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# BOSTON IRISH REPORTER

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Bill Brett: "Most personal book to date."

## Boston's Irish as seen through Bill Brett's lens

By PETER F. STEVENS  
BIR STAFF

Bill Brett's latest book, "Boston, Irish," is literally a labor of love, a work that offers an evocative and deeply layered examination of the city's unique Irish history and heritage, from the high and mighty to those whose impact upon the community has been quieter but no less important. The cornerstone, of

**A sampling  
of portraits,  
Pages 6-9.**

course, is Brett's photographic treasure trove of the Irish and Irish Americans his camera lens has captured over his five decades as an award-winning photojournalist at the *Boston Globe* (his 50th anniversary with the newspaper was in June 2014). With Carol Beggy's incisive, keenly hewn prose accompanying the book's 262 photographs, "Boston, Irish" is a work that belongs not only in the hands of anyone with even a passing interest in the city's rich Irish tapestry, but also in those of anyone with an interest in the history of Irish America and Ireland itself.

(Continued on page 5)

The first thing Bill Brett noticed about Sister Evelyn Hurley, SCN, at right, who was walking in South Boston, was her coat. Sister Evelyn recounted how she knitted it herself. She created countless sweaters and blankets for families in South Boston, where she worked for many years as a teacher and principal at St. Brigid and the former Nazareth School. Sister Evelyn celebrated her 99th birthday on March 7, 2014, and marked her 80th anniversary of entering the order of the Sisters of Nazareth a few weeks later. She was the last member of her community to live in South Boston, where the sisters' first convent was built at the corner of M Street and East Broadway more than a century ago. Fittingly, the South Boston community held a "time" for Sister Evelyn, but it was a bittersweet day as her order decided to close the convent and have Sister Evelyn, who stopped teaching in 1995, officially retire to Kentucky. Sr. Evelyn's father, Bill Hurley, was a Boston City Councilor for 20 years who later opened Billy Hurley's Log Cabin, a restaurant and political hot spot for years.



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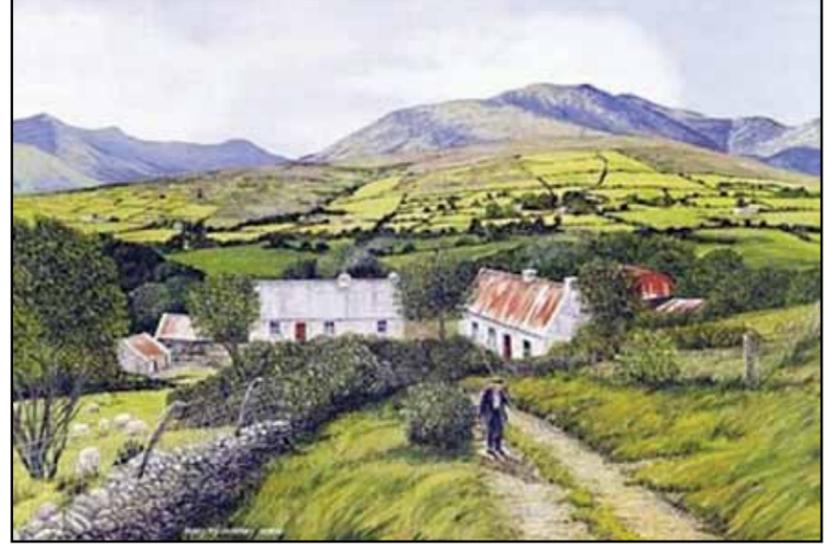
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# LGBT vets win council OK to march in Southie's St. Patrick's Day parade

Vote is 5-4; dissenter questions quorum count

BY LAUREN DEZENSKI  
REPORTER STAFF

A breakthrough in the decades-long impasse over the South Boston St. Patrick's Day Parade organizers' exclusion of gay and lesbian marchers was reached last month after a petition by the LGBT veterans organization OUTVETS to march in next year's parade was approved by a committee of South Boston veterans by a 5-4 vote.

Mayor Martin Walsh's office and others hailed the decision as a clear-cut victory against an exclusionary policy. "We're very pleased that OUTVETS will be marching in this year's parade," said Kate Norton, a spokesperson for Walsh. "Mayor Walsh has been advocating for an inclusive parade for quite some time. We're thrilled to hear that the South Boston Allied War Veterans Council have decided to make the 2015 parade an inclusive event."

Parade Commander Brian Mahoney, who called himself the "ultimate authority" on what happened at the Dec. 15 meeting, confirmed that OUTVETS had won majority approval to march in the parade.

"The vote was a matter of discussion. It was an issue that lasted for more than an hour. People had legitimate questions and [Bryan] Bishop was able to answer them to the majority's satisfaction," Mahoney said of OUTVETS founder Bryan Bishop, who made a presentation to the veterans council but was not present for the vote.

"The group that gets in here now is a veterans group," Mahoney said. "They say they have no social or political agenda. Others may want to read or put more into it, but we merely accepted a group of veterans who wanted to march to honor their service and all the veterans."

Ed Flynn, son of former Boston mayor Raymond L. Flynn, was one of the five

votes in favor of the LGBT veterans. Flynn says that the vote, which was held at the Thomas Fitzgerald VFW Post, was fair and will stand up to scrutiny.

"I voted in favor of the group allowing them to march," said Flynn, who served as the parade's chief marshal in 2013. "I just think any veteran, whether they are gay or straight, they served our country and served in military and put themselves in harm's way. They should be given opportunity to march in the parade."

"We debated it before the vote and some people were for it and some against it. It was a respectful debate," said Flynn. "I think Brian Mahoney and the South Boston elected officials provided strong leadership on the issue."

Bishop said that Mahoney emerged after the meeting to deliver him the good news: "He said it was a 5-4 vote in favor and that he was the swing vote," said Bishop. "He said 'your application has been accepted.'"

Bishop said that the council meeting was tense at times. "It was not cordial. I walked out of there and never felt that way before - it was like an interrogation," said the 46-year-old East Boston resident, a native of North Carolina. He is chief of staff to Francisco Urena, the city's commissioner of veteran services.

"I pled my case," said Bishop. "My whole process is not to subvert. OUTVETS is non-political. We marched on Veterans Day [the first LGBT group to do so in the Boston parade] and we were embraced by everyone." He added that the veterans group will not march with anything that explicitly says LGBT. "My banner has the colors of the rainbow on one corner. We are a veteran group."

One member of the South Boston Allied War Veterans Council is disputing the vote's validity, charging that the full membership of the committee was not



Members of the organization OUTVETS marched in the Veterans Day Parade in Boston last November. The group won approval to march in this year's South Boston St. Patrick's Day Parade at a meeting last month.

Chris Lovett photo

on hand for the decision.

"The Supreme Court decision in 1994 still stands," said Philip J. Wuschke Jr., a past commander of the council who is on the committee and attended the meeting. "There will be no sexual contents in the parade and that's where it stands." Wuschke contends that there was no quorum at the meeting and because not all members had been notified, it was "an illegal meeting."

For his part, Wuschke said he expected that those in dissent would consult with John "Wacko" Hurley, the Veterans Council's lawyer. Hurley, the longtime council leader who championed the veterans' position to deny gay groups entry into the parade in the 1990s, was not present at the meeting. He told the Reporter that he was sick and missed his first meeting in 50 years.

A breakthrough almost took place last year when another LGBT group based in South Boston claimed that they had reached an agreement to march with organizers. However, shortly after the news hit the media, parade organizers withdrew their invitation and drew a hard line against a compromise.

Asked if that is likely to happen again this year, Wuschke responded firmly: "Yes."

Mahoney emphatically disagreed, lamenting, "Every year we go through this nonsense. This is not Brian Mahoney's parade, not Phil Wuschke's parade, not Wacko Hurley's parade. This is a parade put on by the Allied Veterans War Council for the benefit of South Boston."

Senator Linda Dorcea Forry, host of the St. Patrick's Day breakfast that precedes the parade, hailed the vote.

"I understand there are more details to be worked out, but I am thrilled about this development," said Forry in a statement. "I thank the Allied War Veterans for their commitment throughout the years honoring our veterans and for taking this 5-4 vote. I want to thank OUTVETS for honoring the sacrifices of GLBT veterans who fought for freedoms that they themselves could not enjoy. South Boston is a vibrant, diverse and inclusive neighborhood and I am proud to represent this community in the State Senate."

## Michael Joyce Memorial Playground gets 2d launch with a neat new look

BY ED FORRY  
PUBLISHER

State officials and community leaders came together this fall to celebrate the renovation of Michael Joyce Memorial Playground in South Boston. The park commemorates the life of Galway native Michael Joyce, a champion boxer in the Irish Army who emigrated to Boston in 1949, settled in Dorchester, and became a volunteer who helped scores of immigrants from Ireland find work and a place to live. He died of cancer in 1989 at age 66.

The park officially opened in 2010, and since then his family and friends have worked with the state's Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to raise the funds needed to renovate the facility.

Former Mayor Ray Flynn and former UMass and State Senate President Bill Bulger joined Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Maeve Bartlett, DCR Commissioner Jack Murray as about 75 persons gathered at the site on Nov. 21 for the brief ceremony. Congressman Stephen Lynch and Mayor Martin Walsh, and South Boston electeds, state Sen. Linda Dorcea Forry, Rep. Nick Collins, and City Councillor Michael Flaherty also spoke at



A group of family members and friends joined several elected and other government officials at the dedication of the Michael Joyce Memorial Playground at Marine Road in South Boston. Mary Joyce Morris (center), daughter of Michael Joyce, is pictured at the November 21 ceremony.

Margaret Brett Hastings photo

the event.

The finished project is the life's dream of Joyce's children, including Mary Joyce Morris who offered remarks at the event.

"Since his death in 1989, often times you would hear someone say, 'Mike Joyce should be remembered.' Finally this committee was formed to bring to reality this long overdue memorial. Michael Joyce was a gift to all who knew him. To his wife and their six children, he was a good provider and a wonderful role model. He worked

three, sometimes four jobs to make a better life for them in Dorchester. To those who knew him in the halls of the State House, City Hall, JFK Immigration Building, the Court House and agencies too numerous to mention, he was a trusted and reliable representative who would always do his best for those needing assistance.

"To those in this community, he was our 'shining star,' a man who helped so many and never asked for anything in return. We thank you for your sup-

port and turnout today in helping to make possible a permanent memorial in the city of Boston for Michael Joyce, A Man to Remember. He worked for the immigrants, Irish, and Polish, and German. Today there are new immigrants that come with the same wish, looking to make a better life and home for their families

"Thank you all for being here today to remember Michael Joyce, just a very nice man."

## Higgins moves ahead with new water fees

Despite a raging controversy over the Irish government's plan to assess a water charge to the citizenry for the cost of water usage, Ireland President Michael D. Higgins has signed into law a compromise measure which will impose the charges for the first time this spring.

RTE News reported that Higgins had ratified the bill into law on December 28—despite being petitioned by almost 50 politicians who wanted it referred to the Supreme Court. The measure had passed the Irish Seanad in the days before Christmas.

"President Higgins had been asked to invoke his powers under Article 26 of the Constitution which allows him to consult the Council of State," the RTE report said. "But in a blow to anti-water campaigners, a spokesman for the President confirmed to independent.ie that the bill has been signed into law."

The President declined to delay the signing, noting that the bill had already been debated and passed in both legislative chambers, the Dáil and Seanad. Higgins' office released a statement which said the President gave "careful consideration to all aspects of the Bill and the submissions he received."

Under terms of the new law, Irish Water customers are expected to receive the first bills through in the mail in early April. The charging system will not begin until January, after the Government decided to introduce a delay of three months. All bills will be capped until January 2019, by which time the Government says meters will have been fitted in almost every household.

The legislation deals with many of the changes announced by the Government in November in relation to water charges - including a reduction in the bills households will face.



Michael D. Higgins

## Publisher's Notebook

## Tracking Ireland by the numbers

By ED FORRY

The Irish online publication "the journal.ie" each week posts a selection of "statistics and numerical nuggets to help you digest the week that has just passed." In late December, it reported what was termed "a bumper selection of figures looking back on the year that was." Following is a selection of those facts and figures:

**\$359 million** (£231 million): The number of Irish punts the Central Bank says are still hanging around under mattresses or in old piggy banks, almost thirteen years after Ireland switched to the euro.

**39 million:** The number of views on YouTube of the video of Meath priest Fr. Ray Kelly singing his own version of Leonard Cohen's Halleluia at a couple's wedding.



**3.4 million:** The number of tourists who visited Ireland in the first six months of 2014.

**1.5 million:** The number of pigs in Ireland, according to the Central Statistics Office. Just in case you were wondering.

**250,000:** The number of households in Ireland living on less than \$18,300 per year (15,000 euro), according to

research.

**108,000:** The number of people in Ireland who are paid the minimum wage of \$10.50 per hour (8.65 euro).

**100,000 +:** The number of people who turned out for protests against water charges around the country on Nov. 1. Tens of thousands attended a second demonstration in Dublin on Dec. 10.

**79,660:** The number of homes needed in Ireland to meet the needs of the growing population, according to a government advisory body.

**20,000:** The approximate number of people who applied for jobs in An Garda Síochána (Irish police) for just 300 positions. It was the first time since 2009 that new gardaí had been recruited.

**9,615:** The official number of methadone users in Ireland.

**8,000:** The number of Irish people treated every year for alcohol abuse.

**849:** The number of towns and villages that entered the Tidy Towns competition this year (Kilkenny was the overall winner).

**265:** The number of ambulances in Ireland.

**75:** The percentages of deaths in Ireland caused by heart or respiratory diseases, or cancer.

**65.8:** The percentage of women in the civil service, with the majority in the lower grades such as clerical or staff officer.

**64:** The percentage of Irish emigrants surveyed who said that the food they miss most from the old country is... Tayto crisps.

**44:** The percentage of people in Ireland with private health insurance.

**36:** The percentage of Irish people who believe religion plays a negative role in society.

**34:** Where Dublin ranks on a list of the happiest cities in the world, apparently.

**34.9:** The average age of men getting married in Ireland – the highest it has ever been. The average age for brides is 32.8.

**34:** The percentage of Irish people who don't do any exercise at all. The most common reason why not? We don't have time.

**33:** The percentage of judges in Ireland who are women, according to new figures. The Circuit Court comes closest to gender parity with 48 percent of the judges female.

**23:** The number of people who died after using cocaine in one year, according to the Health Research Board. The figure is down from a peak of 66 deaths in 2007.

**10.7:** Ireland's unemployment rate.

**8.7:** The percentage of the population of Ireland who had a ticket to see Garth Brooks play in Croke Park. That's 400,000 people left disappointed by the whole fiasco.

## Commentary

## For Ireland in the New Year: Good news expected to continue

By JOE LEARY  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

This will be an exciting year in Ireland. Signs of an exploding economy started to show up early in 2014 and all indications are that 2015 will offer a continuation of the good news.

According to The Irish Business and Employers' Confederation (Ibec) as quoted in *The Irish Times* on Dec. 21, "The Irish economy will significantly outperform the rest of Europe and grow by a spectacular 5.7 percent in 2014." They are also predicting continuing strong growth in 2015 with the Gross Domestic Product – GDP – rising by 4.8%, unemployment falling, and investment rising.

Some conservative Dublin businessmen are more cautious. Niall Power Smith, a Dublin real estate investor, says, "Ireland is still vulnerable to how the UK, EU, and USA

are doing since we are such a small open economy." But Irish lives will be easier. The government has reduced personal taxes in this year's budget, and Irish men and women and their families will have more to spend.

Liam Connellan, a leading Dublin businessman, points out that the economy is providing more jobs and reducing the flow of Ireland's young minds leaving the country. Emigration has been falling, and families are being built at home. He sees construction cranes reappearing in the Dublin skyline as a sign of renewed confidence.

It should be a source of great Irish pride that after the dark days of 2008-2009 such a recovery would occur. With an enormous debt to pay off, the Irish people suffered through a severe austerity that has proved to be the fight medicine. Lower salaries, lower pensions, and many more sacrifices will now result in a rising economy and better living for everyone. Hopefully, the lessons have been learned.

Still, greed being part of human nature, more stringent regulation is in place to prevent selfish "me first" activity.

As to the recovery, the statistics are undeniable:



Joe Leary

## Off the Bench

## Effective policing of tough areas a challenge of balancing forces

By JAMES W. DOLAN  
SPECIAL TO THE REPORTER

Policing high crime areas presents significant challenges. The affected communities demand protection yet resent heavy-handed tactics that sometimes focus on the innocent or result in a response out of proportion to a perceived offense.

While a judge, I attended meetings in the Mattapan/Dorchester area at which the absence of a police presence and the failure of the courts to punish offenders were the principal topics. Understandably, victimized residents were concerned for their safety. They were critical of the police and the courts for not doing enough to suppress crime in their community.

The views expressed were the same in white or minority communities, but they were more intense in the black community where the danger of being victimized was higher. Drugs and easy access to guns are a volatile mix. Black youths were often victims of drug-related shootings. The business was being regulated over the bodies of black youth. Frequently, innocent bystanders were caught in the crossfire.

Police officials responded by sending in more officers. Often, these officers were young, highly motivated, and aggressive. They were instructed, when responding to community concerns, to be alert and proactive. Here is the dilemma: How do you patrol aggressively without offending residents who are simply going about their business?

Where do you find officers with the maturity, discipline, and self-restraint necessary to balance law enforcement with community relations? How do you teach officers not to overreact; how not to make a bad situation worse; how to exercise restraint even when provoked?

Where do you find officers who will assume the risk of working effectively in a high crime area yet have the good judgment to know when to back off;

unemployment, which had reached 15 percent, is down to 10.7 percent, and Ibec expects it will be down to 9 percent this year.

Automobile sales are booming. The Society of the Irish Motor Industry, in an enthusiastic publicity announcement, said that automobile sales in 2014 will exceed 95,000 cars, which constitutes a 15 percent increase over previous estimates and 30 percent over 2013. To further make the point, employment in the auto industry increased by 4,200 jobs and retail sales were up 5.6 percent through the first 10 months of 2014.

In somewhat of a surprise after the successful "Year of the Gathering" in 2013, tourism jumped again in 2014, to 1.186 million visiting Americans in the first ten months, a 14.5 percent increase. Liam Connellan says the hotels are full and the restaurants are very busy, and Micheal Cawley, chairman of Failte Ireland, says Dublin will need more hotels with an expected increase in visitors in 2015.

And there is once again a domestic housing shortage in Dublin, with a huge rush to obtain mortgage approval before the government initiates new regulations in an effort to avoid the previous bankruptcies: a 20 percent down payment requirement and a limit to the size of mortgages to 3.5 times income.

Last April, Ireland's population was put at 4.6 million by the Central Statistics Office. The cities are growing bigger while the western rural areas are losing people. The recovery follows the same pattern, with the major cities of Dublin, Cork, Limerick, and Galway getting the most benefit.

There are troubling issues in every society, however, and Ireland is not immune. The Irish people have never had to pay for the water they drink and use for bathing as we do in the United States. With the water supply infrastructure needing extensive repair, the government is seeking to install water meters in homes and billing the owner for the water they use.

There have been protest marches and some unfortunate abuse of political leaders, but the new policy appears to be going forward.

Generally speaking, with their economy growing faster than any county in the Eurozone, the Irish should be pleased with their future as they look forward to a very Happy New Year in 2015.

let the situation cool down; deal with a confrontation without being confrontational? While you can teach some of these skills, others require personality traits that are not easily learned.

Would black officers be more sensitive? Perhaps, but I have known black judges whose sentences were severe and who often lectured black defendants on what they were doing to themselves and their own community. They, too, were trying to balance the rights of defendants against public safety concerns.

I also had the opportunity to observe many outstanding officers, many of whom had the respect of troublemakers in a community. They were street savvy, calm, and courteous, when it would have been easy to react impulsively. I have heard cases when officers would have been justified in using lethal force, but didn't.

In light of the Michael Brown and Eric Garner cases, the nation is again focused on the problem. Nobody is suggesting that police presence be reduced in minority communities. They want better, more sensitive law enforcement that is more restrained and respectful of the rights of suspects.

The Garner case is a good example. The offense was very minor. He was angry, refusing to submit to arrest, but not assaultive. The officers should have given him time to calm down, perhaps explaining that he would likely be released within the hour. They could have not arrested him and instead sent him a summons to court. Under the circumstances, it made little sense to take him down, risking injury to him and the officers.

Police officers are confused. They are receiving a mixed message: "We want you to protect us but not so aggressively that we need to be protected from you." With careful selection and proper training, many departments like Boston have achieved a sensible balance; others will conform but mistakes are inevitable. Unfortunately, people will be needlessly injured or killed. When society empowers people with a badge and a gun and asks them to protect us, no matter how well intentioned the empowered are, they remain human beings with all the strengths and weaknesses that status implies.

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



James W. Dolan



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Point of View

# Boston Irish magic on Marlborough Street

60 years ago, Edwin O'Connor settled in to begin writing 'The Last Hurrah'

BY PETER F. STEVENS  
BIR STAFF

A recent stop at The Last Hurrah whiskey bar at the Parker House (now Omni Parker House) got me thinking about the classic novel it is named after, a personal favorite and one synonymous with the battling "boys and Brahmins" of yesteryear. Even now, it the visage of "Himself"—James Michael Curley—that stands out at the bar among the images of famed congressman, senators, and other politicians then and now. It was that very face that inspired a struggling novelist named Edwin O'Connor as 1955 dawned 60 years ago.

In January 1955 and throughout that year, the lights stayed on late in the evening at an old red-brick apartment at 10 Marlborough St. O'Connor was hard at work in his modest flat, the furniture his landlord's, writing a masterpiece that would capture the final campaign of a fictional politician named Frank Skeffington. Skeffington was, of course, the thinly disguised counterpart of James Michael Curley. Entitled "The Last Hurrah" and published the following year, O'Connor's work would be acclaimed in many circles as the finest American political novel.

"I wanted to do a novel on the whole Irish-American business," O'Connor said. "What the Irish got in America, they got through politics, so, of course, I had to use a political framework." In Boston he found his theme.

The son of a doctor and a school teacher, both of them Irish American, O'Connor was born in Providence in 1918. Raised in Woonsocket, he would later write, "To see it is not to love it."

He went on to Notre Dame, intending to study journalism. However, one of his professors opined, "You can learn all you need to know about journalism in six months. English literature takes a little longer." His imagination charged, O'Connor switched his major

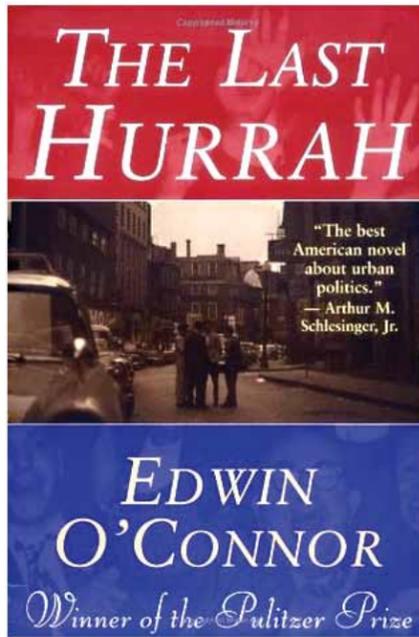


Edwin O'Connor

to literature.

After graduation, he served in the US Coast Guard during World War II before moving to Boston full of plans to write novels and short stories. In the early 1950s, he worked for a pittance as a reviewer for the *Boston Herald*. Catching the eye of Edward Weeks, the editor of *The Atlantic*, O'Connor was hired by him to edit radio great Fred Allen's memoir, "Treadmill to Oblivion," in 1953, and began a lifelong relationship with the magazine. Another *Atlantic* editor, Robert Manning, wrote that the magazine was O'Connor's "club" on Arlington Street, the place where he would drop in when "a few steps from our door."

O'Connor, who had also worked as a radio announcer and producer in Boston, was noted by literary critics as a man who possessed an "ability to write with his ears." As he labored on Marlborough Street in 1955, his keen ear for dialogue gave voice to Skeffington and other unforgettable characters. A reviewer would write of the novel: "I find myself remembering...its talk, its spate of wild, outrageous talk cascading down every page."



When "The Last Hurrah" was published a year later, it shot quickly to the top of the nation's bestseller list, catapulting O'Connor to fame and financial success. Still, not all reviewers embraced his portrait of Curley/Skeffington. A *New Yorker* reviewer contended that O'Connor had polished up the "barbaric" Boston politician into a "fairy godmother of widows and orphans" and had turned "vices into virtues." Despite the naysayers, the novel proved an immense hit, as most readers concurred with *The New York Times's* assessment of O'Connor's work. "[He] has no doubts about what Skeffington cost the city or the Irish.... He also makes it clear, however, that the tragedy is collective, the failure...to have the courage of [one's] own qualities and to make better use of them"

Less than two years after the novel's publication, O'Connor's book received

the big-screen treatment with Spencer Tracy playing Skeffington.

Author Shaun O'Connell (UMass Boston) notes: "After 'The Last Hurrah' became a financial and critical success, O'Connor moved, but not far from the center city of his imagination. In Boston he always lived within the elegant circle of Beacon Hill and Back Bay: on Beacon Street, then on Chestnut Street, finally back on Marlborough Street, where he bought a mansion across from his old roominghouse. Throughout these moves, he came to *The Atlantic* daily, full of wit and charm."

Robert Manning recalled: "He would deliver a marvelous story with a mimicry that was devastating but never unkind, or shift his big frame into a brief soft-shoe to the humming of 'Keep working America.'"

"Edwin O'Connor's fiction stands," says O'Connell, "as his oblique spiritual autobiography: the discovery of his true subject—the record of his own kind, the story of their religious and political seizure of a city—and his renunciation of the city which seized his Irish-Americans: Boston. Like other writers before him, O'Connor was both inspired and disappointed by the city upon a hill, but he took to heart its lasting lesson: the need to quest for spiritual transcendence."

In 1962, O'Connor won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction with his work "The Edge of Sadness." The novel, rendered through the eyes of an aging, reformed-alcoholic priest named Hugh Kennedy, presented the saga of the Carmody family over three generations, the clan's resemblance to the real Kennedy family unmistakable. A *New York Times* reviewer asserted that the Pulitzer Prize went to the "right writer—if for the wrong book." The book he liked better was "The Last Hurrah," written at 10 Marlborough St. and, to this scribe's mind, one of the best political novels in American literature.

## Capturing Boston's Irish through Bill Brett's eyes

(Continued from page 1)

Brett has dedicated the book to his late mother, Mary Ann Brett, an Irish immigrant whose devotion to her family and her faith were the bedrock of the Brett family's success. Her family's saga both on the "old sod" and in Boston (Dorchester, in the Bretts' case) will ring familiar for countless readers of *Boston Irish*.

Recently, Bill Brett talked with the BIR about the book.

**Q.** Do you consider "Boston, Irish" your most personal book to date?

**A.** No question about it. I'd been thinking about doing this for a long time, but the time now felt right.

**Q.** Why did it seem so timely at this particular juncture?

**A.** In large part because the city of Boston—along with the region—is changing so much and so fast. The Boston Irish have come so far from the time of "no Irish need apply" and have made such a deep impact here. So many have been so successful in politics, business, everything. I began to go through my files and realized that along with the Kennedys and other big names, there were also so many other Boston, Irish—nuns, priests, social workers, and the like—who have and continue to give back so much to the community. I wanted to present the ones I've met and photographed over the years in one place.

**Q.** In doing so, you've gone farther back into the city's past than in your previous books.

**A.** Yes, and that's one of the key points of the book, to show that while so much has changed for the Boston Irish and right now things seems to be changing faster, it was not an overnight process. The road was long, hard, and full of suffering for so many, but the thing is that the Irish here did overcome so much.

Today, there are newer immigrant groups here who are on that road, and I believe that not only have the Boston, Irish shown a blueprint for immigrant success, but they also have a duty to help out those trying to make their way. So many

of the people in the new book are doing exactly that, whether they're successful business people, clerics, philanthropists, politicians, restaurateurs, chaplains, cops, firefighters, you name it. It is time for the Boston, Irish to give back—actually, they are giving back, so I mean it's time for them to continue giving back. I believe it's an obligation.

**Q.** For you, that sense of striving and giving back were imbued in you and your siblings from your mother?

**A.** No question about that. In many ways, it's very similar to Marty Walsh's story. Simply put, without my mother, we wouldn't have made it. She barely made it out of Ireland herself ahead of British arrest. Her brother was an IRA soldier in the Irish civil war, and she delivered messages as a courier for them.

**Q.** This is probably an impossible question to answer, but do any of the photos have special resonance for you?

**A.** The one of the O'Neill family, Sara and Diarmuid and the four Ethiopian orphans they adopted [Rahel, 7; Bezawit, 10; Selamawit, 8; and Andualem, 5] is so moving. It is something that never would have happened here 25 years ago and shows how much has changed for the Boston Irish, and because of the Boston, Irish. The photo shows how America really is the land of opportunity.

I also like the one of Father Daniel J. Mahoney—the firefighters' chaplain in every sense of the word, revered by the department. As pastor of St. Francis de Sales Church in Charlestown, Father Dan has also served the community with love, humility, and dedication. He's a priest's priest.

**Q.** If there is one theme or idea or even several that you would like the reader to take away from Boston, Irish, what would it, or they, be?

**A.** I think that the message is that for today's new immigrants and those who come next, the "Boston, Irish" can show the way forward by example. Also, that it is the duty of the Boston Irish to help the next wave of immigrants.

Wishing you a great New Year filled with Joy and Peace!



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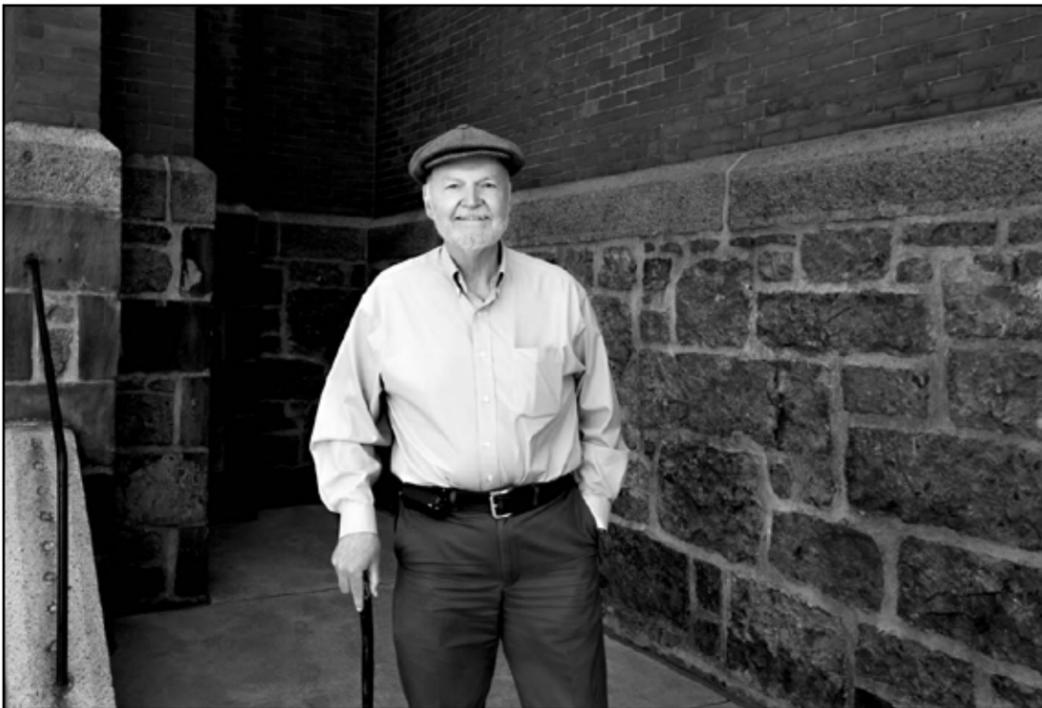
## The Forry Family

Bill, Linda, John, Conor, Madeline & Norah

Paid for by the Committee to Elect Linda Dorcena Forry

# Boston, Irish/Bill Brett

Dr. William T. O'Connell dedicated his life to ensuring that those who fled Ireland during "The Great Hunger," traveling on the coffin ships only to die while at the quarantine station in Boston Harbor, are not forgotten. He worked with his wife, Rita, to document the names of the hundreds who died between 1847 and 1850 on Deer Island and are buried at the New Rest Haven Cemetery. Bill, who passed away in January 2014, did not live to see his dream fully realized, but there is a marker on Deer Island recognizing the nearly 20,000 people who were held on the island and the nearly 1,000 who are believed to have died while there from diseases that included typhoid fever, cholera, and dysentery. This immigrant story resonated with Bill, who was the son of Ireland-born parents. He was a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in Plymouth and the Knights and Ladies of St. Finbarr.



In four decades as a reporter and editor for *The Boston Globe* in Boston and Washington, D.C., Marty Nolan was a witness to history. Marty joined *The Globe* in 1961 and was part of the team that won the newspaper's first Pulitzer Prize in 1966. He became Washington bureau chief, was editor of *The Globe's* editorial page, and later returned to reporting. In 1995, Marty moved to San Francisco to cover California and the West. He retired from *The Globe* in 2001. But all roads lead back to Boston, where Marty was born at Boston City Hospital, the youngest of five children born to immigrant parents. Marty was photographed next to St. Patrick's Church in Roxbury, at the corner of Dudley Street and Blue Hill Avenue, where he was baptized and served as an altar boy. Marty's father, Neil, emigrated from Recess, a village in Connemara, and his mother's family came from Co. Monaghan. His father played banjo in Irish bands for generations of dancers at Hibernian Hall and Intercolonial Hall in Roxbury.

**Nun Day at Fenway Park, 1968** – Some 50 years ago, Fenway Park's annual Nun Day drew hundreds of sisters from various religious orders to the storied park to watch a Red Sox game. In any given year, Boston's archbishop, Cardinal Richard J. Cushing, an avid fan, was likely to join the nuns in cheering on the home team. The tradition faded out over the ensuing years but was revived in 2013. At left is Bill Brett's sister, Peg McCobb, then Sister Sean Patrice of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Peg, the daughter of immigrants from Co. Sligo, left the order and married Bill McCobb, and they raised five children. Bill died in 1998 at age 66. This photograph of the cardinal, wearing his straw hat and black suit, was taken at a very busy time for the South Boston native who led the archdiocese from 1944 to 1970. In 1968, he dedicated what is now Good Samaritan Hospital in Brockton and kept busy raising funds for a \$50-million capital campaign. A close friend of the Kennedy family, the cardinal officiated at the marriage of John F. Kennedy and Jacqueline Bouvier in 1953, and celebrated the president's funeral Mass in Washington, D.C. Born in 1895, he was the third of Patrick and Mary Cushing's five children. Patrick emigrated from Glanworth, Co. Cork, while Mary came from Touraneena, Co. Waterford. Richard graduated from Boston College High School and Boston College and was ordained in 1921. He died at age 75 on November 4, 1970.





For Richard F. Gormley a few things matter above all else: honor, family, faith, and heritage. Shown at the gate of Forest Hills Cemetery in Jamaica Plain, Richie is known to countless people through his family's West Roxbury business, the William J. Gormley Funeral Service. In addition to his Massachusetts funeral director's license, Richie is registered to conduct funerals in Ireland. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps in Vietnam from 1968 to 1970 and received the Cross of Gallantry for his valor. After the war, he traveled to Ireland for the first time and now owns a house on "a nice piece of land" in Ballybrogan, Lecarrow, Co. Roscommon, and travels there several times a year. "Whenever I can," he says. Richie is pictured with a 1937 Packard, one of the classic automobiles he owns, and with Mayor James Michael Curley's top hat that he picked up a few years ago. The hat came in handy when Richie ran for (and won) the election as the unofficial "Mayor of West Roxbury."

The calm scenes of Celia McDonough's watercolors have become familiar to many Dorchester residents and expatriates. Now the Neponset resident's paintings, featured in an annual calendar, have caught on beyond the city's largest neighborhood. Celia is a watercolorist who also works full-time as assistant to Mark Erlich, executive secretary-treasurer of the New England Regional Council of Carpenters. Celia and her husband, John, have been married for 50 years and have five children and 12 grandchildren. Like many Irish families that came to the Boston area in the mid-19th century, Celia and her husband's ancestors left Ireland to escape the harsh conditions and poverty that crippled the country. Celia's maternal grandparents were from Co. Roscommon and Co. Clare and settled in Dorchester before moving to Roxbury. Her paternal grandparents were second-generation Irish American.



Reverend Richard "Doc" Conway (left), Right Reverend Jack Ahern (center), and Reverend Dan Finn—all Roman Catholic priests in Dorchester—say it is altogether fitting that their photograph was taken on Mount Ida Road at Bowdoin Street next to the St. Peter convent. The three men have connections to and served in many of the Dorchester parishes: St. Mark's, St. Ambrose, Blessed Mother Teresa (St. Margaret's), Holy Family and one that the priests say has a special place in their hearts—St. Peter's. Known as the "church of immigrants," St. Peter's Church was constructed by the newly arrived Irish laborers. The first pastor, Monsignor Ronan, was responsible for building St. Margaret Hospital within the parish. Father Doc grew up in Roslindale. His father, James, was an obstetrician, and his mother, Mary Campbell, was a homemaker who grew up in St. Peter's Parish. Father Doc's grandfather came from Co. Galway. Father Jack was raised in Arlington, one of seven children. His father worked in a produce market and his mother was a teacher. "We grew up proud of our roots in Co. Cork and filled with the sense that all good things were possible for us," Father Jack says. Father Dan, his parents and six siblings were all born in Co. Cork and immigrated to Lowell, Massachusetts. He arrived in America at the age of 18. For many years, Father Dan has been the go-to priest for the Irish who have newly arrived in the United States.

# Boston, Irish/Bill Brett



One of the world's most respected master Irish musicians, Séamus Connolly, Boston College's Sullivan artist-in-residence, won the Irish National Fiddle Competition an unprecedented 10 times and has performed on more than two dozen recordings. A native of Kilmaloe, Co. Clare, Séamus says he grew up in a house filled with music; his parents and two brothers were musicians and his brother Martin was a button accordionist who won the Irish National championship several times. Séamus was 12 years old when he began playing the fiddle, and he has hardly slowed down since. Nor have the accolades. In 2002, he was inducted into Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann's Hall of Fame. In 1972, Séamus visited the United States as a member of the first CCE tour, and in 1976 he immigrated to America, settling in the Boston area. At the request of Larry Reynolds, president of the local branch of CCE, Séamus agreed to teach Irish fiddling to American-born students, and he has been teaching and entertaining ever since.



"I'm a convener by nature," Joyce Linehan told a Boston Globe reporter in 2005. Indeed, this music publicist, arts advocate, and political activist, now chief of policy for Boston Mayor Martin Walsh, is known for bringing different groups of people together. Her home in Dorchester's Lower Mills has been dubbed "Ashmonticello" by friends as it gained a reputation as a gathering place for activists and policy wonks. Her living room has been the launching pad for several campaigns, including Elizabeth Warren's run for U.S. Senate and Walsh's bid for mayor. A Dorchester native, Joyce's father, John J. Linehan, a first generation Irish-American with roots in Macroom, Co. Cork, was a state representative from Mission Hill in the 1950s, taking the seat his father had held. Joyce had a successful career as a music manager, publicist, and co-owner of the Ashmont Records label before entering politics. Among the bands she managed were The Smithereens and The Lemonheads. In then '90s, she ran the East Coast operation of Sub Pop Records, which launched the careers of Nirvana, The Afghan Whigs, and Sebadoh, among others.



Boston Medical Center President and CEO Kate Walsh began her career in health care as a summer intern at Brookside Health Center in Jamaica Plain. The oldest of five, she grew up in Brookline, in the former Infant Jesus Parish. Her father "was a policeman, and my mom a homemaker...we are pretty much from central casting," Kate says. She attended Yale University, where she received bachelor's and master's degrees in public health. Before her appointment to the Boston Medical Center in 2010, she was executive vice president and chief operating officer of Brigham and Women's Hospital for five years. Her mother's family came from Co. Galway and made Charlestown their new home. Her father's family emigrated from Co. Leitrim to Brookline. Kate says that her favorite part of Ireland is the more remote part of Connemara. "I'm grateful to share a small part of such a special country and culture," she says, "and I'm delighted by curiosity, generosity, humor and zest for life which characterizes the many Irish men and women I've been so fortunate to know."



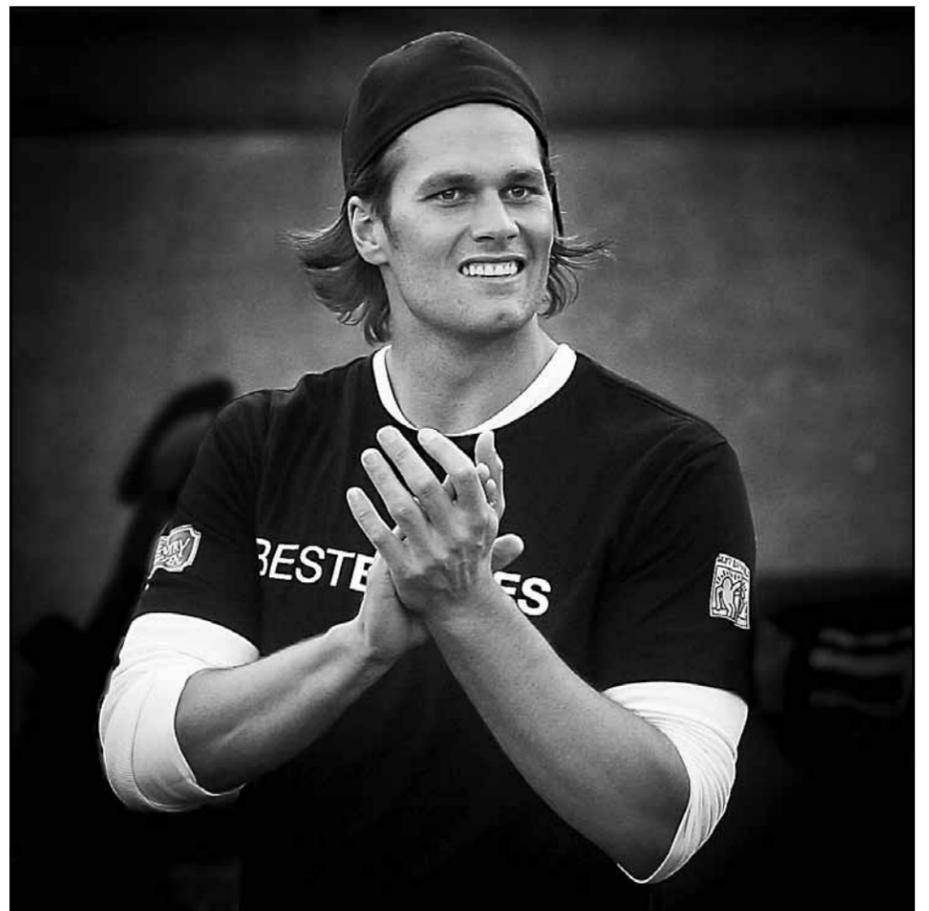
The Irish have a long history in the hospitality industry, and this is particularly true in Boston, where at least seven of the city's leading hoteliers are of Irish descent. They are, from left, Stephen G. Johnston, managing director and general manager, the Boston Harbor Hotel; Ian Pullan, general manager, InterContinental Boston; Paul S. Tormey, general manager and regional vice president, The Fairmont Copley Plaza; Daniel Donahue, vice president and managing director, The Lenox Hotel and Boston Common Hotel; Timothy P. Brett, area managing director, Pyramid Hotel Group; James M. Carmody, vice president and general manager, Seaport Hotel & World Trade Center; and Thomas P. Walsh, general manager, Renaissance Boston Waterfront.



After serving in the Marine Corps, John McLaughlin (second right) started a small electrical contracting business in 1968. Sullivan & McLaughlin, which is often called “SullyMac,” grew to be one of New England’s largest union electrical contracting companies. SullyMac continues to be a family-run company led by John Rudicus (far left)—who is married to John McLaughlin’s daughter Kate—and John McLaughlin’s sons Hugh (second from left) and John (right). The McLaughlins’ Dorchester success story begins with their forebear Hughie McLaughlin, who was born in 1899. The eldest of three children, Hughie was raised on a small farm called Ballybreen on the Inishowen Peninsula, Co. Donegal. His wife, Marie Rawdon, was born in 1907 and raised in Moville, Co. Donegal. Hughie and his siblings immigrated to America, arriving in Boston during the 1920s. After working as a bellhop at the former Statler Hotel, he spent 45 years working as the sexton at St. Peter’s Church in Dorchester, a community where he and Marie lived their entire lives. The family established the Ballybreen-Drumville Charitable Trust, named after the two families’ original homesteads, which focuses on enhancing education for underprivileged youths by supporting Cristo Rey Boston High School (in the former St. William’s School in Dorchester) and Boston College High School. In 2012, SullyMac partnered with the I.B.E.W. Local 103 to form an “Electrician Volunteer Corp” and deployed more than 100 electricians to assist in completing the construction of the largest hospital in Haiti for the nonprofit Partners in Health.



Ed Forry and his son, Bill, continue to uphold the long, proud tradition of newspaper publishers and editors who are members of the community they serve. Ed is founder and publisher of the Boston Irish Reporter, Boston’s hometown journal of Irish culture. A lifelong resident of Dorchester and the originator of the OFD (Originally from Dorchester) designation, he is a “Double Eagle,” having graduated from Boston College High School and Boston College. In 1983, Ed and his late wife, Mary Casey Forry, began publication of the Dorchester Reporter. It is considered the “newspaper of record,” serving Boston’s largest and most diverse neighborhood. Bill is publisher and managing editor of the Dorchester Reporter, the Mattapan Reporter and Boston Haitian Reporter, and editor of the Boston Irish Reporter. He has earned diplomas from Boston College High School and Boston College and holds a master’s degree from the Harvard Kennedy School. The Forry family’s roots are in the villages of the Irish counties of Sligo and Waterford, and Mary Casey’s family came to Boston from Cork. In March 2014, Bill’s wife, state Senator Linda Dorcea Forry, made Boston political history when she became the first woman, the first person of color, and the first politician from Dorchester to host the St. Patrick’s Day political breakfast in South Boston.



Tom Brady is proud of his Irish roots and spoke about them at length to reporters when the New England Patriots played the Tampa Bay Buccaneers at Wembley Stadium in 2009. “My father is 100- percent Irish. We took a trip over there together and visited some of the places where my family came from,” Tom said. “That was a great experience for me, and, obviously, I am very proud of my Irish roots.” The three-time Super Bowl champion has said his work ethic comes from his family. The quarterback’s father has spoken of that history with Irish America. He told the bimonthly glossy magazine that his great-grandfather, who was from Co. Cavan, and great-grandmother, who came from Co. Cork, immigrated to the United States during the famine years. As a professional athlete with a remarkable career, Tom has used his status to help charitable causes, chiefly Best Buddies, a nonprofit founded by Anthony K. Shriver that works to create opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This photograph was taken at Harvard Stadium at the flag football game that Tom hosts each year to benefit Best Buddies.

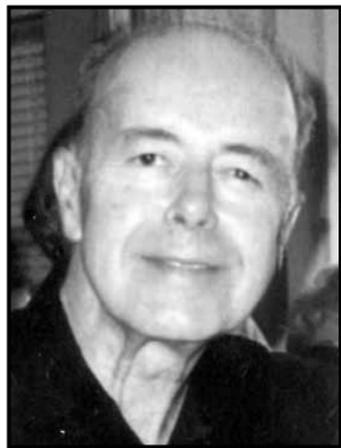


Dr. Martin Dunn, the son of a church sexton, made the lessons of his Jesuit educators the guiding principles of his life. A retired oral and maxillofacial surgeon, Marty cofounded Por Christo, a nonprofit medical service organization that has raised millions of dollars to fund dozens of medical missions to help women and children in South America. Alexandra Balcazar, a young orphan from Ecuador who had a debilitating birth defect, is among those Marty has helped. He performed a seven-hour surgery to rebuild the young girl’s jaw. Alex was ultimately adopted by Marty and his wife, Carol. Born one of 10 children in Quincy, Marty attended Boston College High School, paying the \$180-a-year tuition by doing odd jobs. He remains involved with his alma mater and serves as a trustee. He also worked to pay his own way through Boston College and later Tufts. Marty’s father, James J. Dunn, left Kilkenny for America when he was 17 years old.

# Boston Irish Reporter's Here & There

By **BILL O'DONNELL**

**Northern Ireland Talks Plod Onward** – The talks to prop up the seriously troubled Northern Ireland political situation have seen the departure of **Richard Haass** and soon after followed British Prime Minister **David Cameron**. Enter **Gary Hart**, who may or may not be in the North of Ireland as this is going to press. There is serious business in progress and there is real concern in the North that the peace process, absent some top level corrective measures, could be in danger of collapsing. This is what has caught the attention of both the Irish and British governments.



**Bill O'Donnell**

The troubles (small “t”) focus on parades, emblems, flagpole space, and parity of esteem for the DUP and other unionists who are immersed in a melange of real and imagined slights about today and “the past.” Attached to a litany of complaints energizing the current talks is the lingering question of welfare reform and other policy matters, and, as ever, the devolved

government's budget.

The budget request – it's really a demand – for a \$3.3 billion bailout for the North is the latest price that the five executive parties are asking from the British government as the cost of striking a deal and bringing some order to the Stormont government.

The parties have been in largely unproductive talks for ten weeks and the northern Ireland Secretary of State, **Theresa Villiers**, has been reluctant to give the parties an open-ended tenure. While some may claim that the budget and welfare reform lead the list of complaints, it is the ideological battle between the DUP and Sinn Fein, and the contentious parades, flags, and the legacy of past deaths and violence that constitute major obstacles to an agreement.

Christmas is fast upon us and as this is written, nobody at the table is sure if an agreement is even possible.

**Holiday Turkeys Edge Lamb, Goose, Beef** – It may be somewhat different in the nether regions of the Republic, but in the North of Ireland the main course for the recently celebrated Christmas holiday was “by a long shot” that longtime American favorite, turkey. While turkey, the whole bird, is king of the table, more Irish are leaving the carving to others and opting for turkey breasts and boneless fillets. This is a development that was rarely seen or sold a decade ago.

**Irishman Wins Visa Case Against British** – A County Kerry man, **Sean McCarthy**, who is married to **Helena McCarthy Rodriguez**, a Columbian who holds an EU residency card, has spent five years and thousands of euros contending that his wife is entitled under EU rules to travel freely without a visa. The British government said no, echoing Prime Minister Cameron's pledge to limit the number of foreigners.

McCarthy, a man of determination, took the British to court, contending that Mrs. McCarthy should be able to travel freely within the European Union carrying only a residency permit, and is not obliged to present herself every six months to a British diplomatic mission to (in essence) seek permission to travel. McCarthy challenged the law, citing the EU's “Freedom of Movement” within the Union, and took the case to the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg.

McCarthy won his case there, assuring his wife's ability to travel anywhere within the EU. As McCarthy said following the court's decision, “By accepting the existing British ruling I would be betraying the many millions of EU citizens who are in a similar position as us but lack financial muscle to take an action all the way to Europe.” Way to go, Sean.

**Torture Demeans & Hurts USA** – US Supreme Court Justice **Potter Stewart** famously said of hard-core pornography: “I know it when I see it.” On a different issue, but almost as soul-scorching, is torture, and former US vice president **Dick Cheney's** immense difficulty not only in seeing it but also in conceding that it exists. His full-throated defense of the interrogation tactics used by CIA officers as outlined in the final report of the US Senate's Select Committee on Intelligence was as inelegant as it was untrue. Cheney on torture and the Senate findings: “The report's full of crap.”

Well so is Mr. Cheney, and it's a condition that has existed, at least, since he used his VP clout to ravage CIA files in search of a rationale for the Bush-Cheney war on Iraq. Mr. Cheney was wrong on most things in those pre-invasion shouts of bravado: Remember them? “We'll be greeted as heroes” ... “the oil will pay for our stay there” ... the non-existent weapons of mass destruction ... and his lies and corrupted verbiage that betrayed America and her citizens.

The *National Catholic Reporter* calls torture what it

is: torture, and it says editorially: “The use of torture ... is an indelible stain upon the nation's conscience...” *The Irish Times* said “Somewhere ... between the legalistic documents and the Senate report, we can see the truly corrosive nature of torture. The abuse of the hooded men of Northern Ireland ultimately led to the abuse of the hooded men of Abu Ghraib. It is time to break that chain.”

Cheney's Dec. 14 session with **Chuck Todd** on “Meet The Press” was an exercise in obstruction supported by a series of Cheney myths and self-serving lies by a man who advocated policies that resulted in an unnecessary war and the death and maiming of thousands of young Americans. They deserved better and so did we.

**Honoring Ireland, Serving Humanity** – **Dave Terry** from Blarney, Co. Cork, didn't get to celebrate the recent Christmas at home. For the fifth year out of the last six, he was on foreign soil as a member of GOAL, the Irish charity founded in Dublin in 1977 to serve the poorest of the poor. His mission this Christmas was to help run a GOAL ebola treatment center. Since May of 2014 there have been 1,800 confirmed ebola deaths in Port Loko, Sierra Leone, and the struggle to treat and save the seriously ill goes on.

Dave Terry is a GOAL lifer, having served so far in places like Syria, Iraq, Pakistan, South Sudan, Haiti, and now in Sierra Leone. The days are long and the entertainment and social life is sparse to none, to say the least, but Terry says “there will be plenty of time for holidays when I return to my home on the Aran Isles when I get too old for this job. In the meantime there are many lives to be saved and people to be helped.”

GOAL is an international humanitarian agency dedicated to alleviating the suffering of the poorest of the poor. Non-denominational, non-governmental, non-political, it has spent over a billion dollars on programs in over 50 countries, responding in every humanitarian disaster since 1977. To contact GOAL to donate or for more information, visit them at [goalglobal.org](http://goalglobal.org).

**Memories: Biggest Ever Northern Bank Robbery** – It was by any measure a spectacular robbery, the biggest and boldest caper in terms of bank robberies in British history at the time. It has been estimated (but not yet proven in court) that up to 30 Irish republicans, most likely Sinn Fein operatives or remnants of the provisional Irish Republican Army, planned and successfully executed the Belfast robbery. They escaped with 26.5 million British pounds sterling in December 2004. The money in equivalent American dollars was over \$60 million.

Three months after the robbery the British put in place a major security operation to replace some new 240 million British paper notes from the Northern Bank in an attempt to render the stolen notes worthless. Around that time, some 50,000 unused Northern Bank British pounds were found in a police recreational club toilet. Some called it a prank; police officials say it was an attempt at misdirection.

Charges were brought against two suspects but were dropped in early 2007. A Cork financial adviser was given a five-year suspended sentence for laundering more than 3 million pounds from the robbery. In 2008, a Northern Bank employee became the only person to face trial in the huge bank heist. In 2008 he was cleared of all charges. Some 20 years later, the robbery remains unsolved, and nobody has yet to serve a day in prison for playing a role in the heist.

**Own a Piece of the Emerald Isle** – The problem is one that has haunted Ireland: It is the least wooded place in Europe. In the North of Ireland, at best, only 3 percent of native woodland is left. While the European Union woodland average is around 34 percent, it would take Ireland some 80 years to reach that percentage level, even with the work local government and charities are doing.

**Lyn Nelson**, a native of the North Coast of Ireland, had an idea that natives and visitors alike might want to own a little piece of Ireland, and at the same time help to protect and conserve the country's native landscape. Thus was born an enterprise called Emerald Heritage, which hopes to use funds raised (not by government grants) to preserve and enhance Irish woodlands through restoration and expansion.

Nelson and a friend and colleague, **John Langlois**, teamed up with Emerald Heritage looking to “involve the community, children, volunteers, and land owners to come and plant trees and take pride of their very own plot of land. We already owned land in the beautiful area of the Glens of Antrim,” she said, “and we realized that we could make a difference with the public's help. Together we can ensure that this valuable natural resource will never be destroyed by developers, thus assuring its conservation for future generations.”

The Emerald Heritage has recently teamed up with the Ulster Historical Foundation, a Belfast-based charity. To learn more about Emerald Heritage and their goals, visit them at [emerald-heritage.com](http://emerald-heritage.com).

**American Nuns Grade Better Than Expected** – I spent ten years in school in Somerville staffed by the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Boston. Those were good years when I was learning how to grow up and coming together with women, who, like my mother, taught me to read and gave me the gift of passion

for reading. I owe them and my mother, **Anne Elizabeth Flaherty O'Donnell**, a debt that I can never repay, nor ever be casual about. I stayed with the good sisters until I left as a teenager to enlist in the Marine Corps. But their lessons are never far away.

Fast track to the present. When I first saw the news several years ago about the “Apostolic Visitations,” or whatever those inquisitional chats were supposed to be about, I worried about quiet **Sister Padraic** and her colleagues and about how they might fend off the male big shots who were going to come knocking. I thought, “Why are these purple-clad mandarins coming to cause problems for the hardest-working and most straight-forward volunteers in today's Catholic Church. Why?”

After reading much, not all, of the report headed up by **Cardinal Joao Braz de Aviz**, and noting the cordial content of the exchange between the sisters and the prelate, it is clear that my worst fears went pleasantly unrealized. There were no criticisms, no references to secular agendas or the like; peace and reconciliation were in the air, and in the report. There is still some fine-tuning to be done by the largest and respected of the sisters' leadership organizations, but the presence of the two nuns, **Sisters Millea and Holland**, bore witness to detente and a clear recognition of the critically important role of the nuns in the Catholic Church's social justice mission.

**A New Year's Gift from the Clinton Library** – What a delightful gift from one of the Clintons who is not running for anything. The Clinton Presidential Library and Museum (I think that's its name) has released a research treasure trove of interviews by friends, key staffers, appointees, and others close to former **President Bill Clinton**. I spent far too much time wallowing (a Nixon word) in the Bill Clinton persona as seen by those closest to him. What I found most appealing are the interviews of **Nancy Soderberg and Tony Lake**, who did much of the heavy lifting in giving buoyancy to the Irish peace process.

The 134 interviews released in November as part of the Clinton Presidential History Project by the Miller Center at the University of Virginia is an insider's look at events as recollected by the principals without artifice and no axes to grind. In a word or two – good stuff, neat, and a wonderful way to open the New Year. Certainly better than anything you will read in **Maureen Dowd's** saintly space.

## RANDOM CLIPPINGS

**Michael O'Leary's** Ryanair couldn't buy Aer Lingus and it seems that neither could International Airlines group (British Air & Iberia), which made a serious offer and was spurned by Ireland's premier Irish carrier. ... Is there still some life in the Narrow Water Bridge proposal as a link and a living symbol between the six counties and the Republic? ... Sinn Fein keeps saying “no” to suggestions that its elected MPs could take their seats at Westminster if things get tight. ... Speaking of Ryanair's O'Leary, he said on TV that “humility is a wonderful trait” after noting that it took him 25 years to get it. ... By next summer, Ireland's National Library will have nearly 1,100 parishes going back 300 years digitized and available on the internet. ... Things could be going a lot better with more than 600 interface incidents recorded in NI in the past 8 months.

Ireland, according to the Global Property Index, is the fastest growing property market in the world. If true, what happens when it gets a second wind? ... The rosy scenario crowd is predicting that 1,800 jobs will be created as part of an all-Ireland drive to promote Irish design. From God's lips. ... After a five-year campaign for recognition, Irish travellers will soon be granted ethnic minority status in Ireland. ... **John Carroll**, the hippest media observer in Boston, is set to join WBUR as commentator and senior media analyst. Welcome, John. ... It's time to cut back for **Emily Rooney**, longtime host of WGBH's Greater Boston show. She will continue to host Beat the Press. ... Just in time for Christmas: Waterford Crystal's pensioned workers will share in the \$240 million pension deal made with the Irish government. About time.

Birmingham, home in Britain to many Irish, will de-fund its St. Patrick's Festival after 2015 unless paraders come up with \$30,000. ... A senior Labour member of the Dail is claiming he would earn more as a plumber than the \$125,000 he makes as a politician. I hope his constituents help him out of his low-pay position. ... **Sinead O'Connor** has asked **Gerry Adams** to support her application to be a member of Sinn Fein. Gerry noted she had a probationary period first. ... Cloud computing and storage giant EMC is looking at a Cork location for a new data center. The Mass-based company has 3,000 workers in Ireland. ... Next for Irish care homes and senior assisted living is the possible installation of surveillance systems, aka cameras, etc., to protect vulnerable patients. ... The pope's birthday gift to Rome's homeless is free sleeping bags. OMG, has anyone checked out the Vatican water lately? What will the Curia say? ... Another discovery: hundreds of millions found tucked away inside the Vatican. So take a pause on Peter's Pence while they check the books.

A Happy New Year to all our readers and to friends on both sides of the water.

# BIR ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

## For Sean Gannon, ‘Music was something he could never really lose ... and when it was good, he could put away his worries and just play his heart out.’

BY SEAN SMITH  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

The Irish music community in Boston, and well beyond, joined in grieving the death late last year of Sean Gannon, a member of one of the area's most well-loved musical families.

Gannon, a Dorchester native, died on Nov. 26 at the age of 46. He was the son of John Gannon, a Connemara native who emigrated to the US in 1959 and brought along with him his masterful accordion playing—a skill he shared not only with Sean but also with his younger son, Colm. Individually and collectively, the three Gannons became stalwarts of Boston's Irish music scene, especially at The Burren, where over the past decade Sean and John anchored a weekly session.

On the Sunday before Christmas, John returned to The Burren session for the first time since Sean's death, Colm along with him. “Sean was my go-to guy; he was the sounding board for me,” said Colm, who moved to Ireland in the 1990s but would join his father and brother at The Burren during his visits home. “We never butted heads. A lot of my approach to playing came from sitting around the house playing with him. Sean had this wonderful way of simplifying the complicated things; he'd compare it to something else in life that had nothing to do with music, and

it would make complete sense. “And he was the same way for a lot of other musicians, especially the younger ones who were still getting the hang of the music. He taught them to look past the notes, when to make that D note scream out, and when to pull back a bit.”

Sean was a big, burly presence at musical gatherings, his jet-black hair framing a broad face and prominent eyebrows that often conveyed the characteristic intensity with which he invested the music. But however formidable he seemed — “strong as an ox,” a friend recalls — Sean displayed a deft touch on accordion, and a disarming smile and laugh that bespoke the warmth and affection he felt for the people in his life, especially his family, and in particular his daughter Niamh.

At the same time, friends say, there was no mistaking the passion that Sean had — not simply for playing music, but for playing it the way he devoutly believed it should be played.

“His playing was lyrical, and he really poured his heart and soul into it,” said the fiddler George Keith, a frequent musical partner of Sean who became one of his closest friends. “It's not easy to do. It's far more common to get obsessive about technical details, and forget you're supposed to be playing music — or to make the other



Sean Gannon “poured his heart and soul” into playing traditional Irish music, says a friend.

Kieran Jordan photo

common mistake that just because you *think* you're playing ‘music’ you are succeeding at communicating.

“Sean was one of the relatively rare few I've met who could convincingly do both. He cared intensely about both getting the details right and making it musical; if either were missing, he'd be disappointed.”

“Sean was the real deal; you'd hear him play and just say to yourself, ‘He's got it,’” said Kathleen Conneely, another close friend of many years. “He grew up around the music, was nurtured by it, and then he picked it up and taught him-

self — and it had that special Connemara feel to it, that style and that rhythm. You know it takes a very special person to be able to do that, especially as well as he did.”

Traditional music was practically a family trait on his father's side, Colm noted — John's mother and brothers were musicians, too — so for Sean to have developed a curiosity, and then a strong interest, in it as well was hardly surprising. John provided guidance rather than instruction in the conventional sense: “Sean and I learned the music naturally, through osmosis — a much older way of doing it that really isn't done so much in Ireland anymore, and certainly not here in the US. Dad was matter-of-fact about it: ‘If you don't get it, well, you'll be good at something else.’”

Along with John's insights and advice about the accordion, however, came a firm directive. “Dad would say, ‘Never play it unless you have pride in it,’” said Colm, who went on to become a full-time performing and touring musician. “Sean definitely believed that. He looked at everything, including music, quite deeply.”

“He played with so much heart and exemplified a tradition-bearer who recognized the tradition as a living one that was constantly evolving, while paying due respect to those who came before,” said Amanda

Cavanaugh, who began playing with Sean while she was in her teens and came to regard him as a mentor as well as a friend. “Sean trusted his instincts when it came to music and he taught me to trust in myself as a musician — and also to have a sense of humor and not take music too seriously, because music is meant to be enjoyable at its core. I am eternally grateful for those lessons.”

That sense of humor to which Cavanaugh refers was an important, if perhaps unlikely, component of an intense personality. For Keith, whose roots were vastly different from those of Sean, it emerged as a means to strengthen what had been a largely music-driven rapport. “He used to slag me quite a bit for being the stereotypical computer-nerd, and it took me a while to feel safe slugging him back, but when it happened one afternoon at The Burren it caught him completely off guard. I can't remember a single thing that was said, but I do remember that every little jibe he tossed at me, I would spin right back to him even better. We got on marvelously after that.”

Sean was not a full-time musician like his brother; he had a plumbing and heating business that demanded a lot of his time and energy, and sometimes took a physical toll that made playing accordion a

(Continued on page 12)

## BCMFest 2015 to include ‘Women in Trad’ concert

The experiences of women through the ages — happy, sad, humorous, scary, uplifting — will be the theme of “Women in Trad,” the BCMFest Nightcap finale concert for the 12th annual BCMFest (Boston's Celtic Music Fest) on Sat., Jan. 10.



A grassroots celebration of local Irish, Scottish, Cape Breton, and other Celtic music, BCMFest traditionally takes place over two days at venues in Harvard Square; this year, the festival will expand to a third day, Sun., Jan. 11, with “The BCMFest Academy,” an afternoon of Celtic music classes taught by festival artists.

BCMFest 2015 kicks off on Fri., Jan. 9, with the “Roots and Branches” concert at Club Passim, with Jenna Moynihan; Flynn Cohen, Matt Heaton and Danny Noveck; and Laurel Martin, Mark Roberts and Kieran Jordan. Also that night will be the Boston Urban Ceilidh at The Atrium (50 Church Street), featuring participatory and social dances from the Irish, Scottish, and Cape Breton traditions with live music.

The festival continues on Saturday with children and family-oriented entertainment in the morning at Club Passim, followed by concerts and participatory events at Passim and First Parish Church (3 Church St.) — the latter is also the venue for the BCMFest Nightcap, which begins at 7:30 p.m.

“Women in Trad” was conceived by the all-female Celtic band Long Time Courting (Shannon Heaton, Liz Simmons, Katie McNally, and Val Thompson), which will serve as the “house band” for an assortment of guest stars performing selections that relate to the life and times of women: songs and tales of love and heartbreak, heroines and villains, daughters and mothers, supernatural

beings and poets, and much more.

Guest performers will include: Scottish Fish; Rory and Josie Coyne; Laura Cortese and the Dance Cards; Mariel Vandersteel; Flynn Cohen; Jenna Moynihan and Mairi Chaimbeul; Emerald Rae; Will Woodson and Eric McDonald; Bridget Fitzgerald; Laurel Martin; Rebecca McGowan; and Mary MacGillivray and Judy MacKenzie.

“The idea for the show started as a way to feature female performers in the Boston area,” explains McNally, who plays fiddle with Long Time Courting, “but we realized that it wasn't necessary to create a special event or space for this — as it is, women are a fundamental and commensurate part of the Boston Celtic music scene.”

“Following the chronology of a woman's life, ‘Woman in Trad’ is a show that narrates the ways in which women are celebrated in Celtic music: as maidens, mothers, warriors, and sailors.”

Other acts slated to appear at BCMFest 2015 include: Nancy Bell; Adriana Ciccone Trio; Joey Abarta & Nathan Gourley; Alba's Edge; Boston Scottish Fiddle Club; Ceol Corvus; The Coyne Family; Audrey Budington & Clayton Clemetson; Liz & Dan Faiella; Elizabeth & Ben Anderson; Fódhla; Fresh Haggis; Patrick Hutchinson & Dan Accardi; Jackie O'Riley School of Irish Dance and the Mad for Trad Ensemble; Hayley Hewitt; Highland Dance Boston; Jigs & Saws; Molly Pinto Madigan; Oran Mor; Royal Scottish Country Dance Society; The Rushy Mountain Oysters; Soulsha; Lindsay Straw; The Vox Hunters; and Colleen White & Sean Smith.

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.

For ticket information and reservations, updates on BCMFest 2015 performers and events, and other details about the festival, see [passim.org/bcmfest](http://passim.org/bcmfest).

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# Noone's "Second Girl" in world premiere at The Huntington

By R. J. DONOVAN  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

To find yourself preparing for the world premiere of a play you've written is a major undertaking. To find yourself preparing simultaneously for the world premiere of *two* plays you've written is pretty much unheard of.

Yet that's where Ronan Noone is at the moment. His new play, "The Second Girl," has its world premiere at the Huntington Theatre from Jan. 16 to Feb. 21. Four months later, his "Scenes from an Adultery" will have its world premiere from June 6 to June 21 at New Repertory Theater in Watertown. When the significance of this achievement is brought to Noone's, he says modestly, "I'm very lucky."

From "The Lepers of Baile Baiste" and "Brendan" to "The Blowin' of Baile Gall," "The Atheist," "Little Black Dress," and "Compass Rose," his award-winning plays have been produced from Boston to New York, Los Angeles, Edinburgh, and London.

He wrote "The Second Girl" in 2013 and introduced it as a staged reading during last winter's Breaking Ground Festival at the Huntington. Set against a backdrop of the Eugene O'Neill classic "Long Day's Journey into Night," the play takes place in the downstairs world of the Tyrone family kitchen in August of 1912.

The three characters, all immigrants, include servant Cathleen O'Leary (played by MacKenzie Meehan), the "second girl," who actually appears in the O'Neill drama, plus two

characters mentioned in the original play but never seen — servant Bridget O'Sullivan (played by Kathleen McElfresh) and chauffeur Jack Smythe (played by Christopher Donahue). All three explore the tragedy and triumph of belonging in their new world.

A graduate of the University of Galway, Ronan Noone emigrated from Ireland (Clifden) in 1994. Today, he and his wife and their two young daughters reside on the South Shore. Keeping a full work schedule, he is also an assistant professor in the Playwriting Program at Boston University, an Artistic Associate at The Vineyard Playhouse on Martha's Vineyard, and a Next Voices Playwriting Fellow at New Rep.

He recently made time during a very busy day to talk about the Huntington play and more. Here's a condensed look at our conversation.

**Q.** What was the creative spark in your writing "The Second Girl" as an exploration of the servants' world in "Long Day's Journey"?

**A.** There's a line in "Long Day's Journey into Night" where O'Neill refers to Cathleen as amiable, ignorant, clumsy, and possessed of a dense, well-meaning stupidity. I think I wanted to redeem that. I don't think somebody gets on a boat and comes over here possessed of a dense, well-meaning stupidity.

**Q.** Talk about that a bit.

**A.** I understand where he's coming from. There's a certain self-hatred in terms of being Irish, considering all that's



Ronan Noone's "The Second Girl" will have its world premiere at The Huntington Theatre from Jan. 16 to Feb. 21.

gone on in that play. The fact is that when you leave your home — and I don't know if this is often talked about, and I think it's what I'm trying to get at in the play at times — is that you not just overcompensate, but there's a particular guilt, I think, in the idea that you have left everyone and everything behind and begin to start out fresh. The idea of starting out fresh is wonderful — the sun is shining — but you carry a weight, a story that oftentimes you don't tell, but you bring with you. Makes you who you are . . . that's something I wanted to unravel . . . It's not all just pure optimism. You have to carry something that develops you into a stronger person — for some. And others, as you know — from the Irish who get left behind and end up in corners or streets in a foreign country — should never have had to get on a boat and try to survive.

**Q.** Campbell Scott starred in "The Atheist" at the Huntington in 2007, but for this play, he's directing. What has your process been like in working together?

**A.** There's been a constant tweaking and changing. Every morning in general . . . Campbell and myself work over Skype. He will go through it line by line, piece by piece, looking to understand, and asking me to look deeper into particular facets of character, always trying to pull out the truth as much possible . . . That's been fascinating.

**Q.** You must have developed a nice shorthand with each other by now.

**A.** His appreciation for the play and love of the play really brings out more and more effort and a deeper sense of imagination from me when it goes back to rewriting.

**Q.** I understand you agree with the philosophy that you're not a real playwright until you've got 15 years of doing it under your belt. So how's it going?

**A.** (With a laugh) Tom Murphy said that quote a long time ago and I understand what he means. Every play carries the idea of what you've learned in a previous one. But I think each time you do it, you're trying to get just a little bit closer to understanding humanity.

**Q.** Does your schedule allow you to get back to Ireland very often?

**A.** Everybody in my family is there. I went back in April. It was fantastic. We traveled through Dublin, into Westport, back to Clifden and up through Galway. It was wonderful to

see people I hadn't seen in years. And also to bring back my girls. There's a warmth there. I felt terribly welcomed back to Ireland.

**Q.** It must be fascinating to see your homeland through the eyes of your young daughters, since they were both born here.

**A.** It's exotic, isn't it? To them, they see themselves as, they're "kind of Irish" and I'm "fully Irish."

**Q.** The Boston theater community has enthusiastically embraced you as one of their own. How does that kind of success translate in Ireland?

**A.** I think you have to work harder. Let me put it this way: If I had started out in Ireland, I don't imagine I would have succeeded. And you know what, even if you look at other Irish playwrights that you've known along the way, a lot of them found their home in an English theater. And from there they were endorsed and springboarded into a more world stage. So whether Ireland waits for playwrights to be springboarded that way, or whether it's a closed shop, I don't know because I'm not in their scene as much. But I've never had a play done in Ireland. That's another thing, too. (With a sly laugh) Maybe I have a chip on my shoulder about that.

R. J. Donovan is Editor and Publisher of *onstageboston.com*.

"The Second Girl," Jan. 16-Feb. 21 at The Huntington's Calderwood Pavilion, 527 Tremont St., Boston. Tickets: 617-266-0800 or [huntingtontheatre.org](http://huntingtontheatre.org).



The first month of 2015 will include local appearances by the duo of Maeve Gilchrist and Nic Gareiss and traditional Irish "super group" The Pride of New York.

## JANUARY CONCERT SCHEDULE

### Burren to host The Pride of New York

Appearances by all-star quartet The Pride of New York and the fiddle-feet duo of Brittany Haas and Nic Gareiss highlight Boston-area Celtic music concerts this month.

The Pride of New York, which plays at The Burren Backroom series January 17 at 7:30 p.m., comprises Joanie Madden (flute, whistle), Billy McComiskey (accordion), Brian Conway (fiddle), and Brendan Dolan (keyboards), all individually accomplished musicians with a multitude of recordings — and a few All-Ireland competition titles — to their credit. The band, which released its highly acclaimed debut CD in 2009, champions the style of Irish traditional music that emerged in New York City over decades of immigration, as represented by notable figures like Martin Mulhaire, Sean McGlynn, Jack Coen, Joe Burke, Paddy O'Brien, Larry Redican, Tom Doherty, and Charlie Mulvihill — who wrote or are associated with many of the tunes on the album. For information about tickets and other details, see [burren.com/Backroom-Series.html](http://burren.com/Backroom-Series.html).

Haas and Gareiss will perform on

Jan. 18 at 2 p.m. in Carriage House Violins of Johnson String Instrument in Newton Upper Falls, an event presented by notloB Music. A native of California now living in Nashville, Haas is one of the more active and influential roots-oriented fiddlers of her generation, at home in Appalachian/old-time, bluegrass, Celtic and other folk/acoustic settings; her collaborations include Alasdair Fraser and Natalie Haas (her sister), Tony Trischka, Bruce Molsky, and comedian-banjo player Steve Martin. Gareiss is a one-man percussion dance revolution, blending numerous influences and styles from Ireland, Appalachia and elsewhere, imbued with expression and ebullience; he's performed with The Chieftains, Dervish and Liz Carroll, among many others, and appeared locally at such events as "A Christmas Celtic Sojourn" and BCMFest.

Tickets are extremely limited for this event; go to [eventbrite.com/o/notlob-music-presents-673083315/](http://eventbrite.com/o/notlob-music-presents-673083315/) for reservations and information.

— SEAN SMITH

## RIP Sean Gannon: He taught musicians 'to look past the notes'

(Continued from page 11)  
challenging, even painful task, according to friends. But he was steadfast in his commitment to music, they note.

"He may not have played music full time for a living," agreed Colm, "but he still played music full time."

Though happiest playing at sessions and other more informal gatherings, Sean did take to the concert stage, too. Cavanaugh recalled recruiting him to play with her to accompany Kieran Jordan and her dancers during the 2007 "St. Patrick's Celtic Sojourn" show at Somerville Theater, a far larger venue than either of them were accustomed to.

"Kieran took a chance on us, and I think both Sean and I were a bit nervous as we weren't used to playing on such a big stage," she said, "but we really

clicked with the dancers and with each other. We got to play a duo set together, and we played some tunes we learned from his father. One of them was 'The Crosses of Annagh,' in A major, which is an unusual setting, and to this day is one of my favorite tunes to play."

"For Sean, music was much more than simply 'fun': It was joy, purpose, history, art, and elevation," said Keith. "Music was a language he understood very well, and he loved the language's poetry."

"There was a lot about Sean's life that didn't go the way he wanted it to, but music was something he could never really lose, that didn't cost any money — once you had the instrument — and when it was good, he could put away his worries and just play his heart out."

## 'Passionate musician, great heart ... a streak of madness'

Boston-area Irish dance performer, choreographer, and instructor Kieran Jordan offers a reflection on the death of Sean Gannon last month:

This is a piece I wrote for my students — many of whom danced to the music of Sean Gannon. This is a little tribute to the Sean I knew.

Sean played for many of my workshops and events at Boston Percussive Dance, including our grand opening party there in 2009. He and George Keith were my go-to duo for local projects, and we collaborated on many concerts and festivals, and on the filming of my video "Secrets of the Sole." Sean loved sean-nós dancing. He loved talking about it, watching it, and playing for it. His music, of course, was perfect for it: a river winding around the beats of the feet — urging, lifting, following — soulful and deep, or chuckling along for what he called "hard steps, easy steps, or joke steps. I love them all," he said.

Sean felt everything deeply and was not afraid to talk about feelings. He was great at reading a person or situation, and at naming things as they are, with humor and accuracy. He worked on plumbing jobs at our house; my husband Vincent painted the lettering and designs on his plumbing van; and we had memorable chats around the kitchen table. We shared CDs, tried to find the words to describe our favorite tunes, and both admitted to liking sweet, sad music. I feel lucky to have known this side of Sean.

He was a passionate musician who had great heart and a streak of madness. You could hear all of that in the growl of his accordion — and the spirit of Connemara and Boston combined.

As the saying goes, you can't play the blues if you haven't lived the blues. Sean did both, in his way. He was wonderfully human and wonderfully Irish — spirited, funny, sensitive, vulnerable. He will be remembered so fondly by us all.

# Fear Itself: Gabriel Chevallier, and Patrick MacGill, and the Great War

By THOMAS O'GRADY  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Just in time for the centenary of the Great War of 1914-18 (World War I), the publication in English of Gabriel Chevallier's novel "Le Peur" (1930) is drawing deserved attention. Translated by Malcolm Imrie as "Fear" and available in the handsome New York Review of Books Classics series, the novel is clearly infused with Chevallier's personal experience as an infantryman in the French Army during the Great War. Presenting the life of a soldier through extended passages inscribing equally the physical and the psychological trauma not just of combat but also of waiting for combat, it is a novel of unblinking witness.

Unlike Chevallier himself, who was "called up" to service, his protagonist, Jean Dartemont, enlisted in the army "against all my convictions, but still of my own free will—not to fight but out of curiosity; to see." Dartemont is an educated young man, an intellectual for whom war is initially a phenomenon to study. About a third of the way through the novel, however, after he has been hospitalized with shrapnel wounds, his capacity to *contemplate* the nature of and the *implications* of his experience in the trenches, the dugouts, and the battlefields leads to a public admission that is also a pivot point for the "meaning" of the overall narrative. At the hospital, he is provoked by the nurses who insistently ask him what he *did* at the front line: "I marched day and night without knowing where I was going. I did exercises, I had inspections, I dug trenches, I carried barbed wire, I carried sandbags, did look-out duty. . . ." When prodded by the nurses to elaborate, he clarifies: "Yes, that's all. . . Or rather, no, that's nothing. Would you like to know the chief occupation of war, the only one that matters: I WAS AFRAID."

For the willfully self-deluding nurses, Dartemont speaks utter blasphemy, but the patent truthfulness of his admission colors the rest of the novel after he returns to combat duty. Eventually, he realizes that the only way to conquer his own cowardice is to expose himself wantonly to the inevitability of dying in this transparently futile war.

Reading Chevallier's novel recently, I inevitably thought of an earlier novel of the Great War by Donegal-born man-of-letters Patrick MacGill (who happens to be buried in Fall River, Massachusetts). MacGill's most enduring contribution to the

literature of the Great War may well be his three autobiographical narratives – "The Amateur Army" (1915), "The Red Horizon" (1916), and "The Great Push" (1916) – written in the very midst of his experience as a Rifleman (that is, a Private) in the London Irish Rifles regiment. But he also published two Great War-centered novels – "The Brown Brethren" (1917) and "Fear!" (1920) – after his military service ended when he was wounded in the Battle of Loos in September of 1915.

Unlike most of MacGill's fiction, "Fear!" is not an "Irish" novel *per se*: the narrator-protagonist is Henry Ryder, a barber from a nondescript English village who is conscripted into an unnamed regiment of the British Expeditionary Force and shipped out to France as the War continues to decimate the population of able-bodied Englishmen. While the novel obviously borrows from MacGill's own experience on the Western Front, it is really much more generic than specific in its detailed descriptions of night raids and marches, trenches and dugouts and billets, coarse camaraderie and lonely despair.

As historian David Taylor rightly recognizes in "Memory, Narrative and the Great War" (2013), MacGill's autobiographical trilogy traces an arc of "disillusionment" with war. This arc continues through "Fear!" and the frontispiece to the novel includes a note headed "What This Story is About": "Patrick MacGill has been able to write about war as war actually is. . . . [T]he realism of 'Fear' will bring home to all the conviction that such things must never be allowed to happen again." While MacGill depicts many aspects of war in the novel, the exclamatory title foretells that its central subject will involve his extended revisiting of a motif he had introduced in the opening chapter of "The Red Horizon," set on the ship transporting him and his fellow London Irish Rifles across the English channel early in 1915: "What will it be like, but above all, how shall I conduct myself in the trenches? Maybe I shall be afraid—cowardly. But no!" This question becomes an obsession for Private Henry Ryder.

As a novel, "Fear!" contains a lot of filler. Chapters and long passages detailing basic training at Salisbury Plain, sketching the various "characters" who populate the rank and file of Ryder's company and section, dramatizing life behind the lines in *estaminets* and billets, and inscribing the abrupt shift from enervating tedium to frenetic action read more like vignettes

than as contributing elements to a distilled storyline. What emerges from the baggy plot, however, is a compelling meditation—Henry Ryder's, but really Patrick MacGill's—on *fear*.

Not surprisingly, MacGill's Ryder experiences an "epiphany" strikingly similar to that of Chevallier's Dartemont regarding the short odds of dying in combat. But Ryder's perspective is complicated by a story told by one of his seasoned section mates of the execution by firing squad of a deserter: "I felt as if I were the guilty man myself, that I was guilty of the failing for which L. . . died." For all of their similarities – and there are many, underscoring the universality of the experience of the Great War not just for British and French soldiers but, implicitly, for those on the other side of the barbed wire divide as well, the Germans – MacGill's and Chevallier's novels diverge on the basis of this incident, resulting in very different narrative resolutions.

Chevallier's Dartemont actually survives his wanton rush to combat and he survives the War altogether, which allows him by way of his memoirsque narrative to bear unvarnished witness to the brutal reality of war. The final chapter of Henry Ryder's story is "Written by Another Hand" – a coda-like conclusion by which MacGill allows the reader to infer Ryder's fate after, as he puts it matter-of-factly, "I have run away from the battle." Earlier, Ryder had parsed fear into three categories. The first is "jelly fear," which "slackens the guts, numbs the brain and takes the stuffing from the spine." The second is "reckless fear": "What the devil does it matter now? You don't care! You stop at nothing! Forward! and let me get at them! Six inches cold steel, six feet cold clay! Bullets fly, shells burst! Let them!" The third category is "calculating fear": "You are quite calm, a normal being, weighing the pros and cons of the occasion. Able to fit your movements to your mood, you advance, consider, take cover, study your environment and obey orders. But this moment is not lasting." Clearly, Ryder has succumbed to that first fear in the manner foreshadowed by his section mate's story of the executed deserter.

Yet, finding himself in the ruins of an old church, Ryder looks to a damaged crucifix for guidance to resolve his dilemma. Left at a loss – Christ at least had a mission "to die for the sins of men" – he arrives at a simple understanding of how his cowardice relates to the overall



Rifleman Patrick MacGill's autobiographical trilogy traces an arc of "disillusionment" with war.

devaluing of life and humanity that, as an increasingly transparent "war of attrition," the Great War clearly amounted to: "It matters not – nothing matters. I'll die, anyway. Who fires the bullet doesn't matter. I'm going back to the firing line. . . I'm going back."

Ultimately, that devaluing – or its implied opposite, a *revaluing* of life and humanity – is at the heart of both Patrick MacGill's "Fear!" and Gabriel Chevallier's "Fear!": "such things must never be allowed to happen again," indeed. In the midst of reading these two relentlessly bleak novels, I happened also to pick up "The Missing of the Somme" (1994), a meditation on remembrance by Geoff Dyer. He, too, engages with the issues of fear and cowardice, musing that "Perhaps the real heroes of 1914-18 . . . are those who refused to obey and to fight, who actively rejected the passivity forced upon them by the war, who reasserted their right

not to suffer, not to have things done to them." He then goes on to describe how the family of one Private A. Ingham of the Manchester Regiment, who died on 1st December 1916, had believed for years that he had simply "died of wounds." But when his father was finally informed that he had been executed for desertion or cowardice, he insisted on this inscription being added to the military headstone marking his grave in the French village of Bailleulmont:

SHOT AT DAWN  
ONE OF THE FIRST  
TO ENLIST  
A WORTHY SON  
OF HIS FATHER

I believe that both MacGill and Chevallier would salute that gesture.

Thomas O'Grady is Director of Irish Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston

## They keep on coming to the Cliffs of Moher

Visitor numbers at the Cliffs of Moher in County Clare jumped 12.5 percent during 2014, breaking the one million mark for the first time. Figures released on Dec. 29 by the Clare County Council showed that 1,075,000 visitors toured the visitor centre – an increase of more than 115,000 over 2013. It's the fourth straight year that the figure has gone up.

"A number of positive factors combined during 2014 to drive visitor numbers over the one million mark," Katherine Webster, Director of Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience. "New routes and increased access into Shannon Airport, the launch by Fáilte Ireland of the Wild Atlantic Way on which the Cliffs of Moher are a Signature Discovery point, the popularity of the 12-kilometre Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk, and the Cliffs of Moher's close links with Brian Ború during the millennial anniversary of his death have all contributed to the visitor number increase during 2014. "Meanwhile, strong performances from the core North American, UK, German and French markets have added to the growth seen in newer markets such as Australia, South Africa, China and South America," added Webster.

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## CD Reviews

By SEAN SMITH

**Dan Possumato & Friends, "Tunes Inside"** • As with his 2010 release, "Pulling Out the Stops," Possumato – recently returned to his native Pittsburgh after a long sojourn that included a stop in Portland, Ore. – has put together one of those albums that seems more about sharing music than making an artistic statement. It's amiable, low-key, and welcoming, much like the (slightly doctored) pub façade on the CD cover, as Possumato enlists a bevy of accomplices to join him and his melodeon and accordion for a selection of mainly traditional Irish tunes; appearing at various junctures over the course of the album's 14 tracks are fiddlers Kevin Burke, Vince



Burns and Julie Langan, pianist Teresa Baker, tenor banjoist Brian McGrath, and Mick Mulcrone on bouzouki and flute.

The sets, generally played in unison with minimal arrangement and small combinations of musicians (usually trios or quartets), include session standards like "The Cameronian/John Brennan's/The Boys of Malin" and "Old Pigeon on the Gate/All Around the Room/Red Haired Lass" as well as more recent in-the-tradition-style compositions by Michael McGoldrick ("Trip to Herve's") and Frankie Gavin ("The Doberman's Wallet"), in addition to Possumato himself – his "The Derryloaghan" follows up the Sliabh Luachra polka "Johnny O'Leary's."

For variety, Possumato and mates also take up Quebecois fiddler Andre Brunet's "Station Master's Waltz," a pair of Newfoundland tunes and "Da Eye Wifey," a leisurely but bewitching reel by Iain McLeod, formerly with the Scots groove-trad band Shooglenifty. Contributing to the session-like feel of the album are two songs led by Mulcrone, "Willie Taylor," and "Leave Her Johnny" (the CD's ratio of one song for seven tune sets is about on par for the average session). The concluding track, Phil Cunningham's "Hut on Staffin Island," somewhat breaks with form, as Kathy Fallon plays an extensive, and lovely, solo guitar intro before Possumato, Burns and tenor banjoist Bruce Molyneaux pick up the tempo.

Of note is that the CD lists seven recording locations, five in the US, two in Ireland. It's a tribute to Possumato and his friends that the leisurely, cordial feel is

there throughout the album. Truly a moveable feast.

**Nicola Benedetti, "Homecoming: A Scottish Fantasy"** • Her name might suggest otherwise, but Benedetti is a Scots native, the daughter of an Italian father and Scottish mother. She's also a highly touted classical violinist who won BBC Young Musician of the Year honors and has seven albums to her credit. This new work is an attempt to merge her classical music back-

ground with her Scottish heritage, which is not as unlikely an undertaking as one might suppose, given the influence that Scottish folk music and its fiddle tradition have had on classical composers like Felix Mendelssohn and Max Bruch – the latter of whom wrote the piece that comprises the first part of the album (and gives it its name) and is performed by Benedetti with the Scottish Symphony Orchestra; they also play settings of three Robert Burns songs.



It's the third, and last, portion that is the most interesting, however, as Benedetti collaborates with worthies like accordionist-pianist Phil Cunningham, Gaelic singer Julie Fowlis, fiddlers Aly Bain and Duncan Chisholm, and flutist Michael McGoldrick on traditional and traditional-style material. She and Cunningham do fabulous justice to the well-known (and occasionally outrageous) J. Scott Skinner "Hurricane Set," and – along with Bain – lovingly render Cunningham's air "The Gentle Light That Wakes Me." The piece de resistance is a medley of Gaelic mouth music songs and tunes, for most of which Benedetti takes a back seat to Fowlis's delightfully clear, precise vocals (her husband Eamon Doorley supplies bouzouki) and the power trio of Cunningham, Chisholm and McGoldrick.

Following another Fowlis tour de force, on "Coisich a Ruin (Walk My Beloved)," the album concludes by bringing back the orchestra for that old Caledonian chestnut "Bonnie Banks of Loch Lomond." Although Benedetti's virtuosity is squarely in the spotlight here as she whirls through a series of variations on the melody, it all comes as something of a letdown; you rather wish she'd have forgotten all about the high road and the low road, and just quit while she was ahead.

## Books on tap for 2015

The *Irish Times* anticipates a plentiful year ahead for biographies and memoirs:

### Biography

Andrew Wilson's "Alexander McQueen" (Simon and Schuster, February) explores the source of the fashion designer's genius and the links between his dark work and troubled personal life.

Peter Ackroyd's "Alfred Hitchcock" (Chatto, April) turns the lens back on the famously controlling master of suspense.

"Becoming Steve Jobs" (Sceptre, March), by Brent Schlender and Rick Tetzeli, sheds new light on the Apple tech wizard and his innovations.

Sonia Purnell's "The Private Wars of Clementine Churchill" (Aurum Press, May) chronicles the life of an extraordinary woman and the influence she had on her prime-minister husband, Winston, during World War II.

"Young Eliot" (Jonathan Cape, February), by Robert Crawford, marks the 50th anniversary of the death of T.S. Eliot.

"The Last Blasket King" (Collins Press, April), by Gerald Hayes, tells the story of Pádraig Ó Catháin, known as An Rí, with help from his great-great-granddaughter Eliza Kane.

Matt Cooper's "Tony O'Reilly" (Gill & Macmillan, October) promises a comprehensive and widely sourced assessment of the affairs of one of Ireland's most famous businessmen.

### Memoir

Part memoir, part feminist manifesto, Emer O'Toole's "Girls Will Be Girls" (Orion, February) protests against the "makey-uppy bullshit" of gender conditioning. "The Daughterhood" (Simon and Schuster, February), by Natasha Fennell and the *Irish Times* journalist Róisín Ingle, explores the relationships between mothers and daughters with eight women who want to improve relations before it's too late.

A new memoir from Kevin Myers, "A Single Steadfast Heart" (Lilliput, October), details the writer's childhood and his secondary school days in Leicester.

Kari Rosvall's extraordinary beginnings as a Lebensborn child in the Nazi regime are related in "Nowhere's Child" (Hachette Ireland, March).

The autobiographies of the former *Irish Times* food writer Theodora FitzGibbon are collected in "A Taste of Love" (Gill & Macmillan, April), in which the author brings alive the sights and sounds of 1930s Paris, wartime London and 1950s Rome. The American actor and writer Mindy Kaling's "Why Not Me?" (Ebury, April) is a collection of witty personal essays.

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# Immigration, migration fuel spirit behind Carey's 'North Star' presentation

BY SEAN SMITH  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Two recent CDs by performers with strong ties to the Boston area show the breadth of creativity and imagination in Celtic music today. "Dot the Dragon's Eye," by Hanneke Cassel, was featured in last month's BIR. This month, the focus is on Kyle Carey's "North Star" along with a further exploration of her "Gaelic Americana" songwriting. Carey lived in Cambridge and Gloucester for two-and-a-half years before moving recently to Brooklyn.

Second of two parts.

Kyle Carey's time in Massachusetts was relatively short-lived, but if she hadn't made her home here for that two-and-a-half year stretch, there's a good chance "North Star" would've turned out quite differently.

Carey had moved from Cambridge to Gloucester, where she shared a place with fiddler-singer-songwriter Emerald Rae, and one evening she talked with Rae about the possibility of making a new CD, reciting her "wish list" for the project. A big item on that list was getting Seamus Egan of Solas to serve as producer, but Carey had no idea how she could get in touch with him.

"Seamus doesn't have a website, and he doesn't do social media, so I probably would've had to put a note on Craigslist," quips Carey. "Then Emerald said, 'Oh, you know what? I have his e-mail address. Actually, I think I have his phone number, too.'"

It took a few weeks for Egan to reply to Carey's e-mail (which, according to Carey, began "You don't know me, but...") but he offered to meet with her on his next visit to Boston. "North Star" was under way in earnest, and Carey would find that Egan was all he's been cracked up to be.

"Seamus was wonderful to work with," she says. "He had some good ideas about phrasing in some of the songs, for example, and in general was so helpful

and supportive about what I was trying to accomplish."

It's also worth noting that Carey, like Egan – who was born in Philadelphia of Irish parents and lived in Mayo from age 3 to 14 before returning to the US – has had a fairly nomadic existence. She spent her early years in Alaska, went to Skidmore College in upstate New York, studied elements of Gaelic music and song while living in Cape Breton and the Isle of Skye, and also has had extensive sojourns in Ireland. So perhaps it's no surprise that the experience of having more than one place in one's heart is a recurring theme in Carey's writing, and quite in evidence on "North Star."

An initial impression of the album confirms its American roots: the instrumental backing – particularly Dirk Powell's mandolin and banjo, Ben Walker's guitars and Chico Huff's bass – provides a flavoring of old-timey and bluegrass, and an 'alt-country' feel as well; geographical references in the songs include Charlotte, the Blue Ridge hills, Casper (Wyoming), and Tennessee.

But dig a little deeper – like those Irish and Scots immigrants of yore laboring in the shadow of the Appalachians or out in the heartlands – and you'll find among the lyrics other place names and allusions that point east across the Atlantic: Bantry Bay ("Wind Through Casper"); Connor's Pass, a mountain road in West Kerry ("Nora O'Kane"); the tale of the selchie or seal people ("Wind Through Casper"); even a suggestion of Yeats's "Lake Isle of Innisfree" ("North Star"). Some clues are farther below the surface, as Carey explains in the CD liner notes: We learn that the title track was inspired not only by the selchie legend but by Fermanagh songwriter Mickey MacConnell's "Tinkerman's Daughter," for example, and that the idea for "Wind Through Casper" came to Carey while living not in the west of the US but of Ireland, where she learned that Wyoming had been a terminus for many refugees fleeing the Great Famine.



Kyle Carey's work often draws on influences from traditional music and literary sources.

As befits songs linked to immigration and migration, there's a certain air of restlessness, or impermanence, throughout "North Star." The lyrics speak of traveling across oceans, or mountains, or plains in search of an elusive "better life" – a life enriched by wealth, say, or perhaps love – or watching as others do so, and weighing the consequences of those actions (or lack of them). "What the tide leaves stranded on the shore," concludes the title track, "can take back out again." In "Winter Fever," an estranged lover is told to "chase the road as long it takes/for you to slow down and remember/and find your way back to me/til I'm lost in late December." "If I could break free of these chains," vows the narrator in "Wind Through Casper," "I'd be home by morning's light." And one line in "Northern Light" puts the sentiment quite succinctly: "The distance takes its toll."

Which is not to say that there's nothing but gloom and regret throughout the album: "Nora O'Kane" is fun and sassy, for instance, while "June Day" (inspired in part, Carey says, by the New England maple sugar harvest) evinces contentment.

And then there are two songs in Gaelic – a testament to Carey's work with singer Christine Primrose – most memorably, "Sios Dhan an Abhainn," a

Gaelic translation of the American hymn "Down to the River" that Carey learned from Seattle duo Oran nan Car; Carey sings it in exquisite harmony with Pauline Scanlon and Egan's Solas colleague Eamon McElholm. And it's Scanlon and McElholm, along with fiddler Chris Stout and cellist Natalie Haas (not to mention Boston-area fiddler Katie McNally), among others, who affirm the Gaelic/Celtic thread in Carey's music here.

"A lot of people pick up on the themes of immigration and longing," says Carey, – but I didn't set out to do it that way. I didn't plan this as a 'concept album.' Some of the songs on "North Star" were ones I'd originally written for my first album, "Monongah" [released in 2011], but they didn't make the cut; I wound up rewriting a lot of them while I was living in Gloucester, and added some newer material as well.

"Still, when you think about the history of Irish and Scottish people, immigration certainly is a big part of their story – and especially their connection with America. And that's really what interests me, how artistic and cultural boundaries are crossed, and what happens as a result. I feel very fortunate to have had this opportunity to work with so many incredible people, and to be able to explore those journeys."

## Hanneke Cassel: Apostle of the American Scottish fiddle style

BY SEAN SMITH  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Two recent CDs by performers with strong ties to the Boston area show the breadth of creativity and imagination in Celtic music today: "Dot the Dragon's Eye," by Hanneke Cassel, an Oregon native who's been living locally for more than a decade, showcases the "American Scottish" fiddle style she has helped popularize on her sixth album; "North Star" is the second album by Kyle Carey – who lived in Cambridge and Gloucester for two-and-a-half years before moving recently to Brooklyn – and a further exploration of her "Gaelic Americana" songwriting.

First of two parts.

If you've listened to any of Hanneke Cassel's previous five solo albums (the most recent was "Reasons Unseen" in 2009), then you know what to expect: fiddle-driven, hard-charging, crisply accented reels, strathspeys and jigs or passionate slower-tempo instrumentals that swoop and glide like a falcon above a meadow; cello accompaniment that grumbles, percolates or, when appropriate, soothingly harmonizes – sometimes even leads – along with occasional piano and guitar.

The music has an unquestionable Scottish DNA, what Cassel calls that "up-and-down, vertical quality" with percussive, flamboyant grace notes, but there are aspects – such as the trademark rhythmic "chop," and the bluegrass or even jazz-like improvisational runs on the fiddle or another instrument – that point to an American influence. "It's American," says Cassel. "Not Texan, not Appalachian, exactly, but definitely American."

Cassel didn't invent the American Scottish sound, which is particularly associated with a number of folk music camps like Valley of the Moon (Cassel is an alumnus and now a faculty member there) and the Boston Harbor Scottish Fiddle School (where she's also taught). But she certainly has had a key role in its development and proliferation, through her composing, performing and teaching, as evidenced by the scads of high school-age or younger fiddlers throughout New England, and even elsewhere, who play in the style.

"Some of my former students now have students of their own," says Cassel. "It's pretty cool that there is a new generation taking to this way of playing fiddle, and making it their own."

"Dot the Dragon's Eye" began taking shape about three years ago when Cassel made one of her fairly regular visits to China, this one lasting longer (three months) than previous ones. Carrying with her the



"When things in my life are in flux, I tend to write a lot of tunes," says Hanneke Cassel, who recorded "Dot the Dragon's Eye" in the midst of a particularly eventful period.

sights, sounds, and other impressions of that trip, and subsequent travels to places like India and Kenya, she embarked on an extended period of composing tunes; several were written in support of fundraising events for the One Home, Many Hopes, organization for orphaned and abandoned girls in Mtwapa, Kenya. Other stuff happened, too, the most significant of which was her engagement to cellist Mike Block, whom she married a year ago.

"When things in my life are in flux," she says, "I tend to write a lot of tunes."

Finally, Cassel reckoned she had accumulated plenty of material for a new album, and she lined up an impressive array of supporting players, like Block and fellow cellists Rushad Eggleston and Newton native Ariel Friedman; fiddle/viola players Jeremy Kittel and Ryan McKasson; pianists Dave Weisler and Cali Kovin;

and guitarists Keith Murphy and Christopher Lewis.

The exact combinations of personnel for each track depended on familiarity and convenience, according to Cassel. "It ends up being the people I do concerts with: We'll get a repertoire together, work out arrangements, go do a tour, and then we'll record together. Since I don't necessarily play with the same musicians from tour to tour, it's easiest to go with whoever played on a particular set."

For example, Eggleston, Kittel and Murphy are featured on the opening track, "Dot the Dragon's Eye," with Cassel entering over Murphy's light but lithe strumming and the characteristically inventive bowing of Eggleston, all hums and howls at first, then alternately aggressive chops and agile solos as Kittel joins in. Kittel and Eggleston also are on the final track, a more "conventional" Scottish strathspeys-and-reel medley that slowly builds in speed and intensity on the strength of twin fiddles and cello, until blasting off into the classic "Lexy MacCaskill," the trio expertly juggling harmonies and rhythms.

Block – who's worked with Yo-Yo Ma, Bobby McFerrin, Shakira and Alison Krauss – is on half of the CD's tracks, his versatility evident in the soulful hues he brings to "Eliana Grace/Dancing with Bryce," "Dianne's Waltz" and "The Marathon" (Cassel's lament for the victims of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings) or the earthy undertones to "Natasha McCoy's Reel/Lianne MacLean's Revenge"; he also composed the first tune in the set "The Important Thing Is/TIDGA," which Cassel describes as "a Scottish jig with Eastern influences."

"Mike is such an expressive player," says Cassel. "He's a great soloist, and is so good at taking on the musical characteristics of whoever he's playing with. Obviously, what with the two of us going beyond our musical relationship, it was very exciting to be able to do this recording with him."

Other smaller-scale but pleasurable virtues of the CD include Murphy's Quebecois foot percussion accompanying Cassel on "Natasha McCoy's Reel"; Jerry Sabatini's trumpet solo on "Dianne's Waltz"; and an airy, subtle vocal backing from Aoife O'Donovan on "Religulous/Patience."

"There are a lot of associations from the past few years reflected in this album," Cassel says. "All the experiences on the road, especially overseas, but also here in Boston. New family members and new friends. The kids I played and made music with in Kenya. The young people I see at all the fiddle camps and concerts. It was a blessing to be able to put it all on a recording."

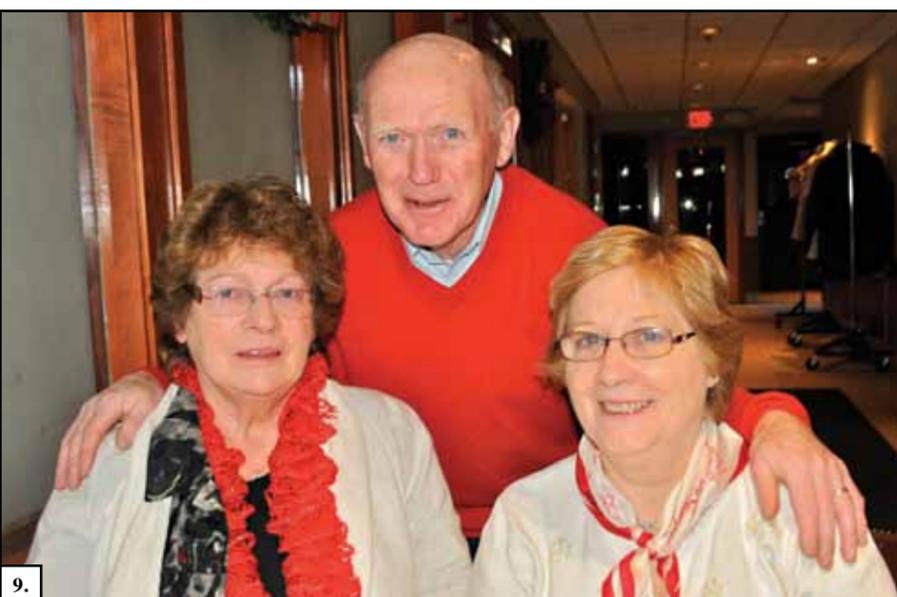
# BRETT'S BOSTON

By Harry Brett

Exclusive photos of Boston Irish people & events

The BIR's Harry Brett was on hand to record some of the happy faces at the Irish Cultural Centre's "Brunch with Santa" party on Sunday, December 14. The event was part of a series of holiday celebrations staged at the ICCNE's Canton campus in the lead-up to Christmas. The evening before, there were 12 lucky winners in the centre's annual Christmas drawing. The grand prize winner of \$30,000 was Judy Hinchey, Auburndale. MFH Plastering, Rockland was the \$5000 winner, and there were ten \$1000 winning tickets, won by Larry Hall, Andover, David Greaney, Cohasset, Denise Graw, Abington, Pat & Mary Corrigan, County Mayo Association, the McCarron family, Joe Cahill & Family, Michael K c/o Geraghty Associates, Danny Logue and Margaret Walsh, Dorchester.

1.) Mark and Heather Boyle with children Sophie and Scott, Danvers; 2.) John and Kani McMorrow with children Jackson and Liliana, Norton; 3.) Walter Mezzetti and mom, Emer, Newton; 4.) Maureen Lenihan, Norwood; 5.) Colin and Owen Rogers with mom Kacie Rogers, Dorchester; 6.) Shannon Hardiman and daughter Kyle Hardiman; Norwood; 7.) Janinne DiLorenzo, Weymouth; Colleen Griffin, Quincy; 8.) Michaela Walsh, Canton, Abigail DiRossetti, Canton; 9.) Nora Walsh, Canton; Tom and Frances Gallagher, Needham; 10.) Maryann and Sean Seefeldt with children Caroline and Jack of Medway.



Traveling People



It's well worth a trip up to Rosstownlough in Co. Donegal to spend some time at the beautiful Sandhouse Hotel and Marine Spa on the Wild Atlantic Way and explore the area.

# Let me tell you about my favorite places to visit in Ireland

**BY JUDY ENRIGHT  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR**  
My Dad used to say, "If it was supposed to be fun, it wouldn't be called work." I know he didn't invent the saying, but it's something I often repeat now to my adult children and watch them roll their eyes as I probably did when my Dad said it to me.

I think of that saying when writing this column for the *Boston Irish Reporter* because this is fun rather than work and let's me share favorite places and attractions.

**THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY**  
My first favorite for 2015 is the Wild Atlantic Way and the many attractions in seven counties along the western seaboard from the Inishowen Peninsula up in Co. Donegal all the way down to the lively harbor town of Kinsale in Co. Cork.

Irish tourism branded the 2,500-kilometer driving route the Wild Atlantic Way and reportedly invested some 10 million euro for signage to mark the route, development of discovery points, and more. The promotion has been a huge success, probably exceeding everyone's wildest dreams. More tourists (resulting in more revenue) have visited the western coast since the project began and it's been a win-win for all.

Recently, according to *The Irish Times* newspaper, the Wild Atlantic Way won "Best Tourist Attraction" at the third annual InBusiness magazine's award ceremony in Dublin. The magazine's annual awards honor outstanding achievement in the Irish business community.

Sadly, too many travelers head south from the airports and miss the extraordinary beauty of this western coast. Hopefully, the branding will attract more travelers to the wild West.

**SANDHOUSE HOTEL**  
As you travel the Wild Atlantic Way, a night or more at The Sandhouse Hotel in Rosstownlough, Co. Donegal, is highly recommended. The hotel was purchased in 2012 by its then manager, Paul Diver, who has since undertaken numerous upgrades and enhanced an already wonderful property. Sandhouse is a comfortable and welcoming hotel, and there's a spa, too.

An Illinois reviewer on TripAdvisor writes, "The

hotel was great. We ate at the restaurant and the seafood was fantastic. Our rooms were overlooking the beach, the rooms was very spacious and very clean. The hotel had an old time charm and the staff was very helpful and friendly." We couldn't agree more!

**W. B. YEATS**  
Another of my favorites along the Wild Atlantic Way is the beautiful area around Sligo where William Butler Yeats lived and worked.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of Yeats's birth into an incredibly gifted family. His father, John, and brother, Jack, were artists, and his sisters, Susan (Lily) and Elizabeth (Lolly), were also artistically gifted and established a printing press and an all-female embroidery workshop.

A playwright and poet, Yeats founded the Irish Theatre (later to become the Abbey Theatre) with Lady Gregory and was its chief playwright until John Synge came on the scene. Yeats also served in the Irish Senate.

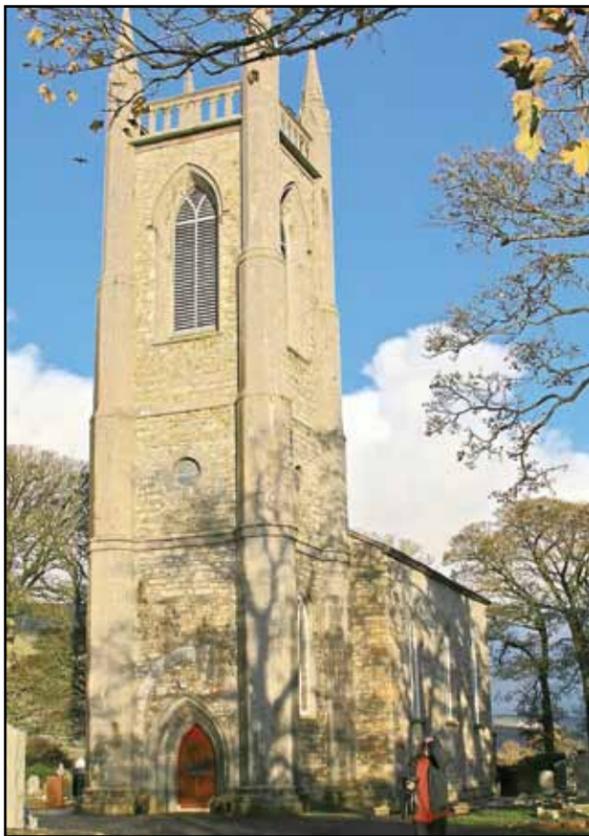
In 1923, he won a Nobel Prize "for his always inspired poetry, which in a highly artistic form gives expression to the spirit of a whole nation." Yeats, who died in 1939, lies in the shadow of Ben Bulbin in the graveyard at Drumcliffe Church, where his great-great-grandfather was once rector.

Drumcliffe and Yeats's grave are worth a visit. There is a charming shop and tearoom on the grounds and a magnificent Celtic high cross in the graveyard.

While you're in the area, be sure to visit Yeats's exhibits at another favorite, Lissadell House in Ballinfull, Co. Sligo.

Lissadell was the childhood home of Constance Markievicz, her sister, Eva Gore Booth, and brother Josslyn Gore Booth. Markievicz was a leader of the 1916 uprising and the first woman to be elected to Dail Eireann, where she served as Labor Minister. She was also the first woman elected to the House of Commons at Westminster in London, but declined to take the seat. Eva was a poetess and Josslyn made Lissadell one of Europe's premier horticultural estates. Yeats was friendly with the sisters and stayed at Lissadell in 1893 and 1894.

"Re-opened in 2014 following a five-year closure,"



Irish poet William Butler Yeats is buried in the graveyard of St. Columba's Church of Ireland at Drumcliffe, Co. Sligo, even though he died in France in January 1939. *Judy Enright photos*

notes the writer Georgina Campbell, "Lissadell is the brightest historical and cultural gem of the northwest and a must-see destination for anyone visiting Sligo or planning a trip along the Wild Atlantic Way."

Lissadell is home to Edward Walsh, Constance Cassidy, and their seven children, so visitors are asked to respect their privacy. Be sure to check the website ([lissadell.com](http://lissadell.com)) for opening times.

**OTHER FAVORITES**  
As you might expect, some of my favorites never change. I try different places but my favorites often prevail. It's hard to know where to begin with the rest of the list because there is so much to love about Ireland but perhaps it's best to start at the beginning with the airport.

I love Shannon Airport! It's small, comfortable, welcoming, convenient, and a straight shot from Boston on my favorite carrier, Aer Lingus.

I learned a travel lesson the last time I flew Aer Lingus because, for the first time ever, I pre-ordered the three-course salmon dinner with complimentary red or white wine. (Steak and chicken are also available.) The meal was hot, delicious, fresh, and well worth the extra \$22 in my opinion. I

will definitely do that on future travels.  
My favorite Irish car rental firm is Dan Dooley ([dan-dooley.ie](http://dan-dooley.ie)). A friend suggested that Dooley was more expensive than their company and then turned up in a tin can on wheels. Dooley might be more but I have used the company for years and definitely feel it's worth having a solid car that is top notch, safe, and well maintained. The company is also extremely responsive if you have any issue with your car.

**SLIGO B&B**  
Last spring, I spent a night at a "family run luxury country house B&B" - Temple House in Ballymote, Co. Sligo - and heartily recommend a stay there for a taste of the elegance of days gone by. Owners Roderick and Helena Perceval interact with visitors and work together to prepare delicious meals that are served to guests around the large dining room table. You'll feel like family in this historic, comfortable home that is part of the Hidden Ireland group ([hiddenireland.com](http://hiddenireland.com)), another favorite. Hidden Ireland's properties are excellent and you can find them all over the north and south.

A bit further south - in Co. Mayo - we enjoy delicious fresh lunches and baked goods at the Beehive in Keel on Achill Island. The Beehive is also an outstanding craft shop. For more good meals, try Newport House in Newport, lunch and dinner at Café Rua in Castlebar and the Granuaile Pub in Newport. Nearby, Westport has many excellent pubs and restaurants as well as one of our favorite Irish craft shops, O'Reilly & Turpin.

We head south again, to Clifden, Co. Galway, called the capital of Connemara. It may be a capital but Clifden is still a small town with small town charm and it's home to my favorite seafood restaurant - Mitchell's ([mitchellsrestaurantclifden.com](http://mitchellsrestaurantclifden.com)) - on the one-way circuit around town. Clifden also boasts an outstanding independent bookstore - the Clifden Bookshop ([clifdenbookshop.com](http://clifdenbookshop.com)) - as well as many other small and very good shops.

And Clifden is near Lough Inagh Lodge Hotel, my perennial favorite, and just down the road from Kylemore Abbey, where the gift shop, run by Linda Spitzer, can't be beat. A tour of the magnificent buildings and grounds at Kylemore is highly recom-

mended.  
Cruising down the coast to Doolin in Co. Clare, you'll find Roadford House, McDermott's Pub, and Fitzpatrick's Bar, all offering a range of prices for excellent food. Try Gregan's Castle Hotel in Co. Clare for luxurious accommodation and outstanding meals.

Riverfield House B&B is where I stay in Doolin and enjoy the wit and camaraderie of owner Cairiona Garrahy. Riverfield is centrally located, reasonable, clean, and comfortable. We also enjoy Heaton's Guesthouse on the Dingle Peninsula (for meals and accommodation.) Heaton's won a 2014 Certificate of Excellence from Trip Advisor.

Castle hotels Ashford and Dromoland are fun places to stay and you might also want to try the Merrion, Gibson, Westbury, or Shelbourne in Dublin, Rathaspeck Manor in Wexford, and Granville Hotel in Waterford. Cities like Belfast, Derry, Wexford, Galway, and Cork offer a wide selection of excellent accommodations as well as dining options to suit every taste.

Before flying home - or after landing at Shannon - try the Inn at Dromoland, handy to the airport, or Cahergal Farm in Newmarket-on-Fergus, also close by Shannon. Cahergal won a 2014 Certificate of Excellence from TripAdvisor and is a great place to unwind in beautiful surroundings. This farmhouse B&B is on my favorite list year after year.

**TRAVEL**  
We hope our readers enjoyed the holiday season and will have a healthy and happy 2015. And we hope a trip to Ireland is on the agenda for this year.

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**Employment: Know your rights**  
Q. I recently became a naturalized US citizen. I've been looking for a new job, and it seems to me that some prospective employers have been hassling me unfairly about my immigration status. This may be because of my accent or the country I originally came from. Is there anything that I can do?

A. In the Civil Rights Division of the US Department of Justice, there is an Office of Special Counsel (OSC) for Immigration-Related Unfair Employment Practices. This office investigates situations like yours, as well as those involving other people authorized under federal law to work in the US, such as legal permanent residents or employment visa holders. In appropriate cases, OSC will sue employers who discriminate against people based on their immigration status or

national origin. OSC has published the following guidance on this topic:

**Citizenship/immigration status** – Generally, an employer may not treat you differently because you are, or are not, a US citizen. [Note: one exception would be certain jobs with the government or a government contractor requiring US citizenship for a security clearance.]

**National origin** – An employer may not treat you differently because of your place of birth, native language, accent, or appearance.

**Document abuse** – An employer may not, on the basis of your citizenship status or national origin, demand more or different documents than necessary for completing the I-9 Form, reject reasonably genuine-looking documents, or treat you differently when using E-Verify.

**Retaliation** – An em-

ployer may not retaliate against anyone who files a complaint with OSC or cooperates with an OSC investigation, or who asserts his or her rights under the anti-discrimination provision of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

A person who believes he or she has been subjected to discrimination for any of these reasons can call OSC at 1-800-255-7688 or visit the agency's web site at [usdoj.gov/crt/osc](http://usdoj.gov/crt/osc).

Of course, there are other avenues to relief from various types of employment discrimination, including filing a complaint with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or the relevant state agency. Choosing the right course in a particular case generally will require the advice of a lawyer specializing in employment discrimination issues, particularly as they relate to immigration status or national origin. IIIC can make a referral to such a lawyer in appropriate cases.

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

**Executive action information at the IIIC** – The Irish International Immigrant Center (IIIC), in collaboration with the Irish Cultural Centre of New England (ICC), will present an information session to inform clients about President Obama's



Patrick Dore and IIC staff member Danielle Owen

Executive Action plan for immigration relief. The session will be presented on Sun., Feb. 1, at 1 p.m. at the Irish Cultural Centre in Canton. Topics to be covered include:

- Deferred action for immigrants living in the US since Jan. 1, 2010, who are parents of US citizens and permanent residents. This will include employment authorization valid for 3 years. This program will be implemented in 180 days.

- Expanded DACA (deferred action for childhood arrivals) for anyone brought to the US before age 16 who has lived in the US since Jan. 1, 2010. This will also include employment authorization valid for 3 years. This program will be implemented in 90 days.

- Expanded provisional waiver program for the spouses and children of permanent residents.

- Clarifying the eligibility to travel abroad for those with temporary status.

**Information Session Now Online** – The IIIC website now has a video presentation of a recently held information session to discuss the president's action on immigration relief. IIIC Managing Attorney Jeannie Kain explains the Deferred Action Benefits of the plan, eligibility to apply, and the factors that need to be considered before applying. To access the video, go to the website: [iiicenter.org](http://iiicenter.org), and its Executive Action page.

**Newly Minted US Citizen** – Patrick Dore, originally from County Cork, utilized various services at the Irish International Immigrant Center (IIIC) in the past but never so much as he did this year when he decided that it was time

for him to become a US citizen. He completed and filed his naturalization application with the assistance of the IIIC immigration legal staff. He also signed up to take US Citizenship preparation classes and his teachers report that Patrick was a hard-working and enthusiastic student who enjoyed the whole course. After he was sworn in as a citizen last month, he said, "It's a powerful combination being Irish and being American. I am very proud to join a long line of Irish Americans. The staff at the IIIC were wonderful in assisting me along this path. They became like a family to me throughout the process and I can't praise them highly enough."

Our congratulations and best wishes to Patrick for a job well done!

**ARE YOU AFFECTED BY THE PRESIDENT'S RECENT IMMIGRATION ANNOUNCEMENT?**

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**IRISH INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRANT CENTER  
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The Irish International Immigrant Center provides free legal support and representation to the Irish immigrant community. Weekly legal clinics where you can receive a free and confidential consultation with staff and volunteer attorneys are held throughout the Greater Boston area.

For information, call us at (617) 542-7654.

**Upcoming Clinic Schedule**

**Tuesday, January 6th**  
IIIC, 100 Franklin St. Lower Level, Downtown Boston Entrance is at 201 Devonshire Street

**Monday, January 12th**  
The Green Briar Pub  
304 Washington Street, Brighton Center

**Tuesday, January 20th**  
IIIC, 100 Franklin St. Lower Level, Downtown Boston Entrance is at 201 Devonshire Street

Our Downtown Boston location is fully accessible by public transportation.

Phone: 617.542.7654 | Fax: 617.542.7655 | [www.iiicenter.org](http://www.iiicenter.org)

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LEGAL SERVICES**

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ON IMMIGRATION EXECUTIVE ACTION**



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INFORMATION/Q&A SESSION

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200 NEW BOSTON DRIVE  
CANTON, MA

**WHEN:**  
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1ST AT 1PM

**CONTACT IIIC:**  
PHONE: 617-542-7654  
[WWW.IIICENTER.ORG](http://WWW.IIICENTER.ORG)

**COST: FREE**

The Irish International Immigrant Center provides legal advice and representation to the Irish immigrant community.

In response to President Obama's Executive Action announcement, the IIIC is holding a series of information sessions. The IIIC is partnering with the Irish Cultural Centre (ICC) on Sunday, February 1 2015 after the monthly mass and breakfast (1pm). All are welcome to attend.

The IIIC has also launched a web page at [www.iiicenter.org/executive-action](http://www.iiicenter.org/executive-action) with information about Executive Action. This page updated regularly.

IRISH INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRANT CENTER  
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## Matters Of Substance

### It's a New Year's Question: Can people really change?

BY DANIELLE OWEN  
IIIC STAFF

Q. "My younger brother is about to lose everything. He was always a bit irresponsible at home, usually going from job to job, leaving when he didn't like it anymore or just being fired. We were delighted when he moved in with his girlfriend last year; maybe he was finally beginning to change.

We knew he liked to drink but found out about his drug use when his girlfriend came to see us. She was very upset, saying he would usually come home drunk after work, and at weekends, he rarely came home at all. He always promised her things would change, but they never did for very long. She said she loves him but is scared of him because he's angry, aggressive, and possessive when he uses drugs.

She's just found out that she's pregnant and he has lost another job. She's thinking about go-

ing home to Ireland, as she's afraid he will never change. I don't know what to say to her, because I don't know either. Can he change?"

A. It is very upsetting to see someone you love whose life seems to be falling apart. The key thing to remember is that your brother is the only one who can stop this avalanche of problems. For many the New Year can seem like a great opportunity to consider new changes. However, before someone contemplates this, there is a theory that some may find useful. It has called the "Stages of Change" model, developed in the late 1970's/early 1980's by James Prochaska and Carlo DiClemente and originally designed to help those who were trying to quit cigarettes. Now it is widely used to help people who have problems with alcohol and drugs. We go through five stages when we change. I have

listed them here, along with some examples of statements that can help you identify how ready someone is to change:

**Pre-Contemplation:** "I'm not using drugs. I drink the same as anyone else! It's you who has the problem, not me!"

**Contemplation:** "There's always a fight when I get home from the pub. I hate waking up with a hangover, but my boss was driving me crazy and I needed to relax. I'll stop tomorrow" – but tomorrow never comes.

**Preparation:** "That's it! I can't do this anymore. There has to be another way! Where can I get help? What if I can't stop?"

**Action:** "I could use a drink now, but will find an AA meeting instead."

**Maintenance:** "I am bringing Mike to a meeting, because it has helped me so much."

Change is always possible, but we need support.



Danielle Bowles

If you would like to learn more about how people can change unhealthy behaviors around alcohol and drugs, please join us for our four-week Family Healing Series of workshops in South Boston during the month of February. Call Danielle, in confidence and without judgment, at the Irish International Immigrant Center for more information about this program or for support and counseling. Phone: 617-542-7654, Ext. 14, or via email: [downen@iiicenter.org](mailto:downen@iiicenter.org)

**The Irish Language**  
by Philip Mac AnGhabhann

**Bliain Mhaith Úr!** “Happy New Year!” (Actually, “Year Good New” in Irish.) This month we will review a little and then move on to some new things. For review, recall that the basic Irish sentence pattern is ...

**Verb + Subject + Object + Extension(s)** where “Extensions” are generally in the order **Place, Time, and Manner**—traditionally **adverbs** although they are often in the form of “**prepositional phrases**.”

“here” “later” “hurriedly”  
“from Peru” “in the afternoon” “in a hurry”

To say that “Someone has a broken leg” the structure is somewhat different due to the use of **do** as an idiom. “He has a broken leg” is **Tá sé do chos a bhriseadh.** / TAH sheh doh HOHS uh VREESH-uh/ “Is he for leg breaking.” **Do**, “for” or “to”, always **lenites** (“aspirates”) the following **noun**, “leg”, **cos**. I use this example because the word for “arm”, **laimh**, begins with an “-l-” and is therefore one of the “big three, l, n, r” that cannot be **lenited**.

The verb “break” is **bris** /breesh/. You have had this before when we studied how to make **adjectives** from **verbs**. Here, you will remember, one simply adds **-ta** or **-te** to the verb, depending on the quality of the preceding vowel.

**ól** /awl/ “drink” **ólta** /AWL-tuh/ “drunk”  
**Bris** /breesh/ “break” **Briste** /BREESH-chuh/ “broken”

Be careful when you say that some one is “drunk” using **ólta**. You *can* use **ólta** in this sense but it is more common to use **ar meisce** /ahr MESH-kuh/. **Tá sé ar meisce** – “He is drunk” meaning “inebriated.”

**Meisceoir** /MESH-kehr/ “Drunkard” is built upon this word but you will also hear the “loan word” from English, **druncaeir** /DRUN-kehr/ meaning “Drunkard” or “Drinker.”

Speaking of “drinking” here are some vocabulary, both “old” and “new.”

**deoch** /jawch/ “a drink” **pionta** /PEEN-tuh/ “a pint”  
**leathpionta** /LEHY-feen-tuh/ “a half-pint (of beer)”

**uisce** /OOSH-kuh/ “water” **caife** /KAH-fee/ “coffee”  
**bainne** /BAHN-yuh/ “milk”

**tae** /tee/ “tea” **mála tae** /MAHL-uh tee/ “tea bag”  
**sos tae/caife** /sohs tee/ “tea/coffee break”

**beoir** /beer/ or **leann** /lahn/ “ale”  
**fion** /feen/ “wine” **buidéal** /BOO-jehl/ “bottle”

**uisce beatha** /OOSH-kuh BEY-uh/ “whiskey”  
**Uisce beatha** literally means “water of life” – think “*aquavit*”.

Now see if you can translate these sentences into Irish. 1.) “Bill broke his arm.” 2.) “Was he drunk?”

3.) “My car is broken.” 4.) “How much is a half-pint?”

5.) “I prefer coffee with milk and sugar, please.” 6.)

“I don’t like whiskey.” 7.) “What is your name?” 8.)

“You are welcome.” 9.) “Did you clean your room?”

10.) “A bottle of wine, please.”

Answers: 1.) **Bhí Liam do laimh a bhristeadh.**

2.) **An raibh sé ar meisce?** 3.) **Tá mo charr briste.**

4.) **Cá mhéad leathpionta?** 5.) **Is fear liom caife le bainne agus siúcra, más é do thoil é.**

6.) **Ní fear liom uisce beatha.** 7.) **Cad is ainm duit?**

OR **Cé t-ainm atá ort?** 8.) **Go raibh maith agat.**

9.) **Ghlan tú do sheomra?** 10.) **Buidéal fion, más é do thoil é.**

**Is fear** /iss fahr/ in speech can be ‘S fear /shahr/ and did you forget that **ainm** is pronounced /AHN-uhm/ with the little vowel sound /uh/ between the **n** and the **m**?

A native speaker will tell you that he/she simply repeats the first vowel between the combinations **nm, lm, lb, rm, rb, lp** or any sound pronounced in the middle of the mouth followed by a sound with the lips closed. But they will all sound like a slight /uh/. Try “arm”, “film”, “orb” being sure to close your lips on the last sound. If you didn’t hear /AHR-uhm/, /FIL-uhm/ or /OHR-uhb/ then you didn’t do it correctly.

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