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BOSTON IRISH REPORTER

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John and Ellie Burke's family – the Burkes of South Boston – joined together after lunch with five tables of relatives and friends.

Margaret Brett Hastings photo

Boston Irish Honorees hailed

An enthusiastic audience of 400 business and civic leaders and members of our city's Irish social and cultural organizations gathered on Oct. 24 in the main ballroom of Boston's Seaport Hotel for the *Boston Irish Reporter's* fifth annual Boston Irish Honors luncheon.

This year's honorees are Boston Mayor Martin J Walsh of Dorchester, Babson College vice president Katherine Craven of Brookline, and the Burke family – Jacquelyn, John, Paul, Dennis and Michael – all born and raised in South Boston.



"The Burkes are an exemplary family, and their story is a wonderful example of our Boston Irish culture," said BIR Publisher Ed Forry. Growing up in South Boston, their dad operated a drug store on D Street, and the siblings followed their own paths while sustaining their strong family ties: Jacquelyn and John Burke became pharmacists like their dad, and John is now senior vice president and chief culture officer of Staples, Inc.; Paul is a district chief of the Boston Fire Department; Dr. Dennis Burke is a leading orthopedic surgeon at Massachusetts General Hospital; and Michael is a union sheet metal worker in South Boston.

"In a similar vein, Katherine Craven



Honorees Katherine Craven, vice president of Babson College, and Martin J. Walsh, Mayor of Boston

has a legion of admirers for her roles in several public agencies. A former staffer in the House Ways and Means committee and the mother of four, she was chief of the state's School Building Authority, and oversaw the startup of UMass Building Authority's \$3.8 billion five-year capital plan. This spring, she was named chief administrative officer at Babson College.

"And I am delighted to acknowledge the leadership role of my longtime friend Marty Walsh, as he nears completion of his first year as Boston's chief executive," said the publisher. "Mayor Walsh has served on our honors luncheon committee each and every year, and he truly embodies the spirit of the very best of



what it means to be Boston Irish. "It was an honor and privilege to tell their stories," Forry added.

The honorees were welcomed to the stage after brief introductions by three presenters: attorney Bill Kennedy introduced the Burke family; former Massachusetts House Speaker Tom Finneran introduced Katherine Craven; and the BIR's managing editor, Bill Forry, introduced Mayor Walsh.

The event was chaired by former BRA executive director Peter Meade; master of ceremonies was Boston Red Sox field announcer Dick Flavin; Rev. Tom Kennedy led the audience in a ceremony, including a prayer for former Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino. Among the

special guests were Ireland Consul General Breandan O Caollai, State Senate President Therese Murray, former UMass President William Bulger, Mrs. Mary Walsh, Lorrie Higgins, and Quincy Mayor Tom Koch.

The lead Platinum level sponsor of the luncheon was Tourism Ireland; Gold sponsors were Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts and Staples; Emerald sponsors included: Bank of Canton, the family of Mayor John B Hynes, Feeney Brothers, The Fallon Company, Geraghty Properties Inc., Mass Convention Center Authority, Gil Sullivan, SBLI, Steward Health Care, Sullivan & Worcester LLP and University of Massachusetts/Boston.

The 2014 Luncheon Committee include: Peter Meade, Event Chair, Ed Forry, Publisher, and Breandan O Caollai, Consul General of Ireland. Members are: James T. Brett, Aidan Browne, William M. Bulger, James Carmody, John T. Carroll, Della O'Flaherty Costello, Steve Costello, Jay Curley, Sean Curran, Brendan Feeney, Dick Flavin, John Philip Foley, Bill Forry, Hon. Linda Dorcea Forry, Maureen Forry-Sorrell, Anne Geraghty, David Greaney, Jim Keefe, Edris Kelley, William F. Kennedy, Rev. Thomas B. Kennedy, Paul LaCamera, Mimi LaCamera, Joe Leary, Rosanne Bacon Meade, Sean Moynihan, James J. O'Brien, Michael O'Neill, Gil Sullivan, Michael Vaughan, Bobby White, and W. Paul White.

Coverage begins on Page 8.

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All eyes on pending sale of Boston Globe property

By Bill Forry
Editor

Mayor Martin Walsh hopes that the sale of the massive Boston Globe property on Morrissey Boulevard will result in a new mixed-use development that will follow guidelines laid out by a city-led task force four years ago.

“Whatever happens with the Globe is really going to be the catalyst for that whole corridor,” Walsh told the Reporter in an interview last week. “If it is tasteful and done right, mixed-use on that site would be important with a component of housing and a component of economic development, whether it’s an office building or retail park.”

John Henry, the owner of the Boston Red Sox, purchased the Globe and its assets—including Worcester’s Telegram & Gazette newspaper – in a \$70 million deal executed last October. He has since sold the Telegram & Gazette and contracted with Colliers International, a commercial real estate firm, to solicit bids for the Globe’s headquarters, which have been located in Dorchester since 1958. Henry and his executive team intend to move the Globe’s editorial, advertising, and office staffs to a new, smaller location in the city, probably in the city’s Seaport district, according to published reports. The newspaper’s printing operations would be relocated to a separate site, the story goes, with a plant in Millbury that the Globe owns a likely prospect.

Tom Hynes, the CEO and co-chairman of Collier’s Boston office, told the Reporter that the Globe began accepting proposals from potential buyers in mid-September. This followed a series of on-site tours throughout the summer and a “global marketing campaign” to seek buyers. Hynes said that the Globe did not set an asking price.

“There were a whole bunch of tours and sometimes repeat tours by interested parties,” said Hynes. “We received our first offers in mid-September and we had a second round of offers in early October. We’re at that stage now where we’re sorting through the finalists.”

Hynes would not say specifically who might be included among the finalists.

“I would expect any buyer will have a very detailed and open public process,” said Hynes. “We don’t have any time horizon on the final decision at this point.”

Michael Sheehan, who was hired by John Henry to serve as Globe CEO last year, would also not talk specifics about who might buy the Globe or when a decision could come down.

“We’re happy with the way it’s going and the process is moving along,” Sheehan told the Reporter. “We are down to the finals.”

“From the bids we saw, I think everyone came back with the [Columbia Point] master plan in mind,” said Sheehan.

The 16.42 acre property at 135 Mor-



The Boston Globe property is outlined in yellow in this image from Colliers International.

rissey Boulevard is dominated by the three-story, 815,899 square foot building that houses the paper’s editorial, advertising, and administrative department along with its production facilities and several substantial parking lots, one of which comprises 600 space and abuts the “over-the-bridge” neighborhood of Savin Hill. The building has been updated twice, in 1962 and in 1995, through renovation projects that expanded its footprint.

Another environmentally sensitive and immediate neighbor to the Globe property is Patten’s Cove, a marshy, urban wild that is connected to Dorchester Bay through a culvert that runs under Morrissey Boulevard. The cove’s status doesn’t rate a single mention in the Globe’s real estate prospectus.

In an article published in the July issue of CommonWealth magazine, Globe CEO Sheehan said he expected that the new buyer would lease the Morrissey Boulevard building back to the Globe for a period of three years while the newspaper arranged for a new home – a requirement confirmed in an “investment offering” prepared by Colliers and obtained by the Reporter.

“It’s a perfect site for mixed use, for an urban Legacy Place, like in Dedham,” Sheehan told CommonWealth. When pressed on why the Globe would not stay in its present Dorchester quarters, Sheehan said he wanted the newsroom closer to downtown Boston.

“Aren’t you close now?” asked the interviewer, Bruce Mohl.

“Not really, we’re close to Quincy,” replied Sheehan, who said the Globe would “love to be in the Seaport area” or close enough for employees to walk to South Station.

This week, in an interview with the Reporter, Sheehan declined to rule out any site for the Globe’s next home.

“I’m afraid to project, because when something pops up and it’s a great idea,

availability taps you on the back of the shoulder,” said Sheehan. “We do have to take into account that this is not an easy city to park in. For a reporter, a columnist, an editorial writer, it’s important to be able to access the people you are reporting on quickly.”

The prospectus prepared by Colliers describes the Morrissey Boulevard site as “an extremely rare large-scale urban redevelopment opportunity” and trumpets the site’s visibility to commuters on the Southeast Expressway and its “five-minute walk” to the Red Line. It also notes, perhaps in a nod to Mr. Sheehan’s favored transit node, its “six-and-a-half minute” ride time to South Station.

A community task force appointed by Mayor Thomas Menino and supervised by the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) established these zoning rules through a master plan for Columbia Point that includes the Globe site that was completed in June 2011 after a rigorous four-year public process.

The plan anticipated a future sale and redevelopment of the Globe campus into a residential community with a new road system and a central green space. The plan noted that “because of the location adjacent to Savin Hill and Patten’s Cove, this redevelopment parcel makes an excellent location for residential use, although office or life science uses could also work at this location.”

The plan also addressed height and density, suggesting that taller 11-to-13 story buildings could be situated nearer to the MBTA’s JFK-UMass station, with smaller, six-story structures closer to the present-day Globe site.

The master plan has already seen some of its intended development targets scaled back. A 278-unit apartment complex slated to be built on a long-empty parcel next to JFK-UMass station won BRA approval in 2013; but the two planned buildings next to the

station will rise only five stories, well beneath the height limits outlined for the parcel in the master plan. Criterion, a real estate management firm, bought the rights to build the \$60 million Residences on Morrissey project from the original developer, Synergy Investment & Development last June.

Synergy’s owner and CEO, David Greaney, remains a key player on the Morrissey corridor. He retains control of the Star Market building and its next-door neighbor to the south, the Greater Boston Media building.

Meanwhile, automotive mogul Herb Chambers is another interested party. Chambers, a Dorchester native, bought the old WB56 property next to the Globe in 2012 and advanced a plan to turn the old TV studio into a pre-owned BMW dealership. Chambers won approval for the plan from local civic leaders and the BRA, but has done no ostensible work to advance the dealership since Henry bought the Globe. Chambers has not responded to several inquiries from the Reporter seeking information about his plans for the site.

In the interview in his City Hall office last week, Mayor Walsh said that he expects issues of height and density to remain controversial despite the preferences outlined in the master plan.

“One thing the master plan called for is density and 17-story buildings and I personally know the community is going to resist that because it’s going to feel too dense,” said Walsh. “We have to look at height. We can’t be afraid of height. We’re used to the Globe there at four or five stories. That’s probably going to change.”

He added, “A single developer or university is not going to fix that problem. That’s one of those areas we have to look long term, not short term: What’s the viability of really creating something special here.”

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Huge crowd enjoys Irish Heritage festival in Neponset



Fiddler Geoffrey Roman of the band Erin's Guild does a little audience outreach.



The Green-O'Leary School of Irish Dancing aloft during Sunday's Dorchester Irish Heritage Festival.

Several thousands people turned out for Dorchester's Irish Heritage Festival on Sunday, which was a beautiful, blue-sky fall afternoon. The festival was staged in the parking lots of Florian Hall and the McKeon Post and included music and dance events inside both venues as well. But the crowd mainly swelled outside, where two stages of live music, a kids zone and a pair of beer gardens were among the attractions.

Photos by Sean Smith



Couples dance to the sound of Erin's Melody.



The family entertainment at Sunday's festival included the quite popular mechanical bull ride.

A fresh coat of paint for Dorchester's landmark tank

A four-month paint-over

By BILL FORRY
EDITOR

A team of union painters have just completed a four-month project to re-paint the National Grid gas tank on Dorchester Bay. The workers for the John W. Egan company — all members of the Painters District Council 35 based in Roslindale — touched up fading swatches of Corita Kent's iconic rainbow design, which remains the largest copy-written piece of art in the world.

The painters worked from platforms suspended from the tank's roof— 14 stories above the ground. The paint job took slightly longer than expected because of weather and other conditions, including condensation that forms in the morning and evening on the exterior of the tank, which stores liquefied natural gas (LNG). Kent, a Catholic nun and famed artist who died in 1986, was commissioned to design the rainbow tank by the Boston Gas Company in 1971. At the time, two LNG tanks stood on Commerical Point. When the original rainbow tank was dismantled in 1992, Kent's design was transferred onto the second tank by workers from the Egan Company, which specializes in painting landmarks. The company recently painted the dome of the State House, Governor Deval Patrick's renovated office and the replica Senate chamber inside the newly constructed Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the US Senate on Columbia Point.

The rainbow tank, though, presents a special challenge to the union painters, according to Robert Belisle, Jr., the project manager from the Egan



Julian Escondon, a union painter for the John W. Egan Company, worked on the top of the National Grid rainbow gas tank last month.

John Doherty photos

Company.

"Because of how intricate the design was and the amount of eyes on it, it makes it more complicated. There's no more pressure than on another job, but I guess if we —screwed it up somebody's going to notice."

The workers used swing staging— identical to what window-washers use to clean the sides of skyscrapers— but retrofitted to use different anchor points on the top of the tank. Three foot wide, thirty feet long platforms have handrails around it and an air hoist on each to lower and raise the workers, each of whom has a separate safety line strapped to their body.



The sides of the tank need to be re-painted— or at least touched up— every ten years, according to Belisle. The roof, he says, need even more frequent attention.

"The roof, because it takes so much direct light and acid rain and snow and everything else, that's probably every 5 to 7 years," said Belisle.

This year's work was "pretty involved," said Belisle.

"The design was pretty faded and starting to chip off, especially after we power-washed it. We then applied a five coat system and hit it with a coat of epoxy and a full coat of clear euraathayne," he said.

Back in June, the workers removed a large decal with the National Grid logo before starting their work. The decal— which Belisle compared to a "giant piece of duct tape"— had been adhered to the tank after National Grid took ownership of the landmark facility in 2007. For a time, before the John W. Egan crew painted over it,

the tank once again sported its old-school Boston Gas logo.

The job is a high-profile one for the painters' union, said John Doherty, a Dorchester native who helps to organize for Painters DC35, which helps to train and certify signatory contractors like the Egan Company.

"We take pride in giving back to Dorchester," said Doherty, who says that the union recently completed donated paint projects at the Mather School and St. Mary's Church on Jones Hill.

"These guys do all commercial, industrial work and a lot of landmarks, like the Custom House. This one is one of the biggest, though and everyone gets the back story," said Doherty.

IMMIGRATION Q & A

Renewing your green card? Why not naturalize too?

Q: I've been a US legal permanent resident for almost ten years, and my green card is expiring soon. What is the current procedure for renewing it?

A: Immigrants filing applications to renew permanent resident cards with a ten-year term of validity, commonly known as "green cards," need to file Form I-90 (which can be downloaded at www.uscis.gov) with US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The form can be mailed or sent by courier to the addresses shown in the instructions. For most applicants, the submission also can be made on-line; go to www.uscis.gov and follow the instructions for electronic filing of Form I-90.

Applicants receive by mail a notice for a biometrics (fingerprint and digital photograph) processing appointment at a local USCIS Application Support Center.

IMPORTANT: Applicants are being instructed to take to their biometrics appointments the records of any arrests, convictions, or any other involvement in criminal matters since last being granted legal permanent resident status. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers have been attending these appointments and reviewing the documentation supplied by applicants. Some applicants have been detained because of the criminal records they submitted or because an ICE background investigation detected criminal convictions or outstanding arrest warrants. Accordingly, it is **IMPERATIVE** that you obtain legal advice before your biometrics appointment if you have ANY issues involving past or pending criminal proceedings anywhere in the world.

IIIC can help you with the Form I-90 renewal filing process, as well as the application for getting a new green card when the original has been lost or stolen, or when the card contains incorrect information.

Note: Holders of two-year conditional permanent resident cards based on marriage to a US citizen don't file Form I-90 to remove the condition; they use Form I-751 instead.

By the way, anyone who has been a legal permanent resident long enough to be eligible for US citizenship really ought to consider applying to become a US citizen as soon as possible. IIIC can help you with the all aspects of the naturalization application process.

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

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




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Are you interested in becoming a U.S. Citizen?

Citizenship classes at the Irish International Immigrant Center will prepare you for the naturalization exam and interview. Study the questions that will be asked, learn what to expect during your interview, and gain confidence that you will pass the exam and be on your way to U.S. citizenship.

For more information, call Sarah at (617) 542-7654 ext. 36 or visit the Center between 9:00 – 5:00 weekdays.

Made possible by the MA Office of Refugees and Immigrants and the GBCI collaborative created by the Fish Family Foundation.



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Roscommon Interns Find Work in Sunny California



J-1 Work & Travel Interns Niall Flanagan and Darragh McGovern

Having a familiar face to accompany you while adjusting to a new country and a new environment can make all the difference. Niall Flanagan and Darragh McGovern have known each other since they were in secondary school in County Roscommon, Ireland. They went on to study Biomedical Engineering at the National University of Ireland in Galway. After graduation, both jumped at the chance to come and work in the United States for a year. They obtained their visa sponsorships through the Irish International Immigrant Center (IIIC), and were thankful for the help they received from the IIIC throughout the entire application process. The IIIC is delighted to be involved in the placement of both Niall and Darragh's internship opportunity in the U.S. and to continue to provide support to them throughout their placement.

When it came time to decide where their employment destination would be in the U.S.A., they both knew that California, spe-

cifically the San Francisco area, was the place for them. Darragh said, "I visited California before and I was very interested in going back." They knew that this was an area that has many employment opportunities in the medical device industry.

Niall and Darragh got internships at Boston Scientific, a multinational company located in California that specializes in medical devices and technology. They said that they were both excited to



Claire Cumiskey and Virginija Petrauskaite

get the internship because it is "incredibly relevant to our field of study." Darragh said, "I am working a lot with the suppliers that provide the materials for the devices we make. I have learned a lot about communications and interpersonal skills during my internship."

Darragh and Niall have also taken advantage of all the fun opportunities that California has to offer. They said, "The weather here is very nice and sunny. We do a good

bit of hiking and visit the tourist attractions in the area, like Alcatraz Prison." They also have been following the more "uniquely" American sports, specifically baseball and American Football.

Now, they are looking forward to spending time in Lake Tahoe at Thanksgiving. They said, "We highly recommend the San Francisco area to any future J-1 participants. We are thoroughly enjoying it."



Participants in October's IIIC Walk for Hope helped support our Wellness programs and raised awareness about suicide prevention.

Matters Of Substance

You Don't Have to Hit to Hurt!

October was Domestic Violence Awareness month and we thought it would be helpful to share some key facts and dispel some of the myths that surround this topic, also known as intimate partner violence (IPV). Sometimes IPV does not involve actually hitting but can include various levels of controlling or emotionally abusive or neglectful behavior. Are you with someone who...

- is jealous/possessive
- checks up on you constantly via phone, email, or in person,
- tries to control you by being very bossy, giving orders, making all of the decisions,
- puts you down, critical of whatever you do, and undermines everything you say?
- is scary to the extent that you worry about how they will react to things you say or do?
- threatens you; uses or

owns weapons?

- pressures you for sex, is forceful or scary with regard to sex?
- attempts to manipulate or suggests guilt by saying "If you really loved me you would..."
- blames you when they mistreat you by saying you provoked them, pressed their buttons, made them do it, or led them on?
- has hit, pushed, choked, restrained, kicked, or physically abused you?

Often, drug and alcohol users fear they may not be believed because family or friends say "well, you're the addict/alcoholic; you're just blaming your partner to justify your alcohol/drugs use!" Certainly those who are addicted to substances can blame others but in this situation, recovery is very difficult to focus on if you are in constant fear of being emotionally abused, verbally put down and every aspect of your life (clothes, hair, schedule, work, who you see etc.) is under scrutiny. You don't have to hit to hurt someone that you love.

JANE DOE INC. offers

wonderful programs for people living with physical and emotional violence and reminds us that abuse can happen to anyone.

- If you are a lesbian/gay/transgendered person, you may be afraid of having people know about your sexual orientation.
- If you are physically or mentally challenged or elderly, you may depend on your abuser to care for you. You may not have other people to help you.
- If you are a male victim of abuse, you may be ashamed and scared that no one will believe you
- If you are from another country, you may be afraid of being deported.

If you recognize any of the symptoms described above, please know you are not alone and there is help, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call Jane Doe at 1-877-521-2601. If you are not sure if this is what is happening to you, your friend or loved one, please call Danielle at the IIIC, in complete confidence and without judgment: 617-542-7654 ext. 14.



IRISH INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRANT CENTER
IMMIGRATION LEGAL ASSISTANCE

The Irish International Immigrant Center provides free legal support and representation to the Irish immigrant community. Weekly legal clinics where you can receive a free and confidential consultation with staff and volunteer attorneys are held throughout the Greater Boston area. For information, call us at (617) 542-7654.

Upcoming Clinic Schedule

Tuesday, November 4th
IIIC, 100 Franklin St. Lower Level, Downtown Boston
Entrance is at 201 Devonshire Street

Monday, November 10th
Green Briar Pub, 304 Washington Street, Brighton

Tuesday, November 18th
IIIC, 100 Franklin St. Lower Level, Downtown Boston
Entrance is at 201 Devonshire Street

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Boston Irish Reporter's Here & There

Reconnecting, and the joys of memory

By BILL O'DONNELL
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Prior to our first visit to Ireland in years last month, I decided to formulate a plan of engagement, or in so many words, how to meet old friends, see familiar places, and experience Ireland north and south as we knew it, and how to do that while giving a nod to my acute osteoarthritis and the constraining limits to my mobility. I could only walk short distances and could not stand for more than a few minutes. A far cry from my three- and four-hour history walks through Dublin, Belfast, and other place in earlier years. I obviously needed a plan.

My wife Jean, in vigorous good health despite a hip replacement last year, would be at my side and helping.

I first decided that as much as we loved the west of Ireland and our Flaherty cousins in Co. Kerry, we foreclosed on any cross-country travel. We agreed on confining our travel by rental car to northeast Ireland: Dublin, Dundalk, Carlingford, and Belfast, with Derry City our farthest western destination. The first obstacle we faced was the difficulty of renting a car in the Irish Republic for over 75 senior drivers like myself. I requested and got letters from my auto insurance carrier and my doctor here attesting to my health, my ability to drive without restrictions, and that I had been accident-free for five years. Voila, no problem said Hertz. They treated us very well, with the exception of a quirky GPS that went mute twice.

Our ten-day visit began with a leap of faith: How would I be able to penetrate the Ireland we had visited so often in healthier days and not be a burden or spend sedentary down time sipping pints and perusing my Irish newspapers. The plan was to drive from Dublin to Derry, with stops along the way, check into our center city hotel, park the car, and, especially in Dublin and Derry, rely on taxi cabs and limit ourselves to short or doable walking spurts.

Our first stop after our car pickup at Dublin Airport and its new and spacious facility was the Schoolhouse Hotel, a converted red brick 30-room hotel with character and a pub framed in dark wood with responsive service located a short stroll from Merrion Square. Our first surprise that evening in the bar was running into an old friend from Boston, Peter St. Clair O'Malley, a partner in Croom Consultants, Cambridge. I didn't recognize Peter initially with his grande-type beard and lip cover, then I did, while Jean eventually pinned him down and we all had a grand laugh. I should have known him instantly by the Plough and the Stars baseball cap he was wearing, but it and its owner were far from home and we had landed at the airport just shortly after five o'clock that morning.

Dublin's city centre was our destination the next morning by taxi to St. Stephen's Green and the much honored Little Museum of Dublin. After paying our admission I left a card at the front desk asking if I might be able to chat with either of the two museum founders, curator Simon O'Connor or director Trevor White. During the tour, Trevor White identified himself and we chatted briefly. Later, I had a much longer talk with Simon and we discussed material, letters and an IBM typewriter of Christy Brown's that I had received from his widow Mary, and the looming possibility that Christy, the quintessential Dubliner of "My Left Foot" fame, should be a distinctive part of the museum's Dublin collection. The museum does intend a tour to several American cities in 2015, and I talked up Boston as a likely port of call. We will be talking soon again.

Later that afternoon there was another taxi ride, to Glasnevin Cemetery to visit Christy's gravesite. I hadn't been back there since his burial in 1981, and we also wanted to check out the new Glasnevin Museum and the archives. Sadly, his well-kept family plot off in the distant St. Paul section of the huge cemetery and without a jitney or other accommodations for the disabled it was simply unreachable on foot for me. Disappointed, we saved a few euros going back into Dublin by a city bus.

Jean and her tiring companion then signed on for one of those well-done, on-and-off Dublin city tours. It was good value at roughly \$15 each. We finished off our busy Dub Day with a pub supper at the Old Stags Head on Dame Court, soon (2020) to celebrate its 250th birthday and still featuring some of the best pub grub in town. I still have at home a 200th anniversary ash-tray dated 1970, a relic of a bygone era. Some habits fortunately are hard to break.

The following morning we headed north towards Dundalk and our favorite Irish hotel of wistful memory, the Ballymascanlon House Hotel, with its surrounding garden, lawns and lush 18-hole golf course and a gentle blending of a centuries-old facade and entrance with a glistening new addition of glass and state-of-the-art amenities. Checking in we caught a glimpse of one of the late Irene Quinn's sons, Oliver Quinn, and his son, who now runs the hotel with his father. Oliver is an old friend of earlier times and was a warm and generous host on our frequent visits there.

Still ahead of us less than two miles away from the Ballymascanlon in Deer Park, Revensdale, was the high point of our trip — Julia Traynor, who along with her mother, our beloved "Aunt Minnie," hosted Jean and me as newlyweds 45 years ago — May, 1969 — as we began our honeymoon in Ireland. They have been our Irish family without papers ever since and we have



Enhancing the natural beauty of the River Foyle is Derry's Peace Bridge, which is situated behind Guildhall Square. It is one of three spans — the other two are the Craigavon and the Foyle — that adorn Derry City's waterways. The Peace Bridge was opened in 2011 as a symbol of union and amity between the two sides of the city.
Jean McKenna O'Donnell photo



The Foyle Shopping is Derry's largest and most popular with weekly foot traffic of some 180,000 shoppers. Completed in 1995, the modern-day pride of Derry City has more than 50 shops on four levels, a stunning atrium-style roof cover, with elevators, escalators, and state-of-the-art customer conveniences.
Bill O'Donnell photo

been back to them over the years but not since we last left them, on 9/11/2001 as the twin towers were being leveled in Manhattan as we watched the televised horror from Julia's home.

On this trip, we had a chance to see Julia's son Ronan and his two children, Aisling, 6, and Rory, 3, both born since our last visit there. Julia knew we were coming so it was not a shock for her to see us rapping at the door. After hugs and glad tidings following our hiatus, we scrambled to fill in the missing years before the tea and welcoming sandwiches and sweets appeared. Then a short drive to Karen and Ken Lynch's home overlooking Dundalk Bay and a welcome by Karen, whom we hadn't laid eyes on in 13 years. Karen's children, Patrick, Aaron, and Aoife, welcomed us and then husband Kenny joined us. The youngsters were full of questions and beaming with happiness at the invasion of the two Yanks, old friends of their mom's and grandmother Julia. If there is anything more engaging and joyous than a room full of beautiful Irish children, I have yet to see it. It was everything a family reunion should be, and the memories are with us still.

On Friday we were off to Belfast looking for a parking spot at the Wellington Park Hotel on Malone Road when our friend of 35 years, Frank Costello, appeared. Frank, who has been lecturing at Queens and hosting seminars at the celebrated Linen Hall Library between consulting trips, found us a spot and we accepted his invitation to sit in and observe his seminar on the Famine at Linen Hall that afternoon with the author and historian John Killen.

Later that evening Frank and wife Anne, both involved, active residents of Belfast for more than 15 years and parents of four sons, hosted a small dinner

party at the hotel for the O'Donnells with an added participant, Margaret "Mag" O'Brien, a native of Savin Hill, Dorchester, who had been part of the Linen Hall event. It was a grand, memorable evening distinguished by Frank organizing the hotel lobby sound system so we could hear tunes from a CD by Jean of American Songbook songs she had recorded several years earlier. The food was great, the service outstanding, and the music just right. A night to remember.

On Saturday morning before heading to Derry City, Jean and I had breakfast with one of Ireland's outstanding statesmen, old friend Alasdair McDonnell, SDLP Leader, MP for South Belfast, and a doctor who has set aside his medical practice for now to lead the constitutional nationalist party in these sometimes fractious days in the North. Alasdair brought along his youngest daughter, 11, who charmed us and kept us off the politics for the moment.

We drove on the dual carriageway from Belfast to Derry and the Derry City Hotel, a hotel neatly tucked into downtown Queens Quay overlooking the River Foyle and the Peace Bridge just steps from the Guildhall, the seat of government in this deeply appealing city center. Jean took a solitary walk along the Foyle, enjoying the balmy, dry weather that had been our lot for most of the days in Ireland. Rain at night; sunshine, with dry and moderate temperatures during the days. As Jean walked the Foyle, I relaxed with tea in the bustling hotel lobby.

We attended evening Mass Saturday at St. Eugene's packed cathedral, a short taxi ride away. Later we had dinner at the old Custom House, a few yards from the hotel, which had a warren of Victorian-style

(Continued on page 7)

Telling our stories – that's the idea

By Ed Forry

If you are Irish and Boston-bred, the annual Boston Irish Honors luncheon hosted by the BIR can truly be said to be a “feel-good” event in the annual autumn calendar.

The idea we had when the honors was first conceived was to search out and tell the stories of families and individuals whose lives can be described as exemplary – that is, sterling examples of what it means to have been brought up in Irish homes from among our common ancestral community.

The fundamental concept for the luncheon was suggested by Jim Carmody, the vice president and general manager of the Seaport Hotel, the venue for each year's celebration. When we met in 2010 to organize a 20-year anniversary event for our newspaper, it was Jim who suggested that we not only seek out and recognize individuals who have gained success and celebrity in their chosen fields, but also add a focus on their roots – the



Irish family common to us all, the source of our support and strengths, the mothers and fathers, aunts and uncles, grandparents and cousins – the folks we all share in common.

His suggestion brought an immediate recollection for me. While growing up in Dorchester, I regularly visited my grandmother Forry's home a block away, and every Sunday after Mass, we would share a meal with her and my aunts. As I remember her, I can almost smell the aroma of those great biscuits she made! During a thunderstorm, Hannah Crotty Forry would bring out the holy water and sprinkle it around the house (one of my mother's favorite expressions: “God between us and harm.”)

I got to know my cousins there, because they, too, would come over from Southie to visit Grandma every Sunday. And my three aunts who lived with her – Anna, Dora and Kate – they each divided up and took responsibility for their ten nieces and nephews, and they made sure we received an allowance each and every week.

It was surely a good reason to visit each week – that 25 cents I got from Aunt Dora went a long way back in the 1950s! But looking back on those family ties from this perspective, so many years later, makes me pause and realize how supportive they were to me and the others of my generation. In their own way, they looked after each of us: We were Boston, Irish, and Catholic, and we were nurtured in a manner that deserves to be recalled and celebrated.

It is also truly a culture that urgently needs to be passed forward, to the new generations of children who share our common ancestry.

I have always been fascinated to learn the stories of my family heritage, much of them essentially hidden from view by the simple passage of time. Forty years ago, I sat my parents down in front of a tape recorder and asked these two South Boston natives to tell me the story of how they met, it seems that my mother's brother was a one term Southie state rep named Joe Toomey, and he left politics when his wife told him she didn't care for all the people who were coming to the house looking for favors.

So my uncle turned to selling cars from the house, and it just so happened that my father, with a few dollars in his pocket from a good job on the Boston El, was looking to buy a car. So he came to the Toomey house on Broadway at the corner of G, and there he met my uncle's young sister, herself still single and ... Well, here am I, 90 something years later, telling a story that, had I not asked, I likely would never have known.

At last month's Honors luncheon, John Burke related stories of the Burke family, of John and Ellie and their parents and siblings. There were 400 in the room, among them 53 Burke relatives, and it was a moment familiar to us all. John Burke gave a word of advice: “If your mother and dad are still alive, go home today and ask them to tell you their storieds.”

I would add, “Record it on your smart phone, or make a video of it – but do it now, while there is time.” In Phil Coulter's mournfullyrics, “What's lost is lost, and gone forever.”



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Through the gloom, the Irish see clear signs of a recovery in progress

By Joe Leary
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Ireland has been in serious financial trouble for more than five year. Unscrupulous or unknowing bankers, greedy real-estate developers, and a no-regulation compliant government were the chief causes of the onset of the crisis. The Irish people responded dramatically and in the landmark election of March 2011 the previous ruling party, Fianna Fail, was destroyed at the polls with their long-time opponents, Fine Gael, taking power. The new government, finding itself deeply in debt to the European Union, most notably the German banks, set about to reduce the debt by instigating a regime of austerity.

Government salaries, including those of all the politicians and state workers, were cut; pensions were reduced; teachers' salaries were cut; and social services were reduced nearly everywhere across the country. In addition, new-house construction came to a halt, and to this day unfinished and empty houses can be found all over Ireland.

Fortunately, the previous good years of the economy and the largesse of the European Union served Ireland well. Ireland's infrastructure had been transformed into a modern country. As American visitors can testify, the new roads are superb. Travel time from Dublin to Belfast is now less than two hours on super highways. Travel throughout Ireland is far easier. On the other hand, arrogant high pricing decisions made by merchants, hotel owners, and golf course owners led to a sharp decline in tourism numbers, which have not yet returned to the levels of four years ago.

The Irish people have paid a huge price in terms of their lower salaries, pensions, and reduced social services. New car sales had virtually no growth, few were able to buy homes, and a sense of depression pervaded the country. Given such difficulties, the Irish deserve much praise for marching forward every day, handling the adversity largely without complaint. Today they

can see a renewal and a promising future; Ireland has managed its way back from disaster.

With the cooperating sacrifice of its people and the fiscal leadership of its political leaders, much of the onerous debt to Europe has been paid down to more manageable limits and 2015 promises to be a far better year. In mid-October the Government, led by Fine Gael Minister of Finance Michael Noonan and Taoiseach Enda Kenny, presented the budget for 2015. It provides at least partial relief for many and changes the gloom and doom atmosphere of previous years.

The highest income tax rates will be reduced by 1 percent; child benefits will be increased; no new cuts to social welfare rates are planned; and welfare recipients can expect a 25 percent Christmas bonus in their December checks. And 1,700 new teachers and 200 new Garda will be hired. With Ireland still operating under serious debt constraints, this spending necessarily has to be limited, but the announcement is a mood-changer, and that is very important.

In addition, Kenny has announced that he plans to reduce the tax rates again next year.

Of course, there is always dissent in a democracy. Some have said that more of the debt should be paid before any relief while the labor unions say the new spending is not enough. For all that, it appears that a good balance has been achieved and Ireland has received the congratulations of many countries for its achievements. In fact, Bankers magazine has named Michael Noonan as the best finance minister in Europe.

Meanwhile, there are ominous signs of increasing discord coming from the North. The Irish government in Dublin must always pay attention to Belfast since nearly half of its people consider themselves Irish first. The First Minister of Northern Ireland and head of the Democratic Unionist Party, Peter Robinson, has stopped cooperating with the Nationalists, refusing even to participate in meetings. It is a troublesome game they are playing.



The Irish American Partnership (IAP) hosted an Oct. 23 breakfast honoring the Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Nichola Mallon, at the Seaport Boston Hotel. From left, Bob Mauro of Boston College, Mayor Mallon, IAP board member Brian McMenimen and IAP president Joe Leary. *Harry Brett photo*

A pilgrim's progress: Being Catholic

By James W. Dolan
SPECIAL TO THE REPORTER

Of late I have been grappling with a new theology that seeks to reconcile evolution and advances in scientific knowledge with Christianity. I did so with some trepidation, concerned that what I might learn would undermine the faith upon which I depend.



James W. Dolan

A few months ago I met a BC High classmate at a school event. A Jesuit and former university president, he had spent many years in the Middle East. After a lively discussion, I sent him an email asking for a list of books he could recommend. I received a list of 32, most of them dealing with science and religion.

So began my journey into theology, cosmology, evolution, and quantum physics. I do not pretend to understand all I have read but I learned enough to know that some of what I had been taught during 16 years of Catholic education was, in light of what we now know, misleading, and occasionally false.

Within the context of what was known at the time, that education was a sincere effort to convey the history and fundamental truths of Catholic doctrine. However, the church cannot exist as a closed fortress. It cannot ignore the extraordinary achievements in science and technology over the last century that offer compelling evidence that evolution continues and that the “truths” of yesterday must be evaluated in a new light.

Fortunately, there are a number of theologians, male and female, who are the new missionaries of the scientific age. They explore the boundaries of religion and science in an effort to first identify, then reconcile, and finally adapt discoveries to what we now know. Their message is clear: The church is not frozen in time, stuck in the “medieval cosmos.” Like everything else,

the church must accept its place in dynamic evolution and re-examine its teachings while learning from science and other religions.

The “new age” theologians do a remarkably good job of seeing God and Christ in the unfolding of the universe. They identify the essential elements of Christianity and explain how they blend into evolution. They see a God of love and mercy, beckoning mankind forward as evolution continues. They describe the need for essential changes in our understanding of God, divine action, Christ, and salvation.

The father of the movement was the French Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a paleontologist/scientist/philosopher who urged Christians to embrace dynamic evolution as part of God's plan for salvation. His views were at first rejected by the church, but they gathered momentum after his death in 1955. They were favorably commented upon by Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI. With his emphasis on love, understanding, and mercy, Pope Francis has moved closer to Fr. Teilhard de Chardin's observation: “We are one after all, you and I; together we suffer, together exist, and forever will recreate each other.”

The church that sent missionaries to the far corners of the world has been reluctant to explore a “new wilderness” that is fast becoming known, understood, and accepted. It fears that to do so will require it to abandon long-held convictions, which action will undermine the confidence of the faithful. To cling to untenable beliefs, to suggest that all we need to know about God and creation is known is to ignore God's word as it continues to be revealed in the unfolding of evolution.

The good news of evolution as preached by these new missionaries challenges old beliefs, suggesting the elimination of some and the revising of others. They offer insights, encouragement, comfort, and a new purpose, none of which conflict with the fundamentals of Christianity. As Catholics, we must be willing to accept the new cosmic reality and apply ourselves to understanding its implications.

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

Point of View

EDITORIAL SLEIGHT OF HAND

No one questions the Globe's right to back Baker, but endorsement's omissions should raise eyebrows

By PETER F. STEVENS
BIR STAFF

The editorial board of the *Boston Globe* has every right to endorse any candidate it chooses to support. Eight days before the election, the paper threw its still-considerable powers of persuasion and coronation behind Charlie Baker. Again, that is fine. What is not fine, however, is the editorial and journalistic sleight of hand presented in the *Globe's* written rationale behind the endorsement. The Baker-infused giddiness that prompted WBZ's Jon Keller and Dan Rea and the *Boston Herald's* Joe Battenfeld to blurt out a few insights about the newspaper and publisher John Henry's support of Baker makes a re-reading of the text of the endorsement interesting and dismaying.

Keller let the cat out the bag first when he assessed the startling *Globe* poll showing Baker nine points ahead of Coakley. Given that virtually all previous polls had depicted a tight race, Keller refused to swallow the new number whole and, surprisingly, offered that the poll was tilted more toward conservative and independent respondents. In short, he was unwilling, though likely eager, to latch on to the poll. In years past, the *Globe* had rarely, if ever, trumpeted its own polling with such banner-headline fanfare as the Baker-Coakley numbers. For what it's worth, a *New York Times*/CBS poll taken during the same time frame as the *Globe's* gave Coakley a five-point lead. Who knows? Still, it's worth noting that Keller works for WBZ – a CBS outlet.

On Dan Rea's *Nightside* broadcast on WBZ Radio on Oct. 27, the host was chatting with the Battenfeld and *Globe* editorial board member Dante Ramos. When Rea asked Battenfeld if there was surprise at the *Herald* over the *Globe's* endorsement, Battenfeld replied that he and his colleagues were not surprised at all because of John Henry's friendship with and political support of Baker. Ramos weakly offered that there was a lot of disagreement on the board over the endorsement, but punted when pressed on Henry's influence in the decision.

In the text, the editorial board played intellectual and

journalistic sleight of hand by omitting any mention of Baker and the Big Dig, especially when compared with the paper's stance in 2010.

The endorsement of Baker ran on Oct. 27, and after damning Coakley with a flurry of faint praise, the nameless board editor rationalized the decision. Obliquely tying Coakley to "cracks" in the state's "Department of Children and Families [DCF], the Probation Department, the state crime lab, the board that regulates compounding pharmacies, the state Labor Department's unemployment system, [and] the Health Connector website," the board lent unspoken legitimacy to the gubernatorial contest's vilest and most dishonest ad. That is the one in which an earnest, sonorous voice, backed by grainy black-and-white imagery, assigns partial culpability to Coakley for the tragic deaths of children as a result of DCF errors and incompetence. At the ad's end, ubiquitous Baker mouthpiece Beth Lindstrom's knowing smile is meant to hammer home the "truth" of the distortions. Yes, Coakley has also run several misleading ads, but they fall far short of that particular ad by Baker supporters, if not his campaign itself.

The endorsement correctly portrays Baker as a social moderate, but in presenting his record of service in the Weld and Cellucci administrations, there is that glaring omission – not one mention of his stewardship of the Big Dig. Apparently, the Big Dig is of no concern to the *Globe* in 2014; however, in 2010, exactly the opposite held true when Baker challenged Deval Patrick in the gubernatorial race.

Here is just one of many examples from the *Globe's* own 2010 files from a lengthy investigative piece by Michael Rezendes and Noah Bierman in the June 13, 2010 edition. Under the headline "Baker's Role in Big Dig Financing Process Was Anything but 'Small' -- Records Undercut His Campaign Claim," the reporters wrote: "Throughout his campaign for governor, Republican Charles D. Baker has sought to minimize his involvement in the \$15 billion Big Dig."

When he launched his candidacy last summer, Baker said he played a 'small role in the Big Dig.' Days later,

his campaign said that, as the state's budget chief under governors William Weld and Paul Cellucci, he had a 'limited role in the financing process.'

"And in March, Baker told a *Globe* columnist that when it came to figuring out how to pay for the massive project at one critical juncture in the 1990s, he was only 'one of about 50 people' involved."

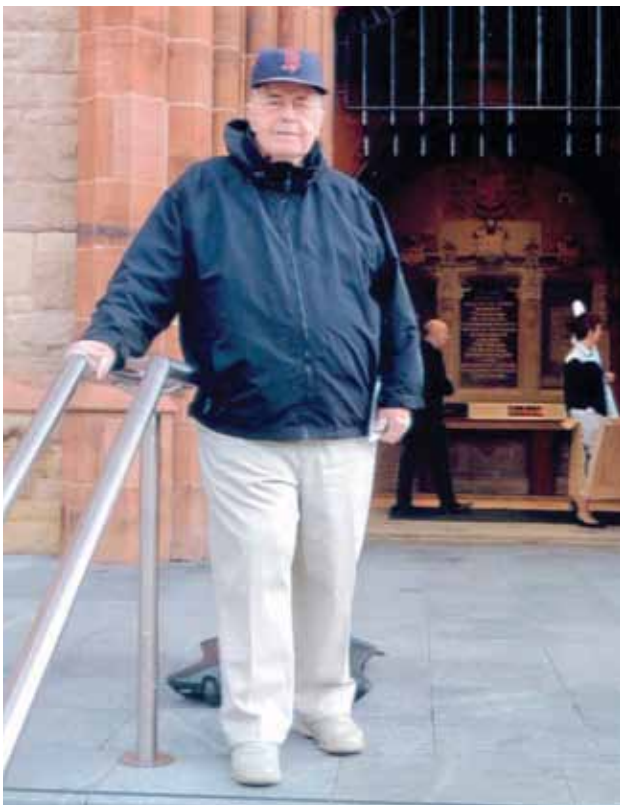
"But those statements are sharply at odds with a picture of Baker's financial leadership of the project that emerges from hundreds of pages of memorandums, letters, and other documents culled from his four-year tenure as secretary of the Executive Office of Administration and Finance, from 1994 to 1998..."

Throughout the 2010 campaign, the *Globe* scrutinized Baker's role in the Big Dig. Now, in the paper's 2014 endorsement, nary a mention of the most controversial public works project in the nation's annals. Nary a mention that it was Martha Coakley who went after Bechtel and Baker's other Big Dig cronies to seek justice for the family of a woman who paid for her life as a result of shoddy workmanship and shoddy management of the Big Dig.

Again, the *Globe* has every right to endorse one candidate over the other. John Henry is the publisher, and as anyone who has been within earshot of a newspaper or magazine knows, a publisher has the final say in endorsements if he or she chooses to exercise that prerogative. When Henry purchased the *Globe*, a great many readers worried that he might influence the paper's objective coverage of his Red Sox. Thankfully for Red Sox Nation, the concern has proven unfounded. Perhaps the same cannot be said anymore in a far more important realm – political endorsements.

As of this column's writing, we don't know if our next governor is Charlie Baker or Martha Coakley. Many observers will point out that Martin Walsh won the mayoral race without the endorsement of either the *Globe* or the *Herald*. If, as the smart money says, our next governor is Charlie Baker, let's hope that a questionable and controversial poll and a whitewashed endorsement will not have played a prominent role.

Reconnecting, and the joys of memory



I returned to Derry's Guildhall 19 years after I participated in the 1995 dedication and opening ceremonies of the Foyleside Shopping Centre in Derry's seat of government.

Jean McKenna O'Donnell photo

rooms upstairs reminiscent of the dinner scene in John Huston's film of Joyce's "The Dead." A fine restaurant with great food for value and a rich history to match.

On Sunday we did a few things that we had promised ourselves we should accomplish while in Derry City. We took a bus tour of the area capitalized by the iconic Free Derry sign, adjacent to the now serene site of Bloody Sunday, the Jan. 30, 1972, massacre of 13 innocent nationalists. Behind the Free Derry sign there was row after row of neat housing where in the early days of the Troubles respected friend Paddy Doherty (Paddy Bogside) led the Siege of the Bogside that helped make the Catholic/nationalist acreage famous for its resilience and thirst for justice.

Later, we spent much time in the Guildhall. The last time I had been there was in 1995 to participate and speak (with others) to a crowded room marking the "near miracle" of a magnificent Foyleside Shopping Centre that many in the days before the Good



Our hosts, the Lynches: Karen Lynch, third from left, is the mother of three, from left: Patrick, Aoife, and Aaron, with Karen's mother, Julia Traynor. Karen was an 18-month-old toddler when we first stayed with the family and our beloved "Aunt Minnie" while on our honeymoon in Omeath, Co. Louth.

Jean McKenna O'Donnell photo

Friday Agreement said could never be built. I recall the early debate in Boston during the construction of the stunning edifice, the second largest in all Ireland, that the Provos would never allow it to go unscathed and that a atrium style roof cover was too tempting to the paramilitaries and would surely become a target of mortar fire. That never happened and I am quietly proud today to have played a small, supporting role along with many leaders in Boston, not least the O'Connell Brothers Construction Co., with dogged heroes like Arthur Casey, construction chief for O'Connell, who gave a tireless chunk of two years of his life to the project, Mayor Ray Flynn, BRA chief Steve Coyle, who offered his support and design ideas, Boston Ireland Ventures, and the good people of Derry who all worked together with Boston to build something meaningful and lasting. The Foyleside Shopping Centre did not exist 20 years ago except in the vision of a handful of counter-intuitive patriots who came together to make peace. Today, the average foot traffic of the Foyleside shops is an astonishing 180,000 people a week.

As earlier agreed to by ourselves and Karen and Kenny Lynch, we returned to Carlingford on Monday, near the end of our long-deferred visit to Ireland, and had dinner that night at Schooner's at McKevitt's Village Hotel Restaurant in beautiful and historic Carlingford. The Lynches, Julia Traynor, and the O'Donnells spent hours discussing a half-century of adventures with our lifetime friend, Julia's late cousin Roger Grant, who left us at age 81 after long years at the hospital section of the Chelsea Soldiers Home.

The ties in the Omeath, Dundalk, area, where the O'Donnells spent so many happy moments on frequent trips to Ireland are deep and abiding. On a personal

and social level they were weeks and months over time when I was an inadvertent student gaining some muscle in the life-living game, when I learned so much about the Irish, family life, the comfort of faith, and the meaning of family and community and friendship.

To the Rileys, the Traynors, the Lynches and all the good people of the wee county who have persevered and triumphed over adversity, I thank you for giving us warmth, comfort, and cover, and for teaching one pilgrim via unpedantic parables of life, how to enjoy the gifts you have been given and appreciate the journey.

...

The O'Donnells paid their own way for all the costs of this trip, with the exception of some fine dining moments when we were guests and grateful companions of friends we have known and cherished throughout many of our 45 years together.

However, for their patience in answering our pre-departure questions and for making the ride and our days in Ireland such a pleasurable experience, Jean and I thank Exploring Vacations (Mulligar) for our auto rental and accommodations. We appreciate and thank Crystal Travel (West Roxbury) for the good seats you found for us on the Aer Lingus A300 flights to and from Ireland. I also want to thank Aer Lingus and Crystal Travel for working together to arrange wheel chairs going and coming at two airports. And to the people of Ireland stretching from Dublin northward to Derry, and points in between, we remain in your debt for the many, many kindnesses and occasions of good will and generosity that enriched our recent travel day. The experience left us with the assurance that the people of Ireland are everything and more that we believe they are.



The Boston Irish Honors 2014

“A moment to embrace and celebrate our shared heritage”

I am delighted to chair the fifth annual Boston Irish Honors luncheon. This event is a welcome moment to embrace and celebrate our shared heritage by honoring men and women and families who embody the best qualities of the Boston Irish.

Our honorees are distinguished for their dedication to public service and excellence in their chosen fields. Their stories remind us of how far we have come in this “city on the hill”—a place that continues to be our chosen home. They connect us to our ancestors and the difficult but courageous decisions they made to set sail or take flight for

a new land of opportunity.

Like so many of Boston’s present-day residents, our forebears came to these shores and neighborhoods with a resolve to not only improve their own lot in life, but also to make Boston a better place for everyone who calls it home.

It is fitting that we continue to recall these triumphs — and not just in moments of grief or transition. That’s why this event— convened by the Boston Irish Reporter— has special significance. The Boston Irish Honors Luncheon has become a welcome date on our calendars.

As Boston is ushering in a new era of leadership, it is critical that we always remember our roots. The Irish experience in Boston is still playing out before us, and the men and women we honor today are wonderful examples of that truth.

Thank you for joining us in this celebration. To paraphrase William Butler Yeats, “Think where our glory most begins and ends, and say our glory is we have such friends!”

Peter Meade
2014 Boston Irish Honors
Event Chairman



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Irish Consul General Breandan O Caollai, left, and Vice Consul Jillian O’Keeffe traveled to Portland, Maine, recently where they discussed educational and community heritage links with that city’s mayor, Michael Brennan, at right.

Brennan, a second generation Irish-American, talked about his recent trip to Ireland, citing the many Irish-Americans in the Portland community, and the links between the two countries. The mayor then hosted a reception in his Portland City Hall office for the Irish-American community and the Consul General.

On the same trip, O Caollai and O’Keeffe spoke at the Maine Irish Heritage Center in Portland where they explained the process for obtaining Irish citizenship based on family heritage and the advantages of having a European Community passport.

BIR NOTEBOOK

Charitable Irish honors 3 with Silver Key Awards

The Charitable Irish Society of Bosotn hosted its 2014 Silver Key Awards ceremony on Oct. 15 at the Boston College Club. In recognition of the Society’s mission, the Silver Key Award is conferred annually upon individuals who have demonstrated outstanding dedication in helping new immigrants. The 2014 award-ees are Richard Campbell, Richard Gormley, and Rev. Gerald Osterman. Also, the Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Phil Coulter, the Derry-born musician who is celebrating a 50-year career compos- ing and performing Irish music. Coulter enchanted the audience with a brief concert of his music.

For more than a quarter of a millennium, the Society’s central mission has been to assist newly arrived Irish immigrants to Boston, most recently by providing sup- port in the areas of employment, housing, education, finance, health and law.

Despite the growth of the Irish economy, a large number of Irish men and women continue to immi- grate to the Boston area. Some of these individuals occasionally find themselves in difficult circumstances because of illness, lack of affordable housing, seasonal employment, or problems with immigration authorities. The proceeds from the Silver Key Award Reception are used to underwrite the work of the Charitable Irish Society in helping individual Irish immigrants on an as-needed basis.

Coulter concert aids Irish Pastoral Centre

The Grammy-nominated musician, songwriter, singer and producer Phil Coulter, who served as a visiting pro- fessor of Irish Studies at Boston College for three years performed a concert Oct. 14 in St. Ignatius Church to benefit the Irish Pastoral Centre-Boston (IPC), a non- profit organization that helps Irish immigrants make the transition to life in America.

Coulter has written or co-written hit songs such as “The Town I Loved So Well,” “Puppet on a String,” “Saturday Night” (a hit for the Bay City Rollers) and “My Boy,” which was performed by Elvis Presley. Since launching his career as a pianist-vocalist 30 years ago, he has amassed 23 platinum records and 39 gold and 52 silver albums. In 2001, he was nominated for a Grammy Award in the New Age category for his album “Highland Cathedral.”

ICCNE seeking executive director

The Irish Cultural Centre in Canton is searching for a new executive director to take the position made vac- ant when Mary McTigue resigned last month, saying, “My last day with the Centre is tomorrow, Tues., Oct. 7. After three years here at the ICC, I am very proud of the work that we have accomplished together. I have enjoyed the opportunity to work with you and hope that I will have the chance to connect with you in the future.”

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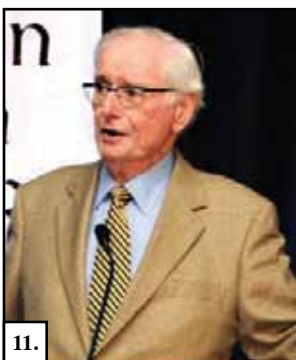
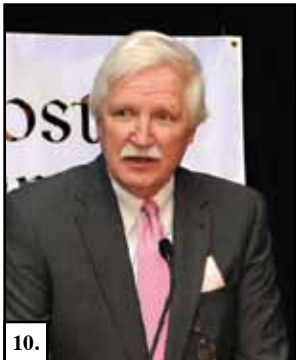
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BRETT'S BOSTON

By Margaret Brett Hastings
Exclusive photos of Boston Irish people & events

Some 400 people attended the fifth annual Boston Irish Honors luncheon, hosted by the Boston Irish Reporter on Oct. 24 at the Seaport Hotel. Pictured are: 1.- Ed Forry with Burke family Honorees, Dennis Burke, John Burke, Bill Kennedy (presenter), Michael Burke, Stephanie Merwin (representing her mother Jacquelyn Burke) and Paul Burke; 2.- Honoree Katherine Craven & family; 3.- Bill Forry, Bob Scannell; 4.- Honoree Mayor Martin Walsh (center) with presenter Bill Forry, Mrs Mary Walsh, Lorrie Higgins and Ed Forry; 5.- Dr. Dennis Burke, Bill Bulger; 6.- Event chair Peter Meade; 7.- Bill Cleary, John B Hynes III, John B Hynes IV; 8.- Ed Forry, Honoree Katherine Craven, Bill Forry; 9.- US Senator Paul Kirk, Bill Cleary, Rev. Richard (Doc) Conway; 10.- John Burke; 11.- Emcee Dick Flavin; 12.- Invocator Rev Tom Kennedy; 13. - Della Costello presents flowers to Mary Walsh, mother of the mayor.





The Boston Irish Honors 2014 for Distinguished Public Service

Mayor Martin Walsh: Firmly rooted in Dorchester and Connemara

By Bill Forry
Editor

For a few hours, Marty Walsh was just another Yank on holiday, enjoying the sights and sounds of Clifden, one of Co. Galway's loveliest and liveliest towns. Boston's 47 year-old mayor had just enjoyed a sailboat ride and a quiet lunch with his partner Lorrie Higgins and two other traveling companions on a brilliant Saturday morning in Connemara.

Now, as he strolled through the scenic village with other tourists, he was incognito in blue jeans, sneakers, and an old-school Red Sox ball cap; mercifully, he was off the grid, stopping to buy scones and desserts for his mother at a local bakery called Walsh's.

The respite would not last long.

Later that evening, he began a series of public events with a Mass celebrated in his mother's home village of Rosmuc, followed by a reception that went late into the night.

The first five days of Walsh's first trip abroad as mayor in September were a blur of bonfires, parties, church services, and endless photo opportunities—with the mayor getting rock star treatment at every stop. In a few places, the frenzy to get photos with him was such that he had to be hustled into a waiting car, often by his cousin, Winnie Curran, a Boston Police sergeant who is accompanying the mayor on the trip.

Martin J. Walsh may not be a household name throughout Ireland, at least not yet. But in the west of Ireland, and especially in the southern parts of Connemara where John Walsh and Mary O'Malley were born and raised, he is a celebrity of historic importance, a modern-day chieftain with a deeply personal connection to thousands of people, most of whom still speak Irish as their primary language. The Gaeltacht, as that Irish-speaking region is called here, is most certainly Marty Walsh country.

It clearly tested the patience of his security team at times, but the mayor himself cheerfully accommodated every request.

"It's such a big thing for everyone in both villages. They're just super excited, especially the kids who have seen the news in the papers and on the radio. I think they view it as a chance to meet somebody famous. I don't think of myself as someone famous, but they do. And even some of the adults, they know the family and my uncles all these years. They're overwhelmed."

Said Walsh: "I was born in St. Margaret's Hospital. My home is Dorchester, Massachusetts. But I am also from Rosmuc and Carna in Connemara."

It was the theme he carried throughout his public



The Walsh family of Dorchester, photographed in Greenhills Bakery in 2000. From left: Mary (O'Malley) Walsh, John Walsh, Martin Walsh, Pat Walsh, State Rep. Martin Walsh and his father John Walsh.

remarks in the region: The people here claim Marty as their own, and vice-versa.

...

Martin J. Walsh was indeed born in Dorchester's St. Margaret's hospital on April 10, 1967. His parents, Mary (nee O'Malley) and John Walsh, later had a second son, John, now 44. Both parents left Connemara in the late 1950s. In 1962, they met at a dance hall in Roxbury and were married in 1965—settling in Dorchester, where John's older brother Pat Walsh was becoming a leading member of the Laborer's Union Local 223.

"He would never, ever even think of moving somewhere else," said Marty's mother Mary. "I moved all this way to marry a man who grew up 20 miles from me," she laughs.

In 2000, Pat Walsh told the Reporter why he and his younger brother left their hometown Callowfeenish, near Carna, in the first place.

"Things were very hard in Ireland back then. They weren't as good in this country as they are now, either. You had to find your own work," explained Pat, who did just that—working his way to the top of Local 223. Pat's son Marty—the mayor's cousin—took over as head of the laborer's local when his dad retired.

John followed his older brother into the union and together they helped make the Southie-based chapter

one of the region's strongest and most Irish of trade unions. John earned the nickname 'Doc'—in part for his habit of caring for ailing young workers who, just on occasion, might show up for work looking a bit green around the gills. When he wasn't on the clock, he and his fellow laborers would often work overtime—and without pay—on labors of love. One of his prized possessions is a plaque given him by the old pastor of St. Margaret's Church—Fr. Dunn—for his "unique contributions" to restoring the church back in the 1970s.

Both Pat and John are gone now. John passed first in 2010—and his son the state representative recalled at the time how much his father's love for the bloodsport of Boston politics informed his own career track.

"He absolutely loved, loved, loved local politics his whole life," then-Rep. Walsh said, recalling his dad's joy in Martin's 1997 election to the legislature. "And for his own son to win... it was easily his proudest moment."

Pat Walsh passed away a year after his brother in November 2012. On his deathbed, Pat had an election day visit from Elizabeth Warren, who came to his home to say farewell to one of the key members of the union coalition that supported her run.

"I'm not sure that he really knew who she was at first," recalled Marty Walsh, who was there for the brief meeting. "Pat was pretty far along. But she came up to his bed and grabbed his hand and said, 'Pat, I'm Elizabeth Warren. And I just wanted to say thank you.'"

"Congratulations," Pat told her, although the polls would not close for several more hours.

"Pat knew at 2:30 that day that she'd be the next senator," said Rep. Walsh.

...

For folks from Dorchester, "Marty" is now the vessel of their own aspirations: the kid from the three-decker on Taft Street who has beaten cancer, a drive-by bullet blast, and "the disease" to grasp his city's ultimate brass ring. He has become living, breathing proof that we can tame our own demons and even harness them for the purposes of a greater good—like ministering to an emerging generation of Bostonians whose futures are similarly imperiled by bullets and booze.

The confident, poised, and at times eloquent Marty Walsh who breezed through his Conte Forum address on Jan. 6, 2014 morning is a far cry from the hesitant, harried candidate I first encountered on a King Street sidewalk in the winter of 1997.

He had come to Pope's Hill—then foreign turf for the Savin Hill upstart—to give his first press conference in the special election to succeed Jim Brett in



A story in the 1997 Boston Irish Reporter featured two young state Representatives Martin Walsh, left, and Eugene O'Flaherty outside the State House.



The Boston Irish Honors 2014



Mayor Martin J. Walsh greets the crowd during his inauguration ceremony at Boston College's Conte Forum on Jan. 6, 2014. The mayor's mother Mary Walsh held a Bible used during the swearing-in.
Photo by Chris Lovett

the 13th Suffolk rep's seat. Walsh was nervous and edgy. His remarks were unremarkable — read from a 12-page “public safety” platform pamphlet — but they weren't what was important then. He was there to fly the flag in Neponset's Ward 16, to eat into his rivals' base, and to project the strength of a candidate who had managed to maneuver himself into an enviable spot: He was suddenly the front-runner, having cleared the deck of all challengers from his base in Savin Hill.

The 29 year-old Walsh was eager to make friends outside of his comfort zone. Unshackled from the tension of a hard-fought, six-way race, his natural, good-natured style began to show itself more. He threw himself into the work of being a lawmaker, but more importantly, as a go-to person for people with problems.

“Marty chose people over power and by empowering other people he empowered himself,” says Danny Ryan, an early political mentor and conscience. “He's addicted to helping people.”

Under Tom Finneran, who was midway through his tenure as House Speaker when Walsh arrived, he was able to deliver big ticket items to his district, including long-delayed funding to build out the 72-acre Pope John Paul II Park in Neponset. Walsh played a supporting, but important, role in compelling the MBTA to pay for major upgrades to Dorchester's four Red Line stations. And he put the heat — and a heaping dose of Irish guilt — on the old MDC to get Morrissey Boulevard's crumbling Beades drawbridge replaced, dramatically telling the Reporter in 1999: “I don't want my parents driving over the bridge when it collapses.”

As disciplined as he was in his personal life, Rep. Walsh sometimes seemed to flail about politically. In Finneran's wake, he backed the wrong horse in two House leadership fights. In January 2002, he went public with his interest in becoming Suffolk County Registrar of Deeds — hardly a job coveted by a politician with higher aspirations. A week later, he pulled back from the brink — and despite being offered the job by Secretary of State William Galvin — opted to stay on course in the House.

Despite sometimes tough coverage from his local newspaper on these and other matters, Marty Walsh never shut off the lines of communication or sought to exact revenge. He can get angry — and he'll let you know he is. But he has always come back to earth and acted professionally. He seemed grudgingly to accept — and expect — our scrutiny, and the criticism that would follow. He knew he would get a fair shot at getting his side out. It's safe to assume that as he takes on his newest challenge, minor tussles with watchdog reporters will no doubt be counted as an important part of his political education.

More often than not, the Reporter tracked Walsh's career with routine reports about bills filed and cam-

paigns won. He showed guts on many occasions and defied expectations. He defied an unhappy civic association crowd that wanted to block the Pine Street Inn from converting a dilapidated six-family house on Pleasant Street into transitional housing for the homeless. In the fight over building dorms on the UMass Boston campus, he defied his fellow union chieftains and stood alongside his Savin Hill neighbors in opposing dorms. And he would tell anyone who cared to listen — well before the Goodridge decision — that he'd happily vote to give gay men and women the right to marry.

“If you want to label me a liberal because I'm supportive of people who are trying to get sober and trying to recover, and trying to stop infectious diseases, they can label me as a liberal all day if they want,” Walsh told former Reporter editor Jim O'Sullivan, now a political editor for the Globe, in a 2004 profile. “Because I'm a white Irish Catholic, people will assume that I'm gonna be a conservative, and I think that's unfair because people don't get an opportunity to talk to me and ask me my positions on the issues, or talk about issues. I think it's kind of an unfair label.”

Walsh's best quality — the one that makes him so likeable — could be his greatest potential weakness in the mayor's job: He's a pleaser. He wants to leave everyone smiling. He seeks to defuse confrontation and focus on the things people have in common. This instinct makes him eminently electable, but it harbors the risk that candidate John Connolly sought to define in last year's mayoral race: That Walsh won't be tough enough to say no when it counts, if

it means losing a friend.

It says here that Walsh has it in him.

...

On his recent trip to Carna, Walsh attended a Sunday morning Mass at St. Mary's Church in Carna. Just inside the church doors, two memorial Mass cards with the faces of John and Pat Walsh were posted in a frame for the mayor to see as he entered. It was one of many reminders throughout this leg of Walsh's trip that this American's roots — and his political success — are very much a part of Connemara's future as well.

Two days later, Walsh was back in Carna to lay a cornerstone for a planned Emigrant Commemorative Center on the site of what is now an empty, dilapidated schoolhouse overlooking the sea. The mayor pledged to help support the centre by working to raise funds and awareness in the Boston Irish community.

“You know the story of people leaving the west of Ireland. You know my parents' story and as I look out across the room, it's your story, your family's story,” Walsh told an overflow crowd of several hundred who packed into a tent next to the ruined building, which dates to the late 19th century. “The people left the west of Ireland, not to get away from the land, as people thought it was, but they actually left the west of Ireland to strengthen their own land here in their native areas,” he said.

Then, to great applause, he pledged: “I'm here today to tell everyone that I'm here to commit to you that we will build this center and we will open this center.”

He added: “You can never forget where you came from. That's why I'm here today.”



Mayor Martin Walsh greeted the Fanad marching band from Donegal during a visit to Letterkenny on Sept. 24, 2014.
Photo by Sean Grant



The Boston Irish Honors 2014

Exemplary Boston Irish Family

For Southie’s Burkes, ‘family’ is a sacred word

By Jack Thomas

At twilight of a soft October night, on Day Boulevard, deep in South Boston, in a weathered first-floor meeting room of the Boston Harbor Yacht Club, there’s an end of the summer tranquility until, one by one, the four Burke brothers arrive, bearing sweet lobster rolls, potato chips, and ice-cold beer, and in rickety chairs around an antiquated table, their stories pour forth about Irish values, about the grand character of South Boston, and especially about the Burke family and their revered mother, Ellie, and their father, Johnny, a Good Samaritan who ran an old-fashioned drug store at D and Sixth for more than half a century.

First, though, regarding the *Boston Irish Reporter* award to the Burkes as exemplary Irish, the brothers agree on one point – they do not deserve the accolade.

“There’s nothing we did as a family that was extraordinary,” says Dennis, an orthopedic surgeon. “We didn’t become presidents of anything or captains of industry, and we didn’t cure cancer and we didn’t become great philosophers. But we are the children of two parents, second-generation Americans who never went beyond grammar school. We’re ordinary people lucky to have had parents who cared for us, who gave us direction, and who had a clear idea of right and wrong, and that’s all we needed.”

His brother, John, a senior vice president at Staples, picks up the narrative:

“First, my sister Jacquelyn couldn’t make it tonight, but she’s here in spirit. And if there’s a story here, the beginning is about two people from a poor background who found one another, and the middle part is that she worked hard to raise five children while he worked at his drugstore, seven days a week. The end of the story is the legacy, how their five children became 10 with wives, 29 with grandchildren and now with 12 great grandchildren, their offspring number is 41. It’s a story that fulfills my father’s dream to see articles in the newspaper about the good people of Southie.”

Today’s award is more important than the Academy Award for Best Hairstyling or the Grammy for Best Pop Instrumental Album, because it’s recognition by neighbors and friends that the Burkes represent the best of Irish culture.

In an age when 25 percent of children are raised in single parent homes, and when 1.6 million children in America are homeless, the Burkes of South



In this photo, circa late 1950s, Johnny Burke is pictured in his backyard on Marine Road, South Boston sitting with his youngest son Michael, sitting, and standing, clockwise from left: Paul, Jacquelyn, John and Dennis. Below, the adult Burke children with their mom Ellie some years later. Pictured below, left to right: John, Jacquelyn, Paul, Dennis and Michael.

Photos courtesy Burke family



Bill Bulger remembers John Burke

“John Burke was an enthusiastic lover of his hometown, South Boston. More importantly he sought to give encouragement to anyone who was striving to achieve a worthy goal such as education, sports accomplishment or any worthy career pursuit.

“He was persuasive in his lively focus on the achievements of local citizens. It was always a delight to meet him and to be uplifted by his



attitude. He was himself an example of personal achieve-

ment in his business at the drugstore on D Street. His kindness and forbearance to those who were in need is legendary.

“And, finally, he gave a powerful message to all through his own example: devotion to family, friends, and neighbors. “Example is most efficacious than precept,” it is said.

Boston are models of sibling loyalty who reflect the values of the Roman Catholic Church, South Boston, and their Irish heritage – with a big dash of Lithuanian. “We’re from a mixed marriage,” explains John. “My father was Irish, my mother Lithuanian, and we went to St. Peter’s, a Catholic Lithuanian school in Southie.”

Any portrayal of the Burkes begins with Johnny Burke (1907-1995), who ran the drugstore at D and Sixth Streets and never denied palliative drugs to anyone, however poor, and also his with wife, Ellie (1918-2005), who was known for her grace and generosity. As in most Irish households, Johnny may have been the public figure, but at home, Ellie was the puppeteer and everybody else a marionette.

So, meet the five “ordinary” children of Johnny and Ellie Burke:

- * Jacquelyn, 65, of Dennis Port, retired pharmacist, mother of three.
- * John, 64, of Milton, senior vice president at Staples, father of three.
- * Paul, 63, of South Boston, district fire chief in Boston, father of three.
- * Dennis, 62, of Milton, orthopedic surgeon at MGH, father of five.
- * Michael, 59, of South Boston, retired sheet-metal worker, father of five.

The Burke home at 20 Marine Road was a Norman Rockwell painting, where father-in-law Vinnie sat at the living room piano playing “Darktown Strutter’s Ball” in honky tonk, and then Jacquelyn played a sing-a-long of her dad’s favorite, “You Are My Sunshine”; where mom made Halloween costumes of a penguin, George Washington, and Uncle Sam; and where Aunt May and Auntie Penny lived downstairs with Nana, who came up every day to have tea with mom. As Dennis says, “It was “The Waltons.”

Johnny wanted his family close. Paul was 32, married, and living downstairs when he bought the Kinnealy house across the street, and when Johnny heard that Paul would be moving, he wept. “But Dad,” said Paul, “it’s only across the street.”

Despite South Boston’s reputation for religious fervor regarding politics, the Burkes were agnostics, so consumed with family that politics was based on friendship. “My parents adored Louise Day Hicks and Billy Bulger and Ray Flynn,” said John, “but that had nothing to do with politics, only personal relations.”

(Continued on page 10)

For Southie’s Burkes, ‘family’ is a sacred word

Regarding South Boston’s greatest political crisis of the past half century – busing – the Burke children escaped the trauma by graduating prior to the crisis.

“We grew up in a racially polarized neighborhood, and to be kind, it was not racial, but tribal,” says Dennis. “Everybody had to survive, and anybody who wasn’t Irish was no good. But in our house, I never heard a swear word, not once. It was not allowed. I never heard my parents utter a racial slur or ethnic derogative, never the N-word, never a Jew-word. We were taught to accept people are they are.”

As in most Irish households, all the fun took place in the kitchen, and if mom never consulted Julia Child’s “Mastering the Art of French Cooking,” she is remembered for traditional comfort foods familiar in Irish-American households in the middle of the last century, from fried baloney sandwiches to franks and beans on Saturday night.

“My mother was an awesome cook,” recalls John, “unbelievable fried chicken, great beef stew, hamburger with mashed potatoes, eye of the round every Sunday, and Swiss steak, the lousiest cut, which she’d bang the hell out of, then cook and cover with gravy and onions. And just before bed – cookies and milk, chocolate chip cookies or sometimes saltines with butter. I still crave something sweet before bed.”

In South Boston, everybody’s a friend, everybody’s a character, and everybody’s got a story. Take Cliffie McDonald, who lived across from the Burkes. He was with the 82d Airborne, parachuted into Normandy during World War II, and then one day, while training in England, he parachuted onto a farm and was confronted by the farmer’s daughter, who was armed with a pitchfork on the assumption he was German. They shared a cup of tea, married, and settled in South Boston, raising nine kids. He became a police detective, was assigned to the Beatles on their first visit to



The Burke family’s 19 grandchildren gathered at a wedding around their matriarch, Ellie Burke.

Boston, and arranged for the Beatles to call his daughter Jill, and also her best friend, Jacquelyn Burke.

When World War II broke out, Johnny Burke was unmarried and ineligible for the draft, but at age 38, he shuttered his drugstore and enlisted in the Army to serve three years as a druggist in the medical corps, where he was known as “Pops.”

“Here’s what I admired about my father,” says John. “He treated everybody with respect. When he died, people would come up to me – and some were nefarious characters – and they’d say, ‘My grandmother used to send me to Johnny Burke’s without money and she’d say, ‘Tell Johnny it’s for me, and he’ll take care of it.’ And as he was closing the store, people came in to say they

owed \$20 or \$30, whatever.”

At the drugstore, the hours were long. Johnny opened at 7, came home for lunch and dinner, and then when back to the store until it closed at 11.

“My father had a great reputation,” says John, “because when the welfare checks were late, he’d give customers what they needed until the end of the month, and then they’d settle up. My father had the ability to survive 53 years across from the D Street Project because he knew all the parents and all their kids, some of whom were wise guys, but they knew enough not to screw around at Mr. Burke’s drugstore.”

Here’s an example of his generosity, says Dennis.

“I saw Ray Flynn at Castle Island and he reminded me that his father was a longshoreman

who spent a year on disability – tuberculosis – and he had to take expensive medication not covered by insurance. Ray told me, ‘My mother would send me to Johnny’s drugstore to explain there was no money and my mother was embarrassed, but Johnny always gave me the medicine and told me to tell my mother that anytime the family needed medication to come and get it and pay when they can.’

The stories flow uninterrupted.

“Six months ago,” said Dennis, “I had a patient, an old timer in his 90s with a hip problem, nothing serious, and he asked if I was Johnny Burke’s son, and from his wallet, he took out a tattered two-by-three photograph of my father that he’d carried for 70 years, dating to World War II, when he

was 18 and my father was 38, and – and this is a measure of South Boston and the Irish – the old man said, ‘Your father was like a father to me. He took me under his wing and made sure nothing bad happened to me, and he gave me this picture.’”

The admiration of Johnny and Ellie extends to the second generation. Challenged in art class to draw a portrait, Paul’s daughter Krissy sketched her grandfather, and when the teacher saw it, she wept. “I know this man,” she said. “I grew up in the South Boston projects, and at his drugstore, and he’d give me medicine for my family.

Unlike many homes of mixed ethnicity, there was no tribal tension in the Burke household, the Irish mixing

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The Boston Irish Honors 2014

with the Lithuanian as neatly as eggs in an omelet.

There were tensions in the schoolyard, however, between the Irish pupils at Gate of Heaven School and the students at St. Peter's, the Lithuanian Catholic School attended by the Burkes.

"At St. Peter's, we had to wear ties, blue with yellow," recalls John, "a big P, little S. Kids from Gate of Heaven, the Irish school, would walk by and look over the fence at our sunken playground, and chant 'S and P, Stupid People.'"

Like "Cheers," at Johnny Burke's drugstore, everybody knew everybody's name. "My father owned the drugstore when drugstores were a whole existence," said Paul, "a place where kids would gather at the soda fountain after school. We sold more frappes and hot fudge sundaes than we did drugs."

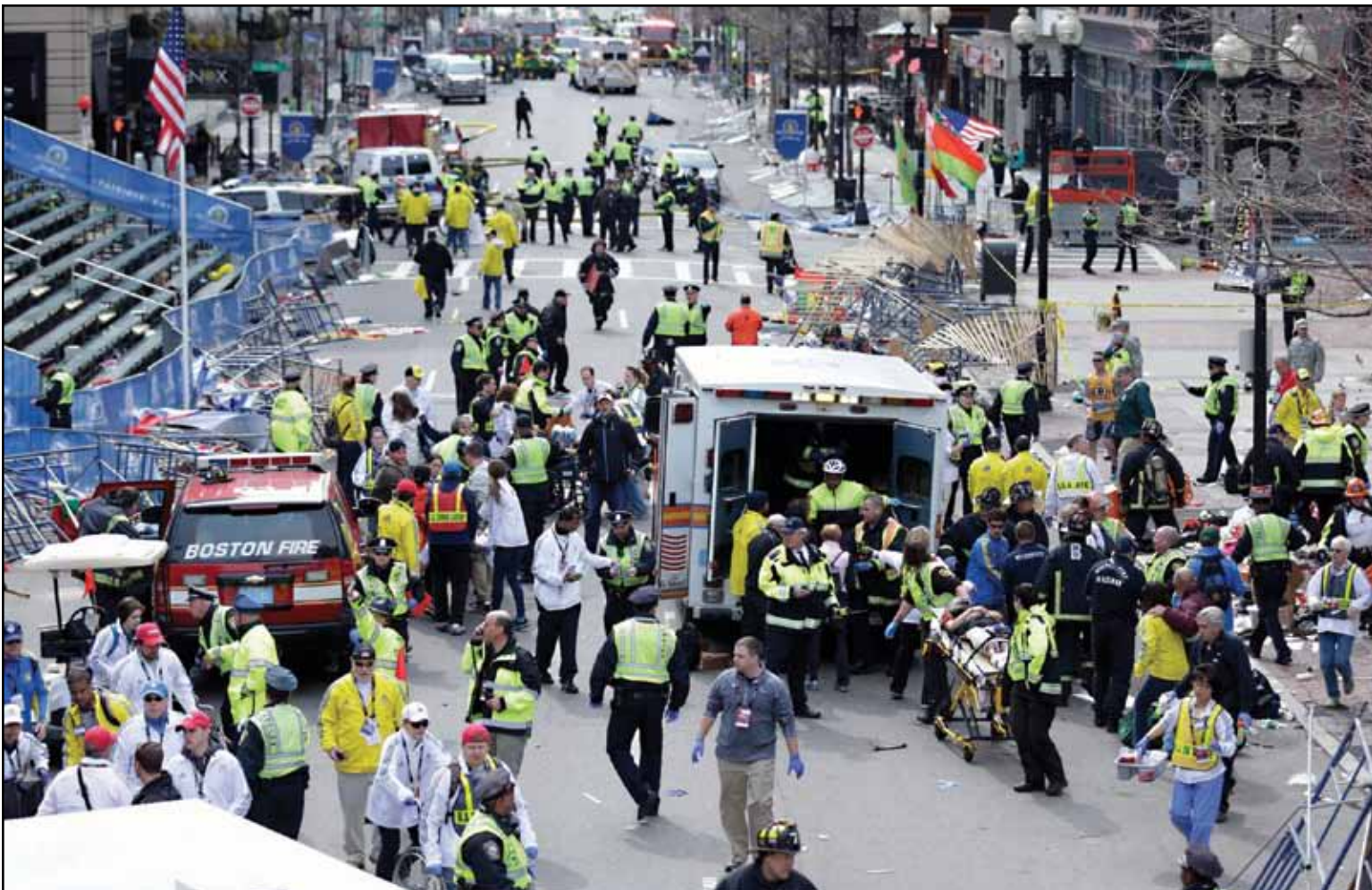
The five Burke children worked at the drugstore from age 10, stocking shelves, making sundaes, and mixing Bromo Seltzers for people like Jimmy Bromo, who came in every morning for a Bromo, and then came back that night for another.

"It was not lucrative," says John. "At the end of a week, if there were more money in the till than bills, we ate swordfish. If not, we ate tuna casserole."

In the Burke home, money was sometimes desperately tight.

"My parents would cry," recalled Michael, "because they'd run out of money, and he'd borrow from savings to keep the drugstore open. Sometimes it took the state a year to pay him. But we lived a simple life and never wanted for anything."

So emotional are the Burke children about their parents, when they talk about them, they sometimes lapse into tears. During an interview in a private room at the Boston Park Plaza, John showed a video of Christmas dinner at the Burke home, when a friend, Big Jack Doyle, sang "A Mother's Love is a Blessing" in memory of



Boston Fire District Chief Paul Burke was pictured in the minutes after the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing. He is shown just behind the ambulance, center, near the door on the left. Chief Burke is assigned to the Office of Field Services and plans operations for special events like the marathon. AP Photo

Ellie, and John was moved to tears, unable to speak. At the yacht club, when Dennis wept to remember his father's generosity, John passed him a napkin to dab tears.

"We lived across from the beach and we used to swim all the time and sail small boats at the yacht club," says John. "Pop loved to take us to Castle Island for hot dogs and ice cream, and there was a sandy hill, so he'd take a handful of change and toss it into the sand, and say, 'C'mon, let's dig for gold,' and we'd dig for pennies and nickels."

Dennis was in the fifth grade at St. Peter's when a friend suggested they could enjoy a day off by taking the entrance examination for Boston Latin School, and when Dennis passed, his parents decided that's where he'd go. The nuns wanted him to stay at St. Peter's, and when Dennis asked, reluctantly, for the required letter of recommendation, the nun in charge of the school gave it to him in

sealed envelope.

Distrustful of the nun, Ellie steamed open the envelope to learn that the sister had described Dennis as unlikely to succeed at the Latin School. She ripped up the recommendation. Dennis graduated from the Latin School, then from MIT and Stritch School of Medicine in Chicago en route to his orthopedist practice. There were other hurdles: A counselor at MIT advised Dennis to forget about medical school. "Guys from Southie don't become doctors," he said. "They're more successful at blue-collar jobs."

With five children to educate, Johnny Burke drained the family's meager savings but never sought assistance. Applying to MIT, Dennis suggested he seek financial aid.

"No," said his father. "We'll be all right."

Before starting MIT, Dennis took a year off to work for the telephone company, and as the next September approached, his mother took him aside and asked, "Are you sure you want

to give up a good job with the telephone company to go to MIT?"

In his final two years, Johnnie Burke was critically ill with Alzheimer's disease, but Ellie refused to have him hospitalized. "We set up a hospital bed at home and took out the thresholds so mom could wheel him to the front porch," recalls Michael, "and all the grandchildren would visit, talk to him, read to him, comb his hair, and shave him, always showing respect."

When Dennis's daughter Alana was a student at Milton Academy she wrote about the love shared by her grandparents. She recalled eating her dinner of chicken cutlets and mashed potatoes at their home, and watching her mother and grandmother changing Poppa into pajamas. He mistook them for muggers, and began to fight his wife and daughter-in-law, she wrote. "Poppa was dying, and there was nothing any of us could do about it."

When Johnny Burke died in 1995, after the undertaker was called, his five children helped carry their father's body down the narrow stairway. "We all carried the old man down to the hearse," said Dennis, "and we did the same thing ten years later for my mother, which is how it should be. Neither Warren Buffett nor Bill Gates will have a better death than my mother and father, who died at home with their family."

"My mother wanted my father buried at Cedar Grove Cemetery," said Dennis, "and we said to my mother, 'Okay, any particular spot?' And she said, 'the Sweeneys and the Cashmans are buried there, so find out where they're buried and see if there are openings nearby. It would be nice to be in the same neighborhood with them.'"

And now, after a lifetime of happiness in Southie, Johnny and Ellie Burke are buried for eternity with their neighbors.



**"A mother's love is a blessing,
No matter where you roam.
Keep her while she's living,
You'll miss her when she's gone."**

Left: Jacquelyn and Ellie Burke

Right: Michael Burke





The Boston Irish Honors 2014 Distinguished Public Service

Katherine Craven's credo: 'Let's make things work'

By Greg O'Brien
and Thomas Mulvoy

If you drop the name "Katherine Craven" into any discussion with key players in academic and public service circles in Massachusetts, the air is quickly filled with words like "model public servant; sound judgment; unquestioned expertise; tireless work style; advances the public interest; impeccable credentials; boundless energy; impressive creativity." And while "saintly" doesn't make the list, one admiring associate calls her "a Joan of Arc" for her "intellect, forcefulness, and ethical approach to her goals in life and at work."

Taking note of those qualities in her announcement last February that Ms. Craven, at the time executive director of the University of Massachusetts Building Authority, would be leaving public service for academia, Kerry Healey, the president of Babson College, said that her "20-year track record in government and higher education, and her highly regarded approach to team building and community engagement, makes her an exceptional fit to lead our administrative and business operations during this critical time."

The title of chief administrative officer (CAO) of Babson College is the latest in a string of high-level Katherine P. Craven appointments fetching back to her days as a manager with the men's hockey team at Harvard. In the early years of the new century, she was, at age 23, a budget analyst for the Ways and Means Committee of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, and later the director of policy for the House where she counseled then-Speaker Thomas Finneran and the membership on the financing of significant legislative initiatives born out of the state's \$23 billion operating budget. She moved on in 2004 to serve as executive director of the Massachusetts School Building Authority, where she oversaw an outlay of \$3 billion spending on K-12 schools and accepted a specific challenge:

"We had to revamp the entire state school building program. With a 90 percent state reimbursement, some school districts were getting six to eight lavish schools. There was a lot of waste and huge debt. No real budgets or planning were at play. Schools were built that never should have been built. There was no consistency. You leave things open for fraud when things happen like that. So we instituted checks and controls. We changed the culture."

In 2010, Ms. Craven added the title of deputy state treasurer to her resume while remaining at the authority. The next year, she was named to head the UMass Building Authority, in which post she and her associates took up oversight of a \$3.8 billion plan to modernize the University of Massachusetts campuses in Amherst, Boston (Dorchester), Dartmouth, Lowell, and Worcester for the benefit of some 70,000 students, 5,700 faculty, and 12,000 professional and classified staff.

And the beat goes on. Late last year, the newly elected mayor of Boston, Martin Walsh, managed to persuade her to join his transition team. And in August of this year, Gov. Deval Patrick named Ms. Craven to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, citing her experience as evidence that she and her associates "will continue to be great partners in our efforts to close the achievement gap and ensure that all of our students are prepared for future success."

Given all the above, it seems reasonable to ask: Who is this 41-year-old wonder woman, and where did she come from?

...

William Shakespeare once wrote, "It is a wise father that knows his own child." The late Boston Juvenile Court Judge John J. Craven, a member of the Boston School Committee and Governor's Council in the late 1960s and early 1970s, knew his daughter Katherine the way a literary genius knows the denouement of a great work. Through the collective wisdom of an extended family marinated in Boston politics and public service, Judge Craven passed down to his daughter the essence of the Irish:



Katherine Craven and Dr. Jim Kryzanski and their children, from left: John, James, John, and Delia.
Family photo

wit, a sturdy work ethic, and perseverance.

My father was the center of my universe," Ms. Craven said in an interview with the *Boston Irish Reporter* in November 2011, mere hours after his passing on Thanksgiving eve. "He taught me all the things a boy should know." The loss of her father, she said, was paralyzing. He had struggled long and hard against Lewy Body Dementia, a rapid-onset Alzheimer's variant that robs a person of memory, thinking, language, and, finally, life itself. Symptoms of the disease, a precursor to its final stages, were apparent after her father's retirement in 2005, she said, but he had the will to fight on with the loving care of family members. She often took her father on trips to familiar places to jog his memory and his spirit—a father/daughter connection that has had staying power for her, she says today.

In many ways, Ms. Craven is a mirror image of her father, a Gov. Edward J. King appointee to the Boston Municipal Court bench, and a composite of her mother, Patricia: humble, resolute, and a person of great vision. Raised in West Roxbury, which is something of an Irish waiting room to Heaven, Ms. Craven belonged to a faith-centered family with a younger brother, John Robert, now an attorney with the Boston Water & Sewer Commission, and a younger sister, Patty, who has Down Syndrome. Katherine's son, Joe, a precious ten year old, also is a Down child. For all that and more, faith and perseverance are family currency.

"Someone once described my father as relentless," she said in the 2011 interview. "I think that's true. Relentless in the pursuit that his children got the best education possible, and used their God-given gifts to the fullest. My dad was a life coach."

At Harvard, John J. Craven, Roxbury Latin-educated and with roots in Roscommon, was called the "greasy grind," a moniker for his "persistent studying; he was very much a perfectionist in that way," she said. His father, John J. Craven, Sr., a second-generation Irish American, grew up in the "Leaky Roof" section of Roxbury, "a place where all the three-deckers leaked," said Katherine, and was a state representative from the Roxbury district from 1930-38. His mother, Katherine "Kitty" (Kane), who with John Sr. raised 11 children, was the first woman ever elected citywide to the Boston City Council. A vociferous opponent of urban renewal, she once "tossed an ashtray at a fellow councillor

who had insulted her, and called another 'a bald-headed SOB,' threatening to poke him in the jaw," according to a *Boston Globe* story at the time.

Katherine's mother Patricia (McCarthy), whose family came from Cork, added needed ballast, humor, and balance to a family driven to public service. The McCarthy name continues to resonate alongside the Craven record in public affairs: Ms. Craven's cousin, Timothy McCarthy, a Hyde Park resident, served Mayor Thomas Menino as a Neighborhood Services coordinator and is now a member of the Boston City Council.

"My grandparents' mission and focus was the political world," Katherine said, "a response to the inability of the Irish back then to break into that line of business in Boston."

That response was a calling passed down to her father, who served on the Governor's Council from 1968-70, and on the Boston School Committee from 1970-74. He also ran, unsuccessfully, for numerous other elective offices: lieutenant governor, Suffolk County sheriff, the state Senate and the City Council. A man who had routine and discipline down to a Spartan science, he mentored as much as he monitored. "On the Juvenile Court, my dad always sought ways of helping people," says Katherine. "But he was a disciplinarian if you weren't doing the best job possible. He inspired me to go into public service, to never give up. He had a way about him."

Early on, her dad taught Katherine how to keep Red Sox box scores—a skill of precision she has carried into professional life. "I was terrible in sports," she conceded. "I didn't have the eye-hand coordination going, but I knew how to keep score." She has been doing that all her life.

Ms. Craven attended elementary school at Mount Alvernia Academy in Newton and high school at Boston Latin en route to Harvard where she majored in history and worked behind the bench as a manager with the men's hockey team, a position advocated by her father when he realized his daughter was a better manager than player. While at Harvard, Katherine met her husband, Jim Kryzanski, a neurosurgeon at Tufts Medical Center. The couple has four children: Delia, 14; Joe, 10; James Henry, 6; and John Francis Xavier, 4. Katherine and Jim also lost a child, Mary Erin. "She died as a baby from West Nile virus," said Ms. Craven in



The Boston Irish Honors 2014

‘Let’s make things work’ is her credo

2011 while noting that she, too, almost died of the disease.

...

Now it’s back to campus for a woman who apparently sees no sense in slowing down to a moderate pace. There’s always much to be done wherever she finds herself. Asked in a recent interview to compare and/or contrast public life with her few months in academia at Babson, CAO Craven went directly to the positive:

“Working with the people in Legislature and at public authorities made for a proving ground for work in a campus culture,” she said in noting that her responsibilities include oversight of facilities management, information technology, human resources, and community relations. “It’s like running a small town where meetings follow meetings with various constituencies in search of a consensus on what to do about important issues.”

Ms. Craven was asked in 2011 how one goes from being a history major to budget analyst in one swift leap, and she replied: “History is the predictor of the future. You fall back on that skill. That’s the trick of it. You don’t have to be an accountant to be a budget analyst – at the state government level, at the intersection of budgets and policy.”

You apparently also have to be a good juggler



Mr. and Mrs. John J. Craven, Sr. with their eleven children and four grandchildren.

of priorities: “She’d come in carrying two briefcases and a baby under her arms,” former Speaker Finneran recalled in a 2010 Globe feature story on his erstwhile counselor. Asked recently to appraise Ms. Craven the person, Finneran replied that she is “sui generis,” a Latin phrase that in her case means you really can’t compare her to anyone else.

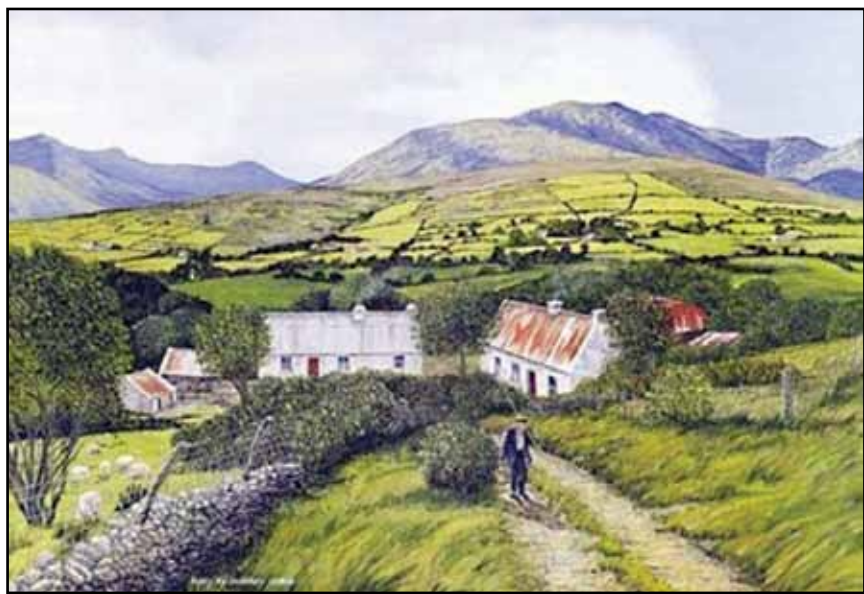
Robert K. Sheridan, retired head of SBLI and the author of the “Joan of Arc” designation, seconds the Finneran motion, saying, “Having Katherine Craven on the job is, simply, the best form of insurance any

institution can have to ensure its success.”

Today, Katherine Craven looks in the rearview mirror with the training of a historian and to the future with the eyes of the community visionary and the relentlessness that defined her father’s approach to life. “I always strive,” she has been quoted as saying, “to keep my priorities straight, as my dad taught me: family first. I hope in the end that I can make a difference. I hope I can help a lot of people, figure things out, and make things work.”

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



Mary Black brings her “Last Call” tour to the Berklee Performance Center in Boston Nov. 8 at 8 p.m.

A Q&A with Mary Black

Mary Black has been one of Ireland's groundbreaking female vocalists for the better part of three decades, with a string of albums—including “Without Fanfare,” “By the Time It Gets Dark,” “The Holy Ground” and “Shine”—that have achieved critical and commercial success. Raised in a musical family herself, Black has now seen her own children venture into music as adults: Róisín, a singer-songwriter who performs as Róisín O, and released her first CD last year; Danny, a member of the rock band The Coronas; and Conor, employed as a surveyor but also plays bass and has worked with his cousin Eoghan Scott, a singer-songwriter.

Black is in the midst of her “Last Call Tour,” which will include a stop in Boston on Nov. 8 at the Berklee Performance Center. Recently, she spoke with Sean Smith of the Boston Irish Reporter.

Q. Let's start out by clarifying exactly what the title of your “Last Call Tour” means. You're not retiring, are you?

A. No, I'm not retiring, but this will mark an end to my touring abroad. As the years go by, touring becomes tiring, and I just figured that it was time to cut back. I'm going to be 60 next year, and there are other things I want to do in life. I'll still do performances in Ireland, though, and maybe pop over to Europe now and then. And I plan on a few collaborations here and there.

But this is all about making time for myself, because so much of my life has been given over to touring, even though I certainly don't regret my musical career. It's just that I have two grandchildren now, and you know, your perspective shifts. We have a place in Spain I'd like to enjoy a bit more, and I'd like to dabble in painting, things like that.

Q. Last year was the 30th anniversary of your very first album, which of course was a major early milestone for your career. What were the events, influences and so on that brought you to that point?

A. Well, I grew up in a musical family: My dad was a fiddle player, my mom was a singer; my brothers (Shay, Michael, and Martin) and sister (Frances) all were active as well, and we had a band of our own. I always had fun with it, even though most of what we did wasn't rehearsed; my siblings would just push me out on stage to sing.

Then I was part of the band General Humbert, and we put out a couple of albums in the late 1970s, mainly traditional tunes and folk songs like “The Bold Princess Royal,” “Fare Thee Well,”

(Continued on page 19)

Introducing ‘TradLife,’ a website for teachers, students of trad music

BY SEAN SMITH
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Frustration can lead to anger and despair—but also, sometimes, a potentially good idea like TradLife, a newly launched website that champions the teaching of traditional music.

TradLife founder Emerald Rae was carrying around a goodly amount of frustration a little more than a year ago. The Gloucester native has been an active member of the Boston area folk/acoustic music scene for some years, as a fiddler, dancer, singer, and songwriter in the Irish, Scottish, and Cape Breton traditions. Known for her solo work—she has two albums to her credit—and her stint with the band Annalivia. But it was as a teacher that Rae was feeling unfulfilled.

“I've always loved teaching, and throughout my life I've had many great teachers, mentors, and friends,” she explains. “I've always wanted to pass on what I've learned. Even after 15 years—half my life—I'm still inspired to inspire others.”

Rae found, however, that there were precious few resources—especially digital—to help her locate prospective students, and vice-versa. She felt that recording and posting instructional videos

online, as some musicians do, didn't offer the kind of individualized attention and engagement that had always appealed to her, as both teacher and student.

“I didn't want to do a general, one-size-fits-all, homogenized music lesson,” she says. “To me, it's important for people to discuss specific questions, which can lead to more in-depth conversations. That approach captures the nuance which is a big part of traditional music—the pizzazz and the intrigue.”

So Rae put some thought into it, enlisted the help of family members and close friends, and came up with TradLife [tradlife.com], which she launched earlier this fall. The website is a portal through which users can set up videoconference-style or in-person lessons on fiddle, banjo, harp, flute, accordion, bodhran, voice and other instruments—and even dance—in different folk traditions, including Irish, Appalachian, Scottish, and Cape Breton. Among the more than 60 TradLife instructors are locals such as Matt and Shannon Heaton, Liam Hart, Flynn Cohen, Kieran Jordan, Ken Perlman and Peter Barnes; others are more far-flung, located in other parts of North America and even other continents, like Tony DeMarco, John Whelan, Jimmy Keane,

(Continued on page 20)



Area musician Emerald Rae, founder of the TradLife website: “I've come across people who've gotten really excited about traditional music, and they'll ask, ‘Where can I find out about this stuff?’ Greater Boston is full of places to hear or learn about traditional music, but it can be a lot more difficult in other areas. Yet even here, you don't always know where or how to get started.”

Sean Smith photo

Irish/Celtic music events of note set for this month

- Club Passim in Harvard Square will feature concerts by the **Deadstring Ensemble**, the trio of Flynn Cohen, Matt Heaton and Danny Noveck, who combine influences from Irish and American traditions, bluegrass, folk rock and other genres (Nov. 3); all-female Irish, Scottish and American music quartet **Long Time Courting**, with Shannon Heaton, Liz Simmons, Katie McNally and Val Thompson (Nov. 20); and singer-songwriter **Diane Taraz**, whose repertoire of traditional and original songs take inspiration from Celtic, British, American and French-Canadian folklore (Nov. 23). In addition, Club Passim will host the monthly BCMFest Session on Nov. 10. See passim.org for information.

- Boston College's Gaelic Roots Music, Song, Dance, Workshop, and Lecture Series has announced a change to its Nov. 13 event: **Kimberley Fraser**

and **Oisín McAuley** will perform a concert contrasting, respectively, the Cape Breton and Donegal fiddle styles at the Cadigan Alumni Center on BC's Brighton Campus. Information at bc.edu/gaelicroots.

- The Burren Backroom Series in Somerville's Davis Square will host **The Battlefield Band**, one of Scotland's most pioneering, and enduring, Celtic revival bands on Nov. 5, and uilleann piper **Cillian Vallely** and flute/whistle player **Kevin Crawford**—known for their solo work and various collaborations, especially as members of the band Lunasa—on Nov. 19; opening for them will be Haley and Dylan Richardson, a young sister-brother fiddle-guitar duo from the New York City area. Go to burren.com/Backroom-Series.html for details.

- Singer, storyteller and poet **Kate**

(Continued on page 22)



Garrett Deagon

The sun has come out for Deagon in ‘Annie’

BY R. J. DONOVAN
SPECIAL TO BIR

For eight performances a week, Garrett Deagon is up to no good. He's currently on a year-long tour playing the funny but villainous Rooster Hannigan in the musical “Annie,” which is coming to The Citi Wang Theatre from Nov. 5 to Nov. 16.

Martin Charnin, the show's original lyricist and director, is directing the tour. “Annie” originally opened on Broadway in 1977. With an enduring anthem that “the sun will come out tomorrow,” the show picked up seven Tony Awards, including honors as Best Musical.

As the despicable brother of the equally despicable orphanage matron Miss Hannigan, Rooster is slick, sly, and out for a buck, even if it means denying the world's most upbeat little orphan the happy ending she so rightfully deserves.

Laughing, Deagon said, “I was scared that I was going to get booed (at the stage door) every night. I didn't know if I could take 300 performances of getting booed. Luckily, that's not the case. The kids are always very responsive. I think it also helps that Rooster's kind of comedic . . . (that) eases the villain out of him a little.”

Garrett Deagon was born and raised in Southern California. With a BFA in Musical Theatre from the University of California, he moved to New York City three years ago. He has appeared Off-Off-Broadway in “R+J: Star-Cross'd Death Match” as well as in regional productions of “Threepenny Opera,” “Fiddler on the Roof,” and Andrew Lipka's “Wild Party,” among others. “Annie” marks his first national tour.

We spoke by phone when the show was playing a two-week run in Florida. Here's a condensed look at our conversation:

Q. “Annie” is that rare show business phenomenon that just keeps reintroducing itself generation after generation. Has the show been well received so far?

A. You know what, it's like a rock concert out there. When it's over, they're loud, they're screaming . . . It's so new and fresh.

Q. Director Martin Charnin is an icon in the theater world. Has he re-envisioned the show from its 1977 roots?

(Continued on page 22)

CD Reviews

By Sean Smith

Cara Dillon, “A Thousand Hearts” • It has been an eventful last decade for the Derry-born Dillon. She has continued to build on the promise of her first two albums with “After the Morning” (2006) and “Hill of Thieves” (2009), the latter released through her own label; meanwhile, she and husband/musical collaborator Sam Lakeman coped with health concerns related to the premature birth of their twin sons as well as her own onset of diabetes, and then in 2010 welcomed a daughter into the world. Fortunately, all appears to be well on the familial/personal side of things – and as for her music, it’s better than ever, which is quite evident on this new album.

“A Thousand Hearts” marks another change of pace in Dillon’s portfolio: After an increasingly ambitious progression in her first three releases, from a primarily traditional repertoire on her 2001 debut to an infusion of Dillon/Lakeman originals, and more elaborate production and arrangements – including two tracks backed by the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra – on 2003’s “Sweet Liberty” and “After the Morning,” “Hill of Thieves” reversed the trend, with a return to mainly traditional material and sparer arrangements. “A Thou-

sand Hearts” is heavily trad in content, too, but also contains three contemporary songs, none of them written by Dillon/Lakeman. The sound is fuller on most of the tracks, yet decidedly folk/acoustic – predominantly fiddle, uilleann pipes, accordion, bouzouki, bodhran and acoustic guitar, with keyboards by Lakeman, who also produced the CD.

The most important thing, though, is that Dillon – armed with a voice of marvelous clarity and soft-but-not-wispy demeanor – shows she can more than handle the variety. She delightfully affirms the underlying optimism in the abandoned-but-hopeful-lover narrative of “Jacket So Blue,” even adding a pop-inflected embellishment to punctuate the verses, and zeros in on the betrayal and regret in “As I Roved Out.” The latter song, which Planxty and Voice Squad fans will recognize, also is indicative of her inclination to put her own stamp on material with a distinguished lineage – similarly, on “Eighteen Years Old,” famously recorded by Dolores Keane with De Danann, Dillon (aided by one of many superb band arrangements on the album) plays up the conflict and tension in this mother-daughter conversation.

The other traditional songs include two in Gaelic, “Erigh Suas a Stóirín” (familiar to Clannad listeners) and “Táimse Im Chodladh,” and a thoroughly sublime take on the Appalachian spiritual “Bright Morning Star” – usually done a cappella. This version has instrumental backing as well as gorgeous harmonies from a chorus that includes Boston’s own Aoife O’Donovan.

Among the contemporary songs, Dillon’s ornamentation underscores the dueling emotions in “Shotgun Down the Avalanche” – probably Shawn Colvin’s most

famous work – and Lakeman’s elegiac piano accompaniment lends an apt backdrop for “River Run,” Beth Sorrentino’s ode to the late actor River Phoenix.

Hard to believe, somehow, that the Dillon-Lakeman partnership is closing in on two decades, encompassing a dozen years of marriage and three kids – I mean, they seem so *young* – but they have shown themselves to be one of the most creative and vibrant forces in the 21st-century folk/trad landscape.

Cran, “Dally and Stray” • Not that we don’t love the fiddle-accordion dynamic in our Irish music ensembles, but it’s refreshing to hear trad-oriented bands built



around a less common combination of instruments. And near the top of that list must surely be this trio of Drogheda native Sean Corcoran (mandocello, lead vocal), Desi Wilkinson (flute, whistle) of Belfast, and Dublin’s Ronan Browne (uilleann pipes, whistle, flute), which has released a long-awaited fifth album, its first in a dozen years.

Putting the flutes and whistles of Wilkinson and Browne out front on tunes, or as a backdrop to the songs, makes for a wafting sound fortified by the raw beauty of Browne’s pipes (especially when played in the upper register), and given a solid anchor by Corcoran’s mandocello. And when Corcoran’s reedy tenor is added to the mix – with harmony vocals from the other two – that sound is all the more intriguing.

And then there are the songs themselves: “The Next Market Day” – with whistles gliding and swooping around blooming romance – will be familiar to some, as will the melancholic “Forger’s Farewell” (which leads to the air “Una Bhán,” played masterfully on pipes by Browne) and the sprightly Connemara dance-song “Cailleach an Airgid,” seguing into a pair of jigs. Particularly fascinating, however, are three Irish-English hybrids, perhaps none more so than “Tú Féin (Just You and Me),” a night-visiting song from the female point of view – no demure ingénue she, her entreaties to her would-be lover are quite frank and forthright (“I sigh and I sob and with lust I am burning/And I’m not ashamed, and I’m not ashamed”). Its mirror image – although less salacious – is “Tá Mé ‘ Mo Shuí (I Am Awake),” with a melody that underscores the desolation of its lovelorn male narrator. Completing the circuit is “Giolla na Scriob,” a he said/she said dialogue recounting a nocturnal encounter; as throughout the CD, the arrangement – here a recurring flute-whistle duet between verses over Corcoran’s gently picked mandocello – is spot on.

The instrumentals shouldn’t be overlooked, either: They include a fine pairing of a popular country dance, “Hunt the Squirrel,” with a sword dance tune, “Drocketty’s March,” and an ambitious grouping of an air taken from the melody of a variant of “Barbara Allen,” another song melody (the distinctively accented “Ballynure Ballad”), a single jig, and the well-known reel “The Corner House.”

Also meriting praise is the band’s use of a blog format for the CD’s informative sleeve notes (available through its website, cranmusic.com), thereby providing a connection for Cran fans and other interested parties – of which there should be plenty.

Brian Finnegan and William Coulter, “Toward the Sun” • Finnegan is the astoundingly quick-fingered and hyper-expressive Irish flute/whistle player for the celebrated quartet Flook; guitarist Coulter, an American, has been greatly influenced by both folk and classical traditions. This six-track CD is a mix of traditional and contemporary tunes from Ireland and elsewhere, including two penned by Finnegan, “Reel for Rubik/Toward the Sun.”

Finnegan and Coulter are so technically strong that the guitar is often as much a lead instrument as the flute or whistle, such as on the medley of the Irish air “Ar Éireann Ní Neosainn Ce Hi” with “The Last Pint,” a Pierre Bensusan composition, and the exquisite traditional French piece “Waltz of the Little Girls,” which Coulter plays as a solo. Even when he’s primarily supplying rhythm, Coulter frequently lays on harmonies to enrich the melody (which is pretty rich to start with, given Finnegan’s ability), such as on a brisk three-jig set and the aforementioned reels, or the medley of a Breton tune, “Ton Bale Ar Pont,” with one from Basque Spain, “Mendiokarra.”

“Toward the Sun” provides a significantly different context in which to hear Finnegan, for those most familiar with him via Flook. Not that he’s been obscured or overshadowed by the band, but here – particularly with such a diversity of tune sources – you can appreciate the full dimensions of his talents. That’s certainly the case on the last track, two waltzes by the late Johnny Cunningham, “Leaving Brittany” and “The Pernod Waltz” (one of the best-known pieces by Relativity, that all-too-short-lived pairing of the Cunningham brothers with siblings Micheál Ó Domhnaill and Tríona Ní Dhomhnaill); Finnegan teases out all manner of delectable variations and subtleties amid the intricacies, with Coulter’s backing giving it the punch and bounce in perfect balance. Enough to make you wish they had come up with a few more tracks.

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A Q& A with Mary Black

(Continued from page 17)

My Own True Love,” “Crazy Man Michael,” “Mo Ghile Mear.”

But while I started out in the folkie/trad end of things, being in a big city like Dublin meant I could find a lot of other music to listen to. I loved listening to a broad spectrum – The Beatles, Billie Holliday, Joan Baez, Joni Mitchell – and I still do. I always felt I was cheating myself if I didn’t keep my ears open. And I incorporated different kinds of songs into my singing.

Q. And then things took off in the early 1980s, what with your first album and your stint with De Danann happening almost around the same time. What was that period like for you, as you look back?

A. I met Declan [Sinnott], who helped me make my first several albums, and he had a very different background, so we really carved out a niche for ourselves. It was a fresh, new kind of music that pulled together these various influences but also had an Irish feel. I was proud of my roots and my background, but I didn’t want to confine myself to one particular kind of music.

We were fortunate in that my husband Joe’s dad had a record label, Dara Records, that was aiming for the kind of contemporary sound Declan and I were interested in. We were so surprised at the response the album received [it went gold and earned Black an arts award from the *Irish Independent*], and it brought me a lot of attention. I got invited to appear on a TV special with Christy Moore – it wound up being broadcast on the day Joe and I got married, so we had to stop the wedding celebration for about a half-hour so we could watch the program!

Being part of De Danann was a great experience, a great

grounding for me. I was young, I liked the lilt and feel of the music we were making, and I learned a lot about being on the road and connecting with your audience, and other important things. But ultimately I realized I just couldn’t see myself doing that as my full-time musical activity. And Joe and I had started a family, so after three years I decided to leave the band.

Q. The solo, independent female singer – as opposed to being part of a group – was still kind of new to Ireland at that stage, wasn’t it? Did you have role models to look to?

A. It was a time when the music scene was more male-oriented, but there were a lot of wonderful female artists around, too, like Maura O’Connell, Dolores Keane, Máire [Moya] Brennan. So I certainly wasn’t alone, and soon there were others, like my sister Frances, Eleanor Shanley, Enya, and so on.

Q. And, of course, you, Maura, Dolores and Frances, along with Sharon Shannon and Eleanor McEvoy, were part of the 1992 compilation album “A Woman’s Heart,” which is often cited as a turning point for women in Irish music [the album is the best-selling Irish record of all time].

A. Yes, Eleanor was actually in my band at around that time, and when she was backstage she’d sing this song of hers she had just written, which she called “A Woman’s Heart,” and I thought it was brilliant. So when the idea of Dara putting out a compilation album featuring female singers came up, I suggested that Eleanor should record her song for it. But there was a concern about wanting established artists on the album, so I sang it with Eleanor. Soon, that song was playing all over



So much of my life has been given over to touring,” says Black, “even though I certainly don’t regret my musical career. It’s just that I have two grandchildren now, and you know, your perspective shifts.”

the radio, and was number one in the charts for months.

Everyone who was part of the project benefited greatly from the exposure, and it really did seem to help firmly establish the presence of women in Irish music. I think it was one of those right-place-at-the-right-time kind of experiences.

Q. Your most recent project has been writing your autobiography [*Down the Crooked Road*], which is being released this fall. How did this come to pass?

A. I’d been asked a few times to write my life story, but it never felt like the right time. I needed someone to bounce

things off of, give me some good feedback. A poet friend of mine told me, “It has to be in your own voice,” so that was very much on my mind.

Fortunately, my daughter Róisín is an avid reader, and it turned out she was perfect for helping me with the project. I’d say, “OK, I’ll tell you this story, you get it down,” and then she’d zero in on the fine details, like “What was the room like?” or “What was your mom wearing?” She’d set the scene that way, and we were able to organize things very well.

What I do is to go through my life, the albums that I made, the people I worked with, and the stories and events that went with that particular time. I philosophize as to how I’ve lived, my thoughts and feelings. It’s not a kiss-and-tell story – I didn’t want to upset anyone, really don’t see the point of slagging off and insulting people.

Writing the book was enjoyable, but also emotional in spots, like remembering my mom’s passing, or exploring times when I was depressed. It’s like singing a song with a strong emotional content to it – you can’t sing it without feeling what’s underneath.

Q. Sounds like a wonderful experience for you and your daughter.

A. Yes, Róisín and I got very close. She’d say, “Oh, I never knew that about you,” and she was very supportive and encouraging – “You have to tell it right.”

Q. Róisín and your sons Danny and Conor also have become active in music. I’m sure most every musician faces the question of how much they should encourage their kids to take up music. How did you handle it?

A. We never forced music on them. But then again, they were

involved in music simply because in this family, where there were always house sessions and parties with all kinds of musicians dropping by. It’s amazing how much they pick up just by osmosis.

It started when Conor, who’s the oldest, decided he wanted to have guitar lessons, so Danny said he wanted to do that, too. But after a while, Danny came to us and said, “I want to give up guitar, it’s just too hard.” And I said to him, “Look, no one’s going to force you, but just try to stick with it for a bit, and you’ll feel you gave it your best.” He still remembers that.

Now, Róisín, I knew she had a lovely voice but I wasn’t sure if she was as musical as the guys were. She loved listening to Eva Cassidy, especially Eva’s cover of “Somewhere Over the Rainbow,” and when she was 12 one night while we had Phil Cunningham with us, she sang it and just pinned me to the back wall. I was just amazed at how good she was. [Róisín O will open for Black at the Berklee Performance Center.]

I didn’t expect any of them to be musical; I mean, you know, sometimes the “music gene” can skip a generation. The main thing for me was, if they can get pleasure from music, then that’s what I want. So when I see them up on a stage, well, it’s quite the buzz.

Q. Any special projects ahead?

A. I have a few ideas, but I’d really love to do a live recording of songs by Noel Brazil, a great singer-songwriter who died in 2001. I had recorded a number of his songs, like “Babes in the Woods” and “Ellis Island,” and he was a very special person who never got the recognition he deserved.

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The Irish Language
 by Philip Mac AnGhabhann

Last month you were promised the vocabulary for some body features – so here they are. Let us begin with the head and face.

English	Irish	Pronunciation
head	ceann	/kown/
face	aghaigh	/ay/ *
hair	gruaig	/ GREW-ig/
nose	srón	/sroon/
ear	cluais	/KLOO-ish/
ears	clusa	/KLOO-suh/
mouth	béal	/BEY-uhl/
eye	súil	/SOO-uhl/
eyes	súile	/SOO-luh/
chin	smig	/smig/

* A reminder that /ay/ rhymes with English “I” and “eye.”

After we add the definite article “the” Irish does sme interesting things. Most of these **nouns** are **feminine**. See if you can tell which are **masculine**. **an ceann** /uhn kown/ “the head” **an taghaigh** /uhn tay/ “the face” **an ghruaig** /uhn GREW-ig/ “the hair” **an tsrón** /uhn troon/ “the nose” **an chluais** /uhn HLOO-ish/ “The ear” **na clusa** /nuh KLOO-suh/ “the ears” **an béal** /uhn BEY-uhl/ “the mouth” **an tsúil** /uhn TOO-uhl/ “the eye” **na súile** /nuh SOO-luh/ the eyes”

How did you do? Only **ceann** and **béal** are **masculine** – the rest are **feminine**. How did you know? The nouns following the **singular article** “the”, **an**, are **lenited** (“aspirated”) and so are **feminine**. Those following the **plural article** (still translated “the”) **na** of both **genders** are not, even if they are **feminine**. Here are some simple rules but first you must remember that the first three **possessive pronouns/adjectives** “my” **mo**, “your” **do** and “his” **a** also **lenite** following **nouns**. Therefore, you may hear **do cheann**, “your head”.

Here are five simple rules for the effect of the article “the” on their nouns:

1. There is no effect on any **noun** following the plural article **na**;
2. There is no effect on **masculine nouns** following the singular article **an**;
3. **Feminine nouns** are **lenited** following **an**, “the”, except those beginning with **d-** or **t-**;
4. **Nouns** beginning with a **vowel** or **g-** and a **vowel** or **sl-**, **sn-** and **sr-** are artificially **lenited** by prefixing **t**. In these cases the **s-** is not pronounced;
5. When **an** appears between two **consonants**, the final **-n** is not pronounced. An example would be “The girl is not here” – **Níl an cailín anseo** – where **an** is between the final **-l** of **Níl** and the **c-** of **cailín** /neel uh KAH-leen uhn-SHAW/. However, it still must be written as **an**.

Now, how can you now if a **noun** is either **masculine** or **feminine**? You can’t unless the word for “the” is there. Otherwise you just have to rely on memorizing them -- but most body parts are **feminine**.

It’s time for us to learn the words for “right”, **deas** /jes/, and “left” **clí** /klee/. These will also be **lenited** when used with a **feminine noun** such as **cluais**, “ear” – “the left ear”, **an chluais chlí** /uhn HOO-ish hlee/ and “the right rear”, **an chluais dheas** /uhn HOO-ish yes/.

Irish views some body parts in a wholistic manner – that is to say the words for “arm” can also mean “hand” and vice versa. Here are some examples:

“leg / foot”	cos	/kos/	fem.
“arm / hand”	lámh	/lahv/	fem.
“finger / toe”	méar	/meer/	fem.

For **méar**, think of “digits”

More vocabulary in the next lesson, including some interesting things about Irish terms for “body parts”, including how Irish differentiates between “fingers” and “toes.”

Introducing ‘TradLife’

Wendy MacIsaac, Enda Seery, Andrea Beaton, Jeremy Kittel and Natalie Haas.

Rae also is planning a series that would include artisans, such as painters, photographers and instrument makers, whose work depicts or involves aspects of folk tradition.

Other interactive features are in the works, such as listings for “trad-friendly” events and discussion forums on various traditional music or dance-related topics.

“In my travels,” says Rae, “I’ve come across people who’ve gotten really excited about traditional music, and they’ll ask, ‘Where can I find out about this stuff?’ Greater Boston is full of places to hear or learn about traditional music, but it can be a lot more difficult in other areas. Yet even here, you don’t always know where or how to get started.

“So now, someone, whether from Boston, Boise or Brazil, can log onto

TradLife, browse through the profiles of instructors – with biographies and brief descriptions of their styles, as well as links to their websites or music samples – and figure out which instrument or kind of music they’re interested in exploring. Then they set up payment, date, and time for the lesson. There’s no software to download – when it’s time, you’re all set to go. And, if you live close enough to the teacher, you don’t even have to use the web; you can meet face to face.”

Rae describes the genesis of TradLife as resulting from “a four-day epiphany.”

“While I was experiencing all this frustration last year, I had lunch with a friend, and I just got on my soapbox for more than an hour about how the lack of infrastructure makes it hard to put traditional music out there. I felt kind of bad for my friend to just sit there and listen to my rant, but it did get

me thinking about what I could do; and I thought about the word ‘trad,’ and how to make that the focus of whatever plan I came up with. I couldn’t sleep for the next four nights, I was so much on overdrive.”

With the advent of Skype and similar technology over the past decade making it ever easier for music teachers to give “real time” lessons online, Rae felt she had a good starting point for a concept. Fortunately, she had home-grown expertise to draw on via her stepfather, Matt Metcalf, who through his contacts in the high tech industry was able to help her find educational technology resources and integrate videoconferencing software onto the TradLife site. Rae also enlisted her mother, Jules Metcalf, to serve as business manager.

“I’m so fortunate to have a tight-knit family that is passionate about music, too. I couldn’t have embarked on this foray into web development without

bostonirish.com
 their help and advice,” she says.

Rae, meanwhile, has settled comfortably into her role as TradLife’s head honcho. “My job essentially entails product management, recruitment, marketing, and promotion,” she says. “These are skills I’ve been using for my musical career, so it all clicked. I guess I hadn’t realized I was an entrepreneur, but it seems to fit well with my personality. It’s also challenging me to learn new things every day - which is important to me.”

Zeal and enthusiasm don’t necessarily ensure success in a business venture, Rae knows, but she’s in it for the long haul. “It takes a long time to build something,” she says. “If your business doesn’t meet your expectations early on and you’re ready to quit, then you’re giving up on what can be a fascinating journey. When you’re passionate about something, and you want to bring it to the world, and you’ve got plenty of encouragement behind you, why not do it?”

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1 Saturday – DECLAN NERNEY DIRECT FROM IRELAND: Doors open at 7 pm. \$25. Call Pat McDonough at 781-534-3919 or visit www.IrishMusicNation.com for tickets or info.

2 Sunday – Fintan Stanley

7 Friday – Holy Ghost Fathers Annual Dance. Call Father Peter Nolan at 617-325-1300.

8 Saturday – COMEDIAN CAHAL DUNNE DIRECT FROM IRELAND: Doors open at 7 pm. \$20. Call 617-327-7306 or 617-549-9812 for tickets or table reservations.

9 Sunday – Noel Henry’s Irish Show Band

13 Thursday – ROSLINDALE WEST ROXBURY KIWANIS 27th Annual Dinner and Auction from 6-9 PM. \$15. Call Marion Kelly at 617-323-3200 X330 for more info.

14 Friday – PUB NIGHT with Colm O’Brien. FREE ADMISSION

15 Saturday – Mass for Deceased Members and Installation of Officers. Denis Curtin. 7 pm.

16 Sunday – Mossie Coughlin and the Boston Irish

20 Thursday – “MENINO ON MAIN” Fundraiser tribute celebrating Roslindale Village Main Streets’ 30th Anniversary and former Mayor Tom Menino whose vision made it all possible. The dinner will also celebrate the release of his book: Mayor for a New America. For more information, call RVMA at 617-327-4065 or visit www.meninoonmain.com

21 Friday – THE SEAN FOLAN AND TOM CLIFFORD’S IRELAND ON THE MOVE TV SHOWS FUNDRAISING DANCE. Music by Erin’s Melody with Margaret Dalton. Raffles, Irish dancers, and more. \$15. For more information, please call 857-719-6976.

22 Saturday – CO. SLIGO SCHOLARSHIP DANCE. Call 781-329-0584.

23 Sunday – Fintan Stanley

30 Sunday – Erin’s Melody with Margaret Dalton

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Traveling People

‘Change’ is another key feature of 21st-Century Ireland

By JUDY ENRIGHT
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Ireland is ever changing. If you doubt that statement, just have a meal almost anywhere in the Emerald Isle and you will be more than pleasantly surprised by the excellence of the food, service, wine list, and cocktail offerings. Anyone who tells you the food in Ireland is plain, dull meat, and potatoes, clearly hasn't been there for many years.

And the same modernization and change hold true for the country itself. Even if you are intimately familiar with a particular area, you often return to find new activities and businesses that have cropped up since your last visit.

I am always surprised when friends say they won't return to Ireland because they've "been there already and have seen it all." Well, that is just so wrong. Even the tiniest town can undergo major changes in the course of a season or a year.

I return every spring to the same part of the country—Co. Mayo. Why? Well, I go back for the West's stunning, rugged scenery, the ever-changing light for photography, the people and the fact that the West of Ireland—just like Dublin or Cork or Belfast or Derry—has plunged headlong into modern times. You don't have to head to other places to find fine food, music or theater, shopping, outdoor activities, or nightlife.

YVONNE'S COTTAGE
Last spring when I was driving out to Achill Island, I repeatedly passed a sign beside the N59 inviting visitors to stop by Yvonne's Cottage in Rosturk just outside Mullranny. My interest was piqued. Finally, a friend and I did stop one day and discovered a most wonderful and charming place for tea or a light meal.

The well-appointed cottage has six inside tables with four outside and is open seven days a week from June through September when tourist season is in full swing. Period decorations and art and photos adorn the mantel and white walls to reflect the theme of a 1950s rural Ireland home.

Yvonne's Cottage is named for Yvonne Moran, a young Ban Garda (female police officer) who was killed in a car accident in 2008. Her father, Kevin, and mother, Barbara, renovated and decorated the small cottage on top of the hill on their property in memory of their daughter, who had always wanted to renovate the barn and make it into her home.

The whitewashed cottage was built by Kevin's great-grandfather in the 1850s as a byre (a one-room barn). In 1892, Mary McNamara married John Moran and they had 10 children, who all grew up in the cottage (boys in one room and girls in another) until many emigrated. A new house—down the hill—was built in 1964 for the family and the cottage



Above: Yvonne's Cottage is a fun (and delicious) place to stop for a bite to eat in Rosturk Co. Mayo. Below, left: The hearth has been restored and decorations throughout mirror the theme of Ireland in the 1950s at Yvonne's Cottage in Rosturk, Co. Mayo. Right: Back in rural Ireland in the 1950s, residents had the bed beside the hearth to stay warm at night. See this and more in Yvonne's Cottage in Rosturk, Co. Mayo, where visitors are invited to stop for a meal or snack. Judy Enright photos



reverted to barn status for the next 43 years.

Kevin trained as a chef and his culinary prowess is evident in the excellent scones and other foods on offer at the cottage. My friend and I enjoyed tea with delicious fruit scones, jam and cream (2.50-euro.) Also included on the menu were: brown bread scone with cheddar, ham and relish (4.90-euro); Granny teacake (2-euro); carrot or lemon cake (2.50-euro.)

Kevin said that about 95 percent of the visitors to Yvonne's come from the Great Western Greenway, on the hill behind the cottage. (The Greenway, Ireland's longest off-road walking and cycling trail, follows the path of a long-abandoned railway line from Westport to Achill Island in Co. Mayo.)

If you're in the area, a stop at Yvonne's Cottage is highly recommended. The food is well prepared and, on a good day, the view of Croagh Patrick across Clew Bay is stunning.

GREENWAY
There are few people familiar with Co. Mayo who would not credit the Great Western Greenway for not only creating many new businesses and jobs but also for helping the economy all along its route.

Bikers and walkers take advantage of food and drink at pubs, restaurants, tearooms, and hotels along the route and consequently the economy of the area has been booming.

In light of the original Greenway's success, other Greenways are now being planned in north Mayo—

from Ballina to Killala along the River Moy—and for Co. Galway commuters traveling from Moycullen to Galway City "on two wheels rather than four." The Galway Greenway would be Ireland's first for commuters.

In North Mayo, planners see the Ballina-Killala route as the first phase of a multi-phase greenway in the north Mayo area.

ANNUAL AWARDS
We were delighted to see that Georgina Campbell's annual awards included Mitchell's Restaurant in Clifden as 2015 Seafood Restaurant of the year. We couldn't agree more! We have eaten at the restaurant many times and are especially fond of their crab cakes, which are outstanding.

Campbell's award presentation says: "Everything is cooked in-house, including breads and desserts - and it shows, in the freshness and flavor. This is a very fair place, offering honest food at honest prices—and, with its really delicious food and outstanding service, it's getting better every year."

Mitchell's, owned by Kay and JJ Mitchell, has been on Clifden's main street since 1991 and, as Campbell says, consistency is their trademark. The restaurant, Campbell adds, is an "attractive and well-managed family-run restaurant in Clifden [that] offers efficient, welcoming service, and very agreeably stylish 'good home cooking' all day, every day throughout a long season." The next time you visit Connemara, be sure to give Mitchell's a try.

Among Campbell's other 2015 award winners were: Beech Hill House Hotel, Derry/Londonderry, hotel of the year 2015; Kai Café and Restaurant, Galway, restaurant of the year; Derek Creagh, Harry's Restaurant, Brigid, Co. Donegal, chef of the year; Frankie Mallon, An Port Mor in Westport, Co. Mayo, seafood chef of the year; Blairscove House & Restaurant, Durrus, Co. Cork, outstanding guest experience of the year; Síle Gorman, Gorman's Clifftop House, Dingle, Co. Kerry, host of the year; The Long Dock, Carrigaholt, Co. Clare, pub of the year.

Also, l'Officina, Kildare Village, Co. Kildare, family friendly restaurant of the year, and Gregan's Castle Hotel in Ballyvaughan, Co. Clare, pet friendly hotel of the year. As B&B of the year, Campbell chose St. John's House, Lecarrow, Co. Roscommon, with Blindgate House in Kinsale, Co. Cork, named guesthouse

of the year. Country house of the year was Tankardstown House in Slane, Co. Meath, and farmhouse of the year was Lough Owel Lodge in Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.

Georgina Campbell Guides is a family-run, hospitality guide and cookbook publisher established in 1997 that specializes in Irish food, hospitality and travel. Campbell's are the longest-running independent hospitality awards in Ireland. Award winners are selected based on reports and findings of an annual assessment process and all recommended establishments are considered for all relevant awards each year with no charge for entry or for winners, which we find important as some guidebooks and travel writers do charge for inclusion and mention.

EVENTS AND THINGS TO DO
• The National Circus Festival in Tralee, Co. Kerry, started in 2001 as a juggling convention and is

now Ireland's largest annual circus festival. More information is available from circusfestival.ie

• The Cork Film Festival is Ireland's oldest film festival and mixes films, music, and ideas. The festival plays the Cork Opera House, Triskel Christchurch and the Gate Multiplex from Nov. 8-16. For more information, visit corkfilmfest.org

• Enjoy the 50th year of the FBD Queen of the Land Festival in Bridge House Hotel, Tullamore, Co. Offaly, from Nov. 7-9. The festival includes Tug O' War, Bouncing Castles, face painters, live bands and more. Sunday includes a trip to Tullamore Dew and live music. See: queenofthelandfestival.com for details.

• The Sneem International Folklore & Storytelling Festival in Co. Kerry runs from Nov. 7-9 and is a weekend of concerts, informal performances, workshops, walks, and lectures themed on storytelling and folklore for all ages. Aimed at exploring local traditions and introducing performers from other backgrounds, the festival gives new storytellers a chance to tell their tales and features storytellers and musicians from Ireland, the UK and US. See sneem-storytellingfestival.com for more.

This is a great time of year to visit Ireland. Airfare is low and there are still lots of events to enjoy before the Christmas holidays. Enjoy Ireland whenever and wherever you go.

Milestone figure for Cliffs of Moher

The one millionth visitor this year to the Cliffs of Moher, Rita Shaw from Niceville, Florida, arrived on site at 11:01 a.m. on Oct. 20 and was greeted with a certificate marking the occasion as well as a 5,000-euro return holiday to County Clare. Shaw was on vacation in Ireland with her husband Stephen.

Visitor numbers to the cliffs have risen for four successive years, with this year's figures up 12 percent over 2013. Katherine Webster, Director of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience, said new routes and increased access into Shannon Airport, as well as the launch by Fáilte Ireland of the Wild Atlantic Way on which the Cliffs of Moher are a Signature Discovery point have contributed to the rise in numbers.

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The sun has come out for Deagon in ‘Annie’

(Continued from page 17) know every song in “Annie” by heart. Is that a plus or is it a constant challenge to live up to expectations.

A. That’s a good question – the numbers *are* so well known – “Maybe,” “Hard Knock Life,” “Little Girls” . . . In a way it helps the story telling. The audience antenna is up – “Oh I know this song, I know this tune”. . . There are expectations, but our cast is exceptional.

Q. Your big number is “Easy Street,” about cashing in during the Depression. It must get a huge response.

A. I love “Easy Street.” It’s so fun. It’s like a New Orleans kind of jazz number that comes out of nowhere. Because the score is really not that [sound at all], and then here comes this grimy, syncopated New Orleans number, and, god, it’s fun. It’s kind of the 11 o’clock number of act one . . . I really get a kick out of it.

Q. The cliché is that actors should never work with animals or children. You’ve got a double dose with this show.

A. It’s so funny you said that. Martin said that once, too. The kids are actually great, they’re so respectful. Issie Swickle [who plays] Annie, she’s only nine, but I’m telling you, she’s never shed a tear. She takes direction like a champ. I’m always in awe of them because when I think about my childhood, anytime authoritative figures raised their voices, I would have been in tears.

Q. Speaking of your childhood, I understand your Mom’s family, the McLaughlins, came over from County Roscommon at the turn of the century. Have you had a chance to visit Ireland yourself?

A. No, and neither has my Mom, and my Mom has such Irish pride . . . But I just tell her, it’s okay Mom, I’m going to take you there one day . . . The one or two things that were passed down to me were the songs . . . My family and grandparents were such singers. The classic songs like “Danny Boy” and “Irish Eyes Are Smiling.” (Singing) “Oh my name is McNamara, I’m the leader of the band.” My grandfather, he was always humming.

Q. I saw on your Instagram page that there’s another actor on your family tree.

A. Arthur [Deagon]. He’s on my father’s side. His connection is more like three or four relatives removed. But he pursued the Ziegfeld Follies in the early 1900s . . . He actually passed away on stage, moments before one of his opening nights . . . I’ve always wondered if there was something in my blood that was performance-based, because not much of my family is interested in it. So when I found him [on Ancestry.com] I was like ‘Wow, this is someone I can relate to’ . . . Really inspiring.

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



Lucy Werner as Lily, Garrett Deagon as Rooster Hannigan and Lynn Andrews as Miss Hannigan stop the show with “Easy Street” in “Annie,” playing November 5 - 16 at The Citi Wang Theatre. Joan Marcus photo

Irish/Celtic music events

(Continued from page 17) Chadbourne, who weaves traditional tales with music for harp, piano, flutes and voice, will perform on Nov. 8 at the Irish Cultural Centre of New England in Canton. See <http://bit.ly/1nu0WeP> for tickets, directions and other information.

- The Katie McNally Trio presents Scottish, Cape Breton, and original music on Nov. 6 at Carriage House Violins recital hall of Johnson String Instruments in Newton Upper Falls, sponsored through notloB Parlour Concerts. notloB also will present a concert of Irish, Scottish, Scandinavian, and Appalachian music with Nate Sabat, Elise Boeur, Sumala Jackson and friends on Nov. 12 at Outpost 186 in Cambridge’s Inman Square. Go to notlobmusic.blogspot.com.

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Rockport, MA

Shalin Liu
Peirce Center
SOLD OUT
December 15,
4:30pm & 8pm

Worcester, MA

Hanover Theatre
December 17, 7:30pm

New Bedford, MA

The Zeiterion Theatre
December 18, 7:30pm

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