ... through a pair of presidential debates, Romney's domestic agenda remains bereft of detail and worthy of mistrust.” Summing up its endorsement of the president, the Tribune focused on the concerns about Romney that they share with millions of voters in asking: “Who is this guy, really, and what in the world does he truly believe?”

Utah is not only a state that knows Romney well, but it is a red state, a Republican state, and its leading newspaper doesn't like what it sees of the bug-out former governor of Massachusetts.

**Newest Irish Famine Museum Opens in Connecticut** – Quinnipiac University in Hamden is the site of the latest Great Hunger Museum. University President **John Lahey** opened the museum on October 11 and claims that the campus addition has the world's largest collection of artifacts, visual art, and printed materials related to the famine. The museum focuses on the 1845-1852 famine years when one million Irish died and some two million more left Ireland for America and other countries.

**No Surprise Here – Mary McAleese** got into a heated argument after being insulted by then Boston Cardinal **Bernard Law** when she visited the US on an official visit as Irish President in 1998. Some 14 years after the Irish president's confrontation with the arrogant, imperious archbishop, Mrs. McAleese recounts the clash in a newly published book she has written on Catholic canon law.

It seems that the cardinal, then the pope's consigliere in the US, was unhap-

py about some of the statements made by President McAleese and proceeded to chastise the Irish leader like some erring seminarian. Law told McAleese that he was “sorry for Catholic Ireland to have you as president,” and McAleese responded that she was “the president of Ireland and not just of Catholic Ireland.” McAleese, a lawyer and canon scholar, noted that the cardinal's language and attitude that day was arrogant and nasty. Law then demanded that McAleese and her party sit down to listen to the orthodox view on women's ordination by a conservative Catholic, the Republican **Mary Ann Glendon**.

On her return to Ireland, McAleese confronted the Irish church hierarchy about Law's actions and was assured they had not been briefing the US cardinal. Several years after the Law-McAleese rumble, in December 2002, Law, after blaming the *Boston Globe* and other media for the clerical abuse scandal, resigned, apologizing for “short-comings” and “mistakes” he had made.

**The Best Free Show In Town** – It doesn't cost you anything except a phone call and a reservation and you can be part of the audience at the Kennedy Library Forums, hosted periodically by the Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum at Columbia Point in Dorchester. Since the forums began, the JFK Museum has hosted fascinating discussions by authors, journalists, government officials, Kennedy family members, and newsmakers on the events of today and in the past.

Coming up this fall and winter are discussions by experts on the Supreme Court (Nov. 18); a look at the life and times of the late Speaker Tip O'Neill (Dec. 9); a discussion with US Attorney General Eric Holder (Dec. 11); and the Life of Joe Kennedy (Dec. 12) with Chris Lydon. Reservations (necessary) by phone at 617-514-1643.

**Correction** – The name of the award to former Irish President **Mary Robinson** by President Obama in 2009 was given in error in this space last month. In a White House ceremony, the president presented Mrs. Robinson with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian award.

**Federal Court Hold On BC Tapes Handover** – Up front the news that should put a smile on the face of journalist **Ed Moloney** and his project colleague **Anthony McIntyre** is the temporary stay of the order to hand over Boston College interview tapes to the British government. The stay preventing the handover of the tapes is in effect until November 16.

Aside from whatever the federal court in Boston (which has the tapes) decides later this month, there is a growing consensus that it is doubtful if the US Supreme Court will choose to hear the tapes case. Another experienced observer, former Congressman **Bruce Morrison**, believes that even if the high court opts to consider the case, it would not decide it. That is an odd position for the Yale-trained lawyer to take, or so it seems to me.

Morrison says the BC tapes controversy “requires a political solution: At the end of the day, I'd be surprised if any court in this country stops [the surrender of the tapes to Britain].” I think he has that right.

The former Connecticut Congressman believes that since the BC tapes are not sworn testimony, they won't amount to a “hill of beans in court.” But he noted that the US-UK assistance treaty that underpins the British request for the tapes has been opportunistically exploited by law enforcement officials in Northern Ireland. “It's wrong to enlist the US government under a treaty that was entered into to catch a terrorist threat in real time, not to prosecute 40-year-old cases,” Morrison concluded. Amen!

**Things Looking Up For Ireland** – Ireland Has a “Time”-induced glow these days and the confident stride of the Irish punter might be, to begin with, related to the recent Time Magazine cover story (European edition) on Taoiseach (prime minister) **Enda Kenny** with the cover headline “The Irish Comeback.” Some believe that the magazine might be a bit premature, but the glow persists.

Another positive sign is the upbeat attitude of Irish Finance Minister **Michael Noonan**, who announced that the

country will leave the bailout program next year. The EU and the IMF, following a look at the Irish books, have concluded that the economy is “on track” re this year's budget targets. Yet another piece of good news is the latest shout-out from Barclay's Bank that the reforms are working and that exports reached \$12 billion in August, up a lofty 16 percent. This, says Barclay's, has boosted Ireland's standing on the global stage.

**Bridge To Link Counties Louth & Down** – The bridge proposal had been mooted about for decades but until last month there had been little to show for the effort to build a bridge over the Newry River to link County Louth in the Irish Republic with County Down in the North. However that's history now with Dublin and Belfast agreeing to construction of the span and with the European Union pledging major funding from its border development fund for the \$35 million project.

The Omeath-Warrenpoint bridge will be the first cross-border span since partition. Can you imagine! No small miracle in these times of austerity both north and south. And a grand positive step forward that slashes the distance (in Kilometers and history) between the twenty-six and the six. And don't even begin to talk of its impact on the region's economy and an uptick in social interaction and good will.

I have not been to tiny Omeath nor its neighbor just across the river in too many years, but I remember with a lingering warmth being with my family along the narrow River in Omeath, our then young daughter atop a donkey and looking across to Warrenpoint in the North, and laughing with lovely friends, the Reilys, Minnie, Julia, Karen, and Ronan, and their kin. The custom stations for Ireland and the British are long gone now and with them the security men who checked our car for contraband as we crossed the border into Omeath and the wee county.

My wife Jean and I spent several superb early days of our Irish honeymoon in a simple, mountainside home in Omeath with our loving Aunt Minnie, a hot water bottle, and a view from the kitchen window that the years cannot erase. It was glorious and in all the rich, atrium-surrounded splendor of luxe hotels we have stopped in around the world since then, nothing, absolutely nothing, has ever come close to the wonder of that time in our lives.

God speed and good luck on the bridge! I'm looking forward to at least one spin across the river. I'd really like that.

**Big Bucks and Bad Behavior** – In his GE Czar days they referred to the UMass Amherst graduate as “Neutron” **Jack Welch**. He had a storybook career at the helm of General Electric. He fired employees by the thousands and he made several fortunes for the corporation. When he retired, GE's board and his successor couldn't give him enough riches, but they tried. His estimated platinum parachute was put at \$420 million; his net worth six years ago topped \$700 million. Quite a success story. Now he writes ‘how to’ books to ensure that the public doesn't forget him.

Welch is an avowed enemy of Barack Obama. It is likely that like a great many of his less-educated friends, he thinks that the president is a socialist or a Muslim. When the September jobless numbers came out early last month Neutron Jack tweeted his world and the media that the jobless number that dropped under 8 percent had gone down by some Obama or White House cooking of the books. Jack called the number “unbelievable” and added “these Chicago guys will do anything. Can't debate so change numbers.”

Without a fact to his name or even

a hint that somebody had played with the jobless number, Welch insulted the president of the United States and his campaign staff in Chicago. He denigrated the federal officials and the civil servants who provide security and safety for federal job statistics. For a UMass grad with a PhD from the University of Illinois we should expect more.

Neutron Jack, who knows a great deal about the jobless (he created thousands) is no better, despite his education and corporate parachutes, than South Carolina Congressman **Joe Wilson**, who called President Obama a liar while he was making his State of the Union speech in 2009. There is not an ounce of daylight between that hapless moron Wilson and our better educated and richer Mr. Welch. Welch is ignorant and self-absorbed, and he and Donald “Look at Me” Trump deserve each other. Two big jerks in search of solace and a photo op to burnish their aging egos.

## RANDOM CLIPPINGS

In a last-ditch effort to clean up the scandal in Ireland's Catholic Church, the Vatican has canned Cardinal **Sean Brady** and will award his seat to someone yet to be tapped, but it will not be Dublin Archbishop **Diarmuid Martin**, who is too principled for Benedict XVI. ... The Abbey Theatre is going all digital and in 3 years will have the largest theatrical archive in the world. ... The tax folk in the North are said to be making “real progress” on lowering the corporate tax rate there. ... Derry has been picked by the lonely Planet guide people as one of the top 4 best cities to visit. ... The Kylemore Abbey, which closed its girls school, has a \$300,000 grant to open an education center in the under-utilized former school. ... **Bill Cullen**, of “Penny Apples” book fame and the Irish Apprentice, lost his Renault dealership and is hurting. ... **Sean FitzPatrick** and two other Anglo Irish Bank big shots are going to trial. About time.

Sinn Fein has fallen in the polls and its second-place spot has been taken over by a slowly resurgent Fianna Fail. Fine Gael, under Kenny and his labour pals, still leads the pack. ... The GAA and the British Defense Department will share a pitch together in Lizburn. Good stuff. ... It's beginning to look as if **Elizabeth Warren** has withstood the **Scott Brown** low blows and could be peaking at the right time. ... Aer Lingus announced in October that if its employee pension fund were redeemed this year, members would only receive 4 per cent of what they expected their pensions to be. ... Two new upgraded restaurants to think about in Belfast: the Shu and Mourne Seafood. ... Is Northern Ireland gradually becoming the “gay cure” capital of the world Nut Wing? First **Iris**

**Robinson** and her recommended therapist, and now a consultant promising cures for gays in Banbridge.

Enda Kenny is saying aloud that not only is **Gerry Adams** a former IRA member but that he was also a member of the IRA Army Council. I wonder how those Dail sessions work out between the two? ... Filming will begin early in 2013 on a three-part television drama that will be ready for the TV public next year on the **Charlie Haughey** saga. ... An unnamed security source is telling the *Irish Post* that British intelligence overplayed the IRA Olympic threat and it was much ado about not so much. ... News from Ireland on the Obama-Romney battle: Polls are showing Obama leading Romney if they could vote: 98 percent and 79 percent up for the president. ... Galway Airport, once a key regional airport, has lost \$8 million since the Irish government stopped its subsidy. There are only five employees there now, and no commercial air service. Very sad!

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The Springboard Wider Horizons Group (from Dublin and Belfast) with Pastor Borders (front middle) on their recent visit to the Morning Star Baptist Church in Mattapan. They were accompanied by IIRC staff member Ann-Marie Byrne. This trip is one of many mutual understanding activities that the group take part in during their seven weeks in Boston.

### Solas Awards honor community leaders

Celebrating 23 years by shining a light on leaders who give back – Named from the Gaelic word for “light,” the Solas Awards are presented to leaders whose work in their communities touch and inspire. We are pleased to honor three individuals whose spirit of giving back to the community embodies true leadership. On Dec. 6 at the JFK Library and Museum, the IIRC’s annual Solas Awards Celebration will honor Kevin Kelley, CEO of Ironshore; Beverly Edgehill Ed. D., Vice President of Organizational Development, of the TJX Companies, Inc.; and Vincent Ryan, chairman of Schooner Capital and founder of the Schooner Foundation.

Prior to the award ceremony, a reception will take place in the stunning pavilion featuring gourmet New England fare. Music and entertainment will include the talented Boston City Singers, along with Ciarán Nagle, one of the original Three Irish Tenors, who will be accompanied by his wife, the renowned singer and violinist Tara Novak. Museum exhibits will also remain open for guests to enjoy during the



Sr. Lena Deevy  
Congrats are in order

reception.

Proceeds from the Solas Awards celebration allow the IIRC to assist people from all nations with access to free immigration legal services, social services, citizenship assistance, ESOL classes, job readiness programs and learning exchange programs between the United States and Ireland.

The Solas Awards are a memorable way to commence the holiday season. We invite you to join us and enjoy an evening of music and celebration. Your seat purchase includes access to the Library at 5:30 p.m. For further details please contact Mary Kerr at 617-695-1554.

Congratulations to

Sister Lena Deevy – We are proud and delighted to congratulate Sister Lena on being one of the recipients of the first annual Government of Ireland Presidential Distinguished Service Award for the Irish Abroad. Other recipients of this prestigious honor are the philanthropist Chuck Feeney and former Coca-Cola head Donald Keough.

The award, which is intended to honor outstanding individuals who “have rendered distinguished service to the nation and its reputation abroad,” was given in recognition of Sister Lena’s enormous contribution to the Irish community abroad here in Boston and her work building bridges between communities that support peace and reconciliation on the island of Ireland.

We also congratulate Sister Lena on her lifetime achievement award at the Boston Business Journal 2012 Leaders in Diversity Awards for her work over more than three decades building diversity and bridging communities. We are all very proud of you, Sister Lena.

Take the first step to US citizenship with our weekly clinics – Applying for US citizenship

is easier than you think! With the help of the IIRC’s excellent citizenship services staff, the application and interview become far less daunting. The IIRC is now offering regularly scheduled weekly citizenship clinics that give applicants the chance to get expert advice and application assistance every Thursday afternoon, beginning at 3 p.m. Citizenship specialist John Rattigan and Citizenship Services volunteer Neil Hurley apply their years of experience and meticulous attention to detail to each and every application they review. It is a marvelous opportunity for anyone looking to become a citizen. Legal Permanent Residents who are looking for help with their applications are encouraged to call and register ahead of time but drop-ins are also welcome during the clinic hours. All consultations with Citizenship Services are free of charge. The IIRC also offers classes to help you prepare for the US Citizenship Exam and interview. Call Citizenship Outreach Worker Toni Earls at 617-542-7654, Ext. 26, or send an e-mail to [tearls@iiicenter.org](mailto:tearls@iiicenter.org) for more information or to register.

## Matters Of Substance

### Rediscovering Gratitude at Thanksgiving

By DANIELLE OWEN

*“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.”*

– President John F. Kennedy

A client’s story of gratitude and hope:

“I haven’t always enjoyed the Thanksgiving holiday. When I first moved to the United States from Ireland 10 years ago, I didn’t really understand the holiday much. It generally just allowed me an excuse to get off work and drink for four days. My American friends were always trying to invite me to join in their families’ celebration, but I only ever accepted an invitation once.

“That afternoon, I had arrived to my friend’s home having had at least half a bottle of whiskey, which, at the time, was



Danielle Owen

normal morning for me. Despite being clearly drunk, I was warmly welcomed by my friend’s family. They had all gone to so much trouble preparing their Thanksgiving dinner; even cooking for a couple of days beforehand. I, however, fell asleep in their living room while they all worked away with the final dinner preparations. My friend came to find me and gently wake me, but apparently I was too difficult to rouse.

When I did finally wake up and they said dinner was ready, I shouted in an annoyed tone, “What dinner?” and proceeded to knock over their table lamp and promptly feel asleep again.

“It wasn’t until last year in treatment for my alcohol addiction that my friend told me this story. I remember feeling so ashamed of my behavior and seeing the look on my friend’s face as he recounted my actions. This is what keeps me sober; not the fact that my family had refused to talk to me for years or even a couple of DUI’s, but it was this story that finally woke me up from my denial!

“I have been sober for nearly a year now and I am so looking forward to Thanksgiving because of this holiday that I realized I was addicted to alcohol and that it had made my life so unmanageable. I

can now celebrate my sobriety and my amazingly patient friends who also rejoice in my new life. I celebrate by going to an AA meeting, sharing my story, and helping those who also want recovery. I’m even cooking this year; to show my friends as well as myself how thankful I am for this new awakening.”

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Change is *always* possible, but make sure you have the support you need. We never plan to have problems with alcohol or drugs, but if you think you do or are worried about a loved one, there is somewhere to go to chat about your concerns. Contact Danielle, in confidence and without judgment, at the IIRC at 617-542-7654, Ext. 14, or by e-mail at [dowen@iiicenter.org](mailto:dowen@iiicenter.org).

Danielle Owen is IIRC Director of Wellness and Education Services.

### IMMIGRATION Q & A

## About US passports when time is short

**Q.** I recently became a US citizen but have not yet obtained a US passport (and my foreign passport is no longer valid). I have a family situation that will require me to travel abroad as soon as possible. What do I do?

**A.** Normal processing time for a US passport application is currently around 4-6 weeks, according to the State Department. There is an expedited processing option available, which is estimated to take 2-3 weeks. This option can be used for new passports, renewals, name changes, and the addition of extra visa pages.

In addition to the usual fees totaling \$165 for a new adult passport, expedited processing requires a fee of \$60 plus the costs of an overnight delivery service.

The forms, required evidence, and all other details concerning passport applications are found on the US State Department website at [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov). Click the Passports link and navigate the topics on the left side of the page to find precisely what is needed for adults, minors, and changes to existing passports.

Instead of mailing their applications, those who need a passport for foreign travel taking place in less than 14 days can make an appointment to handle the process in person at a regional passport agency. The mechanics for scheduling an appointment are covered on the State website as well.

Foreign citizens without currently valid passports who urgently need to travel to the US or to leave this country and return should consult the website of their country’s department of foreign affairs or its embassy or consulates in the US. There they will find the information they need on emergency passport issuance. For Irish citizens, the local Irish consulate can be contacted at 617-267-9330 or at [consulategeneralofirelandboston.org](mailto:consulategeneralofirelandboston.org).

Note that, no matter what your country of citizenship, you can save money and aggravation in an emergency by keeping your passport current with at least six months of validity remaining.

For a free, confidential consultation on any aspect of immigration law, visit one of our legal clinics.

These articles are published to inform generally, not to advise in specific cases. Immigration law is always subject to change, and US Citizenship and Immigration Services and the US Department of State regularly amend regulations and alter processing and filing procedures. For legal advice seek the assistance of an IIRC immigration specialist or an immigration lawyer.

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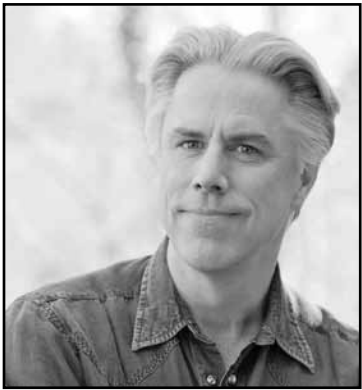
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# BOSTON IRISH REPORTER

BOSTON IRISH ARTS,  
ENTERTAINMENT,  
TRAVEL & MORE



**Jeff McCarthy**  
Man of many roles.

## Playing the Grinch at the Wang

By R. J. DONOVAN  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

When “Dr. Seuss’ How The Grinch Stole Christmas! The Musical” brings its tinsel and bows into The Citi Wang Theatre for a two-week run (November 23-December 9), it’s unlikely you’ll recognize Jeff McCarthy in the lead role.

It’s not that you haven’t seen the six-foot-two baritone before. He’s got 250 theater productions under his belt, eight starring roles on Broadway – including “Les Misérables,” “Chicago,” “Side Show” and “Urinetown” – six feature films, and almost four dozen TV appearances to his credit.

However, to take on the role of The Grinch, he’ll have to slither into a matted fur costume and obliterate his face with green makeup. Isn’t that an actor’s, not to be recognizable?

“It’s an anonymous gig,” Jeff said, laughing, when we spoke by phone during a rehearsal break. “But it’s a blast. And the music is great.”

Describing the transformative power of the costume and the makeup, he said, “It suddenly liberates you. In all sorts of weird ways. We went in to do a radio interview and we had security problems. I didn’t bring my license with me, not that it would have helped, because the picture looks nothing like what I look like in the makeup. But the guard would not let us [in]. And I became . . . fearless. I would never be that way if I hadn’t had the costume on. It’s an interesting experience.”

At The Wang, audiences will have the opportunity to rediscover Dr. Seuss’s time-honored holiday tale of the far-from-merry Grinch. With a heart “two sizes too small,” he plots to steal Christmas from the holiday-spirited Whos down in Whoville. However, through the course of the story, narrated by Max The Dog, he realizes there’s more to Christmas than he first thought. The stage production features a full score, including “You’re A Mean One, Mr. Grinch” and “Welcome Christmas” from the beloved animated TV special.

The original Seuss book, published in 1957, featured black and white drawings. It was when The Grinch made his TV debut in 1966, featuring the voice of Boris Karloff, that the cantankerous curmudgeon became green, thanks to legendary animator Chuck Jones.

In an interesting coincidence, many years later Jones hired

(Continued on page 10)

## Cathie Ryan’s time to look within

By SEAN SMITH  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

It has been an eventful last few years for Cathie Ryan. Among other developments, she moved back to the US after living for nine years in Ireland, got inducted into the Irish American Hall of Fame in her native state of Michigan, was named as Irish Female Vocalist of the Decade by [liveireland.com](http://liveireland.com), and recently released “Through Wind and Rain,” her first album since 2005 – all of this taking place in the 25th anniversary year of her debut as lead singer with Cherish The Ladies, which put her firmly in the spotlight as one of the Irish music scene’s most endearing and talented performers.

So it’s understandable for Ryan to be feeling a little reflective of late, given not only the succession of these and other events but perhaps also the time and circumstances in her life, with a child now well into adulthood and a new community to explore and make her own.

And because Ryan wears her heart not only on her sleeve but also in her music, “Through Wind and Rain” likewise has a certain introspectiveness to it, characterized by songs (most of them contemporary rather than traditional, and two written or co-written by Ryan) that are about taking stock, remembering loved ones, and traveling on in the metaphorical as well as literal sense. It’s also conveyed through the presence of many of Ryan’s friends, such as John Doyle, Seamus Egan, Niall Vallely, Michael McGoldrick, Joanie Madden, Jimmy Keane, and Aoife O’Donovan, as well as her longtime band members Patsy O’Brien and Matt Mancuso.

“I think there is a thematic connection among the songs,” says Ryan, who performed last month at The Burren in Somerville’s Davis Square. “They have to do with loss and other situations and happenings that force you to change. It was an amazing experience to have all these people involved in making the album, to have their love and support behind me.”

The whole reflection/introspection angle might sound like a Debbie Downer kind of listening experience, but it’s not the case. There is plenty of spark and spirit on “Through Wind and Rain,” starting with the first track, “In the Wishing Well,” a composition of Ryan and Noel Lenaghan that contrasts a story of the promise and pain of love with an upbeat, forward-looking mindset (“I love the dichotomy,” says Ryan) and infectious melody, buoyed by Vallely’s concertina, duel bouzoukis by Doyle and Egan, and a thoroughly affable chorus of Doyle, O’Brien, Fiona McBain and Leslie Ritter.

“Oro, Sheandunie Doite (Oro, Burnt Old Man)” and “The Johnny Be Fair Set” – combining the titular song, a comic tale of genealogy and romance, with “Brendan Tonra’s Jig” and two reels (with O’Brien, Mancuso, Keane, Madden, percussionist Brian Melick, and Ryan on bodhran) – also keep the album’s bounce and tempo lively.

Which is not to say that everything else is moribund



Cathie Ryan is back in the US after living in Ireland for nine years.

by comparison. Ryan’s take on her friend Kate Rusby’s “Walk the Road,” once again aided by splendid harmonies from O’Brien, Ritter and McBain, evokes the persevere-against-the-odds sentiment of “Wishing Well,” but adds the virtues of fellowship.

“Walk the Road” segues very well into the next track, “Liberty’s Sweet Shore,” Doyle’s powerful song of Irish immigrants en route to Quebec. Doyle joins Ryan on vocals, Mancuso’s multi-tracked fiddles, and Scott Petito’s cello creating a somber yet graceful undercurrent.

“It’s unusual for me to record songs that are so recent,” says Ryan, “but these two are just

so lovely, and they fit in with the direction the album was taking. I was very grateful to Kate and John for giving me the go-ahead.”

Doyle, incidentally, lends hand and voice to a rather chilling version of “Go From My Window,” a traditional song of night-visiting in which a married woman pleads, in very literary fashion, with her lover not to ruin her domestic tranquility. A motif played by Doyle and Egan, along with bassist Chico Huff and percussionist Steve Holloway, helps ratchet up the suspense.

“We decided to give the song a different feel,” notes Ryan. “Usually it’s sung slowly and

sadly, but we wanted to play up the urgency in the lyrics: She keeps telling him ‘You can’t have a lodging here,’ and he’s obviously not listening to her, so you’re really left wondering what’s going to happen.”

Three other tracks serve to highlight the album’s raison d’être: One is Cape Breton singer-songwriter Laura Smith’s “I’m a Beauty,” which is a gentle, confident broadside against the whole “ravages of time” view on growing older, aided here considerably by Michelle Mulcahy’s tender harp-playing.

“This is the song that made me want to record again. A guy came up to me after a show once and asked me about ‘that woman’s song you did – you know, about beauty.’ I told him that I didn’t think of it as a ‘woman’s song,’ but as a human song, about all of us. And it’s a perfect song for life’s ‘middle passage.’”

Probably the most intensely personal song on the album is “Daddy,” which Ryan wrote about the debilitating effects of alcoholism on a family, as seen from a child’s perspective. In just about anyone else’s hands, “Daddy” might well have been uncomfortably maudlin, even exploitative, but Ryan sings with such honesty and a lack of histrionics that it doesn’t become an issue. And if the subject matter isn’t exactly uplifting, the song’s inclusion on the album was for Ryan a positive outcome in and of itself.

“I wrote the song some years ago,” she explains, “but I just never felt up to recording it. It’s a tough song in many

(Continued on page 15)



Ryan says the songs on her new CD, “Through Wind and Rain,” have a thematic connection: “They have to do with loss and other situations and happenings that force you to change.”



# Playing the Grinch at the Wang

(Continued from page 9)

Jeff to become the voice of the iconic Michigan J. Frog on the WB Network. Now, with Jones gone, Jeff's portraying the The Grinch, with whom Jones became so strongly identified. Plus, he remains good friends with Chuck's daughter.

Raised in California and classically trained, Jeff took to the stage at an early age. In high school he had the chance to perform in Europe, although the company played some unusual locations. "I had this great, great drama teacher and he took us on a tour of Great Britain," he said. "We played in a mental institution up in Scotland where they had to lock us in the dressing rooms when we weren't on stage. And I was playing the fool in this production. So I was the one that all the [patients] wanted, the one they identified with. Some of them were approaching the stage during the performance and had to be led back by security people."

It was also fortuitous that he lived in Santa Maria, California, not far from The Pacific Conservatory of the Performing

Arts. "It was all just luck for me that I grew up in that town, otherwise surrounded by broccoli fields and cattle farmers... the (PCPA Theaterfest) was the biggest theater festival on the West Coast in the 70s. It was bigger than the San Diego Globe... a huge operation.

"I studied there and did a million plays. One of the directors took us on a USO tour all over South East Asia. We did 'Once Upon A Mattress' and a little 30s cabaret show that we played in the DMZ – you know, between North and South Korea. That was amazing. We played Iwo Jima and Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Tokyo, the Philippines, all over the place."

Early in his career, McCarthy worked on the short-lived Broadway musical, "Smile," with music by Marvin Hamlisch. Recalling the late composer, he said, "He was a delightful guy. He remembered everybody he ever met by their name, by their face... he was a special guy in that way. When we had our first 'Smile' party, it was out at his house in The Hamptons. Diane Sawyer was there, Brook

Shields was there, all of these celebrities. He cast a wide net as far as his social life went."

Although "Grinch" will mark Jeff's first professional appearance in Boston, he has maintained a special connection to the city over the past few years. "My daughter graduated from Emerson in May. She's a casting director out in Los Angeles. I've done The Berkshire Festival and I've done Barrington Stage several times, but never played Boston."

It was in Western Massachusetts that Jeff first connected with his Irish past. He said when he was growing up in California, people didn't necessarily pay a lot of attention to family ancestry. "My father would put on a green tie on St. Patrick's Day and that was sort of the extent of it."

However, "at The Berkshire Festival, about 13 years ago, I did a show called 'Brimstone,' which is all about Northern Ireland. ... it was the first time that I keyed into all that. It was an amazing thing how I *felt* the music and the dialect. All of that came very easily, it felt very fa-



Grinch Company

Photobypaparazziappointment.Com

miliar. And then on Broadway, I did 'The Pirate Queen' (based on the life and adventures of 16th century Irish chieftain and pirate Gráinne O'Malley). The producers were Irish and we had a lot of 'Riverdance' dancers involved."

Despite his travels, Jeff admits he's yet to visit Ireland. "I've been to Scotland and Wales and England. That's bound to be my next vacation. I'll finally get over there and take my daughters with me."

In the meantime, the focus is on Seuss. Although he has

played high profile roles ranging from Javert to Agamemnon, Jeff said this particular production is special because, "I've never done anything like this. The Grinch is from the candy bowl for the holiday season."

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

\*\*\*

"Dr. Seuss' How The Grinch Stole Christmas! The Musical," Nov. 23 – Dec. 9, Citi Wang Theatre, 270 Tremont St., Boston. Tickets: 866-348-9738 or [citicenter.org](http://citicenter.org).

## 'He never, ever got tired of the music'

(Continued from page 1)

of the music of his native land. Marginalized even within Ireland itself during his youth, Irish traditional music would attain international popularity and recognition through performers like The Clancy Brothers, The Chieftains, The Dubliners, Planxty, The Bothy Band, De Dannan, Clannad, Christy Moore, Solas, Lunasa, among many others, as well as "Riverdance."

And through it all, Larry Reynolds played his fiddle, whether with family members or an ever-increasing roster of friends, everywhere from the storied Irish dance halls in Roxbury's Dudley Square to intimate (and crowded) sessions in pubs and parlors to festivals attended by thousands.

Reynolds also played a major organizational role in helping to promote and preserve Irish traditional music as a co-founder and chairman of Boston's Hanafin-Cooley branch of the world-wide Irish cultural organization Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann, and, later on, the branch's music school, and as a leader of legendary weekly sessions at the Village Coach House in Brookline Village and, later, the Green Briar Pub in Brighton and The Skellig in Waltham.

Beyond such formal avenues, Reynolds was widely cited as an ambassador, a go-to guy who got things done, especially if it had anything to do with Irish music. And most of all, he was noted for the personal touch with those new to the music, or new to the area (or both), always providing encouragement and advice.

Playing tunes with friends and accepting condolences from well-wishers at The Skellig session less than a week after his father's death, Mike Reynolds did some mental arithmetic and calculated that he and Larry had played "7,000 to 8,000" gigs together. Figure in the gigs the father did without the son, as well as those he played before Mike was born, and the numbers verge on the astronomical.

"He never, ever got tired of the music," said Mike. "It's not easy to be so involved and active as he was. There are plenty of musicians who have gotten burned out, and have had to take some time away -- some never came back to it. But my father kept on and kept on. He just loved it. He fed off it. There would be brand new people in town, and they'd come into the session, and my father would make them feel welcome and practically give them his week's paycheck."

In fact, so great was Reynolds's reputation as an organizer-mover-shaker, his credentials as a musician might be overlooked – except by his family and friends, that is.

"One of the great things about Larry was the broad grasp of traditions he had," said Tommy Sheridan, who began playing with Reynolds in the late 1960s with the Curragh Ceili Band. "He wasn't East Galway, he wasn't Sligo; he was an Irish traditional fiddle player who could play anything, any style you wanted. He put them all together, in a way that only somebody who truly understood them could. He really exemplified the music."

Said Tara Lynch, who became a friend and frequent collaborator of Reynolds through Comhaltas: "For Larry, Irish music was more than jigs and reels. He looked at the broader spectrum: marches, planxtys, polkas, slides and so on. He had a knack for getting to know what people liked, what made them happy, and his technical quality was so good that he could play in those different styles."

Born in the town of Ahascragh – northwest of Balinasloe and also the birthplace of fiddler Martin Byrnes and award-winning singer Sean 'ac Donncha – Reynolds was the next-to-last of 13 children, and the beneficiary of assistance from brother Harry, who bought 10-year-old Larry his first fiddle, and sister Betty, who paid for him



Larry Reynolds is carried to rest from St. Jude Church in Waltham, Oct. 11, 2012.

Photo by Bill Brett

to take lessons from Mabel West. But while Reynolds grew up in a household filled with music and dance, as a young man he found many Irish turning up their noses at such traditions. As Reynolds would recount to Susan Gedutis Lindsay for her book *See You at the Hall: Boston's Golden Era of Irish Music and Dance*, he would carry his fiddle under his coat to avoid ridicule from those who considered traditional music as emblematic of an impoverished, backward land.

"If people'd hear you playing traditional music, a jig or a reel," Reynolds recalled, "they'd sometimes be laughing at you."

Emigrating to Boston in 1953, however, Reynolds found a very different, and quite cosmopolitan, atmosphere. He became immersed in the Dudley Street dance hall scene, where the Irish music with which he was so familiar became enmeshed with American styles like the tango and foxtrot. But there were plenty of ex-pats, or Americans of Irish descent, around who could play the old tunes as well as the new stuff, and he befriended musicians like Paddy Cronin, Joe Derrane, Brendan Tonra, Mickey Connolly, George Shanley, and many others who would become legends in Boston's Irish music annals.

He also made the acquaintance of a talented pianist named Phyllis Preece, whom he married in 1954. They had six boys – Larry Jr., Mike, James, Sean, Kevin, and Brian (deceased) – and a daughter, Deborah, and quite often, a house full of friends, many of them musicians.

Not surprisingly, the Reynolds children had plenty of exposure to Irish music and dance, and quite a lot of opportunity to explore them for themselves. Mike Reynolds recalls taking Irish step-dance lessons with his brothers as a young schoolboy, until he had enough. But when one of his brothers got interested in taking up music, Mike thought he might like to as well.

"I had to practice half an hour every day – do you know how long half an hour is for an eight-year-old kid? – and then my father would call me to him and he'd say, 'Play the tune,' and he'd tell me what I did right or wrong," Mike said. "Later on, my brothers and I would go out with my father to the halls and the social clubs where there would be a ceili or some other event with music. We'd sit in with the other musicians, who all knew my father, of course. And that's where I learned the music – sitting next to my Dad."

By about that time in his life, Mike Reynolds and his siblings had an inkling of how important a figure their father was regarded in the community – the guy you went to if there was something that needed to happen, a cause that needed support.

"There always seemed to be about three different stacks of raffle tickets around the house, which we would go out and sell around the neighborhood," Mike said. "It didn't matter what the cause was, he would get behind it. The Irish are great for gathering around those who need help."

Added Sheridan, "Larry didn't say 'No' very often. Then, you'd get the call from him: 'Would you do me a favor and help me with this?' Your answer, because it was Larry, would be 'Whatever you want.'"

In 1969, it was Sheridan who needed help. He had joined the Curragh Ceili Band a couple of years before, but after some of the members left, he found himself looking for replacements. "My first call was to Larry," said Sheridan, who had first met Reynolds playing for an Irish dance recital, where the two "had the best time." It was the beginning of a successful and enjoyable partnership.

"Larry was always bringing in someone to play with the band, like Seamus Connolly [with whom Reynolds would eventually host a weekly radio show on WNTN] or other young kids he'd seen," Sheridan said. "He was constantly out there to make connections. For him, the gigs we would do weren't about bringing in a band – it was about bringing in the music."

Of course, adds Sheridan, the music wasn't just Irish. "We'd play everything from dance to weddings to birthdays and more, and you needed a broad repertoire that included rock and country and so on. Larry could do it all."

Reynolds's brand of leadership and sociability was critical in helping the local Comhaltas branch, which he co-founded in 1975, become one of the largest and most active in the world. He headed up the branch's ceili band, which gained prominence well beyond the Boston area, and arranged to have the branch's monthly get-togethers at the Canadian American Club, which became a magnet for local and visiting musicians alike.

Reynolds was inducted into the Comhaltas Hall of Fame, to go with the honors he received from the Irish Cultural Centre of New England, Harvard University's Celtic Studies Departments, and *Irish America Magazine*, which in 2006 included him in its list of Top 100 Irish-Americans.

One of his most important Comhaltas-related achievements was helping establish the branch's music school, thereby ensuring that young (and even not so young) people would learn the tradition from some of the Boston area's most accomplished musicians.

"He was very clear in his belief that, for the music and the culture to survive, there needed to be a school," said Lynch, who served as the school's music director. "He knew there were a lot of challenges in teaching kids, and getting them hooked, so he would always be around to meet and encourage them. He had a great way with kids."

Then again, Larry Reynolds had a great way with just about anyone. The most lasting image of Reynolds for Sheridan and others was when he would welcome a new arrival to a session, especially a person with relatively little experience in Irish music. He would ask the newcomer where he or she was from, how long he or she had been playing, and then invite him or her to start a tune.

"So the person would name a tune, and Larry would say, 'Oh, that one,'" recalled Sheridan. "That's one of my favorites."

Sean Smith writes regularly on Irish music and dance for the *Boston Irish Reporter*.





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

– SEAN SMITH

**BCMFest set to mark first decade** – Boston's grassroots celebration of local Irish, Scottish, Cape Breton, and other Celtic music will mark its 10th year when BCMFest (Boston's Celtic Music Fest) takes place on January 11 and 12, 2013.

The festival will showcase several dozen musicians, singers and dancers, all with ties to the Boston music scene, during the two-day event, which is held in the heart of Harvard Square. BCMFest gets underway

on Jan. 11 with its traditional kick-off concert in Club Passim and the Boston Urban Ceilidh – BCMFest's Celtic dance party – at The Atrium, 50 Church St. Saturday's "Dayfest" will feature children's and family entertainment at Passim in the morning, followed by an afternoon of concerts and other events on four different stages in Passim and the nearby First Parish Church, Cambridge, at 3 Church St.

A Saturday night finale concert in First Church, with Cape Breton fiddler Kimberley Fraser, Highland Dance Boston, and other special guests – including "A Celtic Sojourn" host Brian O'Donovan, who will emcee – will cap the commemoration of BCMFest's first decade.

Performers for 2013 include: The Deadstring Ensemble, George Keith & Sean Gannon, Hanneke Cassel & Mike Block, The Coyne Family, Katie McNally & Eric McDonald, Bronwyn Keith-Hynes, Joey Abarta, Core 4, Liz Hanley, Mairin Ui Cheide, Skylark, Belclare, Corvus, Kira & Cliff McGann, Armand Aromin & Dan Accardi, Diane Taraz, Michael O'Leary, Ivonne Hernandez & Adrianna Ciccone, Bob Bradshaw, Laura Cortese, Emerald Rae, Carraroe, Matt Heaton & The Electric Heaters, The Whiskey Boys & Shinbone Alley, Molly Pinto Madigan, The Boston Scottish Fiddle Club, The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society of Boston,

The Bell Family, and Kyte MacKillop & Friends.

A look at some of the highlights of BCMFest 2013:

• **Friday night's kick-off concert** at Club Passim, "New Tunes from Boston: Boston's Celtic Composers," spotlights some of the area's young, innovative musical talent.

• **The Boston Urban Ceilidh**, the Friday evening dance party that is always one of BCMFest's most popular events, will feature live music by Core 4; Kimberley Fraser, Emerald Rae & Rachel Reeds; and Laura Cortese & The Boston Urban Ceilidh Band. No experience necessary – all dances will be taught.

• **BCMFest's Saturday "Dayfest" begins** in the morning at Club Passim with songs, storytelling and other entertainment geared toward children and families.

• "Dayfest" also includes participatory dance and jam sessions in The Attic of First Church.

• Among the special events for BCMFest 2013 will be "The Stars of Munster," a tribute to legendary Irish musicians Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford; "Surf Sligo," a mash-up of traditional Irish music and 1960s "surf rock"; and "Move the Rolling Sky," which recalls the influential folk-rock bands Steeleye Span, Fairport Convention, and Pentangle.

BCMFest began in January 2004, the creation of Irish flutist Shannon Heaton and Scottish-style fiddler Laura Cortese, who believed Boston should celebrate the richness and diversity of its Celtic music with a festival that would be largely run by musicians and volunteers. For the first two years, BCMFest was held at locations in Somerville's Davis Square and Club Passim, and since 2006 has taken place largely in Harvard Square. BCMFest also has held events throughout the rest of the year, including a monthly series at Club Passim, a music cruise in Gloucester Harbor, and an annual concert at the Westford Museum.

In 2011, BCMFest officially became a program of Passim, which has been a venue for, and a supporter of, the festival from the beginning.

"It's hard to believe 10 years have passed," says Heaton. "Laura and I are delighted that BCMFest has struck a chord among such a wide variety of traditional musicians, and it has been humbling and inspiring to see how the community has gotten behind the project for a decade. So many musicians, parents and friends have contributed time, energy and creative ideas – and all of this support has helped the festival evolve and grow. And, at the end of the day, it is one hot display of music and dance talent."

Adds Cortese, "We continue to be impressed by the quality and creativity we see among the musicians, singers, dancers and others who perform at BCMFest each year. It's a true representation of the music community: full-time touring professionals; musicians who work 'day jobs' and go off to play sessions or concerts on evenings and weekends; people with strong personal and familial roots in these music traditions; and enthusiastic high school and college students who help ensure these traditions will go on."

Heaton and Cortese also credit Passim for its role in BCMFest's development: "Passim has been an invaluable resource for folk and acoustic music for decades, not only as a concert venue but for its music school and community outreach. We're honored to be part of this organization."

All information about BCMFest 2013, including ticket prices, festival schedule and performer updates, will be available at [passim.org](http://passim.org).



The fiddle ensemble Childsplay will perform in Lexington later this month and in December.

## Childsplay en route to Lexington this month

Childsplay, the all-star fiddle ensemble featuring many musicians with ties to the Boston area, makes its annual visit later this month to the National Heritage Museum in Lexington and perform three concerts.

The group – whose repertoire is taken mainly from Irish, Scottish, Cape Breton, French Canadian, Scandinavian, and American folk traditions – will appear at the museum on Nov. 29 at 7:30 p.m., then return on December for two shows, at 3 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Childsplay is the creation of Cambridge violin-maker Bob Childs, whose handiwork is used by all the fiddlers and violists in the ensemble. Among the many fiddlers who have taken part in the annual Childsplay concerts are Laurel Martin, Sheila Falls, Hanneke Cassel, Amanda Cavanaugh, Sam Amidon, Mark Simos, Mary Lea, Dave Langford, Pete Sutherland, and Katie McNally, as well as Childs himself. Childsplay also has featured other instrumentalists, including Shannon Heaton (flute, whistle, accordion), Ariel Friedman (cello), Kathleen Guilday (harp), Keith Murphy (guitar, piano) and Ralph Gordon (string bass), and dancers like Kieran Jordan and Nic Gareiss.

The group is known equally for its array of fine singers, notably long-time member Lissa Schneckenburger – who this year will assume lead vocal duties for the departed Aoife O'Donovan – along with Heaton and Murphy, among others.

This year's Childsplay tour will include a special tribute to one-time music director John McGann, who died in April.

Also in the works for Childsplay is a new album

– their sixth – that will be produced by Childs and Liz Carroll, another past performer in the group. In addition, according to Childs, plans are being made for the group to record a new concert DVD; the first, "Fiddles, Fiddlers and a Fiddlemaker" (released in early 2011), combined footage of Childsplay's 2009 performance in Somerville Theater and interviews with several members.

For more about Childsplay, and for links to ticket information and reservations for the concerts at the National Heritage Museum, see [childsplay.org](http://childsplay.org).

SEAN SMITH

## Boston Public Schools Showcase Series

<div style="text-align: center;"> <h3 style="margin: 0;">West Zone Schools</h3> <p style="margin: 0;">Wed., Nov. 7, 2012</p> <p style="margin: 0;">6:00 to 8:00 p.m.</p> <p style="margin: 0;"><b>The English High School</b> 144 McBride St. Jamaica Plain</p> </div>	<div style="text-align: center;"> <h3 style="margin: 0;">East Zone Schools</h3> <p style="margin: 0;">Thurs., Nov. 8, 2012</p> <p style="margin: 0;">6:00 to 8:00 p.m.</p> <p style="margin: 0;"><b>Dever/McCormack K-8 School</b> 315 Mt. Vernon St. Dorchester</p> </div>
<div style="text-align: center;"> <h3 style="margin: 0;">North Zone Schools</h3> <p style="margin: 0;">Thurs., Nov. 15, 2012</p> <p style="margin: 0;">6:00 to 8:00 p.m.</p> <p style="margin: 0;"><b>75 Malcolm X Blvd.</b> Roxbury <b>Madison Park High School</b></p> </div>	<div style="text-align: center;"> <h3 style="margin: 0;">Citywide High Schools</h3> <p style="margin: 0;">Thurs., Dec. 6, 2012</p> <p style="margin: 0;">6:00 to 8:00 p.m.</p> <p style="margin: 0;"><b>75 Malcolm X Blvd.</b> Roxbury <b>Madison Park High School</b></p> </div>

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**Location:** The Irish Cultural Centre



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**December 20 & 21, 8pm**

**December 22, 3pm & 8pm**

### Rockport, MA

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**December 17, 4:30pm & 8pm**

### Worcester, MA

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**December 18, 7:30pm**

### Providence, RI

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Host Brian O'Donovan will be sharing the excitement of the 10th anniversary of ***A Christmas Celtic Sojourn*** via a special edition of the production broadcast live to public radio stations around the nation on Sunday, December 16th. **Join us - either in person at the Cutler Majestic Theatre - or live on the radio on 89. 7, Sunday, December 16th, at 6pm!**

**Our 2012 Program Features:** *From Ireland, Solas* • Harpist **Catriona McKay** and Fiddler **Chris Stout**  
*From Scotland, Alyth McCormack* • Four-part Harmonies from **Navan** • Cellist **Natalie Haas**  
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Calendar of Events

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All clinics are first-come, first-served. For complete details, please call (617) 542-7654.

November 12th
Free Legal Clinic
6:30PM
Green Eater Pub, 304 Washington St., Brighton
All clinics are first-come, first-served. For complete details, please call (617) 542-7654.

November 20th
Free Legal Clinic
IIC, 100 Franklin St., Boston
All clinics are first-come, first-served. For complete details, please call (617) 542-7654.

November 28th
Free Legal Clinic
6:30PM
St. Marks Parish, 1725 Dorchester Ave., Dorchester
All clinics are first-come, first-served. For complete details, please call (617) 542-7654.

December 4th
Free Legal Clinic
IIC, 100 Franklin St., Boston
All clinics are first-come, first-served. For complete details, please call (617) 542-7654.

December 6th
Solas Awards Celebration
5:30PM
John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum
For complete details or to purchase tickets, please call Mary Kerr at (617) 895-1554.


December 16th
Free Legal Clinic
6:30PM
Green Eater Pub, 304 Washington St., Brighton
All clinics are first-come, first-served. For complete details, please call (617) 542-7654.

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John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum

Thursday, December 6

5:30 PM

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CD ROUNDUP

BY SEAN SMITH  
**The Ollam, “The Ollam”** – John McSherry is one busy fella these days. On the heels of the release earlier this year of “Idir,” as part of the trio At First Light, the Lunasa co-founder now unveils his newest undertaking, a collaboration with Detroit natives Mike Shimmin and Tyler Duncan (and yes, that is a third “l” in “Ollam”).

On this album, McSherry (uilleann pipes and whistles) brings his sense of musical adventure to play with the equally innovative-minded Shimmin (drums, percussion) and Duncan (uilleann pipes, whistles, guitar, electric piano), who are members of the Irish trad/jazz fusion band Millish. The result is a layer cake of traditional and contemporary concepts and styles: whistles and pipes in dynamic, neo-trad runs, jazz-funk keyboard riffs and fills, breezy acoustic guitar solos, and brisk percussive backing. At times, it sounds like a low-key, stripped-down version of Moving Hearts in their post-Christy Moore era.

The second track, “The Bell” – which follows a brief “Prollogue” (the triple-“l” thing is a motif throughout the album) – establishes the album’s premise. Duncan lays down a series of soft two-beat chord progressions on guitar, on top of which McSherry plays his characteristically dexterous low whistle in what sounds like straightforward 6/8, underscored by Shimmin’s intermittent bodhran. Then McSherry begins to tinker with

the tune structure, improvising and bending notes while electric piano and a slightly more elaborate drum accompaniment filter in – and then we’re back to the guitar chords again. Just when you think you’ve discerned a pattern, McSherry drops out while guitar, electric piano and bass bounce off each other, and when he comes back in the time signature changes briefly into 4/4 before suddenly reverting to the previous one, leading into the guitar chord sequence again just before the end.

And that’s how it goes: The trio deliberately eschews the traditional (in every sense of the word) Irish tune format, so don’t listen for “A” and “B” parts because they just don’t emerge; instead, you get choruses, pre-choruses and bridges. McSherry’s gyrations on “The Folly of Wisdom,” for example, transition into a delicate, bell-like electric piano solo over a rockin’ guitar-drum combo; likewise, “The Tryst After Death” – which begins with solemn electric piano and tick-tock drum rhythm – becomes an exciting, accentuated pipes and whistle duet that develops into an increasingly tense stand-off between electric piano and guitar, Shimmin’s drums and cymbals building up the pressure until it breaks off into a reprise of the piano-drum pattern from the beginning.

This all may seem very cerebral and high-concept as described in print, but there’s definitely an accessible informality to the sound. Give it a listen, and don’t sweat that extra “l.”



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# Cathie Ryan's time to look within

(Continued from page 1) ways, and so I'm glad now that I was able to put it on the album. It was time."

The album's final song ("The Johnny Be Fair Set" is technically a bonus track) is, quite literally, a benediction: "May the Road Rise to Meet You," by Roger and Camilla McGuinn (yes, that's the same Roger McGuinn from The Byrds). While the refrain will be very familiar to anyone who has spent time among the Irish (or set foot in an Irish gift shop), the McGuinns' verses seek to locate it more in the realm of human experience, and Ryan – again with an assist from Mulcahy – elevates the song beyond kitsch.

"Nobody had ever covered the song before," she says. "I loved the idea of ending the album with a blessing, and this was perfect."

"Through Wind and Rain" shows that whatever contemporary influences there may be in Ryan's music, she is solidly versed in Irish tradition and history, thanks in no small part to her immigrant parents, Tim and Mary, of Tipperary and Kerry, respectively. Tim in particular stands out in Ryan's memory for the way he not only taught her what songs to sing and how to sing them, but also the importance of "honoring" them, as she puts it.

"One of the first songs my father taught me was 'The Old Bog Road,' by Teresa Brayton. He made me read the lyrics, so I could understand the Great Hunger, what it meant and how it affected Ireland. It was very important to him that I understand the background of why that song came to be, why it meant so much to the Irish. And he would teach me the phrasing, because that was important, too: 'This is where you put the pause.'"

Ryan acknowledges that her father was a great teacher, but a tough critic: "As a girl, I would sing in the basement because I didn't want him to hear me. He didn't compliment my singing until I was over 30 -- 'You did a good job.' Even when I was singing professionally, he'd tell me something like 'You're oversinging.' 'Dad,' I'd say, 'there were

no monitors on the stage.' 'Doesn't matter. You need to find a way to sing quietly.'"

Spending time in Ireland with her grandparents, Ryan learned more about the song tradition and singing, but also about the art of storytelling, and the great store of folklore and mythology in Ireland. Joining The Gaelic League and Irish American Club in her native Detroit deepened her immersion in Irish tradition, but Ryan also notes the other influences she picked up in her youth and young adulthood, notably Appalachia, country, even Motown.

Moving to New York to attend Fordham, she met, performed with, and married Sligo singer Dermot Henry, who added more layers to her knowledge of Irish song and the tradition from which it arose. The marriage didn't last, but their connection has – Ryan regularly performed and recorded songs she learned from Henry and makes a point of acknowledging his contribution to her work.

By 1987, Ryan had made enough of an impact on the New York Irish music scene to attract the attention of one Joanie Madden of the groundbreaking all-female Irish band Cherish The Ladies, who asked Ryan if she'd like to join them. This was no small consideration for Ryan, by then a single mother

of a young child. Still, the offer was too good to pass up, so for practices and gigs she would hire a sitter or, if worse came to worse, simply bring him along.

"I remember after the first gig with them, we were all jumping up and down in the ladies' room, saying 'Yes, it works!' I will always value the years I spent with them. I honestly think the band did pioneer change, especially for women, in Irish music. It wasn't a bunch of girls in ball gowns looking all dainty, but a group of women up there who were playing the songs and the tunes. This definitely had an impact on how Irish music was perceived; it wasn't just a man's show any more."

Joining Cherish The Ladies brought her many new friendships, and one of the most durable and meaningful was with Bridget Fitzgerald, the band's original singer, who now lives in the Boston area.

"I love Bridget. She gave me all kinds of encouragement, and in particular she inspired me to sing in Irish. She is one of the big reasons I enjoy going to Boston, which is such a great place – full of singers and musicians I love to be with, because they're so generous and open."

As much as she loved playing with the band, after eight years, Ryan decided it was time to strike out on her own. "I just

felt like I wanted to have control over my schedule, and to work on things I was really looking to try. There was certainly no ill will involved – I still get together with Joanie and the band every so often. And, of course, Joanie is on the new album."

Catching on as a solo artist took some time, though. Ryan, however, found yet another friend and mentor in the legendary Tommy Makem, who invited her to sing on his 1995 PBS Christmas special.

"Tommy was so wise about this business," she recalls. "He told me it was going to be hard, but he was very supportive in many ways, whether it was sending me songs or having me on the Christmas show."

"Tommy, along with the Clancys, were so important to all of us, really. They brought an awareness, and a respectability, to ethnic music – really carved that road for us to follow. They made it possible for other artists of Irish music to be able to stand up and perform at a place like Carnegie Hall."

The following year saw Ryan make her first solo CD and go on her first tour, and she was well on her way to becoming one of the most popular and acclaimed Irish American singers of her generation.

As rewarding as her singing career has been, there is another aspect of her professional life that

may be overlooked, but which she feels is equally important: her vocation as a teacher. Ryan did, after all, graduate summa cum laude in English literature and secondary education from City University of New York, and then taught composition and literature at Lehman College in the Bronx until she began touring. But she never lost the love of teaching, and in fact she has had quite a few opportunities to indulge her pedagogical side through festival workshops or in other contexts, such as the study tours she co-lead to Ireland. In addition to Irish singing, she'll discuss Irish mythology and folklore, or about the value of arts in education.

"I love being able to talk about the myths and the folklore, and how it's all linked into the songs. Even in the 21st century, you can appreciate the connections to this ancient landscape. It's like Frank Harte said: The songs are 'old ghosts in search of a voice.'"

Working with children is a special treat, says Ryan, who has taken part in the Lincoln Center Arts in Education repertory.

"The kids have the music in them, they have the voices, and you have to give them a chance to get to know this part of themselves. The teachers at Lincoln Center have had the kids take one of my songs and rewrite it to

reflect the experiences of their own lives and families. I think it's wonderful, because it inspires the kids to think, 'OK, what's *our* music?'"

Ryan thinks, constantly, about what her music is, where it's going, and how she's going to get it there. Nine years ago, she decided these kinds of deliberations would work best in Ireland, and she moved to the Cooley Peninsula in County Louth; but in May, she returned to the US, settling a little north of New York City.

"It's been a huge adjustment," she says. "I went from a two-bedroom cottage by the shore, with sheep on one side, to a place where the window looks out onto a brick wall. I miss the community I had in Louth, very close-knit – everybody was there for each other, and people would think nothing of popping in. But ultimately, it seemed like this was a change I needed to make."

The economic landscape, particularly for folk music performers, is noticeably different than when she last lived in the US, yet Ryan is not about to give way to negativity.

"When all is said and done, I play music, with my good friends Matt and Patsy, and I get to share it with so many other people, some of whom I've known for years. How can I not like that?"



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By JUDY ENRIGHT  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

One of many things I love about Ireland is that each time you visit, you are likely to be surprised by something that you haven't before seen or experienced. Each season and location brings its own set of special delights and events.

**LOUGH INAGH**  
This fall, I visited Lough Inagh Lodge Hotel ([loughinaghlodgehotel.ie](http://loughinaghlodgehotel.ie)) in Connemara – my favorite small hotel and a convenient jumping off spot for photographic forays into the stunningly beautiful surrounding area. The hotel has 13 double bedrooms, is comfortable and welcoming, and the food is delicious.

The first time I stopped there this fall, it was the last fishing weekend of the season and the hotel was jammed with men and women decked head-to-toe in waterproof gear who braved the rainy, chilly weather to join their ghillies in search of the biggest and best fish. The renowned Lough Inagh fishery includes Inagh and Derryclare loughs and a river at the top of the Ballynahinch system and is an immensely popular fishing spot.

After the fishermen left, a group of hardy New Englanders – from Newton, Westport, and Dartmouth, MA, as well as several from Rhode Island – spent several nights at Lough Inagh. They were members of a VBT (Vermont Bicycle Tours) 10-day ride through the Burren, Aran Islands, and, ultimately, Connemara with a final overnight in Dublin. The ride is characterized as “easy to moderate” and the members appeared to be enjoying themselves tremendously in spite of the weather.

Pat Sheehan, from Newton, said, “Everything here is so beautiful. It's just beautiful scenery and there's beauty at every turn in the road.” Jack Brady, from Lincoln, R.I., added that the sights they'd seen in the Burren and Aran Islands, “were not what I expected of Ireland from looking at travel brochures. We often stopped to talk to the local people and they were so friendly.”

In the evening, the group and other guests were entertained musically by two talented Joyce brothers – John,

16, and Brendan, 14 – and their mother, Una, from Recess. The boys played instruments and danced and Una sang several emotional Irish ballads. VBT's two guides joined in the fun too – Brian sang a song or two and Josey joined Una in spirited Irish dancing.

For more information on VBT's extensive list of varied walking and biking tours in Ireland and elsewhere, visit [vbt.com](http://vbt.com). The company is headquartered in Bristol, VT.

**BALLYHAUNIS AND WESTPORT**

Isn't it interesting to note that Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo, was recently named Ireland's “most cosmopolitan town?” Hard to believe that Dublin, Cork City, or Galway didn't top that list!

Figures released by the Central Statistics Office show that Ballyhaunis has the highest percentage of non-Irish nationals living there – 42 percent of the population. The town boasts the only mosque in Co. Mayo and there are many Muslims who have lived in Ballyhaunis for decades, initially drawn by the Halal meat-processing plant that opened there about 30 years ago.

Down the road apiece, Retail Excellence Ireland (REI) recently cited Westport, Co. Mayo, as the top place to live and shop. After the results of 16,000 surveys were tallied, Westport was named the best out of “100 Best Towns and Cities in Ireland.” Killarney, Co. Kerry, was second. Other towns in the top 10 included Listowel, Co. Kerry; Clonakilty, Co. Cork; Dungarvan, Co. Waterford; Ashbourne, Co. Meath, and Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan.

And, that wasn't Westport's only honor recently. The town recently won *The Irish Times* newspaper's designation as the best place to live in Ireland.

If you haven't been to Westport, it's well worth a visit for interesting shops and restaurants and just for a walk around the beautifully designed and laid-out town. The Georgian style community was designed in the 18th century by James Wyatt and is very well maintained and decorated with colorful summer and fall blooming flowers along the quay and around the Octagon on James Street.

Streets and sidewalks are clean and there's



Brendan Joyce, left, 13, playing the tin whistle, and his brother, John, 16, from Recess, Co. Galway, entertained guests at Lough Inagh Lodge Hotel, Connemara, in October. Both also danced. Their mother, Una, is an accomplished singer and shared several Irish ballads with the appreciative guests.

Judy Enright photos



Above, this hardy group of cyclists, riding through Connemara with Vermont Bicycle Tours, posed outside Lough Inagh Lodge Hotel in Recess, Co. Galway, where they spent several nights. Right, John Joyce from Recess, Co. Galway, shows Pat Sheehan from Newton, MA, some Irish dance steps. John, an award-winning dancer, and his brother, Brendan, and their mother, Una, entertained the Vermont Bicycle Tours' (VBT) guests at Lough Inagh Lodge Hotel in Connemara.

ample parking in several pay-to-park lots behind the Bridge and James streets and sometimes, if you're lucky, you can even find a place on the street. But those spots require more parallel parking skills than I possess, so I head for the parking lots.

**TIDBITS**

*The Irish Times* reports that the price of potatoes, long an Irish staple, rose 177 percent between August 2011 and last August. The newspaper said this year's wet weather during the growing season resulted in a high incidence of blight because farmers couldn't spray when it was so wet. Consequently, potato yields were adversely

affected and the price rose 177 percent. Meanwhile, egg prices rose more than 11 percent and cereal rose by 30 percent while milk prices decreased by 13.6 percent.

Another item of interest – this reported in *The Mayo News* – was the appearance of a male Belted Kingfisher – native to North America – in the six-acre Victorian walled garden at Kylemore Abbey in Connemara. The sighting attracted scores of birdwatchers because the Belted Kingfisher was last seen in Ireland almost 30 years ago. This recent arrival was credited to the Gulf Stream, which probably caught the bird in strong wind currents as it tried to migrate south, and carried it to Ireland.

The magnificently restored gardens at Kylemore continue to attract unusual natural phenomena, the newspaper said. Englishman Mitchell Henry built Kylemore and the walled gardens as a gift for his wife in 1867. The property passed through a series of owners after Henry until finally being bought in 1920 by a community of Benedictine nuns from Ypres, Belgium, who operated a girls' school there until 2010.

**CASTLEBAR SHOWS**



If you will be in the West and are a fan of Jedward (John and Edward Grimes, the singing 21-year-old blond twins) you will want to know that they have planned a show at the Royal Theatre in Castlebar, Co. Mayo, on Fri., Nov. 2. On Thurs., Nov. 15, Dublin folksinger Damien Dempsey will present his “Almighty Love” show there. Ireland's national ballet company, Ballet Ireland, will present “The Nutcracker” at the Royal on Dec. 11.

For details on these and other shows, contact [RoyalTheatre.ie](http://RoyalTheatre.ie).

**MORE FUN THINGS TO DO**

The 57th Corona Cork Film Festival runs from Nov. 11-18. See [corkfilmfest.org](http://corkfilmfest.org) for more.

In Letterkenny, Co. Donegal, from Oct. 30-Nov. 4, Irish cultural heritage will be showcased through a program that includes sessions, concerts, seminars, work-

shops, lectures, and visual arts. Top sean-nós singers, local and visitors, young and old, will hone their musical skills to compete in sean-nós singing, sean-nós dancing, violin, uilleann pipes, harp, duets and much more. For details, see [antoireachtas.ie](http://antoireachtas.ie)

The Ardee Baroque Festival is scheduled for Ardee, Co. Louth, from Nov. 16-18. This baroque festival prides itself on quality music, evocative venues, and a friendly and festive atmosphere. It features a diverse range of performers. For more information, visit [create-louth.ie](http://create-louth.ie)

**TRAVEL**

Be sure to check Tourism Ireland's informative website - [discoverireland.com](http://discoverireland.com) - for special events and activities taking place in Ireland when you visit. And, check out Aer Lingus ([aerlingus.com](http://aerlingus.com)) and other airlines for flight deals in this shoulder season.



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The Irish Language

by Philip Mac AnGhabhann

Read this dialogue between two neighbors, one with her children, who run into each other at the beach. See if you can understand some of it. We will then discuss it item by item.

AR AN DTRÁ

Máire: Uill, a Cháit! Dia duit!  
Cuir iontas maith orm !  
Cáit: Dia ‘s Muire duit, a Mháire.  
Ar do chlann seo?  
Máire: Is ea. Is í seo m’iníon,  
Nóra, agus mo mhac beag, Liam.  
A leanaí, is Cáit Uí Shé,  
Bean Tomás Uí Dhónaill.  
Cáit: Go mbeannaí Dia diobh, a leanaí.  
A Nóra, cén aois thú?  
Nóra: Tá mé naoi mbliana d’aois,  
Bean Uí Dhónaill.  
Cáit: Tá m’iníon deich mbliana d’aois.  
A Mháire, beidh said ag tarraingt  
go maith le chéile.

ON THE BEACH

Mary: Well! Kate. Good day!  
This is a nice surprise.  
Kate: Good day to you, Mary.  
Are these your children?  
Mary: Yes. This is my daughter, Nora, and my  
young son, Liam.  
Children, this is Kate O’ Shea,  
wife of Thomas O’ Donnell.  
Kate: Pleased to meet you, children.  
Nora, how old are you?  
Nora: I am nine years old, Mrs. O’Donnell.  
Kate: My daughter is ten.  
Mary, they will get along well together.

This short dialogue is filled with teachable structures, beginning with the title, **AR AN DTRA**, “On the Beach”, is pronounced /ahr uhn drah/ or even /ahrn drah/, where **trá**, “sands” or “beach” is eclipsed after **Ar An**, “on the”.

Their conversation begins with, “Well, Kate.” Well” is a favorite expression among Irish speakers, taken directly from English but with modified spelling since there is no letter “w” in Irish. The pronunciation is slightly modified, too, as the “l” sound is pronounced in the front of the mouth, like the “l” in English “wheel” but without the “ee !”.

Mary and Kate address each other in the **Vocative Case**. For women, **A** followed by lenition of the initial consonant of the name except for “**l**, **n**, and **r**.” “Mary” and “Kate” will be lenited (old term, “aspirated”) and change pronunciation but “Nora” will not be. **Máire** /MAH-ree/ becomes /uh WAH-ree/ and **Cáit** becomes /uh HAYT/.

“To be a nice/pleasant surprise” is **Cuir iontas maith orm**!, literally “Put astonishment good at me.” This gives us a chance to review the Prepositional Pronouns in **ar** “on” – **orm** “on me”, **ort** “on you”, **air** “on him”, **uirthi** “on her”, **orainn** “on us”, **oraibh** “on you-all”, **orthu** “on them”.

Kate replies with, “Good day”, and then noticing Mary’s children, asks, **Ar do chlann seo?** “Are these your children?” The “official” Irish interrogative is not **Ar** but **An**. However, **Ar** is more commonly used in normal conversation. **An** is used in written Irish and in more formal speech.

Mary responds with, **Is ea**, “Yes” (literally, “It’s so”), then introduces her daughter Nora, **Is í seo m’iníon, Nóra**. Followed by “and my young son, Liam.” **Agus mo mhac beag, Liam. Mo** “my” is contracted to **m’** before a vowel. **Mo** “my”, **do** “your” and **a** “his” require that a following noun -- if it begins with a consonant -- be lenited as in **mo mhac. Beag** /beyk/ normally means “small” but here is used to mean “young.”

Then Mary says, “Children” – again using he Vocative--this is “Kate O’ Shea, wife of Thomas O’ Donnell.” Note that Mary uses Kate’s birth name but adds, “wife of Thomas O’ Donnell.”

Kate’s, “Pleased to meet you” uses a “set phrase” **Go mbeannaí Dia diobh**, “God’s many blessings on you.” Then she asks Nora, “How old are you? **Cén aois thú?** In this “set phrase” **tú** too/ becomes **thú** /oo/.

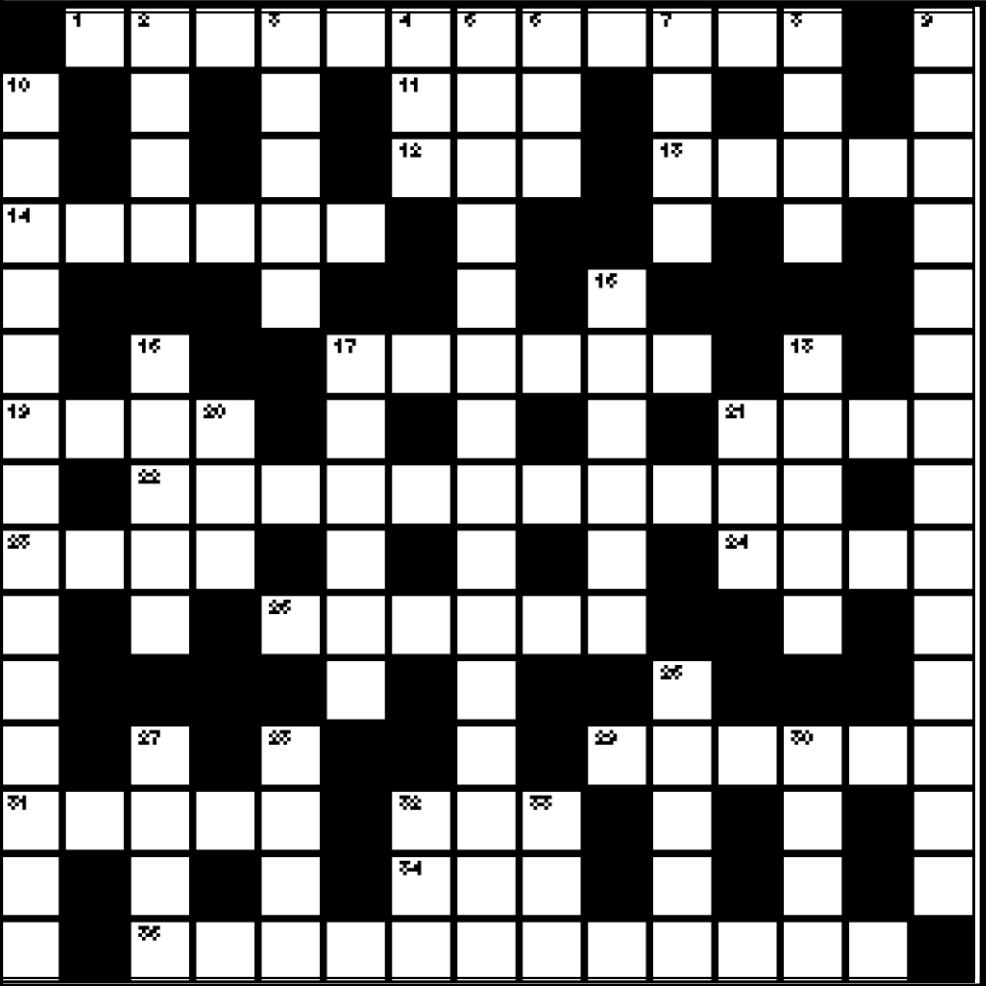
Nora’s answer is that she is nine. There are two things to notice here. The first is that a number before “years of age” eclipses the word for “years.” The second is that Nora calls Mary, **Bean Uí Dhónuill**, “Mrs. O’Donnell”, using Mary’s husband’s name just as we studied in last month’s column.

Nora says that she has a daughter who is ten years old (but obviously not present.) Notice again that **mo**, “my”, is contracted before **iníon**, “daughter.” Then she observes to Mary , **A Mháire, beidh siad ag tarraingt go maith le chéile**.

**Tarraingt** is the verbal noun of **tarraing** with the basic meaning of “pull” or “attract.” Here, in combination with **go maith le chéile** /goh MAH leh HAY-luh/, “very well together”, it has the meaning of “getting on.” Note again that **céile** is lenited after **le** -- **le chéile**.

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IRELAND IN CROSSWORDS

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

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

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

CROSSWORD SOLUTION ON PAGE 14

Irish Sayings

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

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# BRETT'S BOSTON

By Margaret Brett Hastings

Exclusive photos of Boston Irish people & events

The *Boston Irish Reporter* hosted the third annual Boston Irish Honors on October 19 at the Seaport Hotel. The event marked the 22nd anniversary of the BIR, drawing more than 350 persons for the mid-day luncheon.

Said BIR Publisher Ed Forry in his introductory remarks, "Today's honorees — the Muse family, the Feeney brothers and US Rep. Richard Neal—are agents of idealism and ingenuity who represent the best of the Boston Irish experience. They are devoted to a level of professionalism in their chosen fields that makes us proud to call them our own."

The honorees each received an original artwork by Cork-born Dorchester artist Vincent Crotty, and an Irish auto registration plate bearing their family name and county of origin. Congressman Neal was introduced by Jack Connors, the Feeney Brothers by event MC Dick Flavin, and the Muse family by Bill Kennedy. The event was chaired by Dave Bresnahan, CEO of Lexington Insurance. An invocation by Rev. Tom Kennedy of Brookline included a prayer and moment of silence for the late Larry Reynolds, founder of the Boston chapter of Comhaltas.

Pictured are: 1.) The Feeney family; 2.) Congressman Richard Neal and his daughter, Maura Neal Fitzpatrick; 3.) The Muse family; 4.) Bill Kennedy; 5.) Congressman Neal; 6.) Ed Forry 7.) Judge Christopher Muse; 8.) Gil and Kathy Sullivan; 9.) Bob Quinn; 10.) Jack Connors; 11.) Dave Bresnahan, the event chairman; 12.) Rev. Tom Kennedy; 13.) Consul General Michel Lonergan, emcee Dick Flavin; 14.) Chris Muse, Bill Kennedy, and Ed Forry.







## The Boston Irish Honors 2012 for Distinguished Public Service

# US Rep. Neal has many duties, but Ireland is always on his mind

By Gintautas Dumcius  
Reporter Staff

US Representative Richard Neal (D-Massachusetts) remembers the collapse of the Soviet Union, the end of apartheid in South Africa, and Eastern Europe's escape from Communism. "Then," he said, "all of a sudden, the world focused on the longest-standing political dispute in the Western World: Ireland."

Neal remembers that turn of focus very well because he was right in the middle of that dispute, a young congressman from Springfield on a first-name basis with Irish presidents and prime ministers.

Neal, who was elected to the US House in 1988 at the age of 38, was born in Worcester and grew up in Springfield. "You knew everybody," he said of the Irish heritage that animated parts of his city. "Your closest pals and closest friends shared the same background." They no doubt hailed from families that had come over from the old country long before, from places like the Dingle Peninsula, and County Down. Some, he said, were related to the "last living residents" of the Blasket Island. At the O'Reilly Club, a visitor could run into Irish nationalists who had fought in the Easter Uprising of 1916.

As for his own family, he and his wife Maureen have four children: Rory, Brendan, Maura, and Sean.

Still others had come more recently to escape The Troubles, the violent exchanges between Catholics and Protestants and the British in the North that had darkened the Irish landscape from the late 1960s on. As for his own family, Neal's father's side boasts of roots in County Down; his mother's side points to Kerry.

The congressman's interest in Ireland and his roots goes back to his teenage years: "It would not have been unusual for me during the worst years of the Troubles to be doing live broadcasts to Ireland," he said.

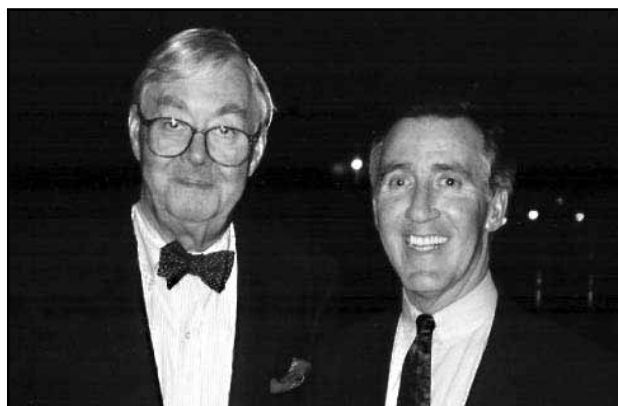
In 1973, Neal started his political career when he was tapped as an assistant to Springfield Mayor William Sullivan. He quickly rose through the ranks, becoming a Springfield city councillor in 1978 and the mayor in 1984, and in between making a trip to the 1980 Democratic National Convention as a supporter of US Sen. Edward Kennedy's unsuccessful presidential campaign. He ran successfully for Congress in 1988 following the retirement of veteran incumbent Edward Boland, a longtime Tip O'Neill confidant.

In Congress, he joined with likeminded members in organizing a caucus to fight for peace in Northern Ireland. "It was our constant role to nurture the parties into finding an accommodation," Neal said in a recent interview.

The caucus was bi-partisan with its members including Republicans Peter King and Jim Walsh. They have all remained good friends, he said, because they were "united in our belief that Ireland could get past the Troubles. And they did."

Neal was up front in defending Bill Clinton's controversial decision in 1994 to grant a 48-hour visa to Gerry Adams, the Sinn Féin president, allowing him to speak at a conference in New York. This was not a popular move with the State Department, which opposed the visa, though members of the National Security Council were in favor of the visit. In the end, Adams came to speak, but was not allowed to raise funds. With rest of the "peace" caucus, Neal regularly interacted with the British government. "We were very vigorous in our arguments as to how the world was changing," Neal said. "And we were wondering, when was Belfast going to change?"

Neal notes that the caucus also worked to call attention to governmental follow-up to such events as Bloody Sunday, the infamous, deadly confrontation at a parade site in Derry's Bogside sector in January 1972 that saw soldiers of the British Army shoot 26 unarmed civil-rights protesters and bystanders, killing 14 of them, all males. In 2010, a British government report found that the killings were "unjustified



Congressman Neal through the years – Clockwise from top: with the First Lady Michelle Obama – meeting Nelson Mandela – Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Cong. Neal; with constituents at St. Patrick's festivities in Holyoke.

*Images courtesy Rep. Neal*

and unjustifiable," prompting an apology from the prime minister

The Congressional group pursued other matters,

what Neal called British "mischief," in their push for peace in Ireland. "We were very aggressive in pursuing a new day in the North," Neal said. "It's staggering what has changed. The policing in the North is all changed. The watchtowers are gone. Thirty thousand British soldiers...they're gone. There's a freely elected government in Stormont, where nationalists and unionists sit together. So we stayed with it, day after day, month after month, year after year. And it's a new day in Ireland."

Neal currently holds several titles in the US House. He's a senior member of the powerful budget-writing Ways and Means Committee, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Select Revenue Measures, the co-chairman of the New England Congressional Caucus, and an at-large party whip.

The Springfield Republican, his hometown newspaper, endorsed him for reelection in last month's primary in a 480-word editorial:

"A vigorous defender of Social Security and Medicare, Neal knows full-well the difference the programs make in the people's lives. It was Social Security that made it possible for Neal's grandmother and aunt to care for him and his two sisters after his parents died. In addition to his work on domestic policy, Neal worked for years to help broker a peace in Northern Ireland – playing a pivotal role in the discussions that led to the Good Friday accords."

The congressman still visits Ireland on a frequent basis. He was last there about a year ago, as the principal speaker at the Sinn Féin's political convention.

What does the future hold for the Irish, particularly economically? "Ireland is poised for a great comeback," Neal said. "The population is very well educated and they're going to get through this current challenge that they have. And in the North I don't know anybody who's made the argument to go to the bad old days."

### Richard E. Neal: Vital Statistics

**Born:** Worcester, Massachusetts, Feb. 14, 1949.

**Married:** To Maureen (Conway). **Family:** Four children: Rory, Brendan, Maura, and Sean. **Education:** Graduate of American International College with a bachelor of arts in political science (1972); master's degree in public administration, University of Hartford's Barney School of Business and Public Administration (1976).

#### Political Career

US House of Representatives, 1988 to the present: He represents the Massachusetts 2d district, which includes cities and towns in western and central Massachusetts, including Springfield, Chicopee, Longmeadow, Milford, and Northampton. Due to the redistricting measure passed last year, it will become known as District 1 in 2013.

He is a member of the House Ways and Means Committee and the ranking minority member of the Subcommittee on Select Revenue Measures. He also serves as an At-Large Whip for House Democrats and is the co-chairman of the New England Congressional Caucus.

He began his career in public service in 1973 as an assistant to Springfield Mayor William C. Sullivan. He was elected to the Springfield City Council in 1978. And was its president in 1979. He later served as mayor of Springfield from 1984 to 1989, when he joined the Congress.

The Democratic leader of the Friends of Ireland, he was the recipient of the American Ireland Fund's International Leadership Award in 2002.





## The Boston Irish Honors 2012 Exemplary Boston Irish Family



Greg and Brendan Feeney, owners of Feeney Brothers Excavation Corp., have restored an old factory building at the corner of Park and Clayton streets into their contracting company's headquarters. *Photo by Bill Forry*

# The Company of Brotherly Love: Feeney Brothers Excavation Corp.

By Bill Forry

Greg and Brendan Feeney don't have to share an office on the spacious third floor of their new headquarters on Park Street in Dorchester. There's plenty of room here for the owners of one of the region's top utility contractors to spread out if they really wanted to.

But the Feeney brothers have been sharing space with good humor and great success since the day they started their own business back in 1987 from the back porch of Brendan's three-decker home on Dorchester's Elmer Road.

The brothers, then still freshly arrived from County Sligo, Ireland, had only a few material assets in those days, including a used, 1973 Ford dump-truck and a brand new backhoe that they broke the bank to buy.

But for each man, it has turned out, the most important ingredient to mutual success has been the brother standing close by his side.

"It worked on Elmer Road," explains Greg. "It worked well on Bay Street [in Savin Hill] for all those years. We work well by bouncing things off one another. Why change it?"

In point of fact, of course, Greg and Brendan were teammates long before they crossed the Atlantic. The two grew up together in Castleconnor, Enniscrone in County Sligo along with eight other siblings — six boys and two girls in total. Brendan and Greg went to school at Easkey NS — where their mother was principal — and both graduated from St. Muredach's College, Ballina, Co. Mayo.

Greg followed in Brendan's footsteps to RTC Sligo Engineering college, where he studied mechanical engineering. Brendan specialized in civil engineering, moved to Dublin for a bit where he worked as a bartender and looked in vain for work that fit his degree.

Like so many plane-loads of his fellow countrymen at the time, his search ultimately led him to Boston in 1983. Brendan cut his teeth in the Boston job market as a roofer, landscaper and, finally, with a Braintree-based contractor. Greg, encouraged by his older brother, followed in 1985.

Both soon realized that there was a gap in the market for skilled workers who had the right equipment to tackle rigorous — but plentiful — road work jobs around the city.

"We could see even as we worked ourselves that there was this opportunity," explains Brendan. "No contractors seemed to be fully staffed with their own equipment."

The breakthrough for the Feeneys came in 1988 when they were added to the "bid list" for Boston Gas work, allowing them to compete directly for the chance to win contracts from the giant utility company.

"We worked around the clock back in the '80s," recalls Greg. The brothers incorporated their company in 1988 and haven't slowed down since.

Although both are too busy managing the daily operations of the outfit to get into the trenches alongside their crews, they are both still fascinated by the details of each job. And both are like boys in a toy shop as they walk through their hangar-sized storage buildings on Sturtevant Street close by their Park Street offices.

Their "ain't broke — why fix it?" posture helps explain a lot about these two entrepreneurs who came to Fields Corner within two years of one another some 30 years ago. Although both men have since moved their families to suburbs south of the city, their work home has always been — and always will be — Dorchester.

And so, as they eyed a new, larger building to base their now-booming enterprise, they knew that the search party would have to begin and end in their adopted neighborhood.

"It's hard to get industrial space in Boston. We could go to any suburban town and it would be a third of the price," explains Brendan. "But you stay with what you know."

Earlier this year, the Feeney Brothers Excavation Corp. moved into the building that the brothers say is their crowning achievement thus far: a renovated, three-story brick structure that is nestled in an industrial zone between Fields Corner and Clam Point. Once home to the Sturtevant Mills property that used huge grinders to make plastics, the build-

ing now houses office space, conference rooms and even a state-of-the-art training center for the Feeney Brothers 200-plus employees. The company relocated from its longtime space in Savin Hill last January (although the company maintains a three-acre yard off Bay Street for vehicle storage.)

The move and the restoration project at the Park Street building is still a work in progress. Last month, workers were on the roof installing solar panels, while in the basement others were putting the finishing touches on an employee lounge. The building is also outfitted with a gym, including fitness equipment, showers and lockers. The amenities are extra touches that the Feeney brothers say they're looking forward to sharing with their employees, most of whom have been with the company for years.

"As far as having a work base, it's as convenient as any place and we have a lot of Dorchester employees," explains Brendan. "We've always had good people and we don't have much turn-over here."

The company specializes in making repairs and laying new gas, electric, telecommunication and water pipes throughout Massachusetts — with about 80 percent of their work focused on the gas industry.

They bought the properties several years ago to store and repair huge supplies of pipes, valves and other heavy equipment, including giant, \$180,000 flat-bed trucks that carry massive, pre-cut pipes to jobs across the region.



Greg and Brendan Feeney began their career as trench workers, installing and fixing large pipes like this one, which is destined for a Feeney Brothers contract project in Medford. *Photo by Bill Forry*





## The Boston Irish Honors 2012

# The Company of Brotherly Love

In recent years, the Feeneys have added a new business to their entrepreneurial portfolio: restaurants. In 2009, they purchased the old Donovan's restaurant in Lower Mills and transformed it into The Ledge Kitchen and Drinks. The Dot Ave. eatery and bar has quickly become one of the neighborhood's most popular dining destinations. The Feeneys also own Slate, a downtown bar and restaurant, and co-own Sweet Caroline's near Fenway Park.

Their pet project is a bit farther afield: They are building a new farmhouse in their native Ennisconne that they expect to make a destination for family reunions in the coming years. Their dad has since passed away, but their mom and other siblings all now live in Ireland, except for brother Ronan, who has been a longtime part of the family's excavation business here in Boston.

Brendan and Greg have built their own families here in Boston: Greg and his wife Mary have three daughters—Caitlyn, Lauren, and Kristen—and one son, Joseph. Brendan and his wife Ann have two girls—Lindsay and Olivia—and two boys, Mark and Paul.

With all they have going on, the Feeneys say they will continue to be stalwart supporters of Boston area charities. The two have given more than \$100,000 in recent years to a diverse mix of causes, from Savin Hill Little League and the Dorchester Park Association to the Rodman Ride for Kids, which directly helps the Boys and Girls Clubs of Dorchester. And, of course, they are regular donors to most Gaelic football clubs and sponsors of the Shannon Blues GFC. They've pitched in to help save the Irish Social Club in West Roxbury and the Irish Cultural Centre, where both are members.

"We believe in giving back," says Greg.



**'It's hard to get industrial space in Boston. We could go to any suburban town and it would be a third of the price, but you stay with what you know.'**

**— BRENDAN FEENEY**

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## The Boston Irish Honors 2012 Exemplary Boston Irish Family



The Muse clan gathered on Cape Cod in August 2011 to send birthday greetings to Patrick “Bubba” Muse, who was serving in Afghanistan at the time.  
*Photo courtesy of the Muse Family*

# Taking cues from Robert and Mary: The life and times of the Muse Family

By Jack Thomas

After graduating from Georgetown in 1970, Chris Muse came home to teach history in the Boston public schools, and he was brimming with optimism until he noticed something odd about older teachers – they may have started out with enthusiasm, but they soon burned out and became cranky fuss-budgets. “God,” he remembers thinking. “these people are not even 40, and they’re dead.”

Disillusioned, he enrolled at Suffolk Law School nights, finished six months early, passed the bar before graduation, and by 1977, he was at Malden District Court, a public defender with a salary alarmingly smaller than what he had earned as a teacher.

Under stress financially, he left the courthouse late one afternoon, drove his 1970 Audi downtown, and parked next to the Woolworth building. He walked down Washington and up Bromfield to Jack and Jill’s Joke Shop, took the elevator to the eighth floor, to the law office of his father, Robert Muse, and asked for work. Delighted to see his third son, Bob Muse took the Macanudo cigar out of his mouth, promised Chris an office and phone, and tossed him a file. “Practice on this one,” he said. “This guy’s been convicted, but don’t just read it – go to Norfolk Prison and talk to him.”

The name on the file was Bobby Joe Leaster, who was 26 and serving life for murder, and the tossing of that file, Muse to Muse, would alter destiny. For the Muses, it led to a 10-year crusade of pro bono work against seemingly impossible odds, and for Leaster, after 15 years in prison, it led to exoneration, freedom, and the life he now leads as an admired youth counselor in Boston.

“If there’s a single thing in my life or in Chris’s life, it’s that we’re proud of taking an innocent person out of jail,” Robert Muse told David E. Frank, of Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly, in 2010. “A lawyer cannot do better in a lifetime. Everything else ... is no consequence.”

Through the years, the Muses provided Leaster with practical as well as legal support, showing up at prison on his birthday, for example, with a cake. Four years after Leaster’s release in 1988, the Legislature granted him a \$500,000 annuity to satisfy what it called a moral obligation. The time involved in pursuing Leaster’s exoneration and annuity has been estimated by the Muses at \$400,000, although the family accepted no payment from the state nor from Leaster, now a friend who visited Robert Muse in the hospital 10 days ago.

“If it wasn’t for Mr. Muse, who is my ‘dad,’ and Chris, who is my ‘brother,’ ” Leaster told Frank, “my life would be over. God sent the Muses to me.”

If you meet the Muse family, be prepared to shake a lot of hands, for Robert and Mary Muse have 11 children, 38 grandchildren, and 9 great grandchildren. So remarkable is the family’s scholastic achievement, and so impressive their professional accomplishments, and so strong their fidelity to an Irish heritage rooted in Mayo, Galway, and Roscommon, a newspaper story is depressingly inadequate to do the family justice.

No profile is sufficient without a toast to their scholastic aptitude. Robert graduated from Boston College and Suffolk Law, and Mary from Emmanuel and BC Law. The family holds a combined 25 college degrees. Among 11 sons and daughters, 6 are lawyers, 2 physicians, one a judge, one a teacher, and another a business man. Their 38 grandchildren have accumulated 15 college degrees already, and more are certain to follow. In the wings are 9 great grandchildren and additional degrees.

For a family so large and accomplished, the Muses have attracted relatively little publicity, and so, introductions are in order: The patriarch is Robert Muse, the matriarch his wife, Mary Beatty Muse. Both are 92 and live in Chestnut Hill in marginal health.

Robert was a Marine Corps fighter pilot in World War II who won the Distinguished Flying Cross by knocking out a Japanese kamikaze plane bearing down on an American destroyer. He returned home to law school and a brilliant career, retiring in 2008 after 58 years and 1,000 trials.



Matriarch and Patriarch:  
Mary and Robert Muse

The daughter of Irish immigrants, Mary joined the first class of Waves in 1941, serving three years as intelligence and communications officer. When she graduated from BC Law in 1950, one of three women in a class of 160, *The Boston Globe* ran a story on page one, marveling that a mother of four could get through law school, “washing diapers while trying to master the doctrine of ‘res ipsa loquitur.’” Reflecting sexism of the period, the story never mentioned her first name, referring to her initially as “Mrs. Robert Muse,” and thereafter as “Mrs. Muse.” In 1983, she was appointed a justice of the Massachusetts Trial Court, and in 2003, BC Law gave her a Lifetime Achievement Award. A lay Eucharistic minister, she has been a role model for women in law and has served on dozens of boards, professional, charitable, and educational.

“We forget the extraordinary pressure on these women, in early years, to excel without getting any kind of break,” says Margaret Marshall, now retired as the first woman to serve as chief justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. “Boston College is a great law school that has produced many outstanding graduates, and Judge Muse belongs in that pantheon. She has done it with quiet confidence and true excellence.”

“Women of my generation have had it easier. Today, the law prohibits discrimination against women, and you might think Judge Muse, who did it all on her own, would be resentful, but she never has been, not at all. She is a feminist with a capital F.”

To the gratitude of the 11 Muse children, by the way, their father failed freshman Latin at BC and had to make up the course that summer, which is when he met Mary, with whom he had those 11 kids. “We’re grateful dad flunked Latin,” says Chris, now a Superior Court judge sitting in Barnstable.

Married 68 years, Bob and Mary were in concert long before they wed in 1944. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, both volunteered for military service. “At South Station, they boarded the same train,” says Chris. “My mother got off at Smith College to train with the Navy, and my father got off in North Carolina to train with the Marines.”

The story of the Muse Family in America begins in the late nineteenth century with the arrival from Galway of Chris’s great grandmother, Sabina Moore, who went to work on Beacon Hill as a housekeeper and saved her pennies to finance the building of dozens of three-deckers by her husband Patrick, a carpenter.

“As recently as 20 years ago,” says Chris, “people from Mission Hill would concede that God made the world, but that He had the help of Paddy Moore, with his pick and shovel.”





## The Boston Irish Honors 2012

# Taking cues from Robert and Mary: The life and times of the Muse Family

Her daughter, Mary Moore – Chris’s grandmother – was one of the first women to graduate from Tufts Medical School, and she served as a physician in the Boston Public Schools and later as administrator of the Boston Consumptive Hospital in Mattapan, making such an impression in the caring of patients with tuberculosis that Boston named a byway for her, Mary Moore Beatty Circle, off River Street. The family’s real estate investments were well-served by Dr. Moore’s political acumen, for family lore has it that she was fond of staying up late to drink brandy with Boston’s notorious mayor, James Michael Curley.

The influence of the Muse family stretches beyond Boston. In Washington, Robert Jr. has devoted himself to national and international issues, including a role, as counsel, under Sam Dash, for the Senate Watergate Committee. In 1972, in Derry, after British paratroopers opened fire on civil rights demonstrators, killing 14 in what became known as Bloody Sunday, a British judge, Lord Widgery, ruled the demonstrators were to blame for their own deaths. A civil rights group asked Dash to investigate, and he invited Muse to assist. What followed was a decade during which Muse monitored hearings into the shootings and provided counsel to families, all pro bono. In exposing the Widgery report as a fraud, Dash and Muse not only helped absolve the demonstrators, but also corrected a historical deceit, for as Kevin Cullen wrote in the *Globe*, the flawed judgment in blaming the demonstrators had convinced “a generation that nothing was on the level in Northern Ireland, that the only currency was violence.”

Sitting in the lobby of the Charles Hotel in Cambridge, the colorful Peter O’Malley, former owner of the Plough and Stars and cofounder of the literary magazine Ploughshares, barely pauses for breath in reciting anecdotes about the decency of Robert Muse during a friendship that began three decades ago over lunches at Marliave’s and later Locke-Ober.

“Bob Muse does not have a cantankerous bone in his body. He is a man of incredible probity and he listens with a talent that could shame a pope. He often has a rosy complexion, and I’d say, ‘Bob, did you get that tan in the sun, or was it serious drinking last night?’ It was a joke, of course, because Bob was abstemious. With 11 kids, he had to be.

“He was one of the last single practitioners – not the Hale and Dorr type, but an independent who could handle anything from parking tickets to first degree murder. The upstairs Irish went to Harvard Law, but Bob had his own high end BC people, and he might have run for public office, but he couldn’t, not with such a big family – not unless he was willing to go on the take, which Bob never was.”

A composer of classical music, O’Malley recalls a time when he had spent so much money subsidizing Ploughshares and sending funds to Londonderry that he was broke. “I asked Bob for a loan of \$2,000 to pay tuition for my son. Bob gave me the money, and when I promised to pay it back, he said, ‘No, just write me a piece of music to be played when my body is going down the aisle.’ And so I did.”

It is one thing to be Irish in South Boston, another to be Irish in Brookline. The Muses lived in St. Aidan’s, the parish of Joseph and Rose Kennedy, where John and Robert Kennedy were baptized, and where, like Jack Kennedy, the Muse sons served as altar boys.

“We were as Irish as anyone,” says Chris, “but in Brookline, there was such a Jewish presence that we were a minority. Our island was the church, and ten of us attended St. Aidan’s School. In the Fifties and Sixties, when Jewish families were in majority, our home was on Green Street, abutting the very orthodox Young Israel Synagogue. From Friday at sunset through Saturday, we watched its ‘parishioners’ walk – not drive – down Green Street, children, wives, and bearded men in black suits with distinctive hats and yarmulkes.”

Chris and his brother Robert served as Shabbat Goy, and as Robert recalls, “At sundown on Friday, the rabbi and others would knock on our door to enlist us to cross the yard and to do mechanical things in the



Mary and a company of her granddaughters.

*Photo courtesy of Bill and Kerry Brett from “BOSTON Inspirational Women” © 2011.*

synagogue that they were prohibited from performing on the Sabbath. We switched on lights and heat and received a dime or quarter. I thought that if it was a sin for them to turn on a light switch, then we had it easy with the Ten Commandments.”

A sister, Julie, a lawyer from Hingham, recalls that everyone assumed that because she came from so large a family, she must be Irish. A brother, Michael, remembers public events at which he’d wear altar-boy garb and a crucifix. “His buddies, all Jewish, would line the sidewalks and razz him,” says Chris, “although I am certain he got back at them Saturdays when they were going to their synagogue.”

The Muse home was alive with Irish guests. “Oh, yes,” says O’Malley, “they welcomed eminent artists to their home, which I called ‘Chataux Blase’ and at other salubrious settings, too. I’ll keep it to the Irish,” he says, rattling off names: “Desmond O’Grady, poet at Harvard, and Molly Howe, founder of Poets Theatre, and John O’Connor, classical pianist, and actress Siobhan McKenna of Abbey Theater, and the Chieftans, and Padraig O’Malley, the author, and from Ploughshares, Mary Lavin, the short story writer, and Brian Moore and John McGahern, both novelists, and John Montague, the poet, and of course, Seamus Heaney, who was at Harvard.”

If the three Muse sisters ever felt adrift competing with eight brothers, their father was there to add wind to their sails, insisting they never accept second-class status because they were women.

“I remember sitting with my father at Pewter Pot Muffin House, looking through the ads, which were all defined as male-female positions,” says Mary, a lawyer in El Dorado Hills, California. “I wondered

about a shorthand course to make myself marketable, but he said that no daughter of his was going into work as someone’s assistant – that I would go in as the boss before I would go in as Girl Friday. I immediately dropped the idea of shorthand.

“What I took from both parents was an ideal that I should be involved in public life,” she says. “A grasp of politics was expected, and from that background, we have all taken lessons I hope are carried on by my children and their children.”

Every sibling is a story. One brother, Peter, an attorney, married a Brookline girl, Debbie, and they live in Milton, where he is convalescing after being diagnosed with a brain tumor. They have two sons who served in the Army, Peter Jr. in Iraq, and Patrick in Afghanistan.

As Debbie recalls, Irish heritage was important. “Bob and Mary were not far removed from Ireland, nor far removed from ‘Irish Need Not Apply,’ and the more educated they became, the further from that stigma they moved.”

From their Irish colony in Brookline, the Muses maintained a fidelity to Celtic heritage, but also, thanks to Jewish neighbors, they grew to respect Semitic culture and to comprehend the historical persecution of Jews. “My family and the Muses lived next door to temples,” says Debbie. “We observed people going to Hebrew schools and Hebrew services, and we went to bar and bat mitzvah services and parties. We heard the stories of classmates whose grandparents had tattoos on their arms, and we learned the reason the father of our friend, Mitchel Ash, disappeared for months at a time was that he was searching the world for Nazis.”

The value of diversity learned in an Irish-Jewish community became apparent to the Muses during Vatican II and meetings at BC about prospective changes in language regarding Jewish people as killers of Christ. “For them and for all of us who grew up in Brookline at this time,” Debbie says, “you could not help but empathize.”

No profile can do justice to so large and so accomplished a family, and a number of family stories are not included here, some flattering and others condemnatory.

But what of the feuds, flare-ups, and free-for-alls that intrude on all families, and as we read in Irish literature, including, if not especially, the Irish? What about all the competition, contentions, and conflicts among all those Muses?

Speaking for the family, Julie responds by e-mail, in capital letters and in boldface:

**“I’M NOT GOING NEAR THAT ONE!”**

*Jack Thomas was a reporter, editor, columnist, critic, and ombudsman in his more than 40 years with The Boston Globe.*



Mary and her son Peter, of Milton.



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