Presenting the 2016 Boston Irish Honorees

Leary, Judge families, Sen. Kirk feted at luncheon

The 2016 Boston Irish Honors Awards luncheon drew more than 400 attendees to the Plaza Ballroom of the Seaport Hotel in Boston on Oct. 28 for a celebration and public recognition of two Boston families and a distinguished public servant by the Boston Irish Reporter. The honorees are:

- Jim Judge, CEO of Eversource Energy, and Mary Cahill Judge, a husband and wife team noted for their generosity of spirit and extensive philanthropy.
- Former US Sen. Paul G. Kirk, Jr., a legendary public servant who chaired the Democratic National Committee and co-founded the Presidential Debate Commission.
- The Leary family—the Irish American Partnership founder Joe Leary, the businessman and philanthropist Kevin Leary, and their sisters, Mary Patricia Leary Dowling and Elizabeth Ann Leary Horvigan—who were cited as an exemplary Boston Irish family.

The selection of the honorees was made by a 34 member committee chaired by Bill Reilly of Cambridge. Committee members included Ireland’s Consul General Fionnuala Quinnan, New England Council president Jim Brett, and BIR publisher Ed Ferry.

"It is important that we acknowledge those among us who have excelled," Reilly said. "They remind us of the accomplishment of our ancestors, many of whom arrived on these shores at a time of great hostility towards immigrants. It is the foundation that they laid so sturdily that gives us cause to celebrate on this day."
Brian O’Donovan, WGBH Radio Host of a Celtic Sojourn, as emcee

Solas Celebration!

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1ST, 2016 | SEAPORT HOTEL

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Honorees include: Martin T. Meehan, 27th President of the University of Massachusetts; Her Excellency Anne Anderson, the Republic of Ireland’s Ambassador to the United States; and Reverend Doctor Ray Hammond, founder and pastor of Bethel A.M.E. Church in Boston
**Charitable Irish Society will award Silver Keys to four at annual reception**

The Charitable Irish Society will hold its Eighteenth Silver Key Award Ceremony on Thurs., Nov. 10, from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel.

The event will feature keynote speakers Gerard and Marilyn Doherty, Billy Higgins, and Sister Maryadele Robinson.

The Charitable Irish Society was founded in 1737. It is the oldest Irish Society in the Americas and has been in continuous membership of both Catholics and Protestants since its early days. From its beginnings, the Society’s purpose has been to provide aid and assistance to newly arrived Irish immigrants as they face the multiple challenges of adjusting to and assimilating into a new country. Consistent with the Irish traditions of hospitality and charity, the Society has expanded its focus to include immigrants from other countries as well as from Ireland.

The Silver Key Award is given to those individuals who exemplify dedication and persistence in helping new immigrants who have truly outstanding. This year’s honorees, most generous philanthropists and political and elected officials, Gerard and Marilyn Doherty, Billy Higgins, South Boston native, resident, founder of the South Hill Children’s Fund and quiet contributor to countless individuals and causes, and Sister Maryadele Robinson, Director Emerita of the Labour Centre, have each made significant contributions to helping others and we are pleased to be able to honor them with the Silver Key Award.

Tickets are $125 each and can be obtained by contacting Sandra Modly at 617-304-1076, or online at charitableirishsociety.org

**New air services on tap for Boston-Dublin route**

Airplane flights from Boston to Ireland have expanded once again with the announcement of two new scheduled roundtrip flights from Logan. The new flights will depart Logan at 9:10 a.m., and arrive in Dublin at 8:30 a.m. Delta return flights will depart Dublin at 10:15 a.m., and arrive in Boston at 12:41 p.m. The inaugural flight is set for May 25. Meanwhile, budget Iceland carrier WOW Airlines, which has offered service between Boston and Dublin with a stopover to change planes in Reykjavik, will introduce additional service to Cork next May 19.
This time around, we’re with her

In 2008, the Boston Irish Reporter chose Barack Obama over Hillary Clinton as our preferred nominee for president. We wrote: “In a contest that is increasingly seen as a choice between substance and style, we chose the latter.” Our pick, John McCain on the Republican ticket, team Clinton seems likely to be a losing proposition for those of us focused on the ultimate goal of returning some semblance of substance and sanity to our national discourse.

Since then, Obama, we believed, would excite the Democratic base and bring in new voters. We hoped he would bring new generations into the political process, and set us on a path toward a more progressive, united future. Like Sen. Ted Kennedy, whose endorsement of John McCain was an early sign of an eventual schism in the Boston Irish Reporter, we saw in the senator from Illinois the promise of a President who would be an active reminder of our own favorite son, John F. Kennedy.

It is an understatement to say that President Obama has far exceeded our expectations. We believe that he will be viewed as the most important leader generated by the top ten jobs he’s had in the last century. We will miss his steady leadership, graceful resolve, and uplifting spirit that the president, the First Lady, and their family have brought to the White House.

Secretary Clinton, the next great successor to the Obama legacy. After a disappointing finish to her first presidential bid in the 2008 candidacy, she has not only distinguished herself by endorsing her opponent, she has also joined in his administration at the highest level, serving as Secretary of State. The conversation and many of her ideas and policies, as well, will come to an end. The final run on the way up to the Oval Office.

The role of secretary of state is demanding and fraught with peril. Fail one, to Joe Biden or someone, is inherent in the job description at the Department of State, where even allies are prone to political derision, and the world’s most nefarious and wicked leaders are your frequent dinner guests. Meanwhile, domestic rivals will seek to make you look like a cancer and a threat to your own and every country’s success. And victory, however sacrosanct, belongs to this administration.

Hillary Clinton, in our view, is the best-qualified, best-prepared and most powerful candidate. The obvious choice for job of president in the fields of candidates presented to the American electorate this cycle. She triumphed over a tough, dynamic and popular rival, President Obama, Sanders— another leader who has done the nation a service by lending his full-throated endorsement to his former rival. She promises to keep a steady pace with the impressive record realized under President Obama’s progressive appointment and the Court, advances in civil rights for LGBTQ neighbors on marriage and in the armed forces, and more equitable pay for women. Like the president, who righted the American economy that was so hobbled and abused by failed leaders under his administration. Clinton promises to make smart decisions that won’t disrupt the ongoing recovery.

Sanders, like many of us who are now fully committed to Clinton’s election, does so with one eye cast toward the future of the party and the prospects for the electorate— the GOP nominee— would mean for our republic and the kind of country that is best for our world. The grotesque, shameless behavior of the Republican party’s new standard bearer, a non-entity with no serious opponent— the GOP nominee— would mean for our republic and the kind of country that is best for our world. The grotesque, shameless behavior of the Republican party’s new standard bearer, a non-entity with no serious opponent— the GOP nominee— would mean for our republic and the kind of country that is best for our world. The grotesque, shameless behavior of the Republican party’s new standard bearer, a non-entity with no serious opponent— the GOP nominee— would mean for our republic and the kind of country that is best for our world.

Joe Leary, Special to the BIR

The Irish and and our election: They’re interested, and worried

By Joe Leary

Special to the BIR

The rest of the time, we will give you a brief idea of what is happening to our attention to presidential elections, but foreign newspapers and foreign leaders have taken over as our primary focus. Most people are very careful about what they say about the campaigns.

Most countries respect the leadership of the president and the office of president, a matter that American newspapers who accept American aid follow certainly want to continue their good relations with the nation or other nation that helps them.

This year, Donald Trump’s campaign was the exception. His campaign, his speeches, his reconsideration of his own self-image, are under serious, bitter criticism throughout the country.

Take a look at the Irish Times. They write:

• The Irish Times quotes Irish government leader Taoiseach Enda Kenny: “If Trump’s comments are true and dangerous, and we think they are, there is an alter-

native for Americans to vote for.

• The Irish Minister for Social Protection, Leo Varad-

ker, has described comments by Trump as sexist and racist.

On our website of rapidly advancing technology where new inventions occur many times a day, a world of instant communication. All the debates and both campaigns are going worldwide. Almost every- thing Trump or Clinton says is known immediately worldwide.

When a simple email sent across town can be accessed by the entire country, and news of a simple email in an attempt to influence our elections, everyone must be very careful and keep being aware of what goes on.

This is not a defense of what the Irish are saying; it is a simple fact that large parts of the world’s population outside of our 50 states may be thinking.

By James W. Dolan

Special to the Reporter

The Trump phenomenon shows just how unconventional we are. We, too, can be beguiled by a demagogue who channels the anger and resentment of the American people into a movement to avoid of substance. Using lies, de-
cisive arguments, and conspiracy theories, an accomplished man has convinced a minority to pledge their future to a single-minded power and influence. The effort to get Trump didn’t happen in our system. Here our system had too many safeguards to allow such an obvious smear campaign to sink, but that too was complicated and our political leaders too focused on this to become real. There were many in Germany and Italy in the aftermath of World War I who felt the same way. Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, who said democracy was too illusory and the people, they thought, they could be managed by professionals and held back by the structural limitations of governance.

They were wrong. Both swept to power on a wave of public panic and discontent that were fueled by the blaming of minorities for social and economic ills. Both moved to consolidate power quickly by controlling the press, imprisoning their critics, and importing a reign of fear and restraint of parochial norms, not unlike Donald Trump’s

Make America Great Again” cries almost a century later. How little time it took to dismantle democratic institutions.

The degree to which an all-powerful authoritarian leader could succeed, despite the reason, of otherwise-sensible people was evident in the public hysteria of the crowds that lined the streets of Berlin States in works and world’s countries as well. Anyone who squeals, Trump doesn’t have the discipline, the knowl-

edge, or the organization to capitalize on his somewhat thin leadership.” What is it about this obviously deeply flawed man that makes him an effective and acceptable? We can’t see or don’t care about his limitations and the role he poses to the nation. They see only the personalization of their anger and discontent. They’re mad as hell and they’re going to behave. How they propose to address this panic is the subject we need to address the established order. Believing anything would be better than what we have, they want change and don’t particularly care how it is achieved.

Assigning blame is a powerful emotion that often overpowers our common sense. This country is the result of frustration and anger against whatever or whoever is perceived to be responsible for whatever problems we have. The belief is that the government is frequently directed against government, minorities, elites, and change in general; it’s a way to protest against the status quo and to push for changes. The government requires a target, and the real or imagined culprits are many. Any number of people who want to be seen as a leader, who wants to accept any personal responsibility for their floundering campaign, he blames the press, political elites, special interests, and the public in general. And why? Because the election “rigged,” he’ll be all too ready to stir up unrest and anger, and the anger and the anger and the anger.

One day and the other day and the other day and the other day and the other day, in a promised ride to glory that can only end in destruction. James W. Dolan is a retired Dorchester District Court judge who now practices law.

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Off the Bench

Beware the flawed, blustering horseman
Talking turkey: Politics, and a grand holiday

By Peter F. Stevens

The nightmare of the 2016 presidential election will soon be behind us, but the political reality will linger amid the political ashes on Nov. 9. Will there be an even worse nightmare to follow? As always, the political pundits and politico-­sapiens predict Hillary Clinton will win, citing the bulge of “irrelevant” white males in the traditional red states that will carry her to victory close to a “sure thing.” On the Republican side, bigotry, birtherism, misogyny, xenophobia, cruelty, ignorance and a total lack of a coherent ideology rule. Vladimir Putin, no coherent policies (the “Wall” is not a policy), and a country in financial ruin are all bad signs, which is why I call it a rigged election that challenge the very essence of American democracy have polluted the nation’s ears, eyes and nerves.

On the Democratic side, Wikileaks, the muck, uninteresting wheeling and dealing of the Clinton Foundation, Hillary’s propensity for secretiveness, her selective memory, and her sometimes interesting relations with the CFR, are all time to consider. The traditional red states have sundered the political class. As a space and as a country, I do not think that has strong support from various corners of Irish America.

In this scribe’s opinion—admittedly no more valid than anyone else’s—the election remains a no-­brainer. Hillary is the saner choice. Yes, she drags a heavily piled cart of political baggage, but when she is portrayed as a threat to victory, I do not think that he or she is “the only one” who can save the nation is talking the talk and walking the walk of a tyrant-in-­the-making.

Republican strategist Steve Schmidt, a key player in the campaigns of George W. Bush and John McCain, was nearly in tears after Trump’s final debate denouement that he would not accept the results. Trump later added that he would accept the tally “if I win.” Schmidt said grimly, “I’m in the minority, but I would only accept fascism can only take hold if democracy is weak.”

I do think that Trump is poised to lose, but there are still radical Republicans who supported him for his victory. The first, as reported in depth by Bloomberg, is that he is in a position to accept the minority vote—voter suppression—at polling places and to discourage young women and millennials from voting. It is worth noting that a question with no answer until the election results are in, is that bulletproof Trump supporters to haul him across the finish line as the election is decided. The president elects, as the only issue of standing citizens and from all over the nation.

After several testimonials to the Pilgrims and the Thanksgiving history, we were all shapped to deliver a poem worthy of both America and those who have given us this great gift of citizenship. It is worth noting that the “real American” someone born on American soil who knows he is the son of the Pilgrims Fethers and Plymouth Rock.

The dedication of the Pilgrim Monument garnered some attention. The Boston Globe’s John O’Reilly had written a poem honoring the “Pilgrim Fathers.” Locally, letters to the editor that objected to the poem’s portrayal of the “foreign-born poet” would write and deliver the words “for such an important occasion.” But former Governor Bayley O’Reilly objected to the poem, admiring the seated dissidents nationwide with his rejoinder that John O’Reilly “is a genius.” John O’Reilly’s Pilgrim, born not on the mainland, but on a small island out at sea.” The fact that the small island was inhabited by individuals who contended with the “foreign-born” the Pilgrims Fethers and Plymouth Rock.

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Boston Irish Reporter's Here & There

BY BILL O'Donnell

A Happy Reunion for a Derry Man in Worcester

By Bill O'Donnell

In the early 1970s, a young Derry man by the name of John O'Donnell visited a city in the U.S. for the first time: Worcester. This was a visit that left a lasting impression on him. O'Donnell, who had grown up in a city where life was tough, was amazed by the vibrancy and opportunity he found in Worcester. This visit was a turning point in his life, and he returned to the city many times over the years, always hoping to make it his permanent home.

Last month, O'Donnell finally realized his dream. He moved to Worcester permanently, to be closer to family and to enjoy the many activities and opportunities the city has to offer. He is now looking forward to exploring all that Worcester has to offer, from its rich history to its diverse cultural scene.

O'Donnell's journey from Derry to Worcester is a testament to the power of opportunity and the importance of exploring new horizons. It is a reminder that, no matter where you come from, there is always a place for you in America.

-- Bill O'Donnell

Boston Irish Reporter's Here & There

Boston Irish Reporter

November 2016

bostonirishreporter.com

BOSTON IRISH REPORTER
Current J-1 participants and members of the J-1 Learning Exchange Program Staff come from all 32 counties and intern throughout the United States. We know from experience that this program is a win-win for students and employers alike. Many students return home to Ireland (at the end of their year) to be future leaders.

A great example of this support took place recently at our center, when advisory board member John Cullinean met with some of the students for a lunchtime talk on entrepreneurship, and on how better present their cover letters and résumés. Also, many thanks to the New England Director of the Irish American Fund, Sue O’Leary, for her support throughout the year.

The JIC helps Irish students find paid, one-year, internships in the United States. If you have any employment opportunities, please contact Paul Pealan at ppealan@jic.ie.

Support James’ Run! Nov. 6 – An Irish immigrant himself, on Sun., Nov. 6, James McGleenon will be dedicating his time to the running of the New York City Marathon to the Irish Immigrant Learning Center. Originally from Co. Galway, McGleenon is executive vice president and chief information officer of Liberty Mutual Insurance and is a member of the JIC’s Advisory Board.

Join James in making sure the Irish remains safe, welcoming place for families and friends to gather, and help us raise $10,000 by Nov. 6. See iicenter.org.

JIC Legal Clinic – Monterey Park – November 7 – Green Card, Pub. 304 Washington Street, Braintree.

Early Voting Has Begun – For the first time, Irish American voters will be able to cast their ballots before Election Day, at their own convenience. This year, you have the option to cast your election ballot at any early voting location in your community, by mail, or at your polling place on Election Day. Early voting period began on October 24 and will end on November 4. To find your early voting location and times for your city or town, visit the Secretary of State’s website at: tinyurl.com/ajdwpw.

Support the Municipal ID Initiative! More than 140,000 Boston Residents lack access to government issued ID because of immigration status, homelessness or gender identity. The Boston City Council’s Committee on Healthy Women, Families and Communities is holding public hearings on a proposed ID - the Boston OneCard.

Let your city councillor and the committee know that you support this initiative by emailing: cec.hfw@boston.gov.

DV Lottery open until Nov. 7 – The US Department of State administers the Congressional-ly mandated Diversity Immigrant Visa Program annually. For Fiscal Year 2018, 50,000 Diversity Visas (DVs) will be available. There is no cost to register for the DV program. Applicants who are selected in the program ("Selectee") must meet, but simple eligibility requirements to qualify for a diversity visa.

The website for the 2018 Diversity Visa program (DV-2018) is now open. The entry submission period will end on Nov. 7. The entry form will only be available for submissions during this period and this period only.

For full instructions about applying, visit the US dvostate.gov. There is no cost for the application. Beware of websites that try to charge a fee for application services.

A Happy Thanksgiving to All! The staff and board members of the JIC wish you and all your family an abundance of reasons to be thankful for this year.

Q. I received a green card valid for two years, on my marriage to a US citizen. I see that the card is due for renewal 2 years after the date of issue. Is that the renewal date?

A. Your two-year permanent resident card is valid for two years from the date of issue. Your renewal date is two years after the date of issue. If you and your spouse must prove your marital status, you will need evidence that you are still married at the time of renewal.

Immigration & A.

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There are disadvantages to losing weight, being slim.

What would you say if the idea of losing weight and being slim be seen as a benefit, and not a failure?

But people unconsciously look down on those who are overweight, who we perceive as overeating or making unhealthy choices.

People might feel pressure from their friends or family to lose weight.

They might feel like they are not living up to certain standards of beauty.

They might feel like they are not healthy or healthy enough.

They might feel like they are not good enough or worthy enough.

They might feel like they are not desirable or attractive enough.

They might feel like they are not successful or accomplished enough.

They might feel like they are not loved or accepted enough.

They might feel like they are not beautiful or attractive enough.

They might feel like they are not strong or capable enough.

They might feel like they are not confident or self-assured enough.

They might feel like they are not rich or wealthy enough.

They might feel like they are not popular or popular enough.

They might feel like they are not well-known or famous enough.

They might feel like they are not beautiful or attractive enough.

They might feel like they are not strong or capable enough.

They might feel like they are not confident or self-assured enough.

They might feel like they are not rich or wealthy enough.

They might feel like they are not popular or popular enough.

They might feel like they are not well-known or famous enough.
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**Traveling People**

By Judy Enright

**Special to the BIR**

How does a traveler to Ireland get the pulse of this foreign land? Some visitors like to get the scoop from residents, read the country’s newspapers, or watch TV news. I like to go shopping – in craft shops, department and grocery stores – not necessarily to buy something but because I think you can learn a lot about a place by seeing what products are offered and how the offerings change from year to year.

**CHANGING FOCUS**

There was a day when tourist shops offered leprechaun, shamrocks, and other such traditional Irish-themed gifts. But many of those same shops today sell original paintings, prints, hand-crafted silver jewelry, leather goods, hand-painted silk pottery, woolens, and other craft items. There is still an earnest leprechaun or two lurking about but generally the better stores focus on products created by Ireland’s many gifted craftspeople.

This ceramic pin depicting a ram is by Michelle Butler, Sperrin Ceramic Studios, in Omagh, Co. Tyrone; she and her husband opened the gift shop, which will be 70 years old next year. It’s a great place to shop if you don’t want to pay the standard 25 percent Value Added Tax charged at most stores out in the countryside and are able to carry home your purchases.

Most Irish goods in Duty Free are sold throughout the country so if you are looking for something unique, be sure to buy it when you see it as you are traveling. Shannon Duty Free is a great place to buy Burren Smokehouse smoked salmon, loaves of Cambridge’s bread, and other products like bacon and sausage that are best bought last minute.

Dublin airport has instituted a whole new shopping experience (thelocap) for customers to buy items online and collect them at various board the plane for home. We haven’t tried it, but it’s an interesting concept.

**GROCERY STORES**

Once upon a time, I might have taken New England products, such as maple syrup, to Ireland as a gift. Or, I might have packed random but necessary ingredients like jalapeños, if Mexican food was on the menu or Band-Aids, because I thought Johnson & Johnson’s were the best but they weren’t available in Ireland. They’re available here now as are many more different types of what the Irish call “plasters.”

Today’s Irish grocery stores have nearly everything we have here, and even more, because many large American companies have facilities in Europe and produce products there. For instance, there is one Kellogg’s Special K granola I buy in Ireland (with dried cranberries and almonds) that I cannot find here. I end up bringing boxes of it home, which doesn’t help with the weight allowance of my bags but it’s worth it to me.

I also find that some of our products that are sold in Irish supermarkets are entirely different there. I buy Yoplait yogurt in Ireland that tastes better than the Yoplait here in my opinion. Why? Maybe it’s the difference in where the cows’ milk comes from.

**GIFT SHOPS**

There are some fine gift shops all over Ireland where you will find just the right holiday gifts for those at home.

Since I rent a house in the West, my familiarity is mostly with shops on that side of the country. Some favorites include The Beehive in Kilkenny, O’Reilly’s and Tarpin and Quay Gallery in Westport, all in Co. Mayo; also, the gift shop at Kylemore Abbey, The Clifden Bookshop and Spiddal Craft Village, all in Co. Galway, Connemara Gifts at Peacock’s Hotel in Maam Cross, Connemara; and the Donegal Craft Village in Co. Donegal.

A friend and I also discovered Caroline Timoney’s Forget-Me-Not gift shop in Donegal Town this spring, where I bought a number of gifts including a wonderful ceramic pin depicting a ram done by Michelle Butler from Co. Tyrone. I also bought several of Michelle’s other designs and plan to give them as Christmas gifts. Her pins are also available at the Museum of Country Life just outside of Galway, Co. Mayo. The House of Ireland and National Museum of Ireland, both in Dublin and O’Brien’s Crafts & Knitwear in Dublin, Co. Clare.

**CELTIC WAVE**

While in Donegal in the spring, I was fortunate to spend some time with Tommy and Patricia Daly at Celtic Weave in Cloughore, Ballislahannon. For four generations, the Daly family has been creating china baskets and flowered wood in their village, which is just a mile west of the village of Belleek.

Making the baskets is an intricate and time-consuming process that starts with hand-knitting the Parian style bamboo rods, then making the frames. Sheets of clay are then braided and woven to create the basket frame, which is then fired. The baskets are individually and painstakingly made, and each piece of flower, every leaf, shamrock, stem, and bud are made from tobacco leaves, planted in petal by petal and leaf by leaf, fired, glazed, and hand painted. It’s a lengthy and exacting process but the Daly family clearly has it down to a fine art form after all these years.

The products created are impressive and range from a large assortment of baskets to napkin rings, thimbles, vases, clocks, candleholders, vases, picture frames, and more.

The small company also makes a number of holiday decorations and items, all of which are available at the shop and online.

**Ashford Castle in Cong,** Co. Mayo, was recently awarded a prestigious five-star hotel at the 2016 AA Hospitality Awards and was named Ireland’s Best Five Star Hotel at the Keeling’s World of Irish Whiskey Gold Medal Awards.

Each tiny decoration at Celtic Weave China is handmade. Here, Tommy Daly, fourth generation basketmaker at Celtic Weave, crafts tiny flowers, buds, stems, leaves and shamrocks to adorn the baskets.

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On Monday, October 24 the Irish Cultural Centre in Canton hosted a lively concert and cell featuring Michael Tubridy, performing with accordionist James Keane. A virtuoso of the flute, tin whistle and concertina, Tubridy is referred to as “the lord of the dance,” according to the regional newspaper Clare People: “In recent years he has turned his thoughts to the bustling and bustling of the dance floor.”

1.) Maudy Dooher, Needham; 2.) Kieran Jordan, Dorchester; 3.) Theresa Keane, New York; 4.) Bill Murphy, Rockland; 5.) Eamon Meagher, Exec. Director Of I.C.C.; 6.) Michael Tubridy, Dublin; 7.) James Keane, New York, Musicians of the Evening: 8.) Mike and Pam Almagro, Plymouth; Linda Sullivan, Dorchester; Ron Barron, Abington; Pat Corbett, Milton; 9.) Larry Reynolds, Jr., Needham; Paul Reesently, Milton; 10.) Margaret Kelly, Barbara Galvin, both of W. Roxbury; 11.) Mary Ellen Baker, Maureen Baker, both of Braintree; 10.) Catt Braiken, Dedham; Pat Tierney, Revere, Carmel and Mossie Murphy, Woburn; Cara Kiff, Quincy; Maureen Conway, Quincy; 11.) Maureen Flaherty, Needham; Mary Keedy, Needham; Joan O’Brien, Newton; Evelyn Fennessy, Bourne; Mary Walsh, Milton; Mary Reen, Holbrook.
When a dream becomes real: Dancing in “American In Paris”

Q. In that situation, do they give you a yes or no on the spot or did you have to wait to hear back?
A. They told me before I left. I was the last person they pulled into the office. They offered me an apprenticeship contract. My Mom was with me... I was trying to be very sweet and calm... Then we got into the elevator and the two of us started screaming. It was a pretty awesome moment.

Q. “American in Paris” has such a rich history. Why do you think the stage version makes such a connection with theater audiences?
A. You know, it’s a classic love story. It brings people back to the wonderful days of Gene Kelly and Leslie Caron. It has the dance elements but it also has the amazing music of Gershwin, amazing compositions. Everyone leaves with love in their hearts. I felt it before I saw it. It’s one of those musicals where you go “Aahhh, I’m on Cloud 9.” It’s a sweet love story and it also ties in a lot of history in France... The audience loves it.

Q. Do you have a favorite moment in the show?
A. Yes. It’s actually a sad moment, but it’s so beautiful. There’s a moment where one of the lead characters, Adam [played by Etai Benson], sings “But Not For Me.” It’s the beautiful duet he does with Milo [played by Emily Ferranti]... The two of them are incredible singers... It’s so inspiring to hear these people sing and share their craft... In “(But Not For Me)” they’re singing about something similar, but they’re in very different points in their lives... It gets me every time. I’m always misty-eyed... Your heart feels for these two characters.

Q. I understand you took a family trip to Ireland when you were growing up.
A. My grandfather would always tell me about his heritage and the Meighan clan. He’s very proud of where he has been and where he has come from. And it was very important for him to show us what our family was all about. It made a huge impression on me growing up... We actually have some family still there.

Q. When was this?
A. I was about 10... We took a two-week bus tour through Ireland and made a bunch of stops. We toured the most incredible places. We went to the Cliffs of Moher and The Giant’s Causeway and I kissed the Blarney Stone. It was an incredible experience.

Q. And have you been to Paris?
A. (Laughing)... It’s next on my list!

R. J. Donovan is editor and publisher of bostonirish.com. 

“An American in Paris,” through Nov. 6, Citi Wang Theatre, 270 Tremont Street, Boston. Info: citycenter.org or 800-982-2787.
Children play is back, and rarin’ to go; Karan Casey joins up as lead vocalist

By Sean Smith
Special to the BIR

After a hiatus in 2015, the Boston-based all-star fiddle ensemble Childsplay is back with a new lead vocalist, Irish singer Karan Casey, and later this month will head out on a four-city tour that winds up with two shows at Somerville Theater in Davis Square on Nov. 20. The group also will play at Hart’s Center in Cape Cod, New York City, and Portland, Maine.

Childsplay comprises two dozen or so musicians — many from Boston or elsewhere in New England — performing fiddle music mainly from Irish, Scottish, Cape Breton, Scandinavian, French Canadian, and American folk traditions. All the fiddlers use violins created by Cambridge resident Bob Childs, who also plays in the ensemble and serves as artistic director as well as its namesake. Although most of Childsplay’s participants have active, full-time musical careers, they gather almost every fall for a few weeks to rehearse and present concerts in the Northeast.

The ensemble has recorded six CDs — the most recent was “As the Crow Flies” in 2013 — and two concert DVDs: “Fiddlers, Fiddlers and Fiddlemaker,” also released in 2013, has been widely broadcast on PBS.

While Childsplay’s history stretches back more than 20 years, it is over the past decade or so that the group has followed a consistent organizational formula that includes a fiddle lead singer; a fiddler — a former member of the band Solas who went on to forge a successful solo career — becomes the third vocalist for Childsplay, and first non- New Englander to take the microphone. First was Newton-born Aisle O’Donovan, followed by Vermont native Lisa Schneckenburger, who will now contribute background vocals as well as fiddle.

The face of Childsplay is not constant. Some regulars might opt in or out in a given year because of scheduling conflicts or other factors and are replaced by new or returning members. A new featured vocalist also marks a significant transition. Yet for all the changes Childsplay may undergo, Childs sees plenty of continuity.

“I tend to think of Childsplay as evolutionary, marked by phases,” he explains. “There’s a period of three to four years that is built around making a CD or DVD, as was the case with Aisfe. Then Aisfe moved on, and Lisa took the role of lead vocalist, bringing along her particular style and repertoire. Meanwhile, of course, other members of Childsplay were contributing fresh ideas for sets and arrangements and ultimately, this all led to another CD and DVD. So then Karan agreed to join us, and that should mean another cycle where we accumulate more new material to along with what we’ve built up over the years.”

But what remains unchanged is the core sound — that blend of fiddles, along with other instruments like guitar, flute, harp, cello, bass, banjo and so on — and, most importantly, Childsplay’s mission: Building a bridge includes a network of the rich legacy of traditional music and dance, as well as bringing

Some of the faces may change for Childsplay (shown here in 2012), including new singer Karan Casey, below, but artistic director and namesake Bob Childs sees a lot of continuity in the group — especially its core sound.

“I am very excited to be joining Childsplay,” said Karan Casey. “I know a lot of the musicians already and I really admire their music. I also love the idea of the whole collective and enjoy collaborating with people at this level — it’s very creative and exciting for me to be working out new arrangements for the songs. I can’t wait to get there and hear it all.”

Childsplay has been around long enough to become a full-fledged non-profit with ancillary activities such as instructive workshops and classroom educational opportunities. The Childsplay website (childplay.org) includes instructional videos by Bewick, Cassel, Fails, and Schneckenburger, and essays on various aspects of music by Childs and other group members.

On a more personal level, Childs says, the progression of years has brought a familial dynamic to Childsplay, in some respects quite literally — for example, Graham DeZarn, who’s been part of the ensemble for the past several years, is the son of a Childsplay charter member, Joe DeZarn.

“It’s been wonderful to see people like Lisa and Hanneke [Cassell] become established performers and teachers, and serve as mentors for young musicians like Katie [McNally] and Amanda [Cavanaugh] — who have now themselves become established performers and teachers, and are already mentors for the next generation of fiddlers. It speaks to that whole concept of community we talk about with Childsplay.”

In fact, Childs says Childsplay can be a salve for its members during tough times — and hopes the group’s concerts might have the same effect on audiences.

“Let’s face it: The last couple of years have been pretty rough for many of us, given what’s going on in the world,” he says. “In times like this, coming together can be reassuring. With Childsplay you have a group of musicians engaged in the creative process, trying to realize a very positive vision — it’s something that we find invigorating and affirming, and hope people who come out to see us will, too.”

For information on Childsplay, including links to concert ticket sales, go to childplay.org.

Residents Shannon Heaton (flute, whistle, accordion), Ari Friedmann (cello) and Kathleen Guilford (harp), along with Keith Murphy (guitar, piano), Ralph Gordon (double bass) and Mark Roberts (flute, banjo), Dale Carter, Kevin Jordan and Kevin Doyle also are part of the ensemble this year.

The choice of Casey as the new Childsplay vocalist was in some ways a departure, in that the band reached out beyond its immediate music community. But then again, as Childs notes, geography doesn’t exactly define community these days — and certainly not in music.

“I was already familiar with Karan because of her time with Solas,” he says. “And of course, she’s been through Boston before, such as when she was with ‘A Christmas Celtic Sojourn.’ Karan’s also worked with Aisfe, and in fact it was Aisfe who suggested her.”

“To my mind, the relationship between voice and violin is critical when it comes to singing with Childsplay, because obviously the violin is at the core of the group — and the violin has often been described as the musical instrument that most closely matches the human voice. So for Childsplay, a singing voice has to have a certain soulful quality, a timbre that is right for the violin. Aisfe and Lisa certainly did, and I really believe Karan does, too.”

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For information on Childsplay, including links to concert ticket sales, go to childplay.org.
BCMFest 2017 touts tradition and renewal

BCMFest (Boston’s Celtic Music Fest), an annual showcase for the Greater Boston area’s rich trove of Celtic music and dance, will come to Harvard Square January 13-15 for another weekend of performance and hands-on events.

This family-friendly festival draws performers of all ages from around Greater Boston, presenting music, song, and dance from Irish, Scottish, Cape Breton and other Celtic-related traditions. Performances begin with the Friday night Roots & Branches Concert in Club Passim, then continue on Saturday — starting with children’s and family entertainment in the morning—at Club Passim and on three different stages in First Church, Cambridge.

BCMFest also features a number of participatory events, including the Boston Urban Ceilidh — BCMFest’s popular Celtic dance party — which takes place on opening night in The Atrium (50 Church Street).

The festival winds up on Saturday evening with the BCMFest Nightcap finale concert in First Church, Cambridge.

BCMFest is a program of Passim, a Cambridge-based non-profit seeking to build a vibrant music community through its legendary listening venue, music school, artist grants and outreach initiatives.

Among the performers confirmed to appear at BCMFest 2017 are: Yann Falquet; Katie McNally & Neil Pearlman; Laura Fedderson; Joel Wensenerstreng & Owen Marshall; All in Always — Laura Cortese & Friends; Heather Cole-Mullen; Jenna Moynihan; Galen Fraser; and more among the local musicians who will be appearing at BCMFest 2017 this January.

It is the theme for BCMFest 2017 is Tradition and Renewal: Looking Back and Moving Forward, which will be expressed in the Nightcap concert, she adds. Traditional music energizes as many of us. And this process of connection to the tradition by performers and listeners alike revitalizes the tradition.

Performers for the Friday night Roots & Branches Concert are: Yann Falquet, a guitarist and singer known for his work with Celtic trio Gentescum; Irish-style fiddler, accordionist and vocalist Heather Cole-Mullen, among the fine young local musicians who have come of age in the past decade; and the Jordan Turrill-Wynocki Trio, with its fresh, lively New England take on Irish traditional music.

From now until November 30, “early bird” full festival passes will be on sale at $55, or $45 for members of Passim.

Reservations, updates and other details about the festival are available at passim.org/bcmfest.

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The immigrant experience is the true great American story

BY STEVEN M. ROTHESTEIN SPECIAL TO THE REPORTER

As one of my first official duties as executive director of the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation, I had the honor of welcoming 208 individuals from countries as diverse as Albania to Zimbabwe to the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Boston’s Dorchester neighborhood as they pledged their oath of allegiance and became naturalized citizens of the United States of America.

These men and women came from a multitude of countries for a multitude of reasons. They came to escape war and civil conflict. They came to be free of political, racial, or religious persecution. They came to seek economic opportunity, or to reunite with family. It was an extraordinary privilege to bear witness to their first of many acts of citizenship.

The guest speaker at the ceremony was Sayon Soum, a Lowell resident who was kidnapped at age six by the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia and forced to become a child soldier. He endured years of cruelty and servitude before he ended up in an orphanage in a refugee camp, where his hardship continued. When he was 15, he was adopted by a Connecticut family, and he came to the United States to start a new life.

Sayon’s journey from child soldier to American citizen is a powerful example of the difficulties faced by many who immigrate to the United States. His story and the stories of the 208 new US citizens are compelling in their own right. But theirs are also new chapters in our singular American story, and their greatest pages may still be unwritten. Amid a national debate about immigration and the contributions of immigrants, let us remember John F. Kennedy’s example, a story told through documents, historic interviews and exhibitions at the JFK Library and Museum.

Our 35th president, he was the grandson of Irish immigrants who came to the United States seeking relief from the Irish famine. In the US, those grandparents first worked as cooperers, clerks, and tavern owners. As they built their new lives, like so many other immigrants from so many other places, they embraced the responsibilities of American citizenship along with its privileges. They became public servants. Within two generations, this family of Irish immigrants, once common targets of discrimination, would include the first Catholic president.

John F. Kennedy’s own public service legacy is informed by his family’s immigrant experience. Many of the groundbreaking programs he championed, such as the Peace Corps and the Alliance for Progress, reflected his sense that the greatest measure of American peace and prosperity would come from engagement with the world and a genuine effort to understand its many cultures and traditions.

In subsequent generations, the Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys have gone on to serve in public roles at all levels and sectors of society. They have made, and continue to make, important contributions as elected officials, diplomats, non-profit leaders. In particular, they have endeavored in countless ways to give voice to the voiceless. Their collective service is an expression of civic duty with deep roots in the immigrant experience.

The example of the Kennedy family is a remarkable American immigrant story. But while better known than most, it is not unique. The contributions of immigrants to American excellence, whether in public service or business, arts or sciences, are too numerous to count. In “A Nation of Immigrants,” Kennedy understood that, like his own grandparents, “Every ethnic minority, in seeking its own freedom, helped strengthen the fabric of American life... Similarly, every aspect of the American economy has profited from the contributions of immigrants.”

Today, our tradition of welcoming new citizens remains not only an act of humanity and principle, but also an act of self-interest. As we welcome these 208 new fellow US citizens, we look forward to the contributions that they, and their children and grandchildren, will make to American life. And just as we celebrate the story of one immigrant family at the JFK Library and Museum, we look forward to the possibility that the child or grandchild of one of these new citizens might one day have his or her own presidential library, adding a new chapter to this great American story.
BIR Calendar: Music and dance
November 2016

Fiddle Hell Massachusetts highlights Greater Boston Irish/Celtic-related events this month. The annual gathering of fiddlers from near and far to meet, learn, and jam takes place the weekend of November 4 & 5 at the Westford Regency Hotel, Westford, with an assortment of workshops and sessions for various kinds of fiddle styles, including Irish, Scottish and Breton; guitarists, mandolinists, accordians and other instrumentalis have activities that suit to their liking. The main event will be the Saturday night concert (Nov. 5) with more than 20 different traditional fiddlers, followed by a contra dance. Among the musicians who will be teaching, leading sessions and performing are: Mark Simos, Andrea Beaton, Ellery Klein, Laurel Martin, Lisa Schneckenberg, Pete Sutherland, Jena Moynihan, Frank Ferrel, Becky Tracy, Ed Pearlman, Mariel Vandersteel and Skip Gorman.

For full details, go to reinerfamilyband.com/introduction.

Also on tap: The Barren Backroom series will welcome Canadiaan Maritimes sensation The Dardanelles, with singer Matthew Byrne on Nov. 2. Formed in 2009, the band includes some of Newfoundland’s best young traditional music performers. Byrne’s new album, England, with his solo recordings and appearances at “St. Patrick’s Day Celtic Sojourn” and Mystic Seafront Music Festival. Tom Power, Rich Klass, Aaron Cells and Emilia Bartolins.

In addition to releasing their album “The Eternal Normal” played at major festivals around Canada, such as Winnipeg, Vancouver, and Mariposa, and also did some tours in the US, UK, and Australia, bringing their native music too a wider audience.

A split bill on Nov. 10 will spotlight several local musicians. Fiddler Galen Fraser will celebrate the release of his solo album “Mischief Music” featuring original music with Scottish and other Celtic and traditional influences. Fraser, a Berkleage College of Music alumnus who has held residencies at The Hurren and elsewhere in Greater Boston, will be sponsored by the album’s guests, including Natalie Haas, Conor Hearn, Neil Pearlman, Eamon Sofo and Jena Moynihan, in addition to performing as part of Fraser’s show, the event will open with the MacFie Champion... This fiddle-harp duo makes contemporary music rooted in Scottish and Appalachian traditions.

On Nov. 17, The Burren Backroom will be the venue for the Berkleage College Annual Benefit for Somerville Homeless Coalition, featuring local performers from a variety of genres, including Irish/Celtic. All proceeds will aid the Somerville Homeless Coalition in providing homeless and salarioy individuals and families with individualized supportive housing solutions, with a goal of obtaining and maintaining affordable housing.

The tickets and information on Bern Backroom events, go to burrenbackroomseries.html.

On Nov. 22, Boston-area native Eric McDon- ald will team with Ryan Mcneilly for a concert at Club Passim in Harvard Square. McDonald (guitar, mandolin, vocals) has been active in the New England traditional music scene, playing with performers such as Katie McNally, Will Woodson and Andreas Beaton and as a member of the 5-piece band Cantick. Mcnally’s National Award-winning Celtic Fiddle Champion, has been involved in a number of collaborations, including with local fiddler Hannah Casseal and a Celtic-baroque fusion

The Dardanelles, featuring singer Matthew Byrne, are at The Barren Back- room on November 2.

Ann Kerrane will be in concert with Gabriel Donoghue at the Cultural Centre in Canton on Sunday, November 13.

The Irish Cultural Centre of New England’s annual concert, Ann Kerrane and Gabriel Donoghue, will take place on Nov. 7 at 7:30 p.m. Kerrane, a native, is from a family of traditional musicians and an All-Ireland champion on concertina, following in the footsteps of her father, Chris Dronkey – but has become known better as a singer. She recently released her second album, “Behind Yon Mountain.” Galway-born Donoghue, who lives in Philadelphia, is a multi-instrumentalist and singer songwriter who has toured or recorded with many prominent Irish/Celtic performers, including The Chieftains, Elders and James Keane. He also is a top-flight album producer and engineer. For tickets, call 781-821-8282. For information, go to IrishCulturalcentre.com.

Dublin native Fiona Ruaadh, a student at Berkleage College of Music, will present her unique arrangement of traditional music on November 9 at 4 p.m. in Berkleage’s Common Room (1140 Boylston Street). Ruaadh plays bass guitar, and has collaborated in jazz and traditional music. Admission is free.

The St. Patrick’s Day Celtic Sojourn in Hartford, Connecticut, is a family-friendly event that features traditional music and dance. Admission is free.

For information, see franklinhouseconcerts.org.

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Annual Reunion Banquet Saturday, November 5, 2016

Join the Donegal Association for an evening of fun, food and entertainment with a sit down dinner at Florian Hall, Hallet Street, Dorchester, MA

Special Honors to John McDEVITT
Entertainment by Erin’s Melody

County Donegal Association of Greater Boston

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Fiddle Hell Massachusetts highlights Greater Boston Irish/Celtic-related events this month. The annual gathering of fiddlers from near and far to meet, learn, and jam takes place the weekend of November 4 & 5 at the Westford Regency Hotel, Westford, with an assortment of workshops and sessions for various kinds of fiddle styles, including Irish, Scottish and Breton; guitarists, mandolinists, accordions and other instrumentalists. Find activities that suit to their liking. The main event will be the Saturday night concert (Nov. 5) with more than 20 different traditional fiddlers, followed by a contra dance. Among the musicians who will be teaching, leading sessions and performing are: Mark Simos, Andrea Beaton, Ellery Klein, Laurel Martin, Lisa Schneckenberg, Pete Sutherland, Jena Moynihan, Frank Ferrel, Becky Tracy, Ed Pearlman, Mariel Vandersteel and Skip Gorman.

For full details, go to reinerfamilyband.com/introduction.

Also on tap: The Barren Backroom series will welcome Canadian Maritimes sensation The Dardanelles, with singer Matthew Byrne on Nov. 2. Formed in 2009, the band includes some of Newfoundland’s best young traditional music performers. Byrne’s new album, England, with his solo recordings and appearances at “St. Patrick’s Day Celtic Sojourn” and Mystic Seaport Music Festival. Tom Power, Rich Klass, Aaron Cells and Emilia Bartolins.

In addition to releasing their album “The Eternal Normal” played at major festivals around Canada, such as Winnipeg, Vancouver, and Mariposa, and also did some tours in the US, UK, and Australia, bringing their native music too a wider audience.

A split bill on Nov. 10 will spotlight several local musicians. Fiddler Galen Fraser will celebrate the release of his solo album “Mischief Music” featuring original music with Scottish and other Celtic and traditional influences. Fraser, a Berkleage College of Music alumnus who has held residencies at The Hurren and elsewhere in Greater Boston, will be sponsored by the album’s guests, including Natalie Haas, Conor Hearn, Neil Pearlman, Eamon Sofo and Jena Moynihan, in addition to performing as part of Fraser’s show, the event will open with the MacFie Champion... This fiddle-harp duo makes contemporary music rooted in Scottish and Appalachian traditions.

On Nov. 17, The Burren Backroom will be the venue for the Berkleage College Annual Benefit for Somerville Homeless Coalition, featuring local performers from a variety of genres, including Irish/Celtic. All proceeds will aid the Somerville Homeless Coalition in providing homeless and salarioy individuals and families with individualized supportive housing solutions, with a goal of obtaining and maintaining affordable housing.

The tickets and information on Bern Backroom events, go to burrenbackroomseries.html.

On Nov. 22, Boston-area native Eric McDon- ald will team with Ryan Mcneilly for a concert at Club Passim in Harvard Square. McDonald (guitar, mandolin, vocals) has been active in the New England traditional music scene, playing with performers such as Katie McNally, Will Woodson and Andreas Beaton and as a member of the 5-piece band Cantick. Mcnally’s National Award-winning Celtic Fiddle Champion, has been involved in a number of collaborations, including with local fiddler Hannah Casseal and a Celtic-baroque fusion

The Dardanelles, featuring singer Matthew Byrne, are at The Barren Back- room on November 2.

Ann Kerrane will be in concert with Gabriel Donoghue at the Cultural Centre in Canton on Sunday, November 13.

The Irish Cultural Centre of New England’s annual concert, Ann Kerrane and Gabriel Donoghue, will take place on Nov. 7 at 7:30 p.m. Kerrane, a native, is from a family of traditional musicians and an All-Ireland champion on concertina, following in the footsteps of her father, Chris Dronkey – but has become known better as a singer. She recently released her second album, “Behind Yon Mountain.” Galway-born Donoghue, who lives in Philadelphia, is a multi-instrumentalist and singer songwriter who has toured or recorded with many prominent Irish/Celtic performers, including The Chieftains, Elders and James Keane. He also is a top-flight album producer and engineer. For tickets, call 781-821-8282. For information, go to IrishCulturalcentre.com.

Dublin native Fiona Ruaadh, a student at Berkleage College of Music, will present her unique arrangement of traditional music on November 9 at 4 p.m. in Berkleage’s Common Room (1140 Boylston Street). Ruaadh plays bass guitar, and has collaborated in jazz and traditional music. Admission is free.

The St. Patrick’s Day Celtic Sojourn in Hartford, Connecticut, is a family-friendly event that features traditional music and dance. Admission is free.

For information, see franklinhouseconcerts.org.

SEAN SMITH

boston.com
**bostonirish.com**

**CD Reviews**

**New Road, “Stone Walls & Street Lights”**

There are a couple of antecedents to New Road’s “Stone Walls & Street Lights.” One is from uilleann piper Leonard Barry’s 2014 recording, “The New Road,” which marked his return to playing after a long absence. The other is “The Unwanted,” an album of Atlantic Fringe music (Ireland, Appalachia and adjacent places) by the trio of Californian Rick Epping, Seamie O’Donagh and Cathy Jordan — all of whom appeared on “The New Road.” So, here comes Epping’s harmonica, concertina, banjo, jaw harp, O’Donagh (guitar, fiddle, mandolin) and fiddler Andy Morris — who also played on “The New Road.” And Notes as the band New Road for this fascinating cross-stitching of Irish traditional and Appalachian folk in their music.

While Irish-American ventures about these days (We Banjo 3’s Gráda, Derbhí’s “Widening Gyms” albums, to name a few), New Road works particularly well. Instead of self-consciously grafting together elements of Irish-American music, they’ve thrived on one another, creating a more consistent blend. In their version of “The Galway Shawl,” for instance, they take the song down to the southern Appalachians, escorted by O’Donagh’s slide guitar and Epping’s concertina and harmonica, creating a front porch hymnology — yet O’Donagh’s vocal keeps it linked to its Irish ancestry. There follows immediately a brilliant trio of Irish reels with Epping switching to jaw harp and thus maintain an Americana feel (mention should be made of the contribution of Johnny English McDonagh — who provided the original inspiration for “Galway Shawl” when he, Epping and O’Donagh were part of Arcady — and guitarist Shane McGowan, not to be confused with the Pogues vocalist).

Epping is playing a long-necked center-piece of the band, supplying rhythm, melody, or a good, bluesy improv. It’s the latter he does in a duet with O’Donagh’s guitar to lead into a simply marvelous medley of hop jigs (“Tommy Potts/Rocky Road to Dublin/John Kelly’s”), before joining up with Barry’s pipes and Mor- rison’s fiddle to grand effect. The harmonica — along with the five-string banjo — also provides a bridge in the opening track from a rare version of “Road to Lisdinvarna” to “Keep the Old Ark Rollicking” (an American tune that he reconstructed with the aid of the classic hornpipe “Boys of Blue Hill” — got that?), then segue into “The Blackbird,” a tune with many versions in both Irish and American traditions.

So much else to commend the album: a Waltz and jig combo (“McCaig’s/The Orphan”) that easily could’ve been an on the “Bell's Inn Wheels” soundtrack, a trio of infectious Shlaib Lunche slidas; and Epping’s salty but sure vocals (a striking but winning contrast with O’Donagh’s on “Saturday Night My Wife Died” and the concluding track “Down in the Home Town” — with a guest appearance by Jordan — on which the song morphs into Irish reel and ends with the “shave and a haircut” fanfare. A new road, certainly, but not an unfamiliar one, either. And that’s its charm. (newroadmusic.com)

**Micheál Ó HAllmhurain, “Túile Águas Tr ás—The Flowing Tide”**

A three-time All-Ireland Flute champion on flute — but also versed in tin whistle and uilleann pipes — Dublin native O’Hallmhurain has been a mainstay on the teaching and organizational front of Irish music, including through involvement with Conhallas Ceoltoirí Éireann and as creator of the Crainnain summer music school on the island of Inis O’ir, where he lives. He’s also had plenty of performance experience, though, such as with Ceoltoiri Laighin — a seminal 1970s band whose other members variously included Padraig Gleeson, Mary Bergin, and John and James Kelly — the Irish Harp Orchestra and a group you may have heard of named The Chieftains. This 14-track album is a highlight film of sorts, the fruit of O’Hallmhurain’s many years of associations with masters like Seamus Ennis, Joe Ryan, and his fellow Ceoltóir Laighin members and of his own historical research. “Túile Águas Trás” includes a couple of O’Caroláin pieces, “Murtacht Mac Canna” and “Larry Maxwell,” and the 18th-century air “Eithbhní Gheal Chúin,” collected by the eminent Armagh musician and scholar Edward Bunting. And then there are loads of reels and jigs, from the familiar (“Mug of Brown Ale,” “The Primrose,” “The Ivory Leaf”) to the obscure (“Shane’s Dancing” “Geitir Cumann’s Reel,” “Boys of the Hilltop”), as well as a pair of o’derivies (“Cockey’s Never Alexander’s”), and medleys of slip jigs, slides and polkas. O’Hallmhurain’s flute-playing harks back to a somewhat earlier style — a touch gentler, perhaps, and rhythmically without being percussive — but you don’t have to attuned to such elements to enjoy the album. He’s joined on all tracks by guitarist Steve Conney, whose unconventional approach to accompaniment (often toggling between intensive rhythm and finger-picked melody or harmony) helps give each tune a set distinctive character. The CD’s introduction, written by Gearóid Ó HAllmhurain, cites Igor Stravinsky’s quote that “music is the best means we have of digesting time” clearly, the fire decades or so have been a delightful repast for O’Hallmhurain. ([geal-linn.ie](http://geal-linn.ie))
A groundbreaking digital collection from Boston College Libraries signifies the vibrancy and constancy of traditional Irish music and one of its leading figures: retired Sullivan Family Artist-in-Residence Séamus Connolly, a teacher and scholar at the university for a quarter of a century.

The Séamus Connolly Collection of Irish Music (connollymusiccollection.bc.edu) presents audio recordings of more than 330 tunes and songs by such traditional Irish music performers as Liz Carroll, Kevin Burke, Matt Cranitch, Martin Hayes, Kevin Crawford, Rita Gallagher, Paddy Glackin, Liz Knowles, Charlie Lennon, Túí Cahill, and Tomm Mooney, and Connolly himself. These recordings—many of them previously unreleased—are complemented by music transcriptions, stories and essays.

Project organizers note the collection links three generations of musicians and pays tribute to those in previous generations who kept the tradition alive. The collection also is a testament to the perseverance of its namesake, who for years collected and organized the materials for publication, and to the collaborative effort of several Library departments to bring Connolly’s vision to life—albeit in a different format than he originally planned.

— who retired from the University at the end of 2015 — writes in the introduction to the collection. “The Boston College Libraries and I are delighted to be able to present the Séamus Connolly Collection of Irish Music free of charge via the Internet, for all to enjoy, download, learn, and play.”

In producing and publishing this extraordinary cultural resource as a digital collection, the Boston College Libraries are enabling users worldwide to not only listen and read, but to search, explore, navigate and share,” said Irish Music Librarian Elizabeth Sweeney, a member of the project team.

The collection is a unique window into the life and career of Connolly, a 10-time All-Ireland fiddle champion and the recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellowship as well as a Faculty Award from the BC Arts Council. The recordings and other materials reflect many of the friendships he has cultivated throughout — and even beyond — the Irish music world, and evoke countless stories, anecdotes and musings associated with the music tradition.

The collection also has local and regional dimensions. A tune composed by the late Brendan Torma, a mainstay of Boston’s Irish music scene for many years, is included. Current or former Boston-area musicians like Helen Kisiel, Tara Lynch (daughter of accordionist Jerry Lynch, a member of Ireland’s legendary Kilfenora Ceili Band), Brendan Bulger, Tina Lech, Eamon Flynn and Matt and Shannon Heaton are featured on the tracks, along with New Englanders such as Donal Ó Huibert, David Kaynor, Pete Sutherland and the late Bob McQuillen.

Connolly is quick to credit the many hands, at
Devotion to faith, family, good works fill center of the Judge family universe

By Bill Forry
Editor
BOSTON IRISH REPORTER
November 2016
The Boston Irish Honors 2016
Exemplary Boston Irish Family

Jim and Mary Judge on their wedding day in 1981. Below, time for a hug three decades later. All photos from family albums

Jim Judge will never forget the day he encountered his future father-in-law, Jack Cahill, on the front stairs of a three-decker on Holiday Street in Dorchester. It was early in his courtship of Mary Cahill and it was a Holy Saturday, the day before Easter. Jack carefully balanced his way down the stoop while carrying an aluminum plate bulging with a freshly roasted ham, a holiday meal prepared by his wife, Maura. As was the case every Easter, and on most holidays, it was a home cooked meal with all the fixings and it was en route to the Pine Street Inn.

A few months earlier, Jack had been abruptly “let go” from his job as a steel craftsman at the All Stainless company. He’d worked there for 19-and-a-half years and was just about to be eligible for a pension when he was cut loose. For the first time since he emigrated to America from Cork City in 1954, he was without a job.

“You can imagine, they had nine kids and he was out of work for six months,” recalls Jim Judge, now 60. “And here he was, bringing this meal out of his home and heading for the shelter. It was a simple gesture, but it impacted me, greatly given the turmoil in his own life.”

It was an indication of the character that’s in her DNA,” says Judge, 60, referring to Mary, his wife of 35 years. It was also a character trait that Judge, himself born and raised in St. Peter’s Parish on the side of Meetinghouse Hill, knew well from his own home.

“Jack’s always been the type that my parents are still alive,” Judge told the BIR in a recent interview. “My dad [Jim] was a Boston cop who retired at 65 after 30 years of working nights in Roxbury. My mom [Cathy] was a volunteer librarian at St. Peter’s and a daily presence there. “At my core, I’m just a St. Peter’s fella, and I wouldn’t trade it for anything.”

Since their marriage in 1981, Jim and Mary Judge have raised a family of four — Courtney, James, Sean, and Jack. More recently, they have welcomed five grandchildren to the fold. They now live in Hanover, but are fixtures in Boston’s neighborhoods to this day, giving back with the same quiet, purposeful resolve that Judge had in Jack Cahilly’s face on a Dorchester porch back in the early 1970s.

The Judges have thrived in more public ways in recent years. Last April, in a promotion that made headlines across the country, Jim was named the new president and CEO of Eversource Energy, the utility company that serves more than 3.6 million customers across New England. Judge, who had served as the company’s chief financial officer since 1995, succeeded Tom May, 68, who had led the company for more than two decades.

Just months into his role as CEO, Judge’s path from St. Peter’s Grammar School to his current perch atop the Pru still seems like a stretch, even to the couple themselves.

“I’ve said to him so many times, Jimmy and I never had a dream when we started out,” recalls Mary. “It was simply to have a good life, a good marriage, and a good family. We just dug in and worked hard every day. When he was named CFO at 37, I remember we were both really stunned. It was a leap of faith on Tom May’s part. But it was really about work ethic. And no one has worked harder than Jimmy has.”

There’s no question where he learned it.

“My parents were born here in Roxbury, but were of very strong Irish descent and very proud of it,” explains Jim. “My father’s parents were from Lahadarte, at the foot of a mountain in County Mayo. My mother’s roots were Bantry Bay, Cork. She is a McCarthy and she was always quick to tell anyone that the McCarthy’s were the kings of Ireland.”

His dad played the accordion and his mum had a “very good singing voice.” They performed what Jim remembers as a “kitchen racket” — a kind of in-home seission that fueled the party at any occasion.

“There were lots of Irish songs every Christmas and really on any holiday, or any wedding or wake, they were the cornerstone. I loved it and so did my extended family,” said Jim, who remembers not only at his dad’s long career as a policeman, but at his mother’s work as a librarian and the generation that preceded her as new arrivals to Boston.

“My mother has fond memories of her grand aunts. They came here and they played the traditional roles of domestic, working for wealthy families. So many of our roots come from that generation that did what it took to succeed. I’m proud of those roots.”

For families like the Judges and the Cahills, life in 1960s and 70s Dorchester extended beyond the parlors and porches of tightly-packed three-decker battlehips and into Ronan Hall, the school gym at the park. There, the ball fields of the hilltop park that was also named for the founding pastor at St. Peter’s.

“Ninety-five percent of our life was St. Peter’s church,” recalled Mary, who is the eldest girl in a family that included her older brothers Jim and Shaw, followed by Donal, Gerry, Peggy, Noreen, Kathleen, and Patrick.

“All of us when to parochial school. We left the house at 7:45 and were back home for lunch. My parents were very involved — dad was a collector and was very involved with St. Vincent de Paul Society. And, every St. Patrick’s Day, we all walked out with an Irish bread to bring to each of the nun’s.”

Jim and Mary have known each other since their sandbox days. “He likes to tell people he met me in diapers,” laughs Mary. “It’s almost certainly true. “He’s been my brother’s best friend since kindergarten.”

Mary’s oldest brother, Jim Cahill, met Jim Judge at 6 and the two, along with a crew of six other neighborhood kids, became best buddies for life. When they worked in a cleaning crew, they played CYO baseball and BNBL hoops in Ronan Park. The park was their refuge well past adulthood and even after many of them moved from the neighborhood.

Jim hit the lottery because of his parents,” recalls Jim Cahill. “His father was a Boston Police officer and gave him a lot of guidance. None of our friends had dads in BPD or in the police and some of them came from dysfunctional homes. But Jim and I were lucky enough. We came from strict, immigrant households and our parents led by example.”

“Jim’s dad wasn’t a typical cop. He was calm, nice, a straight guy. He wasn’t an hypey guy to Jim and his sister Cathy. He worked hard. So Jim was very disciplined in academics and was always working, too — with paper routes and paper deliverer jobs with city, you name it.”

Jim cut his own trail away from Meetinghouse Hill in high school — trekking out daily to the wilds of West Roxbury to attend Catholic Memorial.
“Jim didn’t go there as part of a crowd, he was the only one from our group in St. Peter’s,” said Cahill. “But he had a strong commitment to what was bred in him in those eight years with the nuns in St Peter’s. And the Christian Brothers continued that.”

Cahill was delighted when his best friend and his older sister became engaged. “I wasn’t surprised,” he said. “I think any time your best friend is marrying your sister, we were all very happy about that. And they were both St Peter’s people.”

The couple’s most direct connection to Ireland is through Mary’s family. Her mom Maura, the oldest of seven Scanlan children, met her father Jack on a train to Cork City from Dublin, where they both attended an All-Ireland hurling match. “He said to her: ‘I’d like to see you tomorrow night, but first I’m doing a novena,’” says Mary.

They were married in Cork in 1954 and that fall they made “the leap” across the pond. “It was a fluke, really,” said Mary. “My mother’s younger brother – my uncle Liam – was a delayed vocation and went into the priesthood and he offered the visa to my parents and they said ‘yes.’”

They were sponsored locally by one of her mother’s uncles, James Courtney, who had emigrated to Boston in the 1930s. Maura, who had two years of business school education, a rarity for a woman at the time, took a job at Jordan Marsh. Jack, who left a sure-fire job offer in Cork, struggled to find employment in Massachusetts, but eventually landed in the stainless steel factory.

Even as they began to raise their young family in Somerville, Cambridge, and, later, Dorchester, Ireland still beckoned. They nearly moved back to Cork in the early 1960s, but they were reluctant since their young children were not Irish citizens.

“My mother was very homesick,” said Mary, who noted that Maura and Jack were the only members of their immediate families to leave Ireland. “They both left big extended families. I have 104 first cousins in Ireland.”

The Cahill connection has become the Judge family’s most enduring link with the Old Sod. Her mom’s father, Sean Scanlan, was one of the Fenians who rose in rebellion against the crown in 1916 and read Padraig Pearse’s Proclamation of the Irish Republic aloud in Cork City.

“It was always so much a part of who we were, but especially in the last eight years, we’ve learned so much from my mom,” said Mary, who spent the summer in Cork with her parents in 1969 and still visits regularly, often on large family trips. “We go back and forth a lot. But I think from the historical side I’m much more invested in it. I cannot believe the suffering and the lives these people had.”

Recently, the Judge and Cahill family made a donation to build a practice facility for St. Finbarr’s National Hurling and Football Club in Cork City. It’s the team that Mary’s father, himself a top level GAA player, played for before leaving home.

Jim observes: “We go every couple of years with our extended family – over 30 of us go over. And it’s exposed me to the Irish culture I wouldn’t have seen otherwise.”

The Cahill clan moved their camp to Milton in 1973 “very reluctantly,” and Jim and Mary were married in 1981 in her new parish, St. Gregory’s in Lower Mills. They had started dating around age 19, after Mary graduated from Monsignor Ryan Memorial and took a job at Boston Edison. Jim would soon make his way to the Edison, too, after completing his studies at Babson College.

“Jimmy was the first in his family to go to college among his cousins,” recalls Mary. “That work ethic was the same with his schoolwork. He studied the longest, he was the last one at the library.”

“The other night we were at a wedding and a woman said to me, ‘I met your husband 30 years ago and I told my husband, I think I just met the next CEO of Boston Edison. He was so smart and so great with people.’”

Judge says his experience at the Eversource helm so far has been like an extended “honeymoon” period.

“Tom May did a wonderful job in terms of passing the baton. The company just finished our best year ever in terms of reliability,” he said. “I’ve got 8,000 dedicated employees that I continue to be blessed with and they really do try to do the very best they can every day.”

Judge’s focus is on continuing to position Eversource, already ranked number one in its industry for clean energy efficiency, to rely less on fossil based fuels.

In 2014, two generations of Cahills and Judges smiled for the camera at St. Finbarr’s Club in Cork City at the dedication of a pitch wall (rear) in memory of Mary’s father Jack, a top-flight GAA athlete in his day.
Judge family practices devotion to values

“It can’t happen overnight. We still need bridge fuels. But our companies are taking the lead in making that shift in the paradigm.”

Boston Globe CEO Mike Sheehan, a friend and admirer who was an honoree at the Boston Irish Honors last year, says judge “rose to the top the old-fashioned way – he earned it.”

“There is no bluster to Jim. And why should there be? He knows what he’s doing, and he leads by example. Clearly, actions speak louder than words with Jim,” said Sheehan. “Nobody makes it to the top without a lot of hard work and a little luck. Jim knows how lucky he’s been, coming from a strong family and having deep roots in his neighborhood and community. He doesn’t take any of it for granted.”

Staying Grounded

Jim and Mary keep their family rooted in giving back as well. On Easter Sunday and Thanksgiving, with help from donors like SullyMac and Lambert’s Rainbow Fruit, the Judges and the Cahills descend on a home near their old St. Peter’s stomping grounds. The Quincys Street house is headquarters for the Little Sisters of the Poor - Saint Teresa’s order of nuns - where they work a day-long effort to feed local families in need. Over the last 20 years, they have provided relief to hundreds of Dorchester and Roxbury families at no cost— other than a compulsory prayer.

“The runs hold them up and make them say the rosary,” Judge says matter-of-factly. “We’ll be there again next month. Our entire family participates and it’s a wonderful experience.”

Judge has been a key ally for another important cause rooted in the old neighborhood. He serves as a board member of College Bound Dorchester, which focuses on steering kids away from gangs and into two or four year colleges as a means of interrupting generational poverty and violence. The program is particularly active along the Bowdoin Street corridor where Jim and Mary were raised.

“Jim is a quiet and humble champion for Dorchester who put our youth and their future first in all that he did,” said Mark Culliton, who runs the College Bound organization. “He is a Dorchester kid who did well and understands it’s his responsibility to give back. In his years of service he has been responsible for bringing more than half a million in funding to the students of College Bound. Jim and his wife Mary never forgot where they are from and the debt they owe their community. They quietly give and give to create a better future for the next generation of Dorchester kids.”

The Judges carry Dorchester, and the people they met there, wherever they go. “Our closest friends to this day are Jim’s friends from first grade. We’ve had lots of friends along the way but we were never a couple that cared about your checkbook. When we bought our first two-family house on Ashmont Street, we used to say to each other, ‘Who’s luckier than us?” says Mary. “I think we just never lost who we were. We’ve been around people who lost their moral compass. But we were brought up by parents who put faith and family first. And we have.”

“The family is the center of our lives,” agrees Jim. “To have my parents at their age - and Mary’s mom is 91 – we’re just so fortunate. The rapport that they have with that next generation is so special to see. The values that they were able to try and instill in their children—you can see it in the personalities of the future generations. We’re so lucky to have these role models in our lives.”

Mary Casey Forry Foundation

Mary Casey Forry, a spouse, a mom and a grandmother, was founding president of Boston Neighborhood News, Inc., publisher of the Boston Irish Reporter, and lifted writer whose “Urban Gardener” columns delighted scores of readers. She was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in February 2003, and lived with the disease for 22 months.

As the end of her life came near, she and her family found great comfort in the compassionate care provided by hospice. For Mary, hers was a peaceful death. For our family, we were privileged to welcome hospice into our own home.

But in-home hospice care may not always be possible – a spouse may be unable to care for a partner, or there may be no family or friends nearby to ensure a death with such dignity. Our family has resolved to establish a facility that can be shared by people in need. It is called a “residential hospice,” an environment where persons can receive end-of-life care with compassionate caregivers able to provide the necessary palliative care.

Our hope is to establish a hospice home in the Dorchester-Mattapan-Milton area, a place where individuals may spend their final days “close to home.” For our neighbors, it will be a place for a loved one to die with dignity. For more details, or to offer support, please visit marycaseyforry.org

- Maureen Forry-Sorrell, President

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For Paul G. Kirk Jr., Democrat, it’s ‘all about the work, not the credit’

THE PARTY MAN

By Martin F. Nolan

His middle name is Cran, after Henry Crangan, the Dublin orator who fought for Irish parliamentary freedom. Charles James Fox, the British leader, called him “the Irish Demothenes.”

Paul G. Kirk Jr., a political leader and for 40 years confidant of the Kennedy clan, has seldom heard praise for his speechifying. As a captain in the US Army Reserve, he was known as a tough, fair officer. In his career as a political organizer and Senate aide, he was known for something unusual in Washington: silence.

“He’s an amazing listener,” according to Caroline Kennedy, US Ambassador to Japan. “It’s all about the work for him, not the credit.” That rare trait was cherished by his uncle, Edward M. Kennedy, who recruited the dark-haired young Bostonian after Kirk worked in Robert F. Kennedy’s presidential campaign of 1968.

“I’ll give it two years,” Kirk told Kennedy several times. The temporary assignment multiplied into decades as the senator came to depend on Kirk. In “True Compass,” Kennedy’s memoir, Kirk and his wife Gail make frequent appearances: at Harvard football games (Paul played on the varsity in the 1950s); at Thanksgiving and other family dinners in Hyannis Port; and sailing on Nantucket Sound.

The senator may also have been a matchmaker. Paul and Gail met when they were working in Kennedy’s Senate office. In the 1960s, senators often banned intra-office dating, but as Kennedy told me, “That’s a stuffy, old-fashioned custom. Gail and Paul are made for each other! You know that! What’s the Latin phrase?” “Amor vincit omnia? “Yes,” Kennedy roared. “Love conquers all!”

Now 78, the Newton-born Kirk and Gail live on Cape Cod in Marston Mills.

The senator’s dependence on Kirk grew. Kennedy asked him to be his personal lawyer, representing him in divorce proceedings. After Kennedy’s death in 2009, Kirk was master of ceremonies at the televised funeral. Kirk also carried out the provisions of his friend’s last will and testament.

It seemed almost inevitable that when Gov. Deval Patrick was seeking to name someone to a short stay in Kennedy’s Senate seat, he considered many worthy names, but Massachusetts ended up with US Sen. Paul G. Kirk.

As a young Kennedy aide, Kirk “was lucky enough” to make the acquaintance of Larry O’Brien of Springfield, a close adviser to President Kennedy, Postmaster General under President Johnson, and loyal son of the Mattoon Street neighborhood of Springfield, where he learned politics at the ward-and-precinct level.

O’Brien, who later became commissioner of the National Basketball Association, knew what a “ground game” relies upon. “Political organization is not complicated,” O’Brien would say, “but it is hard work, and not many people care to perform it 10 or 12 hours a day.”

Kirk listened in 1985 when friends urged him to seek the chairmanship of the Democratic National Committee. The party was still recovering from nominee Walter Mondale’s 49-state loss to President Reagan’s re-election effort. Even Massachusetts went the Gipper’s way; the Republican incumbent won 51 percent of the Bay State’s vote.

Running for national chairman is seldom easy. Among the half-dozen contenders, Kirk faced formidable opponents from the South and West. Former North Carolina governor Terry Sanford was supported by other Southern governors. California State Chairman Nancy Pelosi had been endorsed by New York’s governor, Mario Cuomo, and its senior senator, Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

The Massachusetts candidate had the support of the most reliable voting bloc in the Kennedy era’s success in American politics: labor union members. With their help, Kirk won the chairmanship.

In 1987, Nancy Pelosi was elected to Congress and went on to become the first female Speaker of the US House of Representatives. In her storied and formidable career, the only time she lost an election was to Paul Kirk.

As DNC chairman, he supervised get-out-the-vote efforts in the 1986 congressional elections when Democrats made a modest comeback, winning five House seats and eight in the Senate.

Kirk then became involved in shaping the future of American presidential politics. He listened in 1987 when a newly formed nonprofit group, the Commission on Presidential Debates, asked him and the chairman of the Republican National Committee, Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr, to serve together. Since 1976, presidential debates had lacked the two parties’ official endorsements and had been targets of candidate manipulation. Fahrenkopf, a Nevadan, was an ardent Reagan Republican but he and Kirk agreed to share the chairmanship. They became friends and remained so after Kirk left the commission in 2009.

Kirk did not run for re-election at the DNC, returning home to Boston. He was a longtime member of the Democratic National Committee and has been its chair since 1997.

All photos courtesy of the Kirk family.
of the law firm of Sullivan & Worcester and became involved in civic causes, including chairmanship of the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation. He also served as a director of several companies, including ITT, Bradley Real Estate, and the Hartford Financial Services Group.

Today, Kirk serves as chairman, CEO, president, and treasurer of Kirk & Associates Inc. He is of counsel to the law firm Sullivan & Worcester, where he was a partner from 1977 to 1989.

A loyal alumnus of Harvard College and Harvard Law School, he has often returned to the playing fields of Cambridge. He is past chairman of the Harvard Board of Overseers nominating committee and is the chairman of the Harvard Overseers Committee to Visit the Department of Athletics. He has been a trustee of St. Sebastian’s School and at Stonehill College, which awarded him an honorary degree.

In 1999, his interest in football attracted Boston civic leaders who were alarmed at the prospect of the New England Patriots moving to a new home in Connecticut. Hartford was offering the NFL franchise a new stadium on the banks of the Connecticut River.

Even though some NFL owners disliked the idea of swapping the Boston television market, the nation's sixth largest, for the smaller Hartford market, the clock was ticking down in Foxborough.

Luck and an Irish connection

Clockwise from top left: Paul and Gail Kirk in 2002; Paul and his mother in 1981; Paul and his siblings, Christmastime 1998; Col. Paul G. Kirk, Sr., home on leave from World War II service, his wife, Josephine (O’Connell), and children in 1943. Paul is next to his mother.
The debates: ‘They reveal much about both candidates’

By Peter F. Stevens
BIR STAFF

As the former head of the DNC and co-founder with Republican Frank Fahrenkopf of the Commission on Presidential Debates in 1987, Paul G. Kirk, Jr., is uniquely qualified to assess the role they have played in every presidential campaign since then.

In the overheated battle between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, numerous pundits and media have pontificated on whether the Commission is genuinely nonpartisan, as intended. Kirk relates: “After the 1984 election, think tanks, policy groups, and many sources examined the funding of presidential campaigns, the conventions, and all other aspects of the race. Both Democrats and Republicans agreed that debates were essential to voter education, that it was crucial to give voters a face-to-face, unscripted look at the candidates. The major party chairs came to a consensus on this, and Frank, I, and our teams created the groundwork for three presidential debates and one for the vice-presidential candidates.”

Addressing the issue of nonpartisanship, Kirk says, “To start with, the Commission has to be nonpartisan to retain its nonprofit status. I would argue that the conduct of the Commission has remained nonpartisan.”

He adds that the rise of social media has in some ways changed the nature of the debates: “Mike McCurry [Democrat] and Frank Fahrenkopf have had to adjust to an audience that gets much of their information from social media. Live-streaming, Google, Apple, Twitter, Facebook, and so on are now a big part of the political process and progress. They give the debates an even broader impact.”

Discussing the viability of the debates, Kirk notes, “The Commission, I believe, did and continues to do its job. The purpose of the debates – 90 minutes each – allows for more in-depth questioning of the candidates. Whether people like it or not, the public needs to know as much as possible about the presidential candidates, good or bad. The fact is that the debates do reveal much about the major candidates. They let the voters view the contenders and allows the voters to make their own judgments.”

Kirk offered his view on the often-controversial issue of third-party candidates. “Since its inception, the Commission has relied on candidates’ eligibility on enough state ballots that they could get to 270 electoral votes. Also, the threshold of polls that expect a viable candidate to reach 15 percent of those polled allowed Ross Perot to participate in the 1992 debates. The framework for third-party candidates and others have always upheld the approach. In any presidential election, some 200 or so people file as candidates.”

In regard to the 2016 race, Kirk said, “I believe that the debates have worked to reveal much about both candidates.”

WHAT’S IN A NAME?

By Peter F. Stevens
BIR STAFF

For Paul G. Kirk, the “G” stands for “Grattan”—one of the greatest Anglo-Irish statesmen of the 18th and early 19th centuries. Born in Dublin on July 3, 1745, the son of a Dublin lawyer and member of Parliament, Henry Grattan was part of a prominent family in Ireland’s ruling Protestant class. Grattan followed his father’s path into law and politics and joined Henry Flood’s Irish nationalist movement in the 1770s.

Grattan first served in the Irish Parliament in 1775 and quickly became the oratorical titan of the nationalists. In 1778, he stood in the vanguard of the Irish Volunteers, a militia created to preserve order in Ireland as British regiments were shipped to fight in the American Revolution. Many dubbed the militia “Grattan’s Volunteers.”

Grattan often sympathized with the American colonists’ cause, Grattan and other nationalists used the Volunteers as political leverage against the British Prime Minister, Lord North, which won concessions for Ireland. Grattan compelled North to free up restrictions on Irish trade in 1779. The following year, Grattan demanded that North’s government repeal Poyning’s Law, which required British Parliamentary approval of any bill enacted by the Irish Parliament. Grattan’s brilliant speeches and the presence of the Volunteers intervened, as the New York Times explained on April 21, 1999: “Blame it on Dan Rooney, the Pittsburgh Steelers’ owner. Last December, Rooney and Paul G. Kirk Jr., the former chairman of the Democratic National Committee, were at a reception honoring the Irish winners of the 1998 Nobel Peace Prize. They spoke about ‘what a tragedy it would be if the Patriots left the area,’’ Rooney said. ‘‘I said it didn’t look like anybody was doing anything,’’ he added, ‘‘and Paul said it looked like a foregone conclusion that they’re gone. I said, ‘They still have to take it to the league.’ Paul took it from there.’’

Kirk’s Irish roots are in County Cavan and County Louth. On the Kirk side, his grandfather left Ireland at age 14 to seek his fortune in America. One of his sons, Paul G. Kirk Sr., became an associate justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Court. On his mother’s side, today’s honoree was an O’Connell, a family that settled in Lowell in the 1850s. One of its sons was Cardinal William Henry O’Connell, who presided over the archdiocese of Boston from 1907 to 1944.

After the death of Henry Grattan in 1820, the British writer Sydney Smith said, “No government ever disdained him. The world could not brie him. He thought only of Ireland.”

The Grattans, the Kirks, and the O’Connells could salute today’s Boston Irish Honoree in a bipartisan fashion. President saying from Ronald Reagan of the Tipperary Reagans: “There is no limit to what a man can do when he does not mind who gets the credit.”

Martin F. Nolan was a reporter, editor, columnist, and editorial page editor at the Boston Globe during a 40-year career at the newspaper.

1979: Paul Kirk Sr., and brother Eddie in Co. Louth looking for directions to the boyhood home of John Lennon Kirk in Emlagh Townland.
Joe, Patsy, Betty, and Kevin Leary learned their lessons of faith and charity at home

By Jack Thomas

The story of the Leary family of Boston is rooted in an event so shameful in Boston history that it’s not talked about much, but in the summer of 1834, Protestant thugs burned the Ursuline sisters’ school and convent in Charlestown and drove the nuns out of Boston. Nearly a century later, in 1928, a young Dorchester woman, Mary Nolan, graduated from an Ursuline school, the College of New Rochelle in New York. In 1946, she collaborated with Boston Archbishop Richard J. Cushing and others to induce the Ursulines back to Boston to establish Ursuline Academy on Arlington Street. She helped raise funds, and sent her two daughters to the nurses’ school. Today, the academy prospers on a 28-acre campus in Dedham, offering independent Catholic education to 430 girls in Grades 7 through 12.

Joseph and Mary Leary’s children continue their mother’s mission on behalf of the Ursulines, an order of sisters founded in Brescia, Italy, in 1535, and noted for its commitment to the education of girls.

One afternoon in October 2015, 182 years after the devastation in Charlestown, Mary’s daughter Patsy was at home in Milton with her husband, Stephen A. Dowling, and they were mulling a number of charitable gifts. His success as an investment banker has made them wealthy. While lugging laundry to the cellar, Patsy turned to Steve: “I want to give some money to Ursuline.”

“Okay, how much?”

“I think a million dollars would be nice.”

“If you want to do that, honey, you can. Go ahead.”

Afterwards, Patsy wept in gratitude for his acquiescence and for the opportunity to honor the memory of her mother.

When it was announced in August that the Leary family would be celebrated at the 2016 Boston Irish Honors luncheon, no one asked why. For half a century, the Learys have contributed to peace in Ireland and, philanthropically, many millions of dollars to such causes as Nativity Prep, Boston College, The Irish American Partnership, and Boston Health Care for the Homeless.

In their contributions to the culture of Boston and to its business, educational, and charitable communities, the Learys symbolize the influence of Irish Catholics on American life from the middle of the 20th century.

So, let’s meet the current generation:

• Joseph F. Leary Jr., 83, of Newton, father of two, was an executive at Gillette, then the longtime president of The Irish American Partnership, which encourages education, employment, and economic development in Ireland. He met his wife, Eileen, while she was a nurse at St. Elizabeth’s Hospital, and they married in 1959. She died in 1981.

• Mary Patricia Leary Dowling, 81, of Milton, managed the Admirals Club for American Airlines at Logan Airport. Ursuline Academy will honor her at its annual Brescia Ball at The Langham in Randolph on Saturday, Nov. 5.

• Elizabeth Ann Leary Horrigan, 78, of Avon, CT, mother of three sons, is a nurse, and a hospice caretaker.

• Kevin W. Leary, 75, of the South End, father of four, is founder and owner of VPNE Parking Solutions, a $30 million company that provides valet parking at hospitals and donates 10 percent of its net income to charity. In the past decade, his wife, Mary Kelley, have given more than $3 million to charity. Now coping with illness, Kevin retains a charm, insight, and excellent sense of humor. In telling a story, he loses his way, then apologizes with wit: “Last July, I had a bunch of seizures,” he said, “and I’ve had difficulties with memory. I’m sorry, but I’ve forgotten the story I was just telling, but I can assure you that it was a fantastic story, very funny and very compelling.”

All four Learys have degrees from Boston College, and the men served in the military, Joe in the Army, in the military police, and Kevin in the Navy, aboard a destroyer.

At Kevin’s South End condo, over a lunch of tuna, turkey, and roast beef sandwiches, the anecdotes and funny stories roll forth about the quaint life at Ursuline Academy in the 1950s.

- Because the nuns were cloistered, a policeman had to be summoned to escort the girls across Arlington Street to the Public Garden. “The policemen were happy to do it,” said Patsy.

- Both sisters shudder to recall the uniforms they wore: green bowler, white blouse, green bolero jacket, green jumper, thick, white cotton stockings, and what Betty calls Girl Scout shoes, ugly oxfords.

- “Every day after school,” recalled Patsy, “we’d head across the street to the Ritz-Carlton, and use the ladies room to comb our hair and take off those horrible stockings. Then we’d go to Schrafft’s for ice cream.”

Newlyweds Joseph and Mary Frances (Nolan) Leary

The Leary children: Patsy, Joe, Betty, and Kevin.

And some years later: Kevin, Patsy, Joe Sr., Betty, and Joe Jr.
Betty, “My mother would not have approved of Ritz visits.”

- It was proximity to the Ritz that enabled Betty to shake hands with history. “One day, as I approached, I saw a crowd, and as I got close, I realized it was Winston Churchill arriving, so I slipped into the lobby at the Ritz and bought a cigar, a cheap one, because I did not have much money.

As Churchill walked into the Ritz, I presented him with the cigar, and he thanked me, then looked at the label and probably realized it wasn’t very good. The Secret Service, or whoever, stepped in and gave it back to me. I still have the cigar upstairs, although it’s probably corroded and fallen apart.”

Of the two sisters, Patsy was the saint, and, metaphorically at least, Betty the sinner.

“When I was in ninth grade, I skipped school to go to a movie, and it was stupid, because there were so few girls in my class – 11 at graduation – that any absence was conspicuous. Well, I was suspended, and although my mother did not find it amusing, my father thought it was hilarious that he had to go with me while I apologized to the nuns. Yes, I was a rascal, but do you know what I’m very glad.”

The Learys were more Catholic than Irish, or as Joe put it, extremely Catholic. “The house at 480 Brook Rd. in Milton was dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus,” he recalled. “There was a big picture of the Sacred Heart on the wall, over the RCA floor-model radio – there was no television – and we’d all go into the living room as a family and kneel and say the rosary – my mother, father, the children, and grandmother. And no there was no way around it. Father saw to that.”

At the death of their mother in 1955, another Catholic rite was sung into the memories of her children: “My mother was diagnosed with breast cancer in April,” said Patsy, “and she died on May 31, midday, at home, in her bed.”

For Betty, it was a moment of unique intimacy.

“I remember it vividly,” she said.

She was then 17 and a student in nursing at Boston College. “The family had circled the bed, and I was holding my mother’s hand while the priest was reading a Prayer for the Dying.” … Heaven Father, take away fear in the heart of our loved one who’s about to see You …

“I interrupted and said, ‘I think she’s gone.’ The priest checked and said, ‘Yes, she’s gone,’ and we bowed our heads and continued with the prayer. Now, it may have been my nurse’s training, but I had accepted it would happen, and so, I didn’t think of it as traumatic, and I still don’t. It was a beautiful Catholic experience.”

The wake, however, brought a less than beautiful moment.

Consistent with Irish tradition, Mary was waked from the family home, and as Joe recalled, among those attending were former Boston Mayor James Michael Curley and a monsignor with whom Curley often feuded.

“Curley and his entourage were in the dining room, and when the monsignor entered, the two of them started arguing so loudly – with my mother in the casket in the next room – that 25 people crowded into the dining room to hear Curley.

Fifty years after their childhood, one aspect of Catholic life in the Leary household remains a mystery.

“After Mass, my father would get a glass of water, then bless himself and take a sip,” said Betty. “Three times, he did that, and then he’d fill glasses for the rest of us, but none of us can recall why we did that. I guess he was washing down Communion, but I never heard of anybody else doing it. And my father didn’t even go to Catholic school – he went to Boston University, then Northeastern Law.”

According to catholic.com, “in some cultures, the faithful follow the pious practice of drinking plain water before taking nourishment after Communion. Such acts, while praiseworthy expressions of reverence, are voluntary and are matters of custom, not legislation.”

Litanies of life in the Leary home are a reminder of how rapidly life in America has changed.

Fathers & Sons: Joseph F. Leary, Jr., his son, Joseph F. Leary III, Kevin Leary and his son Kevin. Bill Brett photo

The Boston Irish Honors 2016

FIRES OF HATE

By Peter F. Stevens
BIR Staff

The Aug. 9, 1834, missive’s message radiated menace.

To the Selectmen of Charlstown! Gentlemen – It is currently reported that a mysterious affair has lately happened at the Nunnery [sic] in Charlestown. Now it is your duty, gentlemen, to have this affair investigated immediately; if not the Truckmen of Boston will demolish the Nunery Thursday night – August 14

The “mysterious affair” that the handbill referred to was that of Sister Mary John, a young nun at Charlestown’s Ursuline convent. On July 26, 1834, she had lunched in a daze from the convent, showed up at a nearby home, and had been returned to the convent, where she was calmed by her fellow nuns.

With Boston’s anti-Catholic, anti-Irish fervor simmering from rumors of “Popish plots” and from inflammatory books and articles warning that Irish immigrants, “Papists,” would destroy Anglo-America, many locals imagined something sinister behind Sister Mary John’s “ordained.” Chief among rumors were wild tales of “deviant” behavior and secret, bloody rituals behind the wall of the convent.

Antipathy between local Irish Catholics and Boston Protestants had never run higher, and for the latter, the graceful, three-story brick convent, less than seven years old and perched on a Charlestown slope close to Bunker Hill, symbolized the inroads of the growing Irish community as threatening to many Bostonians. Ironically, many of the girls studying and boarding at the convent’s school. The Irish prominent Protestant families who considered the all-female academy as the best in the region.

By 8 p.m. on August 11, 1834, a mob of Yankee workmen had gathered in front of the convent’s gateway. Anti-Irish, anti-Catholic epithets filled the evening air. The "Truckmen’s" rage against Irish Catholics seeking a new life in Boston and environs had invocatively targeted the convent.

Torches cast an eerie glow outside the gate.

The crowd, up to several hundred strong, was led by twenty-nine-year-old John Buzzell, a New Hampshire-born bricklayer who stood six feet, six inches. At 11:30 p.m. Buzzell and his boys, torches in hand, stormed into the convent. The mother superior and her nuns had evacuated their sobbing students to a “summer house” at the rim of the convent grounds.

Flames erupted from every corner of the convent at 12:30 a.m. Fire bells pealed across the city, and the engine companies – Yankees all – dispatched “water-wagons” and crows to the blazing convent. Once there, they did nothing but watch the blaze. The convent was a charred ruin by sunrise.

Buzzell and eleven other rioters stood trial for the crime. Only one, a youth, was convicted, and he was quickly pardoned. Boston’s outraged Irish heeded Bishop Benedict Fenwick’s appeals not to retaliate. The Boston Gazette acknowledged: “The Irish population have been remarkably orderly and quiet.”

The flames of August 1834 burned not only Charlestown’s Ursuline convent, but also the very soul of Boston’s Irish community. For years, the burning of the convent remained a tangible symbol of the obstacles the Boston Irish would overcome. The Ursulines were not to return to Boston for more than a century.

Image courtesy New England Historical Society.
Home-grown spirit of faith, generosity highlights the Leary family’s way of life

Joe was eight years old that day of infamy, Dec. 7, 1941, when his mother returned home to report that she’d heard on the radio that the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor. “I wondered, where the heck is Pearl Harbor,” Joe recalls, “and so we looked it up.”

He awoke the next day to a shock, an endless line of antiaircraft guns along Route 28 heading from Otis airbase on Cape Cod to Boston Common.

“A terrible presence overcame us. We didn’t know what war was, but we learned quickly, because suddenly there were German ships off Boston, and German spies on Cape Cod. My father was issued a helmet and assigned to a tower at Milton Academy to watch for German planes.”

In the age before television and before sophisticated radio news, many people looked to newspapers as the primary source of world events. In the late spring of 1944, as Americans awaited news that the Allies had invaded Europe, 11-year-old Joe was something of a celebrity as he delivered morning and evening Boston newspapers in Milton. “My mother said to me that I’d be the first to get the news, and if the newspapers had a story about the invasion, I was to call her right away.”

Politically, the Learys look back yearningly on their generation as comfortably swaddled in the Democratic Party. “I don’t recall anybody in my family being Republican,” said Joe. “Perish the thought,” chimed in Kevin’s wife Mary.

Although they agreed on 99 percent of political issues, being Irish, the family would ferret out the one percent and argue it to death.

To the discomfort of the Learys, the political alliance has shifted.

“In the next generation, among our nine children and the cousins, there are a lot of Republicans and better liberal conservative people,” says Joe, ruefully.

“We had a dining room table,” he continued, “and we’d sit down on Sundays for dinner with aunts and uncles, and there was no inhibition on conversation except that my father would never permit disparaging remarks about Jewish people or black people. In the Irish community, there was a lot of bigotry at the time, and there may still be, although probably less, but not at our table, never, never never.”

“If my father heard it, you were in trouble,” said Kevin.

How would he express disapproval?

Patsy rises from her seat, picks up a spoon from the table, and approaches her questioner menacingly, and when near, she snaps the spoon like a captious nun. “CRACK!” she says. “You’d get a rap on the knuckle.”

“The one thing we did know about everybody who lived on our street,” says Joe, “was who was Catholic and who was Protestant. If there was a dividing line, that was it: religion. Remember, at that time, we were not permitted to go into any Protestant church, even for a wedding. I did go to a Jewish wedding, but only after I got permission from the church.”

The oldest sibling, Joe made his mark, first, as an executive at Gillette for 30 years, and then for 28 years as president of the Irish American Partnership, a non-profit that supports education, job training, and economic development in Ireland, North and South. Headquartered in Boston, the Partnership, with more than 5,000 members, is one of the largest Irish American organizations in the United States.

Joe was recruited by Charles Feeney, the philanthropist, and although it took the new president three visits, the person he recruited to be chairman was former Marine Corps Commandant Paul X. Kelley, whose military manner made an impression in Ireland.

One of Joe’s first stop was the office of House Speaker Thomas P. (Tip) O’Neill, although the first moments were bumpy.

“You IRA, Leary?”

“No, sir.”

“How do I know that?”

“Call the British and the American Embassies. They’ll tell you.”

O’Neill’s endorsement helped raise money in mail campaigns and at golf tournaments. Leary shuttled to Ireland more than 70 times and listened to lectures by Cardinal Cahal Daly, who wagged his finger, barking in a brogue: “We’ve got to bring the IRA into the government.

Over 15 years, the Partnership issued grants of $20 million to almost 300 projects in Ireland. Having retired Aug. 31, Joe no longer worries about meeting a payroll, raising funds, maintaining a public image, and balancing the seesaw of Irish politics. He’s embarked on a new passion, Boston history, particularly before the Revolution. He’ll also continue to write a monthly column about Ireland for the Boston Irish Reporter.

What would their parents say today about the four Learys and about the award from Boston’s Irish community?

Joe does not hesitate. “They would wish better health for my brother, Kevin, but they’d be happy that we’re all together, and about my sisters and brother, Patsy, Betty, and Kevin, my parents would be proud of their success, their generosity, and their goodness.”

The poignant silence that follows is broken, at last, by Kevin.

“They’d be proud of you, too, Joe.”

“I hope so.”

Jack Thomas was a reporter, editor, columnist, and ombudsman during a 40-year career at the Boston Globe.

Thanksgiving Day 1946 at the Leary household in Milton. Mary (Nolan) Leary is in the center of the second row.
Before we look at the following conversation there are a few things that we must know. The first is what Patrick says as he enters the Public Room. It is a “set phrase” that doesn’t make individual word by word sense such as the English equivalent, “God bless all here.” The next is in Line 3 when Patrick uses the word Thagadh. This is the Habitual Past Tense of tar, “to come”, and can be translated “used to come”. You had this tense last summer but it will be reviewed below.

The next are the Irish words mull, “late”, a roimh “by reference to time, imhig “the half hall anuss” “over there”, and turaisoir “tourists”. The last are the terms beirg, cuigeir, and thiir. The closest English is “duet”, “quintet”, and “trio”. Irish has a different and obligatory set of words used to count persons up to ten. Beyond “ten” Irish uses the numeral plus duine, “person” – although remember that duine comes between the parts of, for example, “thirteen” which is “three teens” in Irish. So you may say “three person” and or tri duine deag. The noun, here duine, is always in the singular even if English uses the plural.

duine amhain  “one person”
beirg  “beirg”
cuigeir  “three persons”
thiir  “four persons”

Now see if you can translate this conversation between Patrick, who enters the pub late, and Nora who tends the bar. There are a couple of strangers in the pub.

Patrick: Dia anseo i?ecte.
Nora:  Dia ’s Muire duit, a Phádraig.
Patrick: Cäs aite Mícheál? Thagadh sé roimh a ocht a chloóg.
Nora: Ibh sé anseo arís.

Patrick: Nior tháinig sé. Nách bhfuil tú mal anocht?
Patrick: Ta, cinnte. Ce atá an bheirt hall anuss?
Nora: Tú turaisóirí. An bhfuil chugóir a d’imhig an thuí a goadthaíodh.
Céd atá mhaith leat?
Patrick: Plaím go dtí do thoil é.
Nora: Ceart go leor!

Translation:
Patrick: “God save all here.”
Patrick: “Is níth atá ort do, Patrick.”
Patrick: “Where is Michael? He used to come by eight o’clock.
Patrick: “Sure, indeed. Who is that couple over there?”
Patrick: “There are five, but there were five but three have gone to sleep. What would you like?”
Patrick: “A pint, please.”
Nora: “Right!”

There are other “set phrases” in this brief conversation that you already know. The response, “God ‘n Mary to you” is one. Others are “What would you like?” literally, “What’s good with you?” “Please”, and “Right”.

In English we say, “I used to refer to an action that we habitually “used to do”. Or we can qualify the action with adverbial phrases such as “...when I...”, “...Irish simply uses a special verb form for this “habitual” repeated action. Take the verb “to plant”:
He planted potatoes yesterday” (Definite Past) Chuir sé pratáin inné.
He planted potatoes every year.”Habitual Past-Chuirseadh sé pratáin gach blain.

The endings of the Habitual Past are a bit unusual. For example, note that for the first time in this course the “T” form does not have an -n and the “you” form does not end in -n – although the -t is there. All forms of the verb are lenited (“aspirated”) to show past action. Note also the insertion of a required “dummy” vowel letter highlighted in these examples to balance the vowel of the verb.

Chuirn “I used to plant”
You used to plant”
Chuirceadh “He, she, you all used to plant”
Chuirimis “We used to plant”
Chuiridís “They used to plant”

Ghabhaíonn “I used to take”
Ghabhadh “He, she, you all used to take”
Ghabhaímis “We used to take”
Ghabhaídís “They used to take”

You will not use these forms often but you should be able to recognize them when other do. The next column may be my last and we will study the Conditional Tense, “if we can.”
The road isn’t going to rise up to meet you all the way over there in America, you know.

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