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‘BEAUTY QUEEN IS BACK’



Marie Mullen and Aisling O'Sullivan clash in Druid Theatre's production of Martin McDonagh's "The Beauty Queen of Leenane," at the Paramount, February 8 - 26.
Craig Schwartz photo

Marie Mullen talks about 'Mag,' the manipulative mother

By R. J. DONOVAN
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Druid Theatre Company — founded in Galway in 1975 by Garry Hynes, Marie Mullen, and the late Mick Lally — stands not only as one of the world's most respected arts organizations, but also at the forefront of the development of Irish theatre.

More than 20 years ago, an unsolicited script landed in their

offices. Penned by a little-known writer, the play would become "The Beauty Queen of Leenane."

Set in a bleak house in rural Ireland, the dark-but-comic subversive thriller examined the cat-and-mouse relationship between a tyrannical, house-bound mother and her lonely, isolated daughter.

As soon as Hynes read the piece, she knew the play was

extraordinary. She was struck by the compelling dialogue and riveting characters. This was not a rough draft from a fledgling author but a taut, tense, fully realized work from someone with an exceptional voice.

The author was Irish playwright Martin McDonagh, today internationally renowned for such stage works as "A Skull in Connemara," "The Pillowman,"

"The Lieutenant of Inishmore," and others.

Directed by Hynes, "Beauty Queen" opened in Galway, transferred to London's West End, and then moved on to Broadway. In New York, the production was nominated for six Tony Awards and walked away with four. One went to Ms. Mullen as Best Actress and one to Ms. Hynes,

(Continued on page 12)

Combative parties stir more unrest in the North

BIR STAFF

Once again, the pot is boiling in Belfast. The dissolution last month amidst recriminations over a heating scheme of the power-sharing government of the Democratic Unionist Party's Arlene Foster, who stepped down as First Minister, and Sinn Fein's Martin McGuinness, the Deputy First Minister who had previously resigned in disgust, mandated a new election for the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Voting has been set for Thurs., March 2. Once the ballots are in, the new Assembly will have three weeks to organize itself and elect two new First Ministers.

For its part, Sinn Fein has settled on its new leader and its candidate for First Minister

Joe Leary analysis Page 4

in the follow-up to the election. She is Michelle O'Neill, who has been serving as health minister for Sinn Fein. The 40-year-old mother of two from Co. Tyrone called her new post "a huge honor." She will be the first Sinn Fein leader with no ties to the era of The Troubles and the subsequent halt in the Irish Republican Army's armed struggle against British rule in the North.

Since the partition of the island in 1922, Northern Ireland and its people have been in constant conflict. The Good Friday Agreement of 1998 set up a power-sharing Assembly to allow all parties to feel included. To govern the 108-person elected Assembly the agreement installed two co-equal leadership positions called the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister.

April gala to support Ireland's amateur athletes

BIR STAFF

The Boston Friends of the Gaelic Players Association, in partnership with the Irish American Partnership, have planned an evening gala in support of the GPA for Fri., April 7 at 60 State Street in Boston.

A committee of more than 40 Boston Irish leaders expect as many as 400 guests to celebrate alongside elite amateur Gaelic players past and present. Organizers, hoping to replicate

similar dinners that have been held in New York, seek to build on the momentum of the hugely successful hurling match between Galway and Dublin that was held at Fenway Park in November 2015.

The Fenway Hurling Classic drew a crowd of more than 27,000 fans to the hallowed grounds — the first such match held in the confines of Fenway since 1954. Galway bested the Dubs 50-47 in a bruising battles that featured

an epic brawl to boot.

The real winners— no question— were fans of the Gaelic Games, who hope that the sport will return to Fenway in the near future for another go.

The April 7 dinner will begin with a 6 p.m. reception, with dinner to follow. Business attire is encouraged. For additional information and tickets, contact Therese Murray at the Irish American Partnership at 617-723-2707 or therese@irishap.org.



Smiling faces and rugged play dominated the scene at Fenway Park on Nov. 22, 2015 as Galway beat Dublin in an exhibition hurling match under drizzly skies.

Photos courtesy of Fenway Sports Group



I work in Hollywood but I keep my money
in my hometown-Kevin Chapman

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BRETT'S BOSTON

By Harry Brett

Exclusive photos of Boston Irish people & events

Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith discussed her new book, "The Nine of Us: Growing Up Kennedy," with her son, Stephen Smith, at a Kennedy Library forum on Jan. 24. The event took place in Stephen Smith Hall, the function hall dedicated in memory of her late husband. Pulitzer Prize-winning former Boston Globe columnist Eileen McNamara moderated.

1.) Steven Rothstein Executive Director JFK Library Foundation; Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith, Steven Kennedy Smith, Eileen McNamara, Brandeis University; 2.) Cheryl Gillespie, Waltham; Ann O'Connor, Cambridge; 3.) N.H. State Rep. Eric Estevez, Tim Mizell, So, Boston; 4.) Former State Rep. Carol Donovan, Woburn; Pat Deal, Arlington; 5.) Pat McSweeney, Dorothy Latour, both Taunton; 6.) Pat O'Leary Thorpe, Kevin Thorpe, Melrose; 7.) Anne Leeds, Newton; Mary Joe Clark, Dedham; Susan Smith, Carlisle; 8.) Cornelius Sullivan, Anchorage Alaska; Terry and Pat Sullivan, Winthrop; 9.) John McDonough, Colleen Mohyde, both Winchester; 10.) Curt and Susan Gilmore, Back Bay; 11. Nancy and Joe Lee, So. Boston; 12.) Geri McGlone, Michelle McGlone, both Brockton; 13.) Susan Thifault, Woburn; Marilyn Gagalis, Winchester; Janet Allison, Wilmington; Theresa Christerson, Woburn; 14.) Frank and Carol Dobek, Eastham.



Looking ahead:
The March parades

Sunday, the 19th at 1 p.m. – Boston’s St. Patrick’s Day Parade will kick off from Broadway Station in South Boston. Check out southbostonparade.org for information regarding the history of the parade, the parade route, parking restrictions, and how to get there.

Saturday, the 4th at 11 a.m. – Cape Cod – Yarmouth. March starts at the intersection of Long Pond Drive and Route 28 in South Yarmouth. Info: 508-362-7239, capecodstpatrsparade.com

Saturday, the 11th at 1 p.m. – City of Lawrence. Parade starts at Essex / Amesbury Street.

Saturday, the 11th at 11 a.m. – Rain or Shine, 61st Annual Newport St. Patrick’s Day Parade. Stars at Newport City Hall. Info: discovernewport.org; NewportIrish.com

Sunday, the 12th at noon – City of Worcester. Starts at Park Avenue. Info: 508-753-7197.

Sunday, the 19th at 1 p.m. – Town of Abington. Starts at St. Patrick’s Square, Abington Center. Info: 781-878-1570; 781-878-7785.

Sunday, the 19th at noon – City of Holyoke. Starts in downtown Holyoke. Info: 413-533-1700; holyokestpatricksparade.com.

Sunday, the 19th at 1 p.m. – Town of Scituate. Starts at Gate Middle School, First Parish Road. Info: 781-545-6671; scituatechamber.org.

Information courtesy of irishmassachusetts.com and Boston Irish Tourism.

14th Year for BCM Fest



(L-R) Owen Marshall, Joel Wennerstrom and Laura Feddersen got in some rehearsal before their BCM Fest set.

The 14th annual Boston’s Celtic Music Fest (BCM Fest) took place January 13 and 14 in Harvard Square, featuring many local performers of Irish, Scottish, Cape Breton and other Celtic and Celtic-related music, dance and song. The events included an opening-night concert and Boston Urban Ceilidh, a full day of performances and participatory activities, and a “Nightcap” concert to close out the festival.

Eire Society cites Tòibìn for its 2017 Gold Medal Award

The Eire Society of Boston has announced that Colm Tòibìn, novelist, short story writer, playwright, journalist and literary critic, is the winner of the society’s Gold Medal award for 2017.

Tòibìn will receive his award at a ceremony on Sat., April 29, at 6 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Boston, where he will offer a presentation.

“We are particularly pleased to present the 2017 Gold Medal to Professor Tòibìn,” says Thomas W. Carty, ppresident of the Eire Society of Boston. “His accomplishments have vaulted him to the forefront of the Irish literary scene. His direct and



Colm Tòibìn

thoughtful positions on matters of social importance make him a visionary spokesperson for the citizenry of Ireland and its worldwide diaspora.”

For more information on the Gold Medal Dinner and Award Ceremony contact Cathleen McGrail, Event Chair, at events@eiresociety.org or call 617-739-6484.

On immigration: Today’s Irish should recall our story

By VERONICA KEYS
IRISH PASTORAL CENTRE

The Irish story of immigration to America started in the second half of the 19th century when Irish peasants fleeing the famine were stereotyped as a “sub-class of clannish, bedraggled, no-good drunks who had too many babies.” Working-class Americans resented Irish laborers who drove down wages. Signs stating “No Irish Need Apply” were seen in Boston.

By 1855 it was estimated that one of every three people living in Boston were foreign-born Irish; the city was becoming known as “the Dublin of America.”

In Massachusetts the American Party, (known as the “Know Nothings” because of their secret society beginnings) won a landslide victory in the state election of 1854 on their promise to “purify” American politics by limiting or ending the influence of Irish Catholics and other immigrants.

Once in office they passed a series of laws aimed specifically at the Irish Catholic population. They tried to deprive Roman Catholics of the right to vote and to hold office. The Know Nothing party’s decline was as rapid as its rise. Its candidates suffered overwhelming defeat

in the presidential election of 1856 and this signaled the end of the party’s popular appeal. It would have been difficult back then for people to imagine an America that has been as good to the Irish and so embracing of the Irish heritage as the United States has been for the past century or more. Today, when we hear the media talk about undocumented workers and the building of walls the image is generally of Mexican immigrants.

However, there are an estimated 50,000 Irish who are not authorized to be in the US, according to the Irish embassy in Washington, with most of them living in the large Irish populations of New York City, Boston, Chicago, and San Francisco.

Their reasons for overstaying visas are varied but many of the cases we meet are people who have children here who may no longer be with the American parent. Returning to Ireland means not being able to regain entry to the US for another decade during which time they may never see their child. Living in the shadows is generally accepted as being stressful and anxiety provoking. “Locked-in Syndrome” is a term used to describe how people feel when they are unable to return home for parents’ funerals or to visit loved

ones.

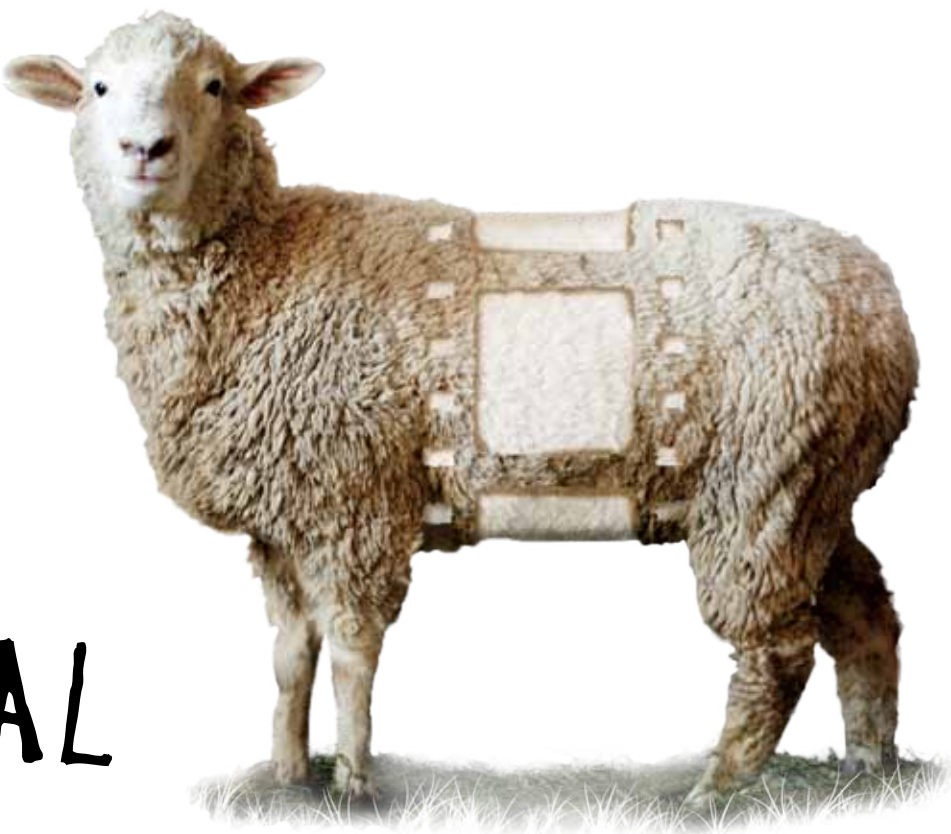
Fr. Dan Finn conducts many services for people who are grieving the death of a loved one on the other side of the ocean and he sees first-hand the trauma associated with living in the shadows. Here at the IPC we regularly meet with people whose status is impinging on some aspect of their life whether it be financial or the fact that they are unable to receive medical attention or simply the huge emotional and mental toll that the accompanying stresses of living in the shadows brings on a person or a family.

President Trump has been clear on his plans to transform the immigration system, plans that create fear and anxiety in all immigrant communities. The Irish-America citizenry can easily forget that our ancestors also faced huge discrimination. In the face of a new era, we, as immigrants in a country made up of immigrants, stand in solidarity with other immigrants.

The IPC is available for anybody who wishes to confidentially discuss their situation at 617-265-5300.

Veronica Keys is the Social Work Program Director at the Irish Pastoral Centre

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Publisher's Notebook

Visiting Ireland a popular pursuit

By Ed Forry

Is this the year to take that first trip to Ireland? For many, the allure of a visit to the ancestral homeland remains strong, and the efforts of the Irish government to promote tourism to the Emerald Isle are showing promising results.

Statistics for 2016 showed record numbers – almost 9.6 million people came to Ireland from overseas last year, an increase of 10.9 percent from 2015

Tourism Ireland CEO Niall Gibbons hailed the success of its efforts, telling the Irish media, “Ireland now welcomes 10 percent of all American visitors to Europe, a number particularly noteworthy given the intense competition from other destinations. We have also seen record numbers arriving here from mainland Europe (+ 8.5 percent) and I also welcome the continued strong performance from Britain (+10.6 percent), our largest market for overseas tourism.” The figures also show that visits from North America totaled 1.8 million, up 19.4 percent, an indication that many Americans found Ireland an easy-to-reach destination.

The attraction of travel to Ireland is enhanced by the strength of the US dollar to the euro. According to the financial website thebalance.com, “The euro to US dollar conversion tells you how many dollars the euro can buy according to its exchange rate. It compares the euro’s value to the dollar’s value. The euro was worth \$1.05 on Jan. 6, 2017. That meant one euro could buy 5 cents more in goods and services than one dollar could. That’s low compared to three years ago when it could buy \$1.37. That means your dollar can go further in

the European Union than it could in 2014. That makes it a great time to take that European vacation.”

And travelers from Boston soon will find more options for airline travel to Ireland. Aer Lingus, which has claimed Boston’s Logan Airport as a “gateway” to Ireland, will increase its daily flights to Dublin and Shannon in the busy tourist season this spring and summer.

And Delta Airlines will bring new competition with a Boston/Dublin service to begin in May. Delta’s daily flights will leave later in the day, in the nine o’clock evening hour, arriving in Dublin at mid-morning, a convenient time for business travelers at both ends.

Also developing this year, both Icelandair and low-cost WOW airline will offer increased one-stop service from Logan to Ireland with a change of planes in Reykjavik, with connecting flights to Belfast, Dublin, and Cork.

Meanwhile, a final decision by the US government was expected early in February on a license request from Norwegian Air International (NAI) for transatlantic routes to US cities from Cork and Shannon. The low-cost NAI has established a base in Ireland, and seeks permission under the EU-US “Open Skies” agreement. The license was approved in December by the Obama administration, but is being challenged by several American airlines and pilot unions.

If the NAI routes are approved, it is expected that new routes from Cork to both Boston and New York would begin as early as this spring. However, the NAI is a no-frills airline, and has been floating an initial one way ticket for as little as \$69! But there will be significant charges made for such things as meals, snacks, beverages, and luggage.

It is also understood that, if approved, NAI will seek to avoid the landing fees at Logan, and use either Portsmouth or Manchester airports in New Hampshire, or TF Green in Rhode Island.

Other traditional alternatives for Boston passengers have been any of several airlines to London, and catching a second flight back to Ireland. That has been a favored route for traveling to Ireland’s Northwest, using Knock airport to travel to Sligo, Donegal, Derry, and the north.





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Commentary

One more time: Another crisis in Northern Ireland

By Joe Leary
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Northern Ireland, a small, artificial enclave of 1.8 million people, has been in constant turmoil since 1922 when Great Britain separated it from the rest of Ireland. In the years since it was created, thousands of its people have died in protest of that mistake and hundreds of soldiers have died trying to preserve it. The territory is so small that it cannot support itself, so Britain provides the financial support to pay the bills and keep it alive.

Over those 95 years, Northern Ireland and its people have been in constant conflict. A peace treaty known as the Good Friday Agreement was agreed upon in 1998 by the largely Catholic and Protestant opposing forces. But Britain still controls the purse strings and London is still in control.

The compact of 19 years ago set up a power-sharing Assembly to allow all parties to feel included. To govern the 108-person elected Assembly the agreement installed two co-equal leadership positions called the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister. The leading vote-getting party would elect the First Minister and the second leading vote-getting party would elect the power-sharing Deputy First Minister.

Two of the early First Ministers were completely opposed to each other: the famous firebrand Protestant Minister Ian Paisley, from Belfast, leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), and the equally famous former leader of the IRA paramilitaries and now a leader of the Sinn Fein, the highly regarded Martin McGuinness from Derry.

To everyone’s surprise – and relief – they got along very well. This lasted until Paisley died. The two succeeding DUP First Ministers, Peter Robinson and Arlene Foster, set out to establish their party’s superior position by never missing an opportunity to counteract the Sinn Fein. This caused increased friction until McGuinness resigned last month. Under the laws set in the Good Friday agreement, this effectively brought the Northern Ireland Assembly to a halt since that body could not operate without balancing First Ministers. Control has reverted to the British Parliament.

Several things caused McGuinness to resign. First was a costly scandal involving the payments of outlandish sums to wealthy Northern Ireland farmers, mostly DUP, so they would switch to wood-burning fuels. The activity is known as the Renewable Heat Initiative (RHI) scheme. The opportunistic farmers were heating previously unheated barns to gain the subsidies, and



Joe Leary

Off the Bench

One last time: “We want Sullivan!”

By James W. Dolan
SPECIAL TO THE REPORTER

It was an intra-service football game between US Navy and US Army bases in Bellingham, Wash., in late 1945. Sitting in the stands were members of the crew of a destroyer that had been escorting troops returning from the Pacific. Among them was a 20-year-old ensign from Walpole who had left Notre Dame to join the Navy.

Seeing that navy was losing, and knowing the young ensign had played football at Notre Dame, the crew members began to chant: “We want Sullivan! We want Sullivan!” When told that George Sullivan, an outstanding lineman at Notre Dame, was in the stands, the coach asked him if he wanted to play. When Sullivan agreed, the coach told him to suit up in the locker room. The Navy fans went wild when he was sent in.

I don’t remember if the Navy won that game but many years later George told me he recovered a fumble and scored. By then he was a judge, having returned to Notre Dame after the war, married his college sweetheart, with whom he had ten children, became the first athletic director at Stonehill College, then a lawyer and a state senator. In the middle of all that, he was recalled to active duty during the Korean War and served aboard a destroyer – in the Mediterranean, no less, he would say with a sly smile. In 1965, he was appointed to the bench at Stoughton District Court.

An all-star football player at Walpole High, George won a scholarship to Notre Dame when the storied football history at the university was becoming legendary. He described being driven to South Station at 17 by his parents and boarding a train for South Bend. Notre Dame won national championships under Coach Frank Leahy in 1943, 1946, 1947, and 1949, and George was there for three of them, playing both offense and defense. His teammates included Angelo Bertelli and Johnny Lujack.



James W. Dolan

no limits were set. The scandal could cost Northern Ireland taxpayers 490 million pounds over 20 years. Foster was Minister of Enterprise at the time, and it was her regime that set up the scheme.

When the new Minister for Enterprise, Jonathon Bell, a DUP party member, was installed, he objected and went public with his concern, much to Foster’s consternation. He was suspended from the DUP and the scandal became quite public. Two of the DUP advisors to the scheme have also resigned.

McGuinness called for Foster to temporarily resign while the investigation is going on. She refused, and he called her bluff by resigning, bringing down the government since two co-equal Ministers are required under the law. Foster quickly backed down and offered to endorse an investigation and mediate a solution. Sinn Fein refused to budge and Foster was out along with McGuinness.

With the Conservative government in London facing Brexit negotiations, the DUP is hopeful that its position in Northern Ireland will be improved. This could turn tragic if the Nationalist/Catholic side comes to believe it is losing its rights again.

James Brokenshire, the new Northern Ireland Secretary of State representing the British government, has called for new elections to the Assembly on Thurs., March 2. After the election the new Assembly will have three weeks to come together, organize, and elect two new First Ministers. This will not be easy.

Perhaps the saddest part of this whole story is McGuinness’s poor health. The *Irish Times* has reported that he is suffering from a serious disease called amyloidosis, which can broadly weaken a body’s operating systems. He has announced he will not be running for office again. This is a great loss to Sinn Fein and all the people of Northern Ireland. No one has more credibility to limit violence and negotiate the peace. He has the respect of everyone involved in the government and has been in the forefront of Northern Ireland affairs for almost 50 years. Everyone who cares about Ireland should pray that he is well enough to influence a good outcome in the coming months.

To replace him, the Sinn Fein has brilliantly named a relative newcomer to the public identity of Northern Ireland Republicanism as its candidate for First Minister: Michelle O’Neill, a member of the Northern Ireland Assembly representing Mid-Ulster for ten years and long a loyal Sinn Fein member. Forty years old, and married with two children, she is very close to McGuinness and is highly respected as a most articulate advocate for her proposals. And she has no connection with the IRA’s militarism of the past. Her appointment is another very public step on Sinn Fein’s travel towards peace and a United Ireland.

He played in what became known as the “Game of the Century” on Nov. 9, 1946, when Army and Notre Dame, both undefeated, met at Yankee Stadium and played to a scoreless tie. Army’s two outstanding backs, Glenn Davis (Mr. Outside) and Felix “Doc” Blanchard (Mr. Inside), had a combined 79 yards against the stout Notre Dame defense.

George had a remarkable life. To be with him was to share in the joy he brought to every endeavor from family events to his participation in festivities at the Norwood Senior Center. With a boyish enthusiasm that was infectious, he would dance and sing in their productions. Although his athletic skills did not translate well into theatrics, George would try anything for a laugh.

A man of great compassion, he worked with us at Dorchester Court in the year before his retirement day. To celebrate the event we had a party in the judges’ lobby. We honored him by rigging a contraption to hoist his robe to the ceiling, a spectacle he thoroughly enjoyed. Like a modern Don Quixote (whom he grew to resemble in his later years) he lived by the medieval code of chivalry – bravery, courtesy, and honor.

George was not a man comfortable with superlatives. He personified humility and goodness, simple virtues not highly prized in today’s culture. “Good” is a word that fits. It is without pretension, strong and gentle, simple and straightforward. Yet its components, character, integrity and compassion, flow into every aspect of one’s life. For George, goodness was natural; it seemed almost effortless. He inspired others by his example and was happiest when the people around him were having fun. That devotion was returned. So he could remain at home in the six years he coped with Alzheimer’s before his recent death at 90 during which one of his five sons spent every night with him.

George Sullivan set a high standard without realizing it. He will be sorely missed by the many who loved him and learned from him. I believe that after he closed his eyes and drew his last breath, they opened on a familiar scene: There was the golden dome at South Bend, and standing outside waiting for him was his dear wife and his old teammates. Once again, George heard that rising chant: “We Want Sullivan! We want Sullivan!”

Point of View

In the land of ‘alternative facts’ and political whitewash

By PETER F. STEVENS
BIR STAFF

Finally! We have the answer to everything that comes from the mouths of Donald Trump and his acolytes. The answer? “Alternative facts.” Kellyanne Conway snapped at NBC’s Chuck Todd that “alternative facts” now govern the nation in which we live.

When President Trump went ballistic at *The New York Times* photos proving that far fewer people attended his inauguration than President Obama’s 2009 event and sent cannon fodder press secretary Sean Spicer out to chastise the “lying media, the spokesman lied for his boss.

When Trump stood in front of the CIA wall emblazoned with stars for every operative killed in action serving our nation, he contended that the only feud between him and the intelligence community was fabricated by the “dishonest media,” ignoring his widely noted previous words about former CIA Director John Brennan and his comparisons of the intelligence agencies to something out of “Nazi Germany.”

Now, thanks to Conway, the lies make complete sense. They’re not lies. They’re neither falsehoods nor fabrications. They’re “alternative facts.” If I believe that the earth is flat, contrary to all proof otherwise, I can’t be wrong – I’m stating an “alternative fact.”

The wisdom of Conway’s words really struck home with reports that in a meeting with members of Congress four days after his inauguration, Trump once again claimed that some three to five million illegal votes were cast for Hillary Clinton, and that stole the popular vote from him. There is not a shard of proof of this charge, and if there is, the Trump administration’s Justice Department *must* investigate what would be perhaps the most “big-league” criminal conspiracy in America’s annals. Then again, no proof is required in the era of “alternative facts.”

Why can’t Trump accept that he lost the popularity contest but won the presidency? Without an MD in psychiatry, this scribe can’t even hazard a guess. What does seem more than guesswork is that if “alternative facts” replace genuine, irrefutable facts in our politics and our collective media, democracy has already departed through the back door of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

Speaking of Trump and his team, The Donald made no bones of the fact that he is at war with the media during his narcissistic turn at the CIA. Joining him in that war are the aforementioned Conway and Spicer. Conway has been given Secret Service protection following the delivery of an envelope with a suspicious white powder to her. (Obama advisors David Axelrod

Heard at the White House: Presidency a comedown for Trump

Among those tens of thousands of words used in the morning newspapers of Sat., Jan. 21 to cover the inauguration of Donald Trump, 18 of them, uttered by new White House advisor Kellyanne Conway on Friday morning, captured the inbred preposterousness of Trumpian rhetoric:

He has made “enormous sacrifices,” she said. “He actually gave up more money, more power, more prestige, more position than he will have.”

Imagine that: The poor guy has taken a step backwards in becoming president of the United States.



Kellyanne Conway
White House aide

and Valerie Jarrett were also given Secret Service details.) Once again, it is sad and disturbing that this all-too-frequent stunt was pulled on her. Conway immediately blamed the media.

In a statement to fellow Trumpian mouthpiece Sean Hannity, Conway said: “Because of what the press is doing to me, I have Secret Service protection. We have packages delivered to my house with white substances. That is a shame.” She similarly castigated the media for its “shameful” coverage of her boss. I assume she means the media coverage of Trump’s vile Access Hollywood comments and his wide array of racist, ethnic, and other misogynistic comments.

Conway was correct in taking on members of the press for an inexcusable charge they hurled against Trump during inaugural weekend. After a White House press conference, a press pool report stated that Trump had removed a bust of Martin Luther King, Jr., from the Oval Office. A guard was positioned in front of the bust, allegedly blocking it from view of the pool reporter, who quickly apologized. It only takes one error like that to muddy the waters for the White House media as they gird for daily struggles with an avowedly hostile new administration.

One thing that *was* removed from the White House, or rather the White House website, was the

page dedicated to civil rights. Trump’s camp says it will reappear at some point. Hopefully that’s true, because there are many in Washington chomping at the bit to whitewash – yes, every pun intended – the accomplishments of the nation’s first African-American president. For many, the imminent demolition of Obamacare, which is pretty much the Dole-Heritage Foundation health plan of the ‘90s and akin to our state’s so-called Romneycare, is the first step in gutting Obama’s lawmaking legacy. If tens of millions of Americans lose their medical insurance, those who loath the very mention of the name Obama will see it as a small price to pay.

Again, with a nod to Kellyanne Conway’s choice word, how “shameful” it is that the practicing Irish Catholic speaker of the US House, Paul Ryan, has no qualms about denying health insurance to “the least among us.”

...

As February ushers in Black History Month and the first full month of President Obama’s absence from the White House, the saga of Bishop James Healy stands as a landmark chapter in both African-American and Irish-American annals. Healy, the first ordained African-American Catholic priest and first African-American bishop, was born on a plantation near Macon, Georgia, in 1839 to Co. Roscommon immigrant Morris Healy and “Mary Eliza, a mixed-race domestic slave.” James was the couple’s tenth child. Because Georgia law prohibited interracial marriage, the Irishman, who was deeply in love with Mary Eliza and flouted convention by treating her as his wife, sent his children north to be educated.

In 1844, James was sent to Worcester, Massachusetts, to begin his education. He went on to fledgling Holy Cross College there and was the valedictorian in the school’s first graduating class, in 1849. He earned a master’s degree there and then entered the priesthood. With the sponsorship of Boston Bishop Bernard Fitzpatrick, Healy was ordained on June 10, 1854, at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris to serve in Boston, Massachusetts. Pius IX later named Healy as the bishop of Portland, Maine, in 1875.

Healy died in 1900, and throughout his life, this son of an Irish plantation owner and the slave he loved revered Holy Cross as the place where his adult life took shape. Instead of interment in the vault of the cathedral in Portland, Healy was, as he had specified, buried in a simple grave on the Holy Cross campus. Today, a building at the school he so loved fittingly bears his honored.

The County Donegal Association, Boston

St. Patrick’s Day Dinner Dance Saturday, March 4, 2017 7:00 p.m.

Florian Hall
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or any County Donegal Association officer



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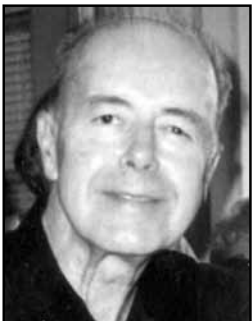


Boston Irish Reporter’s Here & There

By Bill O'Donnell

Welcome to the Trump Era, or what is known as ‘Liar’s Politics in the White House,” and the advent of WWFN, the Wide World of Fake News. The battle lines are set for four years of confrontation pitting some 65 million Americans and many journalists, except for Fox, which doesn’t hire any, against Trump International and its lineup of spin doctors led by its chief caped crusader, President Donald Trump. Good luck & caveat emptor.

...



Bill O'Donnell

McGuinness Resigns, New Election Set – When former IRA commander and Northern Ireland Deputy First Minister **Martin McGuinness** stepped down from his Stormont leadership role, he unleashed a political thunderstorm that threatens to pull down power-sharing in the North. An Assembly election has been called in the six counties for March 2 (it has been just eight months since the last Assembly elec-

tion). After the results are in, negotiations will begin between the NI parties to see if power-sharing can be restored.

The background: Prior to the suspension of the Assembly, **Arlene Foster** was the First Minister who governed with the First Deputy Minister, McGuinness, until his resignation. There were lingering differences between Foster’s party, the DUP, and McGuinness’s party, Sinn Fein, on local issues.

However, the breaking point came when Sinn Fein’s strong opposition to a flawed plan for energy saving in the North became public. Advocated by Foster and the DUP when she was Minister, the plan’s cost had been set at a stunning half a billion British pounds. McGuinness called for Foster to step aside temporarily so the parties could sort out the shocking cost of the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI). She refused. McGuinness resigned, and the election was called.

Further complicating the current political standoff is the fact that reports have surfaced in the media about the poor health of Martin McGuinness. As this is being written, those questions remain unresolved but are of great concern to many.

The situation in the North before the breakdown and the call for the Assembly election was near toxic relating to local issues such as “the principles of power-sharing, parity of esteem,” and the use of Irish in the courts, among other things. There is a fear that this red-hot controversy could devolve into an impasse and if that lingers unresolved, it could bring down the currently fragile structure that underlined in real and symbolic terms the end of the conflict in Northern Ireland and the peace process we know today.

US Hibernians OK McGuinness Resignation, Fault UK and US – The Ancient Order of Hibernians has endorsed the McGuinness resignation. The AOH points to the Democratic Unionist Party, once Paisley’s party and leading election vote-getter, for the “churlish behavior of DUP members to anyone who expresses an Irish identity, specifically those who wish to embrace the Irish language.”

The slashing of funding for programs designed for Irish students while at the same time greatly increasing funding for a unionist flute band has been the most recent complaint by the AOH.

Also coming in for criticism are the British for missteps with regard to the policies that negatively impact the local Irish community, including the Brexit vote and the “deteriorating political landscape” in the North. The Hibernians also said that the US government “has been premature to declare ‘mission accomplished’ and disengage from the Northern Ireland peace process while implementation is still a work in progress.”

The Hibernians are a great organization filled with sincere and dedicated members around the world, but I wouldn’t agree with them on every issue. I was a longtime friend and enthusiastic supporter of the late great **Dave Burke** in Lawrence, and miss his smile, good humor, and gutty support of issues that helped Ireland and its people for many years. A great man.

Refugees, Immigrants Are Targets, But No Criminal Offenses – At numerous campaign rallies, Donald Trump pledged to immediately “deport the people that are criminal and have criminal records, probably 2 million, it could even be 3 million. We are getting them out of our country.” That pledge, harsh but straightforward (and probably inaccurate) underlines the way Trump panders to his voters, many of whom believe that their troubles can be traced to immigration.

Deportation is the quick hustle by federal authorities regardless of whether or not an immigrant is a criminal or has a record. These folks are being shipped home for minor crimes or for no crimes at all. This is manifestly against the law as written.

Another Trump call to action lands on the cumulative Trumpian seed dump that falls on fallow ground when he wants to sound tough or manufacture a new class of scapegoat. And while the new administration and his (fresh face, old racism) nominee for attorney general agree to be tough, the candidate-turned-president will never build his wall; and he never can refuse entry to

the US based solely on religious grounds or untested, hollow claims of terrorist by race.

And what of the concept of sanctuary cities and Trump’s gross ignorance of where the line is drawn between the powers of cities and the federal government. The White House policy would have local police officers enforcing national immigration policy, but under the current law immigration is exclusively a federal responsibility. Those divisions of labor go all the way back to the US Supreme Court ruling in *Prigg v. Pennsylvania* in 1842 that clearly supports local police in refusing to act as unwilling agents of the federals. This and follow-up decisions mean that Trump’s plan for so-called sanctuary cities to be punished or otherwise sanctioned is as invalid as the slavery that prompted the *Prigg* decision. If in doubt, look it up.

Anglo Names Dominate Irish Baby List – For several years now, Irish new parents have opted to name their arrivals with traditional Irish names such as Aoiife, Owen, Donal, Rory, and Conor. Some of that fondness may be attributable to readers of Irish traditions and to social historians who cling to the Ireland of yesteryear. However, that trending to homegrown Irish names for Irish babies may be softening up, with the appearance this past year of more names out of an urban British enclave than a Sligo hamlet. I love the Irish names despite the poet friend who called my wife’s expected first-born “Sean,” but who turned out to be our daughter Erin.

A report from the Irish passport section lists the names James and Emily as the two top new baby names in 2016 out of the 17,752 issued to newborns last year. Attesting to the multi-cultural aspect of the new Ireland are the names Freya and Mohammad on the list.

Giving A Good Man A Final Salute – Once upon a time **John Kerry** had a reputation among some of his peers as a candidate with a strong affinity for always getting close to a camera in advancing his career. True or not, over the past four years as **President Barack Obama’s** global ambassador, our Secretary of State, his agenda has meant thousands of air miles, some glitches and some stunning successes.

A longtime US senator from Massachusetts, and the losing Democratic candidate for president in 2004, Kerry had a win with the Iranian nuclear agreement, which calmed the waters and provided clarity and a lessening of a dangerous nuclear threat from a major Mideast player. That calm interlude was followed by Kerry’s speech in December when he severely criticized settlement-building in the West Bank and east Jerusalem after the UN had abstained from voting on an anti-Israel vote in the UN Security Council. This did not go down well with Israeli Prime Minister **Benjamin Netanyahu** and other supporters of Israel.

Israel is one of America’s staunchest allies, but the headlong rush to populate certain areas under Netanyahu has consistently been opposed by the US which sees it as a direct obstacle to a two-state solution to the lingering stalemate. In his speech, Kerry spoke of a choice factor: “If the choice is one state, Israel can either be Jewish or democratic; it cannot be both. And it won’t ever really be at peace.”

I recall how on a visit to Israel **Joe Biden** was greeted by the dedication of a new Israeli settlement ordered for that specific day and time by Netanyahu as an intentional embarrassment to the US vice president. What a strange way for a host prime minister to disagree with US policy. After decades of goodwill and support, he insults an American leader as he lands on at the country’s doorstep.

Many of us know well our home town office-holders and high visibility politicians. As a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Kerry stood tall in defense of American values and initiatives. But less well known are the stories of Kerry’s off-stage travels as a personal envoy for several sitting American presidents. This muted, camera-less diplomacy was a wise call for those in the White House who knew they could rely on Kerry to fulfill a sensitive, secret mission without fanfare or press releases. A good man and a patriot in war and in peace!

Irish Banks: Dangerous, Costly Sport for Customers – The Irish banking industry took a hard left jab from columnist **Fintan O’Toole** and the *Irish Times* newspaper in the new year. O’Toole, the seeming custodian of Irish values and honest business practices, explored in print the recent shenanigans of over a dozen banks in Ireland and found them appallingly short of good faith and honesty. What apparently triggered criticism from two regulators of Irish banks on two scandalous occasions was the revelation that at least 15,000 of the banks’ customers were deceived into moving from lower cost mortgages to “considerably higher interest rates, often at stinging personal as well as financial cost.” Shades of Wells Fargo on this side of the water.

The presence of a cadre of regulators that have looked to be bunking in with troubled banks is the legacy of the financial debacle that shook banking to its core seven years ago. The hired guns of honest banking are still kept busy, but the search for scoundrel times goes on. “Follow the money” is still a reliable heads-up for both regulators and greedy opportunists alike.

The regulators speak: “We must be wary of suffering amnesia when it comes to the financial crisis. The deterrent value of taking actions against [suspect] firms is good, but the deterrent value of taking actions

against individuals is much better.”

In another meeting about questionable banking practices, the governor of the Central Bank warned his colleagues: “It is clear that this defrauding of customers was systematic and deliberate. It operated in 15 banks - essentially the entire Irish system - and so far as we know there is not one case of a mistake favoring the customer.”

It shouldn’t be necessary to remind bank customers in Ireland to look closely at their contracts, all bank mailings, and the small print. As Boston radio talk show host **Gerry Williams** was famous for warning listeners: “They’re out there.” And they certainly are.

Why Did This Poll Not Surprise – In addition to the Russian side of the presidential election follow-up coverage, it still seems that the Republican Party is in a mild form of denial, or maybe they only watch Fox News.

A poll published a month after Trump’s election asked respondents “Who won the popular vote? That poll showed 52 percent of Republicans think Trump won the popular vote. Democratic polling results among the political parties differed dramatically: 93 percent of Democrats got it right. Only 7 percent of them thought Trump had taken the popular vote.

North Facing General Practice MD Shortage – Northern Ireland doesn’t have so many problems with the Brexit impact, tepid leadership, and questions about parity of esteem, that it couldn’t shoulder one more. The latest concern – some call it an impending collapse – is the growing shortage of general practice doctors in the North.

Highlighting the problem for many was a recent practice closure in Portadown. As a result of the closing, some 5,000 former patients have had to scramble to find a new doctor and a practice that isn’t too busy to take them. These MD practices in N.I. are formed as legal partnerships. Today 25 percent of GPs are over 55 and they are starting to retire, which further strains an already overcrowded system.

Most of the GPs are financially comfortable and trying to avoid the stress and the change they face in an overloaded work place. This results in early retirement and a setting off for Australia or Canada or going locum (doing temporary replacements for other doctors who need rest or a holiday).

If you know any doctors who would like a quick opening in an established practice, contact the Belfast or County Down Medical Service in Northern Ireland for more information.

RANDOM CLIPPINGS

The Central Bank of Ireland is ramping up its Financial Service Centre outreach in Dublin in an effort to attract London-based financial service firms to move their operations to Ireland. ... **Chuck Feeney**, who made billions running the Duty Free shops network and then gave the billions away, has called it a day in the office. He wrote his last check and officially turned the key on the door to his Atlantic Philanthropies. Good luck to a unique man. ... Irish water charges were all the rage, but exit polls in last Irish election show only 8 percent thought it was a main issue. ... Unless I have been watching too much Fox News, it looks like **Brian Burns** is DT’s choice for ambassador to Ireland. ... Latest gossip about Brexit impact on Ireland is not good and looking nervous in Eire & NI.

There’s a new 12-sided one-pound coin that will ultimately mean the old “round pound” will cease to be legal tender after Oct. 15 of this year. So spend them or bank them. ... Bristol County Sheriff **Tom Hodgson** has told Trump that he will help furnish the wall labor with his inmates. Is there something in the water with wackos like Hodgson and the now-deposed thug sheriff in Phoenix? ... Do you need to know more than that the new president plans to continue as the executive producer of the *Celebrity Apprentice* on NBC? ... The University of South Wales is looking for a “Professor of Storytelling” at an annual salary of \$75,000. ... Bloomberg News says new Treasury Secretary **Steve Mnuchin** has a net worth of \$655 million.

Obama visited Ireland in 2011 and told Prime Minister **Enda Kenny** that he planned to go back after his stint in the White House. ... Pilgrimages to Ireland’s West Airport, known as Knock Airport, must be good for business. 2016 was a record year as the airport handled 750,000 passengers its 30th anniversary year. ... The little man with beady eyes and a calculator, **Martin Shkreli**, is still raising drug prices. This time around, his huge hikes will affect HIV sufferers. All the bad guys aren’t in jail. ... The Run for Dana Farber 5K race is set for April 15, just two days before the Marathon. Contact dan a-farber.org. ... Not enough progress in the strike threat by the Northern Police PSNI. Severe punishments if the police go forward on a job action. ... As late as last month, retired Gen. **Michael Flynn** was still helping promulgate more insane tweets about Hillary Clinton. And yes, he remains DT’s national security advisor. You can’t make this up. Will someone with a pass to Trump Tower tell silly man Flynn that Hillary lost the election and is no longer a threat. ...

Finally, a note to USMC members about the database being assembled of all Marines who served at Camp Lejeune any time between 1953 and 1987. They had bad water at during that period at the North Carolina camp. The Marines would like to hear from you at marines.mil/clwater or at 877-261-9782 (M-F, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST).

IRISH INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRANT CENTER



An agency accredited by US Department of Justice

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Website: iiicenter.org Email: immigration@iiicenter.org

Matters of Substance

Taking of ourselves, and each other

By RACHEL REISMAN
IIC WELLNESS DIRECTOR

As I sit down to write this, some 400 miles south of Boston the 45th President of the United States is about to be inaugurated. During this time I have been thinking of our Irish immigrant community, and specifically of our undocumented brothers and sisters who may be in a state of fear and panic.

What I want the Irish to know is that the IIC is here for you as always. If, out of fear and panic, you withdraw and isolate yourself, then what we know for sure is that those worries may become more powerful and destructive.

There is a blueprint of sorts, one that's applied to periods of crisis, whether it is a personal, national or political crisis, that can serve many of us well right now.

Educate yourself

Many frightening life events can destabilize us because we don't understand them and we may not know what rights we have as an undocumented immigrant. Once we educate ourselves, the reality of the situation may not change or disappear, but we gain some mastery

over it by knowing our options and our choices, and our fears become more manageable. I encourage you to call us at the IIC and come to one of future workshops.

Anxiety Management

Regardless of the political situation, anxiety is with us. Human beings are hard-wired for it. It has helped us survive for thousands of years. Anxiety and fear keep us alert and can save us from all sorts of bad decisions; however, anxiety run amok does the opposite. At those times, it can lead us to catastrophic thinking, impulsive behavior, and distorted fears.

While we need to acknowledge that we don't know what the next four years will hold for many of us, we need to remember strategies that can work to manage the worry. They will serve you well. Observe your thinking for periods of rumination about future-oriented fears or catastrophic thinking. Try and replace such thoughts by taking things one day at a time and trying to clarify what is happening and what is not, what can I do and what is beyond my control.

Stay informed, but take breaks from the news and social media. Now more than ever it seems imperative to know what's happening, but an incessant barrage of updates, talking heads, and tweets exhaust us – even on the best of days. It's healthy to sometimes detach and unplug.

Commit to self-care, whatever that means for you. It may be exercise, meditation, hanging out with family, reading, watching a movie. We need joy and pleasure to live meaningful lives and we deserve it especially in the midst of socio-political crises.

Keep an eye out for relapse

Stress, or change, can become a precipitant to illness or relapse. For those who work to maintain their sobriety, or those who are managing a chronic illness, a time of change and new challenges can be particularly fraught. If you are doing your best to stay clean, or to manage an illness issue, spend time planning what may help you. Reconnect with AA, doctors, therapist, church, recreation etc. Be kind to yourself if you relapse,



Rachel Reisman

and ask for help.

Draw strength from past struggles

We know that many countries, cultures, and peoples have suffered, persisted, and overcome terrible chapters in history. This may feel like a dark moment but we are not alone. We don't know the story ahead, but we do still know one another in the midst of it, and if we can trust that there are many around us to help provide information, support, love and advocacy, we can keep our bearings. Here in Boston, I pledge that the IIC will do our small, but dedicated part, to listen to you, advocate for you and hold hope for you.

Please feel free to be in touch at any time with me at rresiman@iiicenter.org or at 617-542-7654.

Notebook: Tingle show ... legal clinics ... IIC classes

Enjoy Jimmy Tingle and Help the IIC!

We're so excited to be partnering with Jimmy Tingle for a great night of comedy and entertainment. When you purchase your tickets online, be sure to enter the promotional code: "IIC." This ensures that \$10 of the ticket sale will be donated to the IIC. Comedian, actor and commentator, Jimmy Tingle is using his one-man show to help raise spirits, funds, and awareness for the Irish International Immigrant Center!

When: Sat., Feb. 4., at 8 p.m. **Where:** Sanders Theatre, 45 Quincy Street, Cambridge. **Tickets/parking:** Info at Harvard Box Office for \$25, \$30, \$35. Order on-

line at: boxoffice.harvard.edu and enter promo code "IIC." Phone: 617-496-2222. Box office: Farkas Hall, 10 Holyoke St., Cambridge. There are no service fees if buying tickets in person.

February Legal Clinics – Tues., Feb. 7 – Paulist Center, 5 Park Street, Boston (Near Park St. MBTA Station); **Mon., Feb. 13 –** Green Briar Pub, 305 Washington Street, Brighton; **Tues., Feb. 28 –** South Boston Labouré Center, 275 West Broadway, South Boston.

Computer Skills for Life! – You have probably made (and already broken) your New Year's resolutions but it's not too late to make another one. Perhaps you have always told yourself that

one day you would finally take the plunge and learn more about the world of computers and the internet. Well, that day is at hand! The IIC is offering a course in the basic skills which will introduce you to all of the wonders of a computer. The price is right and so is the time commitment – only two hours a week for ten weeks. And don't worry; you can still sign up after the class has begun!

When: Jan. 30 - April 10, on Mondays from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. **Where:** Irish International Immigrant Center, One State Street, Suite 800, Boston. **Cost:** \$25. **Contact:** Bonnie Greenwood at 617-542-7654, Ext. 36 or by email to bgreenwood@iiicenter.org

Free Tax Assistance–

If you worked in 2016 and earned less than \$54,000, you are eligible to have your taxes prepared and filed for free at a Boston neighborhood tax preparation site, courtesy of the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement. Returns are prepared by IRS-certified volunteers and filed electronically for free. Get all of the tax credits you are entitled to including the Earned Income Tax Credit, child tax credits, premium tax credits, and many more. The service is available now through April. For a list of Boston neighborhood tax preparation locations and other details go to BostonTaxHelp.org or call 617-635-4500.

J-1 intern spotlight update

This past year we have provided our readers with some personal profiles of Irish university graduates participating in the J-1 Intern Work & Travel (J-1 IWT) visa program who are sponsored by the IIC. Above, you will see a collage of a handful of some of the bright and beaming faces of these graduates which we featured. They all had stories of the personal journeys that brought them to the US to become immersed in career-changing experiences and to enjoy the vibrant culture of another country.

IIC Executive Director Ronnie Millar recently announced that the US Department of State has granted a request to increase the number of visas available to the IIC for the J-1 Intern Work and Travel program. The increase, about one-third, allows the IIC to offer five hundred visas annually to Irish university graduates to live and work in the United States for a one-year period.

Said Director Millar: "Students come from all 32 counties and intern throughout the United States. We know this program is a win-win for students and employers alike, and that these students return home to Ireland (at the end of their year) to be future leaders." The program is supported by the State Department, the Irish Government's Department of Foreign Affairs, and Trade, and the American Ireland Fund (AIF).

These are some of Ireland's best and the brightest who leaped into an adventure that will change their lives and careers as they go forward. They gave to us as good as they got - for we were equally enriched by their presence!

The IIC helps Irish graduates find paid, one-year, internships in the United States. If you have any employment opportunities available, please contact Paul Pelan at ppelan@iiicenter.org

Immigration Q&A

I just got my green card; now what?

Q. *I have just been granted permanent resident status in the US. Can you give a summary of my rights and responsibilities regarding such issues as travel abroad, reentering the US, losing my green card, and registering for service in the armed forces?*

A. With your permanent resident status (green card), you can live and work legally anywhere in the US. You can petition US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for green cards for your spouse and unmarried children. Generally, after living here for four years and nine months (two years and nine months if your status is based on the fact that your spouse is a US citizen and you are still living in marital union with him/her), you can apply to become a US citizen.

You can travel outside the US whenever you like. You must have your green card, along with a valid foreign passport, with you to present to US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) when you reenter the US. You should keep a record of the dates each time you leave and return (backed up if possible with travel documents such as airline tickets and boarding cards), and it is important always to reenter the US legally by using a CBP border checkpoint, including brief trips over the border to Canada and Mexico.

When you travel abroad you must be careful not to "abandon" your residence in the US. If you want to leave for more than 12 months you must get a "reentry permit" from USCIS before you leave, or CBP will presume that you have abandoned your status and may not readmit you. A reentry permit is granted at the discretion of USCIS for specific purposes, for example, going abroad to attend university, or going to your original home country to take care of an elderly or ill parent. Also, if you leave for more than six months but less than a year, you are not automatically presumed to have abandoned your US permanent residence, but you can face scrutiny on this issue from CBP when you return. It is important to consult with us at IIC or with your immigration lawyer before taking a trip out of the US lasting more than six months.

Even if you have a green card, the immigration authorities can prevent you from reentering the US, or deport you if you are in this country if you are convicted of certain crimes. Certain offenses that may not seem very serious could be viewed as grounds for deportation, or they could keep you from being readmitted if you leave the US, or from obtaining US citizenship. If you are charged with a crime, it is *essential* that you consult an immigration lawyer as well as a lawyer specializing in criminal cases, as the law involving the consequences of criminal convictions on a person's immigration status is extremely complex.

If you are a male at least 18 years old and under 26 at the time when you got your green card, your responsibilities include registering with Selective Service (even though there is no military conscription in effect in the US at this time). If you do not register, you may be subject to criminal prosecution. If convicted, you could be deported. Failing to register may also prevent or delay you from becoming a US citizen. You can get the necessary form at any post office, or you can register online at sss.gov.

Other responsibilities of permanent residents include filing accurate federal and state tax returns annually and paying any taxes that you owe; reporting any change of address to USCIS within 10 days; and having your children who are permanent residents register with USCIS within 10 days of turning fourteen.

Your green card does not entitle you to vote in US elections or serve on juries – you must be a US citizen for that. Doing so as a legal permanent resident amounts to a false claim of US citizenship and can have very serious consequences.

Disclaimer: *These articles are published to inform generally, not to advise in specific cases. The US Citizenship and Immigration Services and US Department of State regularly amend regulations and alter processing and filing procedures. For legal advice seek the assistance of IIC immigration legal staff.*

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Solas says it's time to say 'goodbye for a while'

But not before a show in Beverly this month, and a five-week tour

**By SEAN SMITH
SPECIAL TO THE BIR**

Having marked their 20th anniversary this past year in grand style – with the release of the crowd-funded album “All These Years,” which included appearances from all its former members – the groundbreaking Irish-American band Solas is about to head back out on the road, with a stop at the Cabot Theatre in Beverly on Feb., 18 at 8 p.m. (Go to thecabot.org for tickets and other details.)

But after that, don't count on seeing them again anytime soon.

Recently, the band announced on its Facebook page that it will take a sabbatical for an undetermined interval after this tour – which kicks off on Feb. 9 and concludes on March 19. “It is time to hit the reset button and rest, write, teach, be with family and loved ones, and just breathe. This isn't goodbye forever, necessarily, but it is goodbye for a while.”

Fiddler Winifred (Win) Horan – who is one of the two remaining original members of Solas, along with Seamus Egan – affirmed the decision last month in a telephone interview from New York City.

“Doing the album was a pretty big undertaking, what with having so many people involved: We had to record in a few different locations, based on people's availability, and we never actually got everyone in the same place all at once,” she said. “When it was all done, I think it just hit us – especially Seamus and me – what a milestone this was for the band.



Winifred Horan, second from left, and the other members of Solas, which will be going on hiatus after an upcoming tour that includes a stop at The Cabot Theatre in Beverly.

And it was a reminder of all the effort, dedication and, yes, sacrifices we made to keep Solas going – it was all worth it, of course, because we saw the world, and played in places I'd never imagined.

“But through all that, as a band we never took a break, even though we have other projects and other important parts of our lives – I love the teaching I do at the Lincoln Conservatory, and I just don't feel right not being there for my students. So, we don't know yet how long this

sabbatical will last, just that for a variety of reasons we need it.”

The birth of Solas in the mid-1990s represented a convergence of several trends, notably the arrival of a new generation of performers in the Irish/Celtic music revival that had taken hold by the late 1960s/early '70s, as well as an increasing interest in exploring commonalities across musical genres. Add in the undeniable buzz that “Riverdance” – which debuted at around the same time – created for Irish music and dance, and

it was a propitious time for a group of young Irish and Irish-American musicians to put a new gloss on the revival.

And that they did. Irish music aficionados and casual listeners were struck by Solas's power and drive, its ambitious, forward-thinking arrangements, and most of all the sheer excellence of its members: from the enchanting, expressive voice of Karan Casey to the pulsating guitar presence of John Doyle to the melodic heft of Horan, Egan and his multiple instruments,

and accordionist John Williams. Over time, the roster changed: Casey, Doyle and Williams departed; Donal Clancy and Mick McAuley arrived, with Eamon McElholm coming on board after Clancy left, Johnny B. Connolly after McAuley; and Casey's role as lead vocalist was taken on in succession by Deirdre Scanlan, Mairead Phelan, Niamh Varian-Barry, Noriana Kennedy, and most recently, Moira Smiley. But Solas's high-level ability and vision never faltered.

It's not unreasonable to see the band's growth and development as a microcosm of the Irish music revival itself. Starting from a largely traditional Irish repertoire, Solas reached into the American folk songbook (“Pastures of Plenty”) and the works of contemporary songwriters like Jesse Colin Young (“Darkness, Darkness”) and Sarah McLachlan (“I Will Remember You”), and increasingly revealed their own talents for composing tunes and songs. In doing so, Solas established an identity as not simply an Irish band, but an Irish-American one – its members native-born Irish or American-born of Irish immigrants – threading together styles and influences of both traditions.

Theirs was, and remains, a truly original sound perched comfortably between traditional and modern – one that is quite evident on “All These Years.” In some ways, it's a retrospective, because not only are current and past members included, but other musicians who have sat in on various occasions: bassists

(Continued on page 11)



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bmarcotte@awhs.org or 781-535-6051




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By SEAN SMITH
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Perhaps the best metaphor to evoke the Irish set dance is to think of that odd piece of furniture – you know, historically and aesthetically valuable, but tricky to set up, doesn't seem to fit in with the rest of the décor, and so it sits off by itself mostly out of sight and out of mind.

But a recently released CD conceived by the Boston-area Irish dancer, choreographer, and dance teacher Kieran Jordan and involving local musician Sean Clohessy may just help land the set dance a well-deserved place in the 21st-century parlor of Irish tradition.

Set dances – such as “The Blackbird” and “St. Patrick's Day” – are a perfect union between music and dance, each specifically attuned to the other. The dancer composes a set of steps to the tune, which in turn gives time and space to the dancer; that might mean an extra phrase, or a tempo or rhythm that's just a little different than your typical reel, jig, or hornpipe.

The 15-track “Cover the Buckle” is all set dances all the time played by Clohessy on fiddle and Sean McComiskey on accordion and tin whistle, with accompaniment by Josh Dukes on bouzouki and guitar and Matt Mulqueen on piano. Jordan's dancing feet can be heard on four tracks.

The title of the CD, Jordan explains, is multifaceted in meaning: In the historical descriptions of Irish dance, “cover the buckle” might refer to the name of a particular tune, dance, or dance movement, but it also can encompass the overall display of step dancing itself.

By the same token, “Cover the Buckle” can be appreciated on several levels, from the practical to the aesthetic. Dancers who are interested in

exploring the set dance tradition now have a source of music that suits their needs. Musicians likewise can utilize the CD as a resource for their own work on building a set dance repertoire.

But non-dancers and non-musicians, and even casual listeners, also have the opportunity to consider the characteristics of a somewhat overlooked facet of the Irish tradition – presented here with a respect for the past but with a 21st-century perspective.

“Set dances are, for the dancer, an exercise in designing and composing,” says Jordan. “It's not something you learn right away – as a beginner, you generally do the jigs and reels, hard shoe and soft shoe. Set dances are more complex, and it's when you really see how important the connection between dancer and musician is, because the music for these dances isn't a one-size-fits-all thing. The melodic approach to what the feet are doing invite the dancer and musician to tune in with one another.”

Jordan says the idea for “Cover the Buckle” arose from necessity. It was challenging to find the right recording to use to teach her students set dances, she explains – many of the recordings that exist were made with competitive dancing in mind, as opposed to the performance variety, so the selections are truncated or just don't have “the right feel.”

But Jordan also thought musicians less familiar with set dances would enjoy the album. “These aren't necessarily tunes you would hear a lot in sessions,” she says. “Now and then, somebody might play ‘The Blackbird’ or ‘St. Patrick's Day,’ but set dances are just not part of the usual session repertoire – they tend to have a different structure and character to them.”

“So the thought was, let's have an album of set dances that are geared for performance rather than competition, played by musicians who really get what set dances are all about. And while we envisioned it as a resource for dancers and musicians who are relatively new to set dances, we also wanted to put set dances in a new light to appeal to those who are experienced in them. There are some set dance tunes we've heard all our lives, and after a while they might get a little stale. We wanted to bring some fresh, new energy to them.”

Clohessy and McComiskey, along with their accompanists, certainly accomplish that. The playing is crisp and bright, and while conscious of tempo and rhythm, is hardly stiff and regimented – the discourse between music and dance is especially apparent on the tracks in which Jordan appears, such as “Mount Phoebe Hunt”; and in fact, Clohessy and McComiskey transform the tune into a reel, an idea they came up with practically on the spot during rehearsal for the album, Jordan notes. That spur-of-the-moment spirit also is manifested by Clohessy's “Here we go!” exhortation at the start of “The Priest and His Boots,” a particularly lively number that feels like it could (and should) go on forever.

“This was, of course, a ‘dance album’ so we

couldn't go totally experimental,” says Jordan. “But I thought it was important for there to be a certain artistry to it, one that gave space to creativity and also some spontaneity – just as you would want if you were doing this on stage or in a pub.”

The album's version of “St. Patrick's Day” well represents what Jordan and her cohorts sought to achieve. Do a web search for the tune, and the renditions you're most likely to find are uniformly bouncy and sturdy. But on “Cover the Buckle,” the track opens with Dukes' moody, introspective guitar intro, before Clohessy and McComiskey enter with the melody; Dukes' accompaniment throughout is similarly laid-back and expressive, and Mulqueen's piano -- which comes a little later on -- delineates the rhythm without hemming in the fiddle and accordion. There's an overall sweetness and gentleness to the tune here that is significantly different than what you'd hear at a typical fleadh or feis.

“It's kind of a pity set dances aren't played more in the general repertoire,” says Clohessy, a Limerick native from a musical family. “Most of the tunes are very beautiful, and you can find a lot of fascinating little details in them. I think it's most likely that they tend to be so associated with competitions, where the playing is very strict in terms of



Kieran Jordan with musicians Sean Clohessy (center) and Sean McComiskey, who worked with her on the recording of “Cover the Buckle,” an album of set dance tunes. “There are some set dance tunes we've heard all our lives, and after a while they might get a little stale,” she says. “We wanted to bring some fresh, new energy to them.”

speed. So that's why, in this more relaxed context, we wanted to show how you can explore set dances melodically and see the possibilities in them.”

Jordan adds her own imprint with “Three Ducks and a Goose,” a set dance she composed to the tune of the same name written by late Boston-area fiddler and composer Brendan Tonra, and “O'Carolan's Draught,” a piece by legendary harpist Turlough O'Carolan that – as she points out – is technically not a set dance but is an example of how tradition can be augmented.

“O'Carolan's Draught” is usually played slower, but I remember hearing some friends play it a little more up tempo and rhythmically, and I always wanted to try dancing to it,” she says. “That's what I encourage in my teaching of sean-nos [old style] dancing, and in

the non-competitive setting: Listen to the tune, think about it, think about the steps that you can do with it.”

The “Cover the Buckle” project served to only deepen Jordan's appreciation for set dances, and the musicians had a similar revelation: “Recording this album – coming together, trying things out – was such a good experience,” says Clohessy. But the defining comment, according to Jordan, came from Mulqueen, who was heard to exclaim “Set dances! Who knew?”

“Hopefully, this album might help move set dances more to the forefront of people's awareness, so they can see and hear for themselves how important these dances and pieces of music are to Irish tradition.”

To find out more about “Cover the Buckle,” see kieranjordan.com.

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CD Reviews

By Sean Smith
John Blake, Mairéad Hurley and Nathan Gourley, “The Truckley Howl” • The title of this album – also now the name of the trio that recorded it – merits some consideration, especially given that it refers to a quote by one of Irish music’s enduring figures, Seamus Ennis, who once offered this as an overview to understanding Irish tradition: “First, you must learn the talk. And then you must learn the grip. And after



that, you must learn the truckley [sic] howl.” His point was that acquiring the lexicon, figuring out the notes to each tune or song, and getting the hang of the fiddle, pipes, accordion, or whatever instrument, gets you only so far in Irish music; the last part is being able to grasp, and convey, the arcane intangibles of the music – allowing yourself “to get swept up in the moment” might be the best 21st-century equivalent. Such is the collective aspiration of *The Truckley Howl*, whose members are current Boston resident Nathan Gourley (fiddle, guitar); Sligo concertina player Mairéad Hurley; and London guitarist, pianist and flutist John Blake. Masterful musicians all with years of performing experience behind them, the trio plays 14 tracks’ worth of tunes – collected from assorted printed sources, and both private and commercial recordings – with obvious technical proficiency yet also an attentiveness to those aforementioned indefinables of the music. If you follow their lead, you will surely experience these epiphanies of grace at various points along the way. Sometimes it’s the traits of the instruments, separately or together – the brashness of Hurley’s concertina, the fluidity in Gourley’s fiddle, the airiness of Blake’s flute – and sometimes it’s the tune, or a part of one. Like their set of two hornpipes from the O’Neill Collection, in particular the second one, “The Mountain Top,” with its distinctive D-B-D-A-D motif in the second part. Or, in one trio of reels, the transition from “Papa’s Set” to the inimitable “Spike Island Lasses” and its shift in mood and temperament. Or that little hitch in the jig “The Clare Shout.” Even an off-the-beaten-path entry, “The Spanish Fandango” (which sounds rather like an O’Carolan tune filtered through Galicia), achieves this transcendence. “The Truckley Howl” is essentially an invitation to appreciate Irish music as greater than the sum of its parts. And not to get too sloppy sentimental here, but somewhere Seamus Ennis is probably nodding his head in approval. [thetruckleyhowl.com]
Lau, “The Bell That Never Rang” • A friend of mine once called Lau the Emerson, Lake, and Palmer of Celtic music. Not that this Scottish trio uses massive Moog synthesizers or a drum kit big enough to need its own 18-wheeler transport, but much like the seminal 1970s progressive rock band they have become known for their powerful and increasingly experimental sound. This six-track album sees Lau – Kris Drever (guitars, vocals), Martin Green (accordion, electric piano, electronics), Aidan O’Rourke (fiddle) – move farther away from its early incarnation, which had a somewhat more traditional-based format, albeit with plenty of contemporary elements. It is Drever, a firmly established and acclaimed songwriter as well as a justly praised singer, whose imprint is especially profound here – the lyrics in all six songs are his, cerebral, nuanced, and sometimes wry and pointed. So there’s an indie-rock kind of feel to much of the album, Drever’s jangling electric guitar set beside O’Rourke’s swirling fiddle lines and the rhythmic ballast of Green’s piano accordion, such as on the sardonic “Death of the Dining Car.” The full range of Lau’s artistic capabilities – including the Emerson, Lake, and Palmer parallel – are on display in the epic (17-minute-long) title track, which was commissioned for performance at Glasgow’s Celtic Connections Festival and takes its name from a detail in the city’s coat of arms. It begins with a movement played

by the Elysian String Quartet, swinging between fully formed phrases and atonal or distorted passages as Drever, Green, and O’Rourke variously enter, building up into a chaotic storm of sounds, some of them electronically manipulated. Gradually, the tempest abates until Drever and O’Rourke lead the transition into the centerpiece, a languidly paced meditation on ephemerality and the struggle, or acquiescence, it engenders within us. The song’s climax is a multiple refrain, “No one knows when you’ll go/and no one thinks to tell you,” in which Drever’s and guest vocalist Joan Wasser’s voices are gradually replicated like a growing chorus of the departed – it’s incredibly sublime and a bit eerie at the same time. The multiple-refrain device also appears in “Back in Love Again,” which opens with some intricate, bluesy acoustic guitar picking by Drever and then begins to gather steam, Green and O’Rourke playing a swift counter-melody as Drever and Wasser sing “We fall out/and we fall back in love again.” Progressing to almost the height of absurdity, the repetition of the phrase might nonetheless prompt some musings (or maybe it won’t, but there is some good fodder for car or dinner conversation): How many times *can* we fall out and back in love? Is the “we” all-inclusive, or just pertaining to the song’s narrator(s)? Can life, or a specific relationship, be so easily reduced to this stark emotional ebb-and-flow? Ending the album is “Ghosts,” which appeared on an earlier recording by the band and – in light of recent years’ events – has taken on some new relevance what with its allusions to immigration and assimilation (“I’m not an incomer/My parents were ghosts/Sir, I was born here/So where would I go?”). Enfolded by a melody in a comforting, almost-but-not-quite waltz time, the song evinces a quiet but firm defiance. “The Bell That Never Rang” (album and track both) may be challenging to some, especially those with minimal tolerance for dissonance and experimentation, but the adroitness of Drever’s writing and singing, and the trio’s collective force of personality, make a compelling case to give Lau a listen. [lau-music.co.uk]
Teresa Horgan and Matt Griffin, “Brightest Sky Blue” • Horgan, a Cork native, is perhaps best known these days as lead singer and flutist for intercontinental pan-Celtic band The Outside Track, while Griffin – a Londoner now settled in West Kerry – has played guitar and other related instruments in several collaborations, notably with singer-accordionist Méabh Ní Bheaglaoich (they released a fine album, “Cuisle,” in 2015). Their CD is a mix of traditional-contemporary material that seems pretty typical for an Irish female singer’s album in this day and age, but that’s selling Horgan and Griffin a little short, because “Bright Sky Blue” makes for perfectly pleasant listening: She’s got a lovely voice, trad-based but with a tint of folk/pop/country stylings that work well for a versatile repertoire; Griffin is practically a one-man show, adding bass, mandolin, and bouzouki to his exceptional acoustic and electric guitar-playing. Among the supporting cast is Pauline Scanlon (part of the vocal duo Lumiere), who contributes backing vocals on several tracks, and Niamh Varian Barry (formerly of Solas), playing fiddle and viola. There are some familiar entries, such as “Cruel Sister” (by way of Pentangle), “Fair Flowers of the Valley” (via Tim O’Brien), Leon Rosselson’s populist rouser “The World Turned Upside Down,” covers of Paul Simon (“Kathy’s Song”) and John Martyn (“Sandy Grey”), as well as “As I Roved Out,” with surely one of the more glorious melodies in Irish traditional song – and Horgan and Griffin do justice to them all, particularly the latter. Less known, perhaps, is English singer-songwriter David Wood’s “May the Kindness” (deserving of a place in the folk/acoustic pantheon of latter-day inspirational songs) and the title track, by Donegal’s Ian Smith – a cautionary tale in which moments of anger lead to, literally, a lifetime of regret. Horgan’s instrumental prowess also gets a cameo, in a set that opens with a Breton tune, “Dans en Dró,” on multi-tracked flutes (displaying some outstanding ornamentation and harmonies), and goes into “The Roscommon Reel.” Put this in the “worth a listen” column.



February Calendar of Irish/Celtic Events
A look at some Irish / Celtic music performance events in the area over the next month.
• Those indefatigable ambassadors of Irish music **The Chieftains** will be in town at the Chevalier Theatre in Medford on March 1 at 7:30 p.m. The quartet of Paddy Moloney, Matt Molloy, Sean Keane, and Kevin Conneff continues to uphold the five decades worth of Chieftains’ legacy, always willing to explore new territory – as evidenced by their most recent album, “Voice of Ages,” which included collaborations with indie-folk/rock/Americana artists like The Decembrists, Bon Iver, Imelda May and the Low Anthem. Information and tickets available at chevaliertheatre.com.
• Club Passim in Harvard Square will host a unique gathering of four stalwart performers on Feb. 5. **Natalie Haas** has helped spark a tremendous groundswell of interest in the cello as a Celtic music instrument through her partnership with fiddler Alasdair Fraser and collaborations with Solas and Natalie MacMaster, among others; **Yann Falquet** is a fount of traditional Quebecois music and a masterful singer and accompanist on guitar and jew’s harp. The husband-and-wife team (who relocated to Greater Boston last year) will be joined by **Maeve Gilchrist**, whose Celtic harp style incorporates jazz and world-music influences, and **Nic Gareiss**, an innovative step and clog dancer who also excels as a vocalist and bouzouki player. Haas also will be part of the “Pure Dead Brilliant Fiddle Concert” at Club Passim on Feb. 16, featuring a bevy of accomplished Celtic fiddlers including **Hanneke Cassel** and **Laura Risk**, along with other musicians such as guitarist-vocalist **Keith Murphy**. Guitarist-mandolinist-vocalist **Eric McDonald** will be part of the Passim Monday Discovery Series on Feb. 13. A Boston-area native now living in Portland, Maine, McDonald has collaborated with such Celtic musicians as fiddlers Katie McNally, Brendan Carey Block and piper Will Woodson, but has also cultivated a solo career and recently released his debut album “Rove.” Also performing will be singer-songwriter Elise Leavy. All shows above begin at 8 p.m. For information and tickets, see passim.org.
• In addition to playing at the Feb. 16 “Pure Dead Brilliant Fiddle Concert” at Club Passim [see above], **Hanneke Cassel** will perform on Feb. 25 at the Ivy Chord Coffeehouse in the Unitarian Universalist Church of Reading. Cassel, one of the more prominent fiddlers in the “American-Scottish” style, will be accompanied by cellist Mike Block and guitarist-vocalist Keith Murphy, who will present songs from Eastern Canada and Quebec. The show begins at 8 p.m. See uureading.org/concerts for details.
• Prince Edward Island trio **The East Pointers** come to the Burren Backroom series in Davis Square on Feb. 12 at 4 p.m. The band, on the strength of its recent release “Secret Victory,” has infused the Canadian Maritimes music tradition with contemporary, folk-styled compositions to create a fresh, infectious sound. The East Pointers are fiddler Tim Chaisson and his banjo-playing cousin Koady – both from PEI’s esteemed music family the Chaissons – and guitarist Jake Charron, who’s toured with fiddler Liz Carroll. On Feb. 22, the Backroom will present a double bill of duos: **The Murphy Beds**, Jefferson Hamer and Eamonn O’Leary, whose interpretations of Irish, British and American traditional songs are marked by hauntingly lovely vocal harmonies and finely blended guitar, mandolin and bouzouki duets; and **Dana Lyn and Kyle Sanna**, whose “through the looking glass” sound combines traditional Irish music with improvisational and compositional elements. The evening begins at 7:30 p.m. Another two-fer event takes place in the Backroom on March 1 at 7:30 p.m. Opening is Dublin septet **Skipper’s Alley**, which musters a truckload of instruments – including uilleann pipes, flute, banjo, concertina, fiddle, harp, guitar, tin whistle, mandolin and bodhran – for its much-praised renditions of Irish traditional music and song. Following them will be **Runa**, an Irish-American-Canadian band that weaves the Irish tradition into a framework of Americana and roots music. For ticket information and other details about the Backroom series, go to burren.com/Backroom-Series.html.
• Irish music spiced with Latin rhythms is the flavor of the night at the Irish Cultural Centre of New England in Canton on Feb. 14, when **Baile an Salsa** brings their “salsa trad” to the area. The 10-piece ensemble – which has appeared on RTE1’s “The Late Late Show” and TG4 – plays a repertoire of its own compositions blended with traditional Irish tunes, and songs in English, Spanish and Irish. See irishculture.org for event and ticket information.
• Boston College’s Gaelic Roots series will host a lecture and performance on Feb. 23 highlighting Boston’s rich Irish music history. Ethnomusicologist and musician **Daniel Neely** – who writes for the *Irish Echo* – will give a talk titled “From the Variety Stage to the Shamrock Band: A Brief History of Irish Music in Boston, 1890-1930,” touching on the Gaelic Revival, the 1920s dance band era, the Depression, and other facets of the Irish music story in Boston. A concert with area musicians **Joey Abarta, Sean Clohessy and Sheila Falls** will follow. The event, which takes place at 6:30 p.m. in the Theology and Ministry Library Auditorium on BC’s Brighton Campus, is free and open to the public but registration is required. Go to bc.edu/gaelicroots for the registration link and other information.
• **Boston College Irish Dance** will present its annual spring showcase on Feb. 24 and 25 at BC’s Robsham
(Continued next page)



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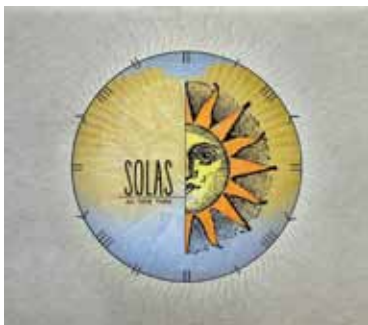
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Solas says it’s time to say ‘goodbye for a while’

(Continued from page 8)

Chico Huff and Trevor Hutchinson and percussionists Ben Wittman and John Anthony. Yet with the exception of “Darkness, Darkness,” all the material is new. Egan’s command of various instruments – banjo, mandolin, flute, whistle, nylon string guitar – and Horan’s guts-and-glory lead and backing lines anchor the instrumental sets such as “Roarie Bumblers,” “Mr. and Mrs. Walsh” and “Lucy Locket’s/The Quiet Pint/The Sleepy Sailors,” with characteristic tight ensemble playing and shifting time signatures and rhythms from beyond the Irish and American traditions. The Francoesque waltz “Lost in Quimper” shows the band’s cosmopolitan side, with accordion, fiddle and mandolin teasing out the tune’s melodramatic disposition. And Solas even has a go at a classic session tune, “New Rigged Ship,” enhanced by a solid bass and percussion accompaniment.



“We wanted to look forward, not backward,” says Horan of Solas’ recent album, “All These Years.” “This was a way of celebrating what we accomplished, with all the people who over the years brought their own unique gifts and energy to Solas.”

Not Alone.” Lesser-known songwriters also get attention: Montanan Martha Scanlon’s “Little Bird of Heaven,” and Cork native Ger Wolfe’s “Lay Me Down,” given

exquisite treatment by Smiley. Kennedy, accompanied by her five-string banjo, gives an Appalachian flavor to a setting of Yeats’ “Song of the Wandering Aengus,” and Barry’s rendition of Southern mountain ballad “Willie Moore” is in similar Irish-American territory, while Scanlan essays the sorrowful Irish nationalist lament of old, “Padraig Og Mo Chroi.”

“We didn’t want a repeat of what we did for the 10th anniversary, a live show with old material,” said Horan. “We wanted to look forward, not backward. This was a way of celebrating what we accomplished, with all the people who over the years brought their own unique gifts and energy to Solas; we thought it was better to put all these qualities to work on crafting something new. And I think the result shows how musically cohesive Solas has always been, regardless of who’s been in the line-up.

“To this day, I believe that with Solas it didn’t matter what your background was. None of us ever felt pressure, or an obligation, to fill a niche. What spoke to us from the beginning was the power of the music, the beauty in its simplicity, or its complexity. The music always came first.”

A band is a reflection of the time and circumstances in which it’s created, Horan said, and of how these intersect with the interests of the band’s individual members. “With Solas, you had five people who, although each had a foundation in Irish music, had eclectic tastes. John was into rock-and-roll, Karan was interested in jazz, and Seamus – though he grew up playing in the All-Ireland competitions – was a self-taught renaissance man who had an ear for arrangement and composing. I’d played Irish fiddle as a kid but also went to conservatory, and I grew up in New York City, exposed to a melting pot of sounds.

“Then you consider the 1990s, and what was going on, whether it was grunge rock, or groups like Afro-Celt Sound System blending Irish and world music, and of course ‘Riverdance’ with all the diverse influences in Bill Whelan’s musical score. Plus you had the Internet, though it was still kind of new, and you could get your ears on practically anything.”

So while early on the band might have adhered to

a more trad Irish repertoire, Horan said, they felt no hesitation in broadening the scope of either form or content. “We always embraced that eclectic side of ourselves. We felt right doing it, and it was something that audiences clearly wanted to hear. So we just didn’t set any limits: If it was musical, and if it felt right, we’d do it.”

But doing it in the recording studio was never enough, she adds.

“Solas, from the get-go, was a touring band at the heart. Regardless of the technology you use, the training or the gear you have, if you can’t play and deliver live, if you can’t connect with an audience it doesn’t mean anything. That’s why I’m glad we’re touring for ‘All These Years’ – it’s very special to get a response from our fans who’ve supported us for so long.”

Appropriately enough, “All These Years” concludes with the title track, a hushed, reflective Egan composition played as a duet by Horan and Egan (this time on piano, which likely pushes his instrument count well into double figures).

“Putting it at the end just seemed the right thing to do, where it’s just Seamus and me,” said Horan. “It gets back to what I said about the simplicity of the music: Solas can have a ‘big sound’ with all kinds of things going on, but then we can have just two people playing something that’s quiet and mellow, and the energy and passion are still there.”

If “All These Years” – the album and the tune – isn’t a coda for Solas, exactly, it does herald a significant pause in the proceedings, according to Horan. At a time when the US and much of the world seems unsettled, socially, politically and even emotionally, Horan feels that the forthcoming hiatus is a much-needed opportunity to “look at what’s going on around us, not as a musician, but as a person.”

Still, she added, there’s ample reason to believe Solas can and will reconvene at some point in the near future and pick up where they left off.

“I just hope this time off lets us breathe, individually and collectively,” she said, “and helps catalyze our creativity.”

February Calendar of Irish/Celtic Events

Theater Arts Center; both shows begin at 7 p.m. This year’s show, “InTENSity,” will once again feature traditional Irish as well as original choreography by the student-organized and run ensemble; there also will be guest appearances by other BC student dance groups.

• The duo of **Colleen White and Sean Smith** will make a return visit to the Newton Free Library on Feb. 12 at 2 p.m. With a mainly traditional Irish repertoire that also includes songs from Scotland, Britain, America and even France, White (flute, whistle, vocals)

and Smith (guitar, bouzouki, bodhran, vocals) have appeared at various local events and venues, including BCMFest, Club Passim, the Dorchester Irish Heritage Festival, and the Midway Café in Jamaica Plain. See newtonfreelibrary.net.



Vocals – Andres Martorell; Congas – Alan Preims; Bass —Antonio Aguilar; Fiddle – Michael Chang; Bata / Percussion – Frailan Moran; Mandolin / Guitar – Peter Brazier; Accordion – Ger Chambers; Piano – Brid Dunne; Timbales / Bodhran – Rags Ferguson; Flute / Bouzouki – Gabriel G Diges.

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With this tumultuous year behind us and possible another facing us, it's good to focus your mind on some basic and simple (not easy!) steps. Imagine your health as a jigsaw, lots of small pieces that all together create a picture of you and your health. No single piece, like joining a gym or going on another diet, will determine good health. Instead it's all the small changes and steps that lead to a balanced and healthy picture.

From my experience working with patients and clients, I've gathered four of the most crucial steps that add up to major changes. To help you get on track, I've knocked 15 percent off the price of Heyday's online weight management program this month.

Check-in - Start to differentiate between needing to eat and just wanting to eat. Pause before eating, and ask yourself, "Is this hunger or habit?" Your eating may be more about boredom, stress or wanting to treat yourself. If food is only meant for stomach hunger, then there must be at least one other way of meeting these needs without relying on the tub of ice cream. By making a clear choice either, "yes, I'll have it and enjoy it" or "no, maybe later" you're empowering yourself to care for you. Step back from the inner critical voice telling you what you "should" and "should not" eat. Instead make deliberate, defined choices. This will help you trust yourself around food.

End automatic eating – When you eat while you're

on the phone, watching TV, driving or just grabbing a handful of crackers while you happen to be in the kitchen, your eating goes unnoticed by yourself. That's why at the end of a meal you might still feel unsatisfied and look for more. You haven't really had the food and experienced the taste. Separate your eating from other activities. So when you eat, just eat, and really have your food. Taste and enjoy every bite.

No more "all-or-nothing" – Rigid rules, extremes, and being good or bad around food set you up for disappointment. People with weight difficulties often have high standards for themselves and can be perfectionists with their eating. If it's not perfect, then it's not good enough. So a few extra biscuits extra lead to the notion that "it's all ruined," and half the packet of biscuits is then gobbled, followed by a large serving of guilt. A few biscuits will not ruin your picture of health. But a constant habit of "all-or-nothing" eating will have a negative impact. Getting up from minor setbacks and drawing a line under the extra few biscuits is crucial, instead of continuing the eating. That in-between balance is vital.

Exercise for health, not punishment – Don't exercise because "I ate two desserts and better spend an



Dr. Bernadette Rock

hour in the gym." This sort of thinking associates exercise with punishment. Instead exercise to feel strong, energized, and connected with yourself. Find an activity that you enjoy and can schedule. Small consistent steps are far more effective than one leap, which tends to be temporary. This year focus on the small steps and create a beautiful picture of good health.

Email your comments or questions to Bernadette at hello@heydayworld.com and check out heydayworld.com for further details.

Wishing you a healthy year in 2016,
Dr. Bernadette Rock (PhD).

'BEAUTY QUEEN'

HAS RETURNED

(Continued from page 1)

who became the first woman in history to win a Tony for direction.

Now, two decades later, "Beauty Queen" is back, also from Druid, also directed by Hynes, and also starring Marie Mullen. The difference is that Mullen played Maureen, the beleaguered daughter, in the original production. This time, she returns as Mag, the manipulative mother. In an interesting bit of casting, Mullen's daughter, the actress Aisling O'Sullivan, plays Maureen.

This 20th anniversary tour has already played Galway, Los Angeles, and New York. It comes to Boston as part of the ArtsEmerson season, playing the Paramount from Feb. 8 to Feb. 26. (Druid previously presented its acclaimed production of McDonagh's "The Cripple of Inishmaan" for ArtsEmerson in 2011.)

Mullen has been hailed as one of the great actresses of the Irish stage. She spoke about her work by phone from her home in Ireland. As lethal as she can appear as Mag, she was open, welcoming, and funny in conversation. Here's a condensed look at that chat.

Q. Like all of McDonagh's work, "Beauty Queen" elicits a visceral reaction.

A. I think it's a classic myself. A wonderful play and a wonderful piece of work. Audiences have no difficulty getting involved in the story – the mother and daughter thing. As the story goes on, people get annoyed with me. When Mag plots a certain ominous act the waves of hate come across the audience. I mean, they were right beside us in the theater in LA and I thought somebody was going to get up and choke me!

Q. A bit unnerving?

A. (Laughing) I was so scared. I really was. I just wanted to get off the stage. Oh my God. (I would hear) "Oh, you can't be serious! You're not going to do *that*!" They would say it out loud. I'm in my zone, you know. I can hear these things, but they think I can't!

Q. Has playing both Maureen and Mag, albeit 20 years apart, given you an advantage in understanding both characters so well?

A. I'm only discovering that now myself. Anna Manahan played the mother when I was the daughter . . . When I started to play Mag I decided I was just going to have the confidence to go with the rhythms that Anna set up, which were in my head. I kept referring to the script and I found those rhythms were spot on. They were right. So why change them? But what's happened now is that more of me is beginning to come into it. More of the way I look at things.

Q. The play ranges from wickedly funny to deadly serious. Are audiences challenged by that?

A. It just means that I am constantly adjusting my performance to find the truth. And it's a good thing because it means it happens fresh on stage every night. Nothing is phoned in. It can't be phoned in. Not even the rhythms. We are constantly adjusting to the audiences, to what they get, to what they don't get . . . It's a constant unveiling of a story every night, and for actors that's really good because we have to be completely receptive to the audience. And completely receptive to each other to make sure that we're bouncing off each other in the right way.

Q. Although the story is set in Ireland, the dysfunctional parent-child relationship is universal?

A. Yes. People say, "Oh I know where I am with this" and they immediately feel secure and they settle down to just take the play on . . . Martin has done that . . . It's just his style. To involve you. To tell you about these characters. Not to judge them, but just to ask you to listen to them and make up your own mind, whether you want to laugh at that line or whether you want to be annoyed at that character – whatever you need to be.

Q. Thinking back, what drew you all to form Druid back in the 70s?

A. It was because the three of us were from the west of Ireland. Because we had the rhythms that a lot of our playwrights had written in. That we wanted to explore plays and we wanted to put them on for people in the west, particularly in Galway. I don't know how much we had thought about touring at that stage, but very soon touring became a big deal in our company. To tour to small towns of Ireland and bring them professional theater and not have them having to drive to Dublin to see a play. That's how it really started.

BIR: What a remarkable legacy! **MM:** We were young, you know? When you're young, you say "Let's try it." Anything's possible.

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

...

Druid Theater Company's "The Beauty Queen of Leenane," Feb. 8 - 26, Paramount Stage, 559 Washington Street, Boston. Info: 617-824-8400 or artsemerson.org.

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Curtin Home Health Care a growing enterprise

The oldest sister in a family of 11 children who were raised on a working farm in Co. Clare, Martina Curtin began learning about home health care at a very early age. Today, continuing that care is her business, Curtin Home Health Care, which she started in 2008 out of the Back Bay.

Over the last nine years, with key assistance on the business side from her husband, Craig Carlson, she has built the company from a small operation to one that employs some 30 home health aide positions ranging from basic personal care assistants to registered nurses to those who provide end-of-life care.

Curtin says her growing up as the oldest sister has been the catalyst for her passion for health care. "There was no room for error growing up with 10 siblings and it was always, "get up and get on with it," as my husband Craig says, "in my direct, but nice way." I always knew I was a leader and I knew there were bigger things out there. I saw the mistakes that other agencies made and I knew I could do this better."

Curtin has a steady focus: "You meet families at their most vulnerable time. Their loved one is sick and they're going in 100 directions and they just don't know what to do.

It takes all of my time to do the schedules," she says. Carlson, whose background is his work as a senior advisor at Bain and Co, watched his wife's business grow exponentially and along the way he recognized the need for a business manager. In 2014, he offered to help handle the business side,

which has continued to evolve with the hiring of new employees and taking on clients at a rapid pace. *Curtin Home Health Care is based out of Boston's Back Bay, but offers services all around the Greater Boston Area. Learn more about them online at curtinhomework.com.*

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Mark your calendars now for the Charitable Irish Society's 280th Annual St. Patrick Day Dinner on March 17, 2017 at the Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel in Boston. Many of the Charitable Irish Society's events have been held at this venue, and we look forward to returning there again this year.

First trip to Ireland? Suggestion: Take a tour

By JUDY ENRIGHT
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

You're having fun planning your first trip to Ireland and you wonder whether you should take an organized tour? Yes, absolutely. That's a great idea, especially if you've never been before.

Generally speaking, countrywide tours acquaint you with various cities, counties, and assorted attractions. You can then return on your own later to spend more time in the places that especially appeal to you. There are also specialized tours that focus on special interests like golf, hiking, etc.

Bus tours make sense in larger cities where there are many interesting attractions that you might miss otherwise. City driving is not fun and, if you're on a tour, you have the benefit of not only an experienced driver but also a guide's extensive knowledge about places you're going to. And you are usually dropped off at the door of the attraction and your hotel or B&B.

EQUESTRIAN HOLIDAYS

Many tour companies focus on Irish holidays for particular interests, such as golf, equestrian, fishing, cycling, and more.

Information on equestrian holidays, offered all over the country, is available from ehi.ie. Pony trekking and trail rides are available from some locations and, at Killarney Riding Stables in Ballydowney, Co. Kerry, you can sign on for a two-day or a five-day Ring of Kerry trail ride. What fun!

If you're a horse fancier, be sure to visit Dartfield in Loughrea, Co. Galway, to see the horse museum. Also stop by the Station House Connemara Pony Museum in Clifden, also Co. Galway, and if you happen to be in Clifden in mid-August, the Connemara Pony Festival Show is a fun event for all ages.

One tour company, Hidden Ireland Tours, offers a series of interesting options online, including a Wild Atlantic walking/hiking tour with Con Moriarty. The company also has special interest, day tours, pilgrimage, adventure and chauffeured tours. For details, visit hiddenirelandtours.com

If you are not sure which tour is for you, be sure to visit your favorite travel agent or hop online where extensive information is



There's a sadness to the lovely Doolough Valley on the way to Delphi Lodge in Co. Mayo, that dates back to famine times and the loss of lives there. *Judy Enright photo*

posted by numerous tour companies.

DRIVING

Driving on the left can be a challenge for most of us not accustomed to it, but renting a car and going where and when you want is a great way to see Ireland.

My favorite car in Ireland is a Skoda 4-door sedan, which is bigger than many rental cars but not so big that parking is a problem. The trunk (or boot) is spacious for luggage and the Skoda is a comfortable car for cruising the highways and byways looking for comfortable places to stay and fun attractions.

For at least the past 10 years, and maybe more, I have rented Skodas on every visit from Dooley (dooleycarrentals.com or dan-dooley.ie) and find the cars clean and well maintained and the staff extremely accommodating. My husband and I once rented from a different company. Previous renters had been sick in the car but the seats had not been cleaned. Needless to say, it was pretty appalling. Thankfully, there has never been any kind of problem with Dooley cars.

What I like best about

renting a car is that I am free to go anywhere and everywhere on my schedule and not someone else's. Being free, I can see places off the beaten track that I might miss otherwise.

While I am a devoted Dooley fan, I appreciate that there are other good car rental companies in Ireland. The best advice is to go online and do some research or talk with others who have rented cars in Ireland.

IRISH INGENUITY

History is an important element of the Irish tourist business and it's interesting to see companies evolving today that reflect the way things were once done.

One such company is in Lahardane, Co. Mayo, where Paul and Jude Davis are restoring buildings along and behind the main street where they will distill Nephin Irish Whiskey. They hope to create 18 fulltime jobs in the distillery that will use local heather and gorse to brew its own blend of peated, single malt whiskey.

The website, nephinwhiskey.com, says: "In an era where Irish whiskey is dominated by bland, blended whiskey made by giant foreign-owned

multinational corporations, Nephin Whiskey is creating authentically made, peated single malts made in a small village in the West of Ireland using locally grown barley, locally cut turf and triple distilled in traditional copper pot stills, then matured in unique casks handcrafted in Nephin Cooperage."

Paul is quoted in *The Mayo News* saying, "We're sourcing locally, using turf smoke to dry the barley and running our own cooperage on site. All of that is unique today, but centuries ago would have been common in this part of the country." The area was a center of spirit production for centuries and was renowned for quality produce - even after the Licensing Act of 1556 made distilleries illegal.

Eventually, the owners hope the distillery will be a highlight on the North Mayo tourist trail, along with Lahardane's Addergoole Titanic Memorial Park. (Addergoole parish lost eleven people - more than any other place in Ireland - when the Titanic sank. Fourteen boarded the ship for the maiden voyage in 1912 but only

three survived. At 2:22 a.m. every April 15, the community gathers at the Roman Catholic church, where bells are rung to mourn the 11 that died and the three survivors.)

The new whiskey business is expected to boost the local economy and provide opportunities for the young, who typically move away from the village. When you're in Ireland, be sure to look for Nephin Whiskey.

Another new company is Francis M., which is reviving luxury linen in Ireland. Says founder and CEO Sean Moran: "The Francis M. work ethos is key: the simpler the design, the more exacting the craft. Restrained and elegant simplicity replaces unnecessary swirls and flourishes."

A hundred years ago, he adds, Ireland was the center of linen production worldwide. In an average year, enough linen was woven in Ireland to wrap a nine-foot belt of cloth around the earth's equator. During WWI and WWII, many combat planes - including the famed Spitfires, Lancaster Bombers, and Wellingtons - were covered in

lightweight, unbleached Irish linen because of its exceptional strength.

The Irish linen industry today "is a shadow of its former self," Moran says. "Most of the weaving houses have closed... and the output is defined by prim handkerchiefs, wedding ring cushions and christening gowns, all adorned with lace, shamrocks, and Celtic flourishes. The market is also littered with imported products touted under the guise of Irish linen."

"I do believe we can put this remarkable fabric into well-heeled homes worldwide. It will involve working with the few remaining weaving sheds, going back to basics and doing the important things well. There is always a market for utmost quality that lasts," says Moran.

Although linen is manufactured in other countries, Irish weavers and spinners have the benefit of skills handed down for generations. Linen bedding, Moran says, is tensile and increases in strength when wet, allowing it to stand up to repeated laundering even at boiling temperatures. It becomes softer and silkier with each laundering.

Two seasonal linen weights are offered. Francis M. linens are sold only through the website francis-m.com and shipped globally. Custom services are also available. For more information, contact Moran at: scout@francis-m.com

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The Irish Language

by Philip Mac AnGhabhann

This month we are going to review the **Habitual Past** tense and introduce the **Conditional** tense. Recall that the **Definite Past** is a single point in time. The Habitual Past extends over a period of time.

Ghlanadh sé an orlár nuair a raibh sé doirseoir é. “He *used to clean* the floor when he *was* a janitor.” Both of these verbs are in the **Habitual Past** and **Dependent Past** since he worked as a janitor for more than one time.

Ghlan sé an orlár tar eis dhoirt sé an tae. “He *cleaned* the floor after he *spilled* the tea.” Both of these verbs are in the **Definite Past** since it was a one-time accident.

The **Definite Past lenites** (“aspirates”) the initial **consonant** of the verb unless it begins with ***l, n, r*** which can never be **lenited**. If the verb begins with a **vowel** it is “artificially” **lenited** by prefixing a **D’**.

“Nora planted a tree yesterday” **Chuir Nóra crann inné.** The Irish word **crann** /krown/ is a cognate of English “crown” and can also mean the “mast” of a ship or boat. **D’ól Nóra an bainne.** “Nora drank the milk.” **Verbs** that begin with **F-**, first **lenite**, and then since **Fh-** is “silent”, prefix **D’**. An example is **Feil**, “can”, **D’fheil sé** “He could”.

You had the **Definite Past** of the “irregular” verbs a number of times. There is no need to repeat them. The **Habitual Past** you had last month. Recall in the **Habitual Past** tense that the First Person “I” form does not end in **–m** and the Second Person “you” form does not end in **–t** although the **–t-** is still there. All forms of the **verb** are **lenited** (“aspirated”) to show **past action**.

You must, in written Irish, insert the “dummy” vowel letter to bracket the consonant if the preceding **vowel** of the regular **verb** is not the same “quality”. Examples include **cuir** “to plant or “put on” and **gabh** “take”. You may never have to actively use this tense but you should recognize it when you see it in writing.

Chuirinn	/HOOR-uhn/	“I used to plant”
Chuirtea	/HOOR-chah/	“You used to plant”
Chuireadh sé,sí,sibh	/HOOR-uhk/	“He,she,you-all used to plant”
Chuirimis	/HOOR-uhmeesh/	“We used to plant”
Chuiridis	/HOOR-uhjeesh/	“They used to plant”
Ghabhainn	/GAHV-uhn/	“I used to take”
Ghabhta	/GAHV-tah/	“You used to take”
Ghabhadh sé,sí,sibh	/GAHV-uhk/	“He,she,you-all used to take”
Ghabhaimis	/GAHV-uhmish/	“We used to take”
Ghabhaidis	/GAHV-uhjish/	“They used to take”

This is true for **verbs of one syllable**. Verbs of **two syllables** drop the second syllable in the **Past Habitual** tense. Examples are the verbs **salaigh** “to dirty” and **coinnigh** “to keep” or “hold”. Here the verbs stems are still **lenited** but the endings are not quite the same as the one syllable verb. They follow these models. However, notice the ending **-(a)iodh**. This is a new one. The accented **–í-** means that it is pronounced /ee/ as in “feed”..

Shalaínn	/HAHL-een/	“I used to dirty.”
Shalaítea	/HAHL-eechah/	“You used to dirty.”
Shalaíodh	/HAHL-eek/	“He, she, you-all used to dirty.”
Shalaímis	/HAHL-uhmish/	“We used to dirty”
Shalaídis	/HAHL-uhjish/	“They used to dirty.”
Choinninn	/HOHN-een/	“I used to hold.”
Choinnítea	/HOHN-eechah/	“You used to hold”
Choinníodh	/HOHN-eek/	“He, she, you-all used to hold.”
Choinnimis	/HOHN-uhmish	“We used to hold.”
Choinnimis	/Hohn-uhjish/	“They used to hold.”

Verbs that begin with **vowels** do as they did in the **Definite Past**, **lenite** artificially with **D’** and then attach the proper endings.

<input type="checkbox"/> “drink” D’óladh Nóra bainne.	“Nora used to drink milk,”
D’fheoidh am bláth.	“The flower withered.”

Now here is the **Conditional Tense**. The “**Conditional Tense** more useful in a conversation than the **Habitual Past**. These forms are used in sentences that have a “condition” attached such as “I will go *if you will go* with me.” The **Conditional Tense** in Irish will almost always follow “if”, **dá**, and for regular verbs is a combination of the **Definite Past** it **lenites** the **verb** and adds the **Conditional Tense** endings.

An example is the verb **bog**, “to dampen”, with the endings underlined and the “dummy vowel” in italics to illustrate:

dá bhogfainn	“if I dampen”
dá bhogfá	“if you dampen”
dá bhogfadh sé, sê, sibh	“if he, she, you-all dampen(s)”
dá bhogfaidis	“if they dampen”

More on the Conditional in the next columns.



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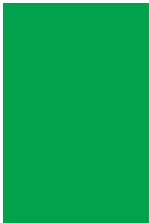
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