

February 2018

VOL. 29 #2

\$2.00

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Boston Neighborhood News, Inc.

BOSTON IRISH REPORTER

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The wheel of the Jamestown, Captain Forbes's adapted warship. *Forbes Museum photos*

Forbes Museum exhibit recalls a special mission

BY DANIEL SHEEHAN
REPORTER STAFF

The newest exhibit at the Forbes House Museum in Milton tells the story of Captain Robert Bennet Forbes's humanitarian aid mission to Ireland during the height of the Great Potato Famine of the 1840s.

The exhibit, which officially opened on Jan. 27 at an open house event at the museum, features a collection of artifacts and documents that detail the voyage and place it in

historical context.

In February 1847, Ireland was experiencing a particularly harsh winter in the throes of the potato famine. Stories began to emerge of entire towns being wiped out by starvation, freezing temperatures, and famine-related diseases like typhus. As news of the tragedy continued to filter across the Atlantic, Boston residents rallied to come up with a plan to help.

After a meeting at Faneuil Hall, the seed of a

humanitarian aid mission emerged, with Captain Forbes at the helm. Born in Jamaica Plain in 1804 and raised in Milton, Forbes was an experienced seafarer who made several trade voyages to China in his lifetime.

Seeing the urgency of the food shortage in Ireland, he took the initiative and petitioned Congress to lend him the Jamestown, a warship docked in Charlestown harbor, to ferry supplies

(Continued on page 6)



Captain Forbes witnessed devastation first hand.

He did his duty 'to the last'

In January 1908, Boston bid farewell to a hero in blue; his killer soon faced justice

BY PETER F. STEVENS
BIR STAFF

Second of Two Parts

It was Jan. 16, 1908, and the ambulance had clattered to a stop at the Relief Station Hospital (part of the old Boston City Hospital) on Harrison Avenue. Inside, Boston Police Patrolman John T. Lynch hovered between life and death. Shot by a man named "Foley" a half-hour or so before, the young man lapsed in and out of consciousness.

The *Boston Post* reported: "He was then carried upstairs to the operating room, where he was laid on



A street sign remembers patrolman John T. Lynch at the corner of Summer and Kingston Streets.

the operating table. The doctors held a consultation and decided to remove the bullet from his body. The bullet had entered the right side just above the liver and opened up a very ugly wound. The flow of blood from the wound was very small."

The surgeons went to work, probing the wound

for the bullet and gingerly extricating it. By the procedure's end, they knew that the damage was fatal.

As the doomed officer came out of anesthesia, he strained to sit up. His doctors and nurses gently held him down as a priest arrived to administer the Last Rites.

His eyes widening,

Lynch asked, "Am I all in, doctor?"

One of the surgeons replied, "No, officer, I guess you will be all right in a little while."

One of the team told reporters: "This answer seemed to cheer him, and he smiled. Then with a pitiful and mournful voice he [Lynch] said: 'Oh, my poor mother, what will she say?'"

"These were the last words which the officer spoke, for he then lapsed into unconsciousness, from which he never awoke."

(Continued on page 5)

Abortion ban headed for ballot box in Ireland

Health minister defends referendum

BY GREGORY KATZ
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON — Irish women are having abortions regardless of a near-total constitutional ban on terminating pregnancies, the country's health minister said on Jan. 30 in defense of a planned referendum that will ask voters whether the amendment should be repealed.

Health Minister Simon Harris said on Ireland's RTE television that he is beginning work on a proposed abortion law that would be submitted to parliament if the May referendum removes the constitutional ban. The legislation would allow abortions during the first trimester, he said.

"Whether the Eighth Amendment is in our Constitution, or indeed not in our Constitution, abortion is a reality for Irish women," Harris said. "I cannot close my eyes and block my ears to the fact that 3,265 of our citizens travelled to the U.K. in 2016" for abortions they could not obtain legally in Ireland.

Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar announced Mon-

(Continued on page 15)

'Seeking Sanctuary'

An artistic collaboration of music, words, installations

BY SEAN SMITH

SPECIAL TO THE BIR

An immigration-themed performance event that premieres February 9-11 at the Boston Center for the Arts will feature a specially commissioned piece by Charlie Lennon — one of Ireland's most distinguished tradition-influenced musicians/composers — and a narrative based on family stories of two prominent Boston citizens: Mayor Martin Walsh, the son of Irish immigrants, and Irish musician Tommy McCarthy, owner of the popular Davis Square music venue The Burren.

Through a combination of music, spoken word, and art installation, "Seeking Sanctuary" will evoke the journeys and experiences of three of Boston's largest immigrant communities, Chinese and Cape Verdean as well as Irish, according to organizers.

Joey Abarta, a Boston resident widely considered among the best uilleann pipers of his generation, will be the guest performer on the piece by Lennon, who will play fiddle.

Other participants in



Joey Abarta will play uilleann pipes for the new Charlie Lennon work.

Mary Mangan photo

the "Seeking Sanctuary" concert include Zhantao Lin, a virtuoso on the Chinese bowed instrument the erhu who will perform a selection of Chinese folk songs, and vocalist Benvindo Cruz, who will lead a set of Cape Verdean traditional music.

Complementing the performances will be a visual art installation based on immigrants' stories; audience members will be invited to write about and contribute their own personal or family immigration experiences.

The "Seeking Sanctuary" (Continued on page 8)



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

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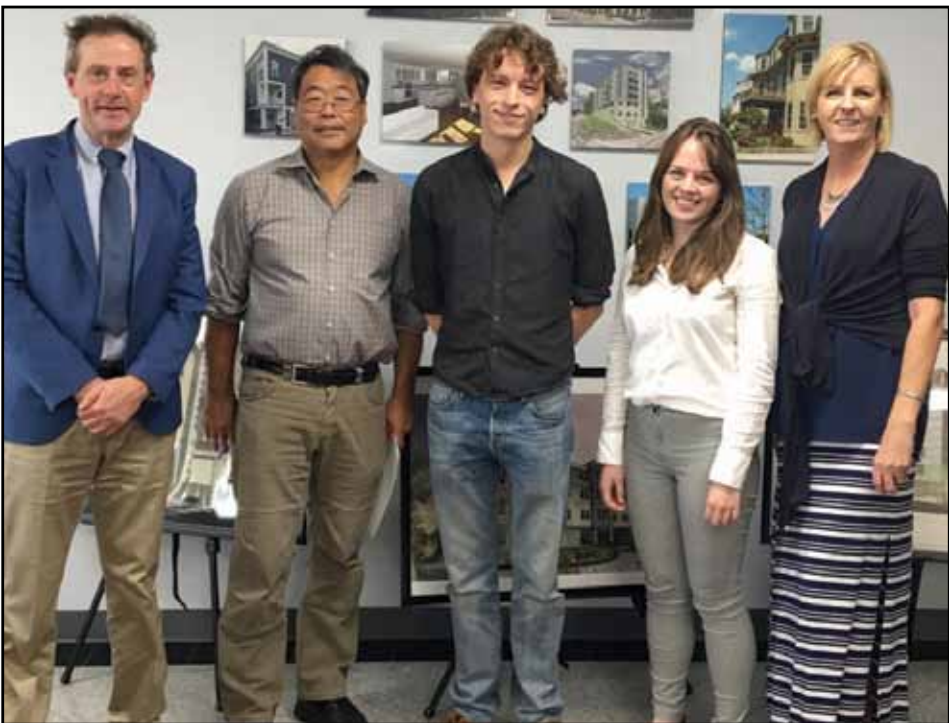
An agency accredited by US Department of Justice
One State Street, 8th Floor, Boston, MA 02109
Telephone (617) 542-7654 Fax (617) 542-7655
Website: iiicenter.org Email: immigration@iiicenter.org

Queen’s student builds on her future in Boston

When Eve Russell, a master’s candidate in architecture at Queen’s University Belfast, was considering her future following the completion of her degree, she knew that an internship in the US would give her a real advantage. All she needed was the right opportunity.

It was only fitting that when Eve received an email detailing a 12-month internship with Boston-based Choo & Company Architects, in partnership with the Irish International Immigrant Center, she took a leap and seized the opportunity. Weeks passed after she sent in her portfolio and, without hearing back from the firm, Eve begrudgingly accepted that the opportunity had passed. She was completely taken by surprise one quiet Friday evening, when an offer letter appeared in her inbox.

All that Eve knew about US social and workplace culture derived from American sitcoms that were popular during her childhood, even from across the Atlantic. It was with great excitement and curiosity that she accepted the offer, and looked forward to the months ahead. IIIC’s Lisa-Marie Nathan provided all of the support



From left: Paul Pelan, IIIC; Arthur Choo, Choo & Company Architects; Chris Rooney, Architecture Intern, Queen’s University Belfast; Eve Russell, Architecture intern, Queen’s University Belfast; Martine Morrison, Choo & Company Architects.

and guidance that Eve needed to arrive safely and assuredly in the US. Four months later, Eve lives in an apartment slightly outside downtown Boston, enthralled with the vibrant American atmosphere that she had dreamed of back home in Belfast. Her favorite spot, a cozy café just a few blocks down from her accommodation, is serendipitously remi-

niscient of that featured in her favorite show, “Friends”. Since her arrival, Eve has attended lectures at Harvard and MIT, taken trips to cities across the country, salsa, and wing dancing lessons, attended concerts, museums, art galleries, and celebrated her first American Thanksgiving. Of her position at Choo & Company, Eve says that “the job itself is

providing me with hands-on experience within my profession, and field measuring is even giving me a chance to explore the array of buildings that the city has to offer.” We wish Eve all of the best as she continues with her American adventure and thank Choo & Company Architects for their fantastic partnership throughout this experience.

IIIC has expanded Irish Languages Classes

In partnership with Cumann na Gaeilge, the Irish International

Immigrant Center has expanded its Irish Language class offerings,

and will now be hosting three classes throughout the coming months for

learners of all levels. The IIIC is delighted to see increased interest from the community for Irish classes, and we are eager to continue hosting classes after the coming semester. If you are interested in registering for a course, or if you would like to learn more, please contact Siobhan Kelly (skelly@iiicenter.org/617.542.7654, ext 15). Related story, Page 6.

Immigration Q&A

Keep all addresses current, accurate with immigration officials

Q. I recently filed an application to adjust my immigration status to legal permanent residence, based on my marriage to a US citizen. We have not yet heard from US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) about an interview with them to decide my case. Meanwhile my wife and I are planning to move soon to a new apartment. We will be filing a change of address notice with the US Postal Service so our mail will be forwarded to the new address. Will mail from USCIS reach us at our new address?

A. No. It is very likely that the Postal Service will not forward mail from USCIS, because of security concerns. Unfortunately, at IIIC we hear from immigrants who moved to a new residence and have been waiting a long time for some communication from USCIS, only to learn later on that a piece of important mail was returned to USCIS as undeliverable. For this reason, immigrants often miss USCIS deadlines because they fail to respond to an important mailing from USCIS that they in fact never received. They learn later that USCIS deemed their application to be abandoned, and therefore denied.

You certainly don’t want that to happen to you. So what should you do? First, practically all non-US citizens residing in this country for 30 days or more, not just those with pending applications, are required to file a notification with USCIS within ten days of an address change. This includes legal permanent residents (green card holders) but not people with A or G visas.

There are two ways to do this. First, you can file online by going to uscis.gov/AR-11 and following the instructions. Second, you can choose instead to use the simple, one-page AR-11 form that you can download at uscis.gov, the government’s website, and mail to the address shown on the form. There is no fee for filing an address change.

It is very important to understand that if you have an application pending, there is an additional step that you need to take. You must inform USCIS directly of your address change so that the officers processing your case will mail future communications to your new residence. You can do this either by filing online as indicated above plus following the additional instructions pertaining to people with pending cases, or by calling the USCIS help line at 1-800-375-5283 and providing your address change information.

Remember: If you choose not to use online filing, just informing the Postal Service and mailing the AR-11 form is *not enough* if you have a case pending with USCIS. You need to contact the agency about the pending case as soon as you move.

For record retention purposes, keep proof that you complied with the address change requirements by: (1) if you mail the AR-11 form, you should keep a copy and mail the signed original by certified mail, return receipt requested, or by priority mail and (2) if you file online you should record the confirmation number you receive, and you should print out the page with the information you submitted, and sign and date it. Keep all such records in a safe place.

A further note: In cases where an applicant has a financial sponsor who submitted an affidavit of support (Form I-864) in his/her case (such as usually happens where an immigrant has a US citizen or legal permanent resident spouse or other petitioning relative), the sponsor (not the immigrant) also has an obligation to file a change of address form when the sponsor’s address changes. The form for this purpose is I-865, and no fee is required.



IRISH INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRANT CENTER

IRISH LANGUAGE CLASSES



WHAT:
Irish language course for all levels
Hosted by the Irish International Immigrant Center in partnership with Cumann na Gaeilge

WHEN:
Thursdays 6:15 -8:30pm
January 18th - March 8th

WHERE:
Irish International Immigrant Center
One State Street, 8th Floor
Boston, MA 02109

CONTACT:
Siobhan Kelly
617.542.7654, ext. 15
skelly@iiicenter.org

FEE:
\$112 for CnaG members
\$128 for non-members

Become a member of CnaG by visiting their website: cumann-na-gaeilge.org.



IRISH INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRANT CENTER IMMIGRATION LEGAL ASSISTANCE

The Irish International Immigrant Center’s immigration attorneys and social workers are available for all immigrants during this time of uncertainty and concern in our community. We are closely following the changes in immigration policies, and are available for confidential, legal consultations, and case representation. At weekly legal clinics, you can receive a free and confidential consultation with staff and volunteer attorneys. For information, or if you or anyone you know would like to speak to an immigration attorney, please call us at (617) 542-7654.

Upcoming Clinic Schedule

Clinics are in the evening – please do not arrive more than 30 minutes before the clinic begins.

Downtown Boston

IIIC, One State Street, 8th Floor, Boston MA 02109
Tuesdays, February 6th and February 20th at 4:00pm

Brighton

The Green Briar Pub, 304 Washington Street, Brighton, MA 02135
Monday, February 12th at 6:30pm

South Boston

South Boston Labouré Center, 275 West Broadway, South Boston MA 02127
Tuesday, February 27th at 6:00pm

Citizenship Clinics

IIIC, One State Street, 8th Floor, Boston MA 02109
Every Wednesday from 10am-1pm
Walk-ins are welcome!

Our Downtown Boston location is fully accessible by public transportation.
Phone: 617.542.7654 | Fax: 617.542.7655 | www.iiicenter.org



CUMANN NA GAEILGE I MBOSTON
Irish Language Society of Boston

BIR Calendar

Thurs., Feb. 4— The Irish Cultural Centre in Canton will host a Mass at 11 a.m. followed by a full Irish breakfast, a singing seisiun at the pub, and a cross-making activity to celebrate St. Brigid's day.

Sat., Feb. 11 and 25— The Boston Branch of Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann (The Reynolds-Hanafin-Cooley Branch) will host their semi-monthly Irish Traditional Music Seisiuns February 11 and February 25 from 3-7 p.m. at the Canadian-American Hall at 202 Arlington St. in Watertown. Admission is \$10 and all musicians, set dancers, and toe tappers are welcome. Doors open at 1:30 on the 25th for a slow seisiun (free). Aspiring musicians are invited to attend.

Thurs., Feb. 15— Celtic rock band Gaelic Storm will perform at 8 pm at the Cabot Theatre in Beverly, MA. For tickets visit thecabot.org.

Sun., March 18— Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade in South Boston begins at 1 p.m. The event is preceded by the St. Patrick's Day Breakfast at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center at 9 a.m.

Fri., April 6— The Gaelic Players Association will host their 2nd annual Boston GPA Dinner at the InterContinental Hotel. They are projecting to have over 500 attendees. Registration will be available soon on the GPA website.

Sat., April 7— The Eire Society will host their annual Gold Medal Dinner. This year's Gold Medal recipient is yet to be announced. Last year's recipient was acclaimed Irish author Colm Toibin.

Wed., April 15— The 9th annual "Irish Hearts For Orphans" fundraiser will take place at the Marriott in Quincy.

Fri., May 11— The Eire Society will host a book launch at the Irish Cultural Center with Cork author William Wall, who recently became the first non-U.S. winner of the Drue Heinz literature prize for his series of short stories entitled "The Islands."

BC's Burns Library hosts author Ellen Alden

In conjunction with the Eire Society, Boston College's John J. Burns Library hosted a book presentation and donation ceremony with local author Ellen B. Alden on Wed., Jan. 31. At the event, Alden will discuss her new award-winning historical novel, "Yours Faithfully, Florence Burke."

The novel is based on a series of nineteen letters written by Alden's great-great grandfather, an Irish immigrant and Union soldier in the Civil War. After fleeing the Great Irish Famine of the 1840s, Burke went on to endure hardship and suffering on battlefields in Virginia during the Civil War. As part of the ceremony, Alden will be donating the letters, which she found in her attic, to the rare document archives housed at Burns Library.

A former elementary school teacher, Alden attended the Graduate School of Education at Merrimack College and now resides in Andover. Her new novel won the 2017 Independent Publishers of New England award for genre fiction.



Ellen B. Alden

Forry takes her leave; breakfast talks ongoing

Linda Dorcena Forry resigned from her State Senate seat on Jan. 26 to join Suffolk, a prominent construction company. A special election primary is scheduled for April 3, with a May 1 final election date.

Forry, 44, has hosted the South Boston St. Patrick's Day breakfast since 2014. Talks are under way to determine who will assume hosting duties for this year's event, which is set for Sunday, March 18 at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center. Forry told the *Dorchester Reporter* on Jan. 29 that "this is a tradition that is important," and "we are working on locking down a host."

The daughter of Haitian immigrants, Forry took office 13 years ago as a state representative and solidified her position by winning a close 2013 election to the Senate, becoming the first woman of color to take the historically Irish-American-held seat.

"The foundation of my public service career has revolved around creating opportunity and access and giving a voice to those who have none, and this work will continue for the rest of my life," Forry said in a statement when she announced she would resign the next day.

She noted that family considerations had contributed to the decision, including her wish to give more time to her family, including her husband Bill Forry, the publisher and editor of the *Dorchester Reporter*, and their two young boys and two young girls; her 80-year-old mother, who is caring for her father, an Alzheimer's patient; and her 103-year-old grandmother, who is living in Forry's childhood home in Dorchester.

— REPORTER STAFF

His job: Pave the way for Globe Santa

By TOM MULVOY
MANAGING EDITOR

For most of us, thoughts of Santa are a November-December thing. For Bill Connolly, Santa considerations are a yearlong proposition in his role as executive director of the Globe Santa program, which on Christmas Day 2017 concluded its 62nd campaign, using more than \$1 million from reader donations to distribute presents consisting of toys and books to some 34,000 children in more than 19,000 deserving families.

The Boston Globe, under the leadership of the Taylor family, took over the popular charity program when the Boston Post, and its Santa charity drive, folded in 1956, and the newspaper has borne the expenses of making Globe Santa a successful Christmastime event ever since.

For 50 of those years, the Southie-born, Dorchester-raised, Boston College-educated Connolly, with deep family roots in Rosmuc, Co. Galway, and Co. Mayo, has played a part in Globe Santa's long run.

"I started working at the Globe in 1966 as a messenger on the business side," the Milton resident said in an interview, "and I volunteered to work for the Santa program in 1968 when the packaging was handled in the newspaper's warehouse at Morrissey Blvd. Over the years I would keep volunteering in various capacities, until 2000, when I took over managing the folks who handled the day-to-day tasks of the program. In 2005, I was named executive director."

Connolly skipped over a lot in that summary. His Globe resume from 1966 to his retirement in 2005 and assumption of Globe Santa operations stands out for its richness of experience at the newspaper over



The owners of the Union Oyster House, Joe and Mary Ann Milano, and Bill Connolly, center, executive director of Globe Santa, outside the venerable Boston restaurant. The iconic tavern gave \$5,000 to the program last year, continuing a longstanding tradition. Boston Globe photo

what most observers, in-house and out, regard as its glory years: ad display makeup, accounting manager, controller, business manager, treasurer, and vice president of administration. He took time off from his Globe responsibilities in 1998 to work directly for the Times Co. as president of its Shared Service Center.

On the day in late January that this interview was concluded, Connolly was well into thinking about the 63rd Globe Santa operation, having just met with members of the board of the Boston Globe Foundation, of which the Santa program is a part, to chew over feedback on last year's operations and to take a look at what can be improved upon.

Irish-owned start-up hopes cryotherapy will catch-on

By DANIEL SHEEHAN
REPORTER STAFF

Dionne McGinn believes her fledgling personal training business, Cryoathletics, is on the cusp of something huge.

The 28 year-old County Tyrone native founded the business just over a year ago. Her young company is still relatively low-profile, but her branding suggests otherwise.

Sporting a Cryoathletics sweat-shirt, she pointed out the window of a Boston cafe toward a flashy blue Cryoathletics van parked down the street. Later, she excitedly whipped out her phone to show off a photo of her new trailer, emblazoned with the same logo, an ice blue sphere enclosing two silhouetted athletes.

"I call it a rolling storefront," said McGinn.

Cryoathletics is the only mobile business in Boston specializing in cryotherapy, the process of treating injuries and pain with ultra-cold nitrogen gas. Using her van and trailer, McGinn transports an inflatable cryochamber and a smaller machine for localized treatment to her clients, where she performs on-site therapy.

The method has been used in Europe, including in McGinn's native Ireland, for well over a decade now, but has yet to gain widespread popularity in the U.S.

"Over here, it's very far behind, it's just starting. So I'm very much in the stage of educating people," she said.

A native of Eskra, a small town in County Tyrone, McGinn she gained experience in the field by working at Ireland's first cryoclinic, where she saw how cold therapy helped Gaelic footballers accelerate their injury recovery.

Soon after, she spent a summer in Boston working with local Gaelic Football teams based in Canton. The experience working with amateur athletes confirmed McGinn's desire to pursue a career in sports therapy, and inspired her to one day work with the pros.

What McGinn calls her "penny drop" moment of clarity happened

when she encountered through her physical therapy work a certain off-injured New England Patriot and asked if he had considered cryotherapy to help accelerate his healing process. The gridiron star had never heard of it.

"He was like, 'What's that?'"

In that instant, McGinn saw a window of opportunity for a business venture based in her passion of physical therapy.

"Boston's a big sporting city, and I was like, why do the professional teams not have it? Why do the college teams not have access to this? I already know all about it, why am I waiting on someone else to do this when I can do it myself?"

With a newfound sense of clarity and purpose, McGinn set about designing her own logo, and her vision for Cryoathletics gradually came into focus. Soon enough, with the addition of a sleek website, a collection of branded Cryoathletics memorabilia, and McGinn's small vehicular fleet, the idea materialized into something concrete.

McGinn believes just as firmly in her methodology as in her business model. She explained how liquid nitrogen gas, at around negative 200 degrees Fahrenheit, has a similar effect to ice, but works more efficiently and at a deeper cellular level.

Treatment takes no more than a few minutes, and does not pose a threat of frostbite when administered properly. McGinn says cryo is also more accurate than cortisone shots, the preferred pain treatment method of many U.S. sports doctors, due to the fact that they are only effective if injected in precisely the right spot.

Cryogenic technology is backed by science, and based on its ubiquity in Europe, McGinn sees a U.S. market primed for a cryo-revolution.

"All the soccer teams over there use them. They're even using it on horses now," she laughed. "There are racehorses walking into cryochambers for treatment."

Right now, McGinn's focus is still

"As executive director, over the course of the year, I implement the holiday gift assistance program," said Connolly, "and that includes, but is not limited to, initiating the toys and books purchases; meeting with key third party organizations, such as the state Department of Transitional Assistance to facilitate and streamline the validation of family need process for both organizations; collaborating on the editorial and promotional campaigns; soliciting fund raising strategies, activities, and partners; and, in the fall months, coordinating fulfillment and delivery of holiday packages directly to family homes."

Always on the move, especially in November and December when he visits numerous venues to accept donations large and small from givers notable and just folks, on this cold and very damp January morning, the tireless Connolly is already revved up for another campaign. He ends the interview by extolling the guidance and help he receives from the top at the Globe.

"This most treasured tradition depends on thousands of donors who believe in the magic of Christmas," he said. "It also depends on those behind the scene on the operations side, specifically Linda Pizzuti Henry, the newspaper's managing director and chairwoman of the Boston Globe Foundation. She oversees Globe Santa. She is incredibly supportive and involved in all decisions. Her input is instrumental in what the family and children receive and the final toy and book selections. In a few words, she is very hands on."

"Everything," said Connolly, "is geared to Dec. 25. A child's smile is the ultimate reward, confirming the joy of sharing in the giving — for all of us."



Dionne McGinn, founder of Cryoathletics "I'm very much in the stage of educating people."

on humans — and her challenge is getting people to gain trust in her and her largely foreign method. But she says she's already built a core client base in the greater Boston area, the entirety of which has been pleased with the results of their treatment. Apart from injury recovery, McGinn's business also offers services related to the numerous health benefits of cryotherapy. She treats patients with chronic pain, rheumatoid arthritis, and psoriasis, and also offers cosmetic treatments including cryo facials and "fat freezing," a non-surgical body sculpting procedure.

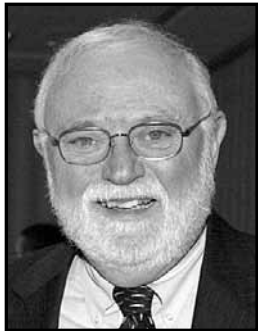
But working with professional athletes is still the ultimate objective for McGinn, who is already on her way to realizing that goal. After meeting the Reporter for an interview, she was taking her van over to Stoughton to treat a former Boston Celtic player who had complained about back soreness after an afternoon of play with his kids. McGinn is hoping that word of mouth will do just as much as her branding in helping her name reach the ears of athletes and team doctors.

"The whole time I'm just trying to keep the end vision in mind," she said. McGinn's approach is innovative, but her story echoes those of many who came before her. "I flew over here with just three suitcases," she said, "with an idea and a dream." With Cryoathletics in the ascendant, it may not be long before McGinn's dream becomes a reality.

A tip of the cap to Kieran Jordan

By Ed Forry

Congratulations go out this month to Irish dancer Kieran Jordan, who was awarded a 2018 “Fellows in the Traditional Arts” grant by the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Last year, Kieran opened her own dance studio on Hyde Park Ave. near Cleary Square, and the Council award includes a \$12,000 grant to support her work.



“We are delighted to announce the 2018 Artist Fellows and Finalists in the Traditional Arts awarded by Mass Cultural Council,” the Council said. “At the age of five, Kieran Jordan watched Irish step dancing for the first time in a St. Patrick’s Day parade. Soon after, she was taking lessons in her parish hall on Saturday mornings. Thus began her life-long journey to becoming not only a renowned Irish step

dancer, but also a cultural activist and an invaluable resource within the Irish-American community.

“Jordan is a gifted dancer, choreographer, and teacher of old style Irish step dances, a tradition that is intricately tied to Irish history, local culture, and traditional music. She displays the aesthetic assurance that naturally evolves from the dedication of a gifted artist who has danced competitively within the Irish traditional step-dancing sphere.”

A native of Pennsylvania, Kieran came to Boston to take her degree at Boston College, and after her 1996 graduation she joined the staff of the *Boston Irish Reporter* as arts editor. She is married to fellow artist Vincent Crotty, and they make their home in Dorchester Lower Mills.

...

One of the joys of belonging to Boston’s Eire Society are the emails sent to members by longtime association secretary Barbara Fitzgerald. She creates a series of timely and interesting items connecting Irish traditions to contemporary events. Here’s a recent sample, celebrating the imminent arrival of spring:

“Brigit, Bride, Brighid, Brigid is said to walk on earth on Imboloc Eve, Feb 1st. Before going to bed, each member of the household may leave a piece of clothing outside for Brigit to bless. These clothes are brought inside and believed to now have the process of healing.

“On the following day the girls carry a Bride ‘og’ doll made from straw and carry a St. Brigid’s Cross from house to house. The old cross is thrown in the hearth and a new cross is then placed in the entrance to their homes and outbuildings to protect their homes and animals from want and evil.

“Tradition shows that many Irish folks bake Oatcakes and eat jam because the convent (where) Saint Brigid lived made jam in the 5th century. She was the Abbess there.

“The cross made from rushes protects the houses from fire and evil. It is hung in many Irish American kitchens for this purpose.”

As Groundhog Day, Feb. 2, approached, she told us: “Irish Folklore: Cailleach the Hag, witch or old woman, gathers her firewood for the rest of the winter. Legend has it that she intends to make the weather last a good while longer. She will make sure the weather in February is bright and sunny so she can gather plenty of firewood to keep herself warm in the coming months. As a result people are relieved if the day has foul weather. It means she will run out of firewood there for winter is over.

“American Folklore: The Groundhog Day” has its origins in an ancient celebration of a point midway between winter solstice and spring equinox. Superstition has it that fair weather was seen as a forbearance of a stormy and cold second half of winter. Punxsutawney Phil is now the official weather forecaster. See shadow, more winter; No shadow, end of winter.”

Barbara signs off each little pearl of wisdom with: “Tis Herself.”



BOSTON IRISH REPORTER

The Boston Irish Reporter is published monthly by:
Boston Neighborhood News, Inc.,
150 Mt. Vernon St., Suite 120, Dorchester, MA 02125
news@bostonirish.com www.bostonirish.com

Mary C. Forry, President (1983-2004)
Edward W. Forry, Publisher
Thomas F. Mulvoy Jr., Managing Editor
William P. Forry, Editor
Peter F. Stevens, Contributing Editor
News Room: (617) 436-1222
Ads : (617) 436-1222
Fax: (617) 825-5516 news@bostonirish.com
On The Web at www.bostonirish.com
Date of Next Issue: March, 2018
Deadline for Next Issue: Friday, February 16 at 12 noon
Published monthly in the first week of each month.

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The standoff in Northern Ireland is a disgrace, pure and simple

By Joe Leary
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

The good people of Northern Ireland have been without local assembly government for over a year now with politicians continually refusing to agree on much of anything to repair the situation. With the destructive Brexit changes looming, the citizens of Northern Ireland have no real voice in their future.

The hard work by so many that resulted in the Good Friday agreement setting up the Assembly has not proved to be helpful in providing a solution. Make no mistake: Unyielding bigots remain in Northern Ireland. It is not a theological dispute but it is certainly a Catholic/Protestant split depending on which team you are part of. Not only does this hard feeling complicate trustful negotiations, but it also separates people in their daily lives.

To their shame, neither Britain nor Ireland has done much of anything to restore the Assembly. They are both so concerned with Brexit they have no time to deal with the Northern Ireland Assembly.

It all started in January of 2017 when Arlene Foster, the head of the leading Unionist Party, the DUP, came out against any official recognition of the Irish Language, disappointing thousands of Irish. She was quoted as saying there are more people speaking polish in Northern Ireland and there was no need to focus on the Irish language. Then a scandal broke that connected Foster with a scheme to enrich Protestant farmers (it involved replacing oil with wood chips requiring boilers with the government compensating the farmers with huge payments. Sinn Fein, the Nationalist Party, demanded that Foster resign while being investigated.

The late Sinn Fein leader, Martin McGuinness, resigned in protest, and that was it for the Assembly since both major parties must be represented at the top of as Leader and Deputy. An election was called and much to everyone’s surprise, Sinn Fein captured 27 assembly seats to the DUP’s 28. That was a shock, especially to the DUP. Since then, several unsuccessful meetings have been held to reconstitute the Assembly.

Musings: Politician, master showman

By Dick Flavin

The Boston Red Sox lost one of their most devoted long-time followers last week when former state treasurer Bob Crane died at the age of 91. Beginning in the 1930s, during the time of Moe Berg, the catcher/scholar of whom it was said, “Moe could strike out in seven different languages,” right through the times of Teddy Ballgame, Yaz, Big Papi and beyond, Bob’s devotion to and passion for the Olde Towne Team never wavered.

Even as his body was wearing out and he could no longer get to Fenway Park, the previous night’s game and the prospects for the next night held his interest.

Robert Quentin Crane was far more than just a Red Sox fan. He was the most underrated public figure of his age. There were a couple of reasons for that: first, while most politicians spend their time trying to show that they’re smartest person in the room, Bob disguised the fact that he was, in fact, the smartest person in the room. Second, in 34 years of elective office he never once, to my knowledge, gave a campaign speech. Instead, he sang a song, told a funny story, and asked people how he could help them.

It was a formula that worked; he was the longest serving state treasurer in Massachusetts history and he never lost an election.

He was also a consummate showman (his father had worked in vaudeville as a property manager). He organized some treasury employees into a group known as The Treasury Notes and together they would travel the state on their off time, singing, telling stories, doing imitations – putting on entire first-class variety shows for civic groups and charitable organizations. Bob was the group’s emcee and lead singer, a damn good one, too.

His compelling Irish charm, his smile, his sense of mischief, were enthralling. He absolutely loved it, as did those he entertained. And it paid enormous dividends at the ballot box.

All the fun and laughter he created tended to obscure the fact that he was an extremely capable state treasurer. The treasury, under his leadership, was a highly professional operation and the state’s money was in good hands. When the lottery was established in 1971 he became its first chairman and remained so for 19 years, building it into the most successful lottery in the nation.

After he retired from public office he didn’t retire from public life. He kept The Treasury Notes together and they continued to entertain for many years, bringing joy to all while raising untold thousands of dollars for charitable causes. He charged no fee for appearances and paid the other performers and musicians from his own pocket.

Critics ranted that he sometimes gave jobs to friends or friends of friends, or that some state money ended up in banks whose directors he knew, but his attitude was that just because somebody knew him shouldn’t be a disqualifying factor. He never tried to hide what he did, was always open about it, and willingly took the slings

Meanwhile the cast of characters in leadership has recently changed. Younger people not connected with the terrible violence of years ago are now in leadership. Martin McGuinness, who died of a rare blood disease, was succeeded as head of Sinn Fein in the North by a your woman, Michelle O’Neill. A surprise candidate, she has been a breath of fresh air without any of the baggage associated with the old days.

Sinn Fein is the only North/ South political party with seats in both legislative bodies. In the South, Gerry Adams, a controversial figure who has been in office for 35 years, is being replaced by Mary Lou McDonald as leader of the Sinn Fein. The election will be held on February 10 in Dublin. So now you have completely new leadership, both bright women, in one of the combatant parties.

There are several other new leaders who will be influential in finally resuming Northern Ireland Assembly activities. Britain has named Karen Bradley, a member of Parliament, to replace former Northern Ireland Secretary of State James Brokenshire, who resigned for health reasons. No progress was made on his watch.

A chartered accountant before she entered politics in 2006, Bradley assumed the office on Jan. 8. She offers new possibilities that she can move the process forward.

There is relatively new leadership in the Republic of Ireland also. Mr. Leo Varadkar became Taoiseach last year and has been quite active in speaking about Northern Ireland. His deputy leader, Tanaiste Simon Coveney, who is also head of Foreign Affairs, has also been active in the North and made a joint statement with Karen Bradley outside Stormont in early January urging a return of the Assembly.

It is inexcusable to allow the Assembly to remain closed. The 90 members are each still being paid a salary of approximately \$60,000 a year with British leadership apparently afraid to stop the funding for fear of alienating some of their supporters. Theresa May’s Conservative party remains in power due to its ten DUP members of Parliament who have given her their vote to help their own cause.

Unfortunately, the curmudgeons who run much of the politics in the North are still influential and insist on staying in power. But the times are changing, new leaders have arrived, and hopeful signs are growing.

and arrows from the critics, even when they, to no avail, investigated him. As a result he earned the undying loyalty of more people than any other politician of my lifetime.

Two years ago, there was a State House event at which the conference room in the treasurer’s office was dedicated in his name. Bob was there in a wheel chair, and a lot of famous pols from the old days were on hand as well, such as former Gov. Mike Dukakis and former Senate president Bill Bulger. In addition, there were lots of just plain people whom he had helped along the way.

Standing among them was a man almost as famous for his aversion to crowds as he is for his heroics on the field, but Carl Yastrzemski, whose daughter had worked for Crane in the treasurer’s office, wanted to be there for his old friend.

Bob Crane came to prominence in the 1960s, the decade that saw the rise of other giants of Massachusetts politics – Ted Kennedy, Ed Brooke, Frank Sargent, Kevin White. He might have been the best politician of them all. None of them, if they were around today, would dispute that.

While Bob never did give a campaign speech, he excelled at another type of address – the eulogy. He had so many friends, and he always delivered. One of his last public appearances was in 2012 to say goodbye to his great friend Kevin White, the four-term mayor of Boston.

Bob’s legs were already betraying him and he had to be assisted up the altar stairs of Saint Cecelia’s Church to the pulpit, but once there he showed he hadn’t lost a step as far as captivating an audience is concerned. He told touching stories about his old pal that had the congregation alternately laughing and weeping. It was a tour de force performance. I still remember his closing words that day: “God bless you, Kevin, the song is ended but the melody lingers on.”

With that the entire congregation in the jam-packed church rose to its feet in a thunderous ovation. I’d never been a part of, or witnessed, a standing ovation in church before. As I stood there applauding with the rest I couldn’t help but think to myself, “By God, he’s just like his old idol, Ted Williams. He hit a home run in his last at bat on the big stage.”

One of his favorite songs, and one he sang at every performance of the Treasury Notes was “What a Wonderful World.” Its lyrics say in part:

“I see friends shaking hands, saying how do you do, They’re really saying, ‘I love you.’
And we love you, Bob.



Bob Crane

Point of View

WILL THE REAL GENERAL KELLY PLEASE STAND UP?

The Marine from Brighton Has Emerged as a Lightning Rod in the Immigration Battle

By PETER F. STEVENS
BIR STAFF

When General John Kelly was appointed Secretary of Homeland Security, and, later, White House chief of staff, many in and around Boston felt a sense of pride and optimism that one of our own would emerge as an “adult in the room” of the Trump Administration. General Kelly’s proven courage and high competence in his long career in the Marines had earned him the respect and admiration of those he commanded under fire, his fellow officers, and many politicians.

Born on May 11, 1950, in Brighton, John Kelly grew up on Bigelow Street in a Boston Irish family with strong Catholic beliefs. The UMass Boston grad went on to serve more than 40 years in the Corps, including three tours of duty in Iraq. He rose to head the United States Southern Command, defined by the Pentagon as “the unified combat command responsible for American military operations in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean.” In late 2010, his son Robert, 29 years old and a Marine following in his father’s footsteps, was killed in action in Afghanistan.

Kelly has rightfully been hailed as a Boston neighborhood-guy-made-good and a man who has endured the immeasurable agony of losing a son to war. Not even his harshest critics can dispute or tarnish the sacrifice and service John Kelly has made on behalf of the nation or his personal and professional performance in uniform. Recently, however, since he was named by President Trump as his chief of staff to replace Reince Priebus, Kelly has become a lightning rod for hardline stances on immigration and DACA, reportedly aligned with Trump senior advisor Stephen Miller, whose



Donald Trump and his chief of staff, General John Kelly.

anti-immigration resume has led many foes to brand Miller an outright bigot.

In a fall 2017 issue of the *Daily Beast*, Mike Barnicle posited: “Many have asked and wondered how or why such an exceptional guy like General Kelly would take the task of trying to turn the absurdly incompetent, chaotic Trump presidency into a functioning vehicle. And the answer is simple and obvious: Because he loves this country and does not want to have it fail or falter at the gate of a future filled with both promise and peril. His only ambitions are for America.”

I believe those words. That’s what so perplexing in recent weeks about Kelly, who, with Miller, is blamed for derailing a DACA deal and steering Trump to his “s---hole” comment and bigoted derision of Haitians

and Africans. One expects Democrats and many in the media to come hard at General Kelly as Miller’s fellow “Trump whisperer.” Another local guy, MSNBC’s (and Dorchester’s) Lawrence O’Donnell went so far as to label Kelly a racist after his verbal attack of an African-American Florida Congresswoman who was in the car with a grieving Gold Star widow when the president made what could kindly be called a callous, clumsy call to her.

One does not expect a conservative Republican such as Lindsay Graham to single out General Kelly as an obstacle to any bipartisan resolution of DACA and other immigration issues such as chain migration. Graham did just that.

From a historical perspective, it’s always unsettling to see Irish Americans embracing

Nativism. John Kelly’s family roots are of immigrants who arrived in Boston and elsewhere in America to encounter virulent prejudice simply because they were Irish and Catholic. Some of his ancestors likely knew full well the reality of “No Irish Need Apply.”

General John Kelly surely knows that in Boston, the Irish immigrants of the 1840s and 1850s were in many ways as reviled by “real Americans” as the “Mexicans, the Muslims, the Haitians, and the ‘rapists and murderers’ who now fuel the hateful platform of Trump and a huge swath of his supporters. This is not about border security – which any sane Republican, Democrat, and Independent wants. What Trump, Miller, and others have brought back is a sadly traditional American dish – a simmering stew of toxic Nativ-

ism – to a fresh boil, seasoned with a dollop of racism.

What Nativists of the past knew all too well was that they loathed anything Irish, anything Catholic, any immigrant except the right kind, anything they deemed “un-American.” They proclaimed that they needed to save the nation from going broke to pay for “Paddy and Bridget,” who were arriving in unprecedented waves. Anyone who was not a native-born, Anglo-Protestant was not a real American, but a threat to them. Again, the outsider, the other. The Nativists, or Know-Nothings, “wanted their country back.” Today, the phrase has an all-too-familiar ring.

To find General John Kelly, with so much of his life steeped in service and sacrifice, enabling an unabashed Nativist president is troubling – especially given that Kelly’s and so many other Irish American families’ ancestors arrived in America through chain migration. Once, famine, disease, and oppression drove the Irish to America’s shores. Historical myopia notwithstanding, our ancestors were not wanted by “real Americans.”

As our nation writhes with the issues of DACA, the “Wall,” border security, and illegal/undocumented immigrants, many pundits attempt to dismiss the historical experience of the Irish, Italians, and other immigrant groups by intoning “that was then, this is now – it’s different.” Nativism is never different. Fear and hate are its accelerants. It is likely that General Kelly had an ancestor or two who understood Nativism all too well.

Again, there is no disputing Kelly’s heroism, leadership, honor, and sacrifice in uniform – which is why his recent alignment with Trumpian Nativism does not seem to fit a man of Irish Catholic descent.

He did his duty ‘to the last’

In January 1908, Boston bid farewell to a hero in blue; his killer soon faced justice

(Continued from page 1)

Patrolman John T. Lynch passed away at 10:49 p.m. before his mother and father and siblings could arrive by his bedside. Standing beside him was Captain Gaskin, of Division 2, who had gone to the hospital as soon as word of the shooting came in there. Gaskin told the assembled reporters in the lobby: “Patrolman Lynch was one of the best young officers I ever knew and had a brilliant record. He was a careful man, polite and ever ready to do his duty. It is one of the saddest things that I have ever known during my term of office. His duty was done to the last in holding a dangerous man, even though dying.”

Inside a Station 2 cell, Foley, related the *Post*, “held a moody silence until word came that Patrolman Lynch was dead.

“Foley,” they [the police] said to him as he peered from behind the bars at the station, ‘Officer Lynch is dead. You are

a murderer. The electric chair will fix you for this.”

Stunned and furious, Lynch’s comrades in blue began combing every lead about Foley and his escaped accomplice. In a brief statement to the press, the police offered only that “when booked at Station 2, the prisoner said his name was William Foley, 24 years of age, and that he had no home.... that he lives in South Boston and that he is a member of a bad gang.”

Officer Patrick Doyle, who had scrambled to Lynch’s aid and grabbed the gunman from Lynch’s grasp, fought back tears as he spoke to reporters: “I am too much broken up to tell you how badly I feel. It seems strange that such a new man should have been stricken down. I do not remember the man who did the shooting, but he must be one of the gang we have been looking for lately.”

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Smith, Captain Dugan, and Captain Gaskin in-

terrogated the prisoner, reminding him that the electric chair awaited him. “Then the man seemed to lose his nerve,” the *Post* recounted. “He talked.”

While the police interrogated Foley and started to comb South Boston for additional leads, the press descended upon Patrolman Lynch’s home, at 11 Bainbridge Street, in Roxbury. The *Post* related, “There his sorrowing family was found.... Nearly crazed with grief over the untimely death of her favorite son, who thought only of her in his dying moments, the mother of the dead officer was on the verge of prostration.

“Sinking into a half-swoon on being told the awful news, she was not herself for the rest of the evening. Her cries, together with the weeping of the dead man’s sisters, could be heard throughout their home all of the evening – the home that the dead officer left about 5 o’clock last evening in the fullest health and hoped to

return to at 1 o’clock this morning.”

Lynch’s brother officers felt the same array of emotions but for the moment tamped down their grief. That would come full-bore later. They continued to press Foley.

Within hours, the gunman completely cracked. He told the police that his vanished accomplice was a man named “John Murphy.”

On January 18, 1908, the *Post*’s front page blared: “Police Get Pal of Robber Who Killed Officer.” The papers reported: “They were waiting in the doorway [at the corner of Summer and Kingston Streets] to pounce upon the first best chance offered to waylay a pedestrian. [Foley] knew he could not get by the search of the officer, and he had fired, not with the intention of killing him, but for the purpose of diverting the officer’s attention so that he could get away. He expressed sorrow for Lynch’s death.”

With Lawrence fingering Smith as the killer and with Smith having been caught literally with gun in hand, the police and prosecutors moved quickly in Municipal Court. Smith was a career criminal since the age of 11 and had served two stints in prison.

Patrolman John T. Lynch’s funeral Mass was held on Mon., Jan. 20, 1908, at Joseph’s Catholic Church, on Circuit Street, in Roxbury, at 9 a.m. Packing the pews were his family, friends, brother officers, and dignitaries. Outside, a dense crowd had gathered in the frigid morning air.

“Great sorrow for Patrolman Lynch’s untimely end was expressed in all parts of the city, the *Post* reported. “His relatives are heart-broken, while the members of the police department, superiors and brother officers, manifested great grief.”

Following the service, Patrolman Lynch, also an Army veteran, was



Patrolman John T. Lynch

interred with full military and civic honors at Holyhood Cemetery.

On June 9, 1908, William Foley, the man who had gunned down Lynch, was convicted of first-degree murder. The judge showed a degree of mercy by sentencing him to life imprisonment, igniting outrage among the public and the police force. Foley was paroled in 1942.

Today, a memorial marker honors Patrolman Lynch at the junction of Summer and Kingston streets, the site where he was shot. Passersby should stop for a moment and take a look at the simple plaque. It commemorates a man who embodied the motto “to serve and protect.”

Forbes Museum exhibit recalls a special mission

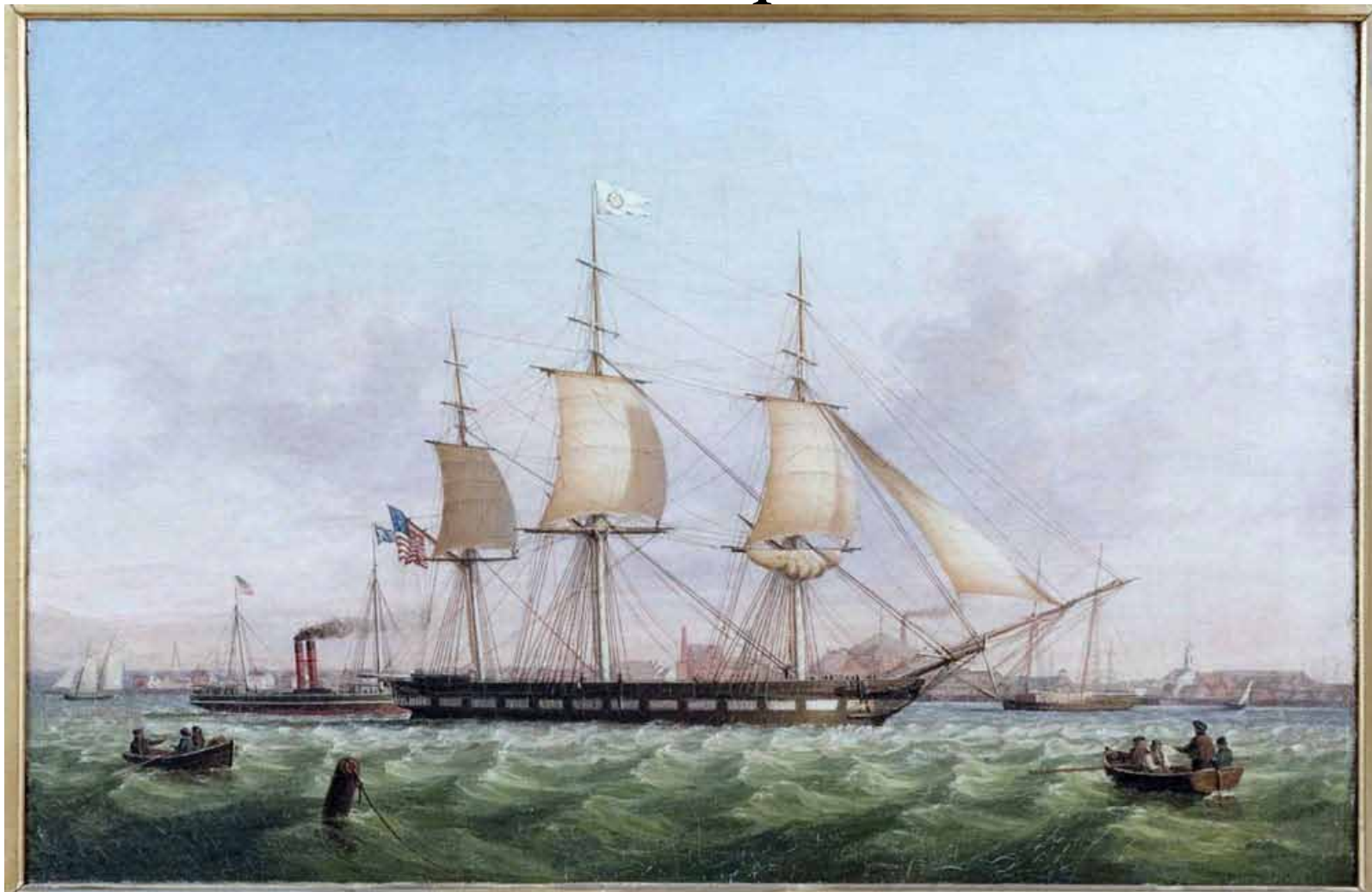
(Continued from page 1)

across the sea. President James K. Polk approved the petition, marking the only time in history a warship has been leased to a private citizen.

In just five weeks, the Boston Relief Committee raised 800 tons of food and other provisions, receiving donations from Catholic and Protestant congregations alike throughout the Boston area and up and down the Eastern seaboard. Beginning on St. Patrick's Day, a group of volunteers comprising mainly Irish immigrants helped to load the ship with thousands of barrels containing flour, rice, cornmeal, dried meat, and clothing. When it departed, the Jamestown rode low in the water due to its massive load of supplies, "a ship of war changed into an angel of mercy," as a pastor friend of Forbes described it in a letter.

With a volunteer crew, Forbes set sail on March 28 and arrived at Cork harbor in just two weeks. He was greeted with fanfare and celebration, but he didn't stop there; he was instrumental in assuring the supplies were distributed efficiently and equally across the Irish countryside. When a Catholic priest named Father Matthew brought him to rural villages decimated by the blight, Forbes witnessed firsthand the devastation and realized that it was in these parts of the country where the need was the greatest. He resolved that he would use the ship for another voyage.

In collaboration with the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Forbes House Museum has opened a new exhibit on this overlooked story of goodwill, featuring various artifacts and documents from the journey including the Jamestown's wheel, Captain



Above, a portrait of the USS Jamestown leaving Boston Harbor with relief items to Ireland. At right, a sketch of an Irish village from the London News depicting the horrors of the famine.

Forbes Museum photos

Forbes's personal letters and journals, the official US passport, a signed presidential petition from the voyage, and thank you gifts from the Irish people.

The collection of testimonials and newspaper clippings details much about the famine story, the unprecedented US response, and the extensive records documenting which towns and families benefited from the aid.

Museum trustee Susan Lachevre emphasized how important it is that the story be remembered, and celebrated. "We've not yet been able to tell it alto-

gether, as the things have been scattered around the museum and at Mass Historical until now," she said.

Relief efforts were a success, Lachevre explained, in spite of growing tensions in Boston as more and more Irish Catholics immigrated to the city. "That was another wonderful thing about this, that people were rising above their political differences to help these starving people. There was a lot of religious friction as well, and people set all of this aside."

The success of the mis-



sion is mostly beyond common knowledge today, on both sides of the Atlantic. But the precedent set by the voyage inspired

several like it during the remaining years of the famine, and provided a blueprint for humanitarian aid relief going

forward. "It's been called one of the first large-scale philanthropic efforts in history," said Lachevre.

Learning center helps IIC welcome new English learners

By DANIEL SHEEHAN
REPORTER STAFF

The Irish International Immigration Center (IIC) hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the opening of its new Arbella Foundation Immigrant Learning Center on Thursday January 25. The center will feature several new classrooms named after different Irish cities, which will be used for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), computer literacy, and career advancement courses.

IIC Executive Director Ronnie Millar expressed his excitement at the new facilities, calling them a necessary addition in light of the current political climate.

"These rooms will primarily be used for education services and for legal services," said Millar. "At this time, the expansion of program and the demand for our services has really increased, so we're really appreciative of being able to support more immigrant families and more students."

The federal government's recent crackdown on undocumented im-



From left: Joe Levanto, broker at CRE Brokerage, Bonnie Greenwood, Director of Education Service, Ronnie Millar, IIC Executive Director, Erin Chubb, ESOL teacher, Cherisse Woolard, Learning Exchange Program Associate

migrants has led to a heightened ICE presence and an increase in arrests and deportations in many immigrant communities of Boston, including the illegal Irish. The IIC

provides immigration legal services to help non-citizens navigate the complexities of immigration law and make sure they are represented in the event of such an arrest.

Beyond legal services, the IIC also offers a number of classes and resources that aim to help immigrants transition to life in Boston and begin on the path to citizenship.

As Millar pointed out, language and communication are often among the greatest barriers to success for new immigrants.

Edna Gutierrez, a student at the center who

moved to Boston from Mexico a year ago, shared her experience with the IIC at the ceremony.

"Looking back, I was excited to start a new chapter in my life, but also nervous about fitting in," said Gutierrez. "Fortunately, I found this beautiful center last summer, and here I developed my communication skills and I met people from around the world from whom I have learned a lot."

Millar finished his remarks by quoting Brazilian educator Paulo Freire as a way to encapsulate the IIC's vision.

"[Freire] says that education is freedom. I would like to expand on that and say that education is empowerment. What we're about here is helping families and immigrants be empowered as they land here and as they come to the United States to be contributors to our community and successful members and neighbors. It's all about empowerment and helping others stand on their feet and become successful in their transition to the United States," said Millar.

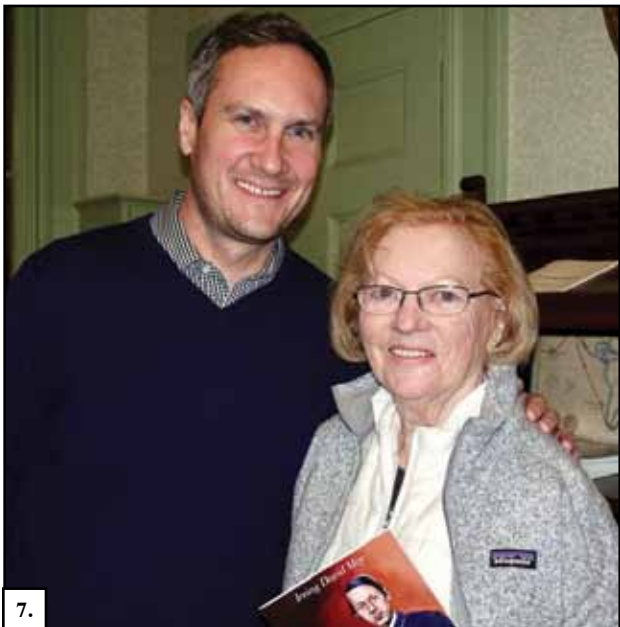
BRETT'S BOSTON


By Harry Brett

Exclusive photos of Boston Irish people & events

The Forbes House Museum in Milton hosted an open house on Saturday, January 27 celebrating its new exhibit on Captain Robert Bennet Forbes's 1847 humanitarian aid voyage to Ireland during the height of the potato famine. After collecting donations from Boston and other U.S. cities, Forbes sailed a U.S. naval warship loaded with 800 tons of much needed food and clothing to Cork harbor. Greenhills Irish Bakery of Dorchester catered the event, and local musician Brian Queally performed traditional Irish music.

1.) Musicians: Winter, John Coe and Brian Queally; 2.) Andy and Janet Hanley, Milton; 3.) Rebecca Egan, Quincy; Joseph Kelley Gately, Framingham; 4.) Tim Shea, Janet Murdock, Quincy; 5.) Kayla Wong, Canton; Keidi Vaughan, Canton; 6.) Tom and Ann Carey, Hingham; 7.) James Labbe, Betty McKeen, Milton; 8.) Meg Kasuba, Susan Lachevre, Milton; 9.) Walter Gleason, Milton; Denise Gilardone, Hingham; 10.) Martha Cotton, Gwen Labbe, Milton; 11.) Liam and Hannah with mom (center) Dorothy Murphy, Quincy.





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Tickets: Dinner Ticket \$60 p/person
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Contact: Bob Healy at 781-447-1447 or e-mail: bobhealy125@msn.com

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ALPHA-1 FOUNDATION

Alpha-1 Antitrypsin Deficiency (Alpha-1) is a genetic condition passed on from parents to their children through genes. It can cause both lung and liver disease. Alpha-1 is the most common known genetic risk factor for emphysema.

‘Seeking Sanctuary’

An artistic collaboration of music, words, installations

(Continued from page 1) ary” event is organized by Palaver Strings, a Boston-based, musician-led string orchestra and nonprofit organization that seeks to take classical music beyond the concert hall, engaging new and diverse audiences by examining social issues through the prism of artistic expression; its name is derived from the Liberian expression “palaver hut,” meaning a place for discussion and conflict resolution.

Maya French, Palaver’s executive director and a co-organizer of “Seeking Sanctuary,” says the project is an effort to look beyond political turmoil, controversy and rhetoric and focus on the historical, and human, aspect of immigration.

“Everyone has their own immigration story – and these are all part

of America’s story,” she explains. “The idea is to use the musical pieces and the narratives, along with the art installation, to aid the discussion about the common threads in our immigrant heritage: hopes, fears, disappointments, successes. These all bind us together.”

The impetus for “Seeking Sanctuary” came from Palaver member Nate Martin, whose mother Laurel is an accomplished Irish fiddle player. A former student of master fiddler Seamus Connolly, Martin – chair of the Irish Music Department at Indian Hill Music School in Littleton – has performed in several different collaborations, including the fiddle ensemble Childsplay, and has a solo recording to her credit.

Martin has been pleased by Nate’s experiences with Palaver: “It’s just so inspiring to see committed young classical musicians thinking of creative ways to present the music, and finding different contexts for it.” Nate and the family have often mused about possible projects Palaver could undertake, she adds.

“Then, a couple of years ago, I thought how interesting it would be if the group could collaborate with Charlie Lennon. I love his compositions because they fall within the traditional Irish music genre – many of his tunes are widely played by Irish musicians – and he’s also done exemplary work in bridging the gap between classical and traditional music,” says Martin, pointing to Lennon’s suite “A Terrible Beauty,” honoring the heroes of the 1916 Easter Rising.

Lennon, the TG4 Composer of the Year in 2006, began playing piano and fiddle at age seven, becoming immersed in the distinctive Sligo music tradition. In his late teens, he studied classical and jazz, and became a professional musician playing in several ceili bands. During the late 1970s, he began composing tunes and went on to record six albums, including “Lucky in Love,” “Island Wedding” and “Flight from the Hungry Land”; he also published a book of his compositions, Musical Memories.

When Lennon came to Boston two years ago to present “A Terrible Beauty,” Laurel and Nate, along with French, approached him about writing a piece that would be the basis of a Palaver collaboration. As discussions continued, an idea emerged that the composition could be built around the theme of stories about Boston’s immigrant communities.

“This was well before the presidential election took place,” Martin notes. “While immigration was certainly a major issue in the campaign, the project took shape in advance of the events and controversies that arose during the Trump administration’s first year.

“Immigration has been an important theme throughout our history,

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March 16& 17

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Tony nominee **Maureen Brennan** (Boston Conservatory faculty) is backed by live music as she recounts the tale of Mary “Mother” Jones and her mop-and-dishpan brigade of 1899. This true story of an unlikely union victory celebrates the power of non-violent resistance. The story also features union hero William Wilson, who later became the nation’s first Secretary of Labor.

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Renowned Irish fiddler, pianist and composer Charlie Lennon will premiere a new piece at the “Seeking Sanctuary” concert February 9-11 at the Boston Center for the Arts. Sean Smith photo

and it is obviously a very timely one now. But this is an artistic event, not a political one.”

Lennon wanted to have an uilleann piper involved in the project, so Abarta was recruited. The Los Angeles native, who moved to Boston in 2009, has toured North America, Europe, and Asia as a performer as well as a teacher. Locally, he has appeared in “A Christmas Celtic Sojourn” and BCMFest, and is part of a duo with fiddler/guitarist Nathan Gourley as Copley Street. His recordings include a solo album, “Swimming Against the Falls,” and “Copley Street” with Gourley. Abarta received

a traditional arts apprenticeship from the Massachusetts Cultural Council that enabled him to share his knowledge with a younger musician.

“I feel that this concert is a tribute to listening,” says Martin. “Tradition is about listening to the old styles, stories and music, and taking them to heart as well as to the mind. So this is an opportunity to not only listen to, but reflect on immigrants’ stories, and extrapolate from them to get a sense of the rich tapestry they represent.”

For information on “Seeking Sanctuary,” go to palaverstrings.org/events.



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Life is sweet as pie for Patrick Dunn in ‘Waitress’



Lenne Klingaman (Dawn), Desi Oakley (Jenna) and Charity Angel Dawson (Becky) in the Sara Bareilles musical “Waitress.”
Joan Marcus photos

By R. J. DONOVAN
SPECIAL TO THE BIR
Patrick Dunn is definitely a guy on the go. One day you'll find the actor performing off-Broadway, the next he's at Lincoln Center working with the legendary Hal Prince on a production of "Candide." He might be playing the lead in "Jesus Christ Superstar," appearing at the New York Music Festival, conducting a master class for the-

ater students, or touring the world impersonating Elvis Presley in "Legends In Concert."
This month, he's making his national tour debut in the ensemble of "Waitress" (music and lyrics by Sara Bareilles), playing the Boston Opera House from Feb. 20 to March 4. He also understudies three of the four male leads.
Set in small southern town diner and inspired by the Adrienne Shelly film,

"Waitress" tells the story of Jenna (played by Desi Oakley), a waitress and expert pie maker trapped in a loveless marriage. A baking contest in a nearby town may give her the courage to rebuild her life.
Prior to Broadway, "Waitress" opened in 2015 at American Repertory Theater in Cambridge. Then, as now, it's directed by Tony Award winner Diane Paulus ("Pippin," "Finding Neverland").
Originally from Port

Jervis, NY, and tracing his roots to great-grandparents in County Wicklow, Patrick holds a BFA in Musical Theatre from the prestigious Hartt School at the University of Hartford. He was also an ambassador for the Hugh O'Brien Youth Leadership program, a group dedicated to "training and nurturing the young leaders of tomorrow."
The only performer in his family, he notes with an easy laugh that "my Dad was the good Irish cop and my Mom was an Irish nurse. And I was like, I think I want to sing, everybody!"
We spoke by phone when the show was in Milwaukee. Here's a condensed look at our conversation:
Q. As a member of the show's ensemble, what's it like constantly making entrances, exits, and quick changes.
A. It's as choreographed off-stage as it is on. It's cool being an ensemble member in this show because we're so busy. We weave in and out of the story, almost Ninja-like in certain places. At other times, I sit in a diner booth, read a newspaper, and eat some food. Other times we're swirling pies around - it's such a prop heavy show. I don't even use my dressing room once during the show... We each have a little dressing station right behind the scrim, upstage, because we don't have time.
Q. Boston has a special affinity for this show since it began here. What's it been like working with director Diane Paulus for the tour?
A. She's so great. She knows exactly what she wants 99.99 per cent of the time. And the other .1 per cent, she figures it out real quick. She's really specific... She lets you play and then she hones everything in. It's really cool to watch her process.
Q. You've had a chance to work with a lot of interesting people, right from the start, haven't you?
A. My first Broadway show when I was 12. That was "A Christmas Carol, The Musical" at Madison Square Garden (directed



Desi Oakley is Jenna, a waitress and expert pie baker in the Sara Bareilles musical “Waitress.”

by Tony Award winner Susan Stroman). I played Young Scrooge for a couple of years in a row. It was produced by Radio City Music Hall. It ran much like the "Christmas Spectacular" at Radio City. I had done a few little things, and on a fluke, with a group of friends, I went down to audition - to miss a social studies test. And I ended up booking it.
Q. You have a strong connection to Susan Stroman?
A. Yeah... She was with me for quite a long time in my younger years, even wrote me a letter of recommendation for college. Which wasn't a bad reference to have.
Q. Any other special mentors?
A. I have to say my Mother, really. She was kind of the classic Irish stereotype - protective, but also knew that I needed to go and scrape my knee every now and then and learn my lessons. Even today, still a Mama's boy... She was always, always there.
Q. Do I hear you met Martha Stewart many years ago when you were part of the Hugh O'Brien youth program?
A. It was when she was on trial, so she wasn't very nice... I was one of (Hugh's) ambassadors and spoke at the World Leadership Congress... I was on the entertainment panel - the kids could relate to me because I was their age. I was at the Albert Schweitzer Leadership Dinner in New York at the Marriott Marquis, and she was there. I just remember her being so cranky. And my dad, driving me home was like, "Yeah, she's going to jail."
Q. Can you tell me about "Legends" and Elvis?
A. "Legends," oh man, "Legends" is so fun for me. I mean you know how the business is. It can be tough. You have your lulls. As much as I love musicals, I try and do Shakespeare, and I try and do some operas. And then on top of that, as a joke, I started impersonating Elvis - as a dare, from a friend. And it kind of just



Patrick Dunn is making his national tour debut in the Sara Bareilles musical “Waitress.”

snowballed over the course of a very short period of time... I eventually became one of the top five Elvis impersonators in the world, as judged by Elvis Presley Enterprises... I've toured with them, sat down in Vegas and I've played Foxwoods a lot, which is fun because my Hartt professors will come and see the show. And they're, "What the hell did we do?"
Q. Is there a moment in "Waitress" that you really love?
A. Totally. It's one of my favorite parts. It's during Dawn's song, "When He Sees Me"... She's a waitress and kind of this little neurotic nerd, trying to branch out and date... She had this moment that in rehearsals we called, The Prince Charming Moment, which hit home for me. When I was younger I played Prince Charming for Disney Cruise Lines and that's where I met my wife who was portraying Cinderella. So I was like, "Okay I can do the "charming thing" really well." Dawn's really neurotic at the beginning of this song. And toward the middle, the three ensemble men get up and strike burly poses, have a little dance, a few turns, and try to swirl her around into the Princess that she really is. It's kind of cool.
R. J. Donovan is editor and publisher of on-stageboston.com.
...
"Waitress," Feb. 20 - Mar. 4, Boston Opera House, 539 Washington St., Boston. Info: 800-982-2787 or boston.broadway.com.

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THE BIR'S FEBRUARY CALENDAR OF IRISH MUSIC & DANCE EVENTS

A look at Irish/Celtic events in the Greater Boston area taking place over the next few weeks:

• **Gaelic Storm**, one of the hardest-working touring bands around (they travel more than 200 days a year by their estimate), will come to the Cabot Theater in Beverly on Feb. 15 at 8 p.m. Now into its third decade, the one-time California pub band – which famously made a cameo appearance in “Titanic” – the quintet of Steve Twigger, Patrick Murphy, Ryan Lacey, Pete Purvis, and Katie Grennan continues to tout its mix of Celtic, country, rock/pop and crowd-rousing antics. Last year, they released “Go Climb a Tree,” their 13th album. For information, see thecabot.org.

• The 2018 edition of the **Pure Dead Brilliant Fiddle Concert** – the kick-off event for the annual weekend retreat/workshop series with a focus on Scottish fiddle – takes place Feb. 15 at 8 p.m. in the Log Cabin Chapel at Grotonwood, located in Groton. Special guest Kevin Henderson, one of the Shetland Islands’ most well regarded fiddlers and a member of bands such as Fiddlers Bid, the Boys of the Lough, and the Nordic Fiddlers Bloc, will appear along with Boston-area performers Hanneke Cassel, Natalie Haas, Katie McNally, Neil Pearlman, Elias Alexander, Eamon Sefton, Galen Fraser, Pumpkin Bread and guest step dancer Abbie MacQuarrie. For further details, go to PureDeadBrilliant.brownpapertickets.com.

• The Burren Backroom series hosts four events this month, beginning on Feb. 7 with a concert



Gaelic Storm plays at the Cabot Theater in Beverly on February 15.

by celebrated composer of Irish traditional music **Charlie Lennon** and his daughter **Éilis**. Charlie, an accomplished fiddler and pianist who was named TG4 Composer of the Year in 2006, has written several books, suites, and an orchestral work commemorating the Easter Rising of 1916, and many of his tunes have entered traditional musicians’ repertoire. Éilis is a talented fiddler herself who helped her father set up recording studio in Spiddal. [Lennon’s appearance at the Burren coincides with his performance as part of the “Seeking Sanctuary” program at the Boston Center for the Arts February 9-11. See story in this edition.]

The following night, **Claudine Langille** – a former member of the groundbreaking 1980s Celtic/Appalachian band

Touchstone – and **Silas Hamilton** will bring their multifaceted musical styles to the Backroom. Langille (vocals, tenor banjo, mandolin, guitar) and Hamilton (vocals, accordion, fiddle, guitar, mandolin), who are two-fifths of the band Gypsy Reel, have drawn inspiration from Irish, Appalachian, Quebecois, and other related traditions.

Former Solas member **Niamh Varian-Barry** and button accordionist **Peter Staunton** will play in the Backroom on Feb. 21. Varian-Barry is a singer, and a classically trained violinist and violist who co-founded the Clare Memory Orchestra. Staunton, producer of the Super Ceili dance music show, utilizes electronics and other effects as part of his performances to push the boundaries of traditional Irish dance music. The duo has an album of traditional tunes, “Get Up the Yard.”

Sarah Bauhan, a mainstay of New England folk music, will hold a CD release celebration on Feb. 25. A native of New Hampshire with strong Scottish roots, Bauhan became involved in the contra dance revival of the 1970s, playing flute and whistle with, among others, Dudley Laufman’s Canterbury Country Dance Orchestra. She also was influenced by pioneering bands from abroad such as The Chieftains, Boys of the Lough, Silly Wizard and the Battlefield Band. Her newest album, “Elmwood Station,” is her first in 10 years and fifth overall.

Enduringly popular singer-songwriter **Robbie O’Connell** will make a return to the Backroom on Feb. 28. Waterford-born and Tipperary-raised, O’Connell – who moved to Massachusetts almost 40 years ago – began performing concerts at age 13, and toured with his uncles the Clancy Brothers before embarking on a solo career. Many of his songs, like “Kilkelly,” “There Were Roses,” “Keg of Brandy” and “You’re Not Irish,” have become staples of the

Irish/Celtic music scene. He will be accompanied by **Rose Clancy**, a Cape Cod-based fiddler and violin-maker, and impresario of the Chatham

All shows begin at 7:30 p.m., except for the Sarah Bauhan concert, which takes place at 4 p.m., and the Claudine Langille-Silas Hamilton show (7 p.m.). For information and links to ticket sales, go to burren.com/Backroom-Series.html. For Langille-Hamilton, see tickets.burren.com.

• The Gaelic Roots

series at Boston College will kick off its spring semester schedule with a lecture and concert by **Niall Vallely**, a concertina virtuoso who is one of his generation’s most prolific composers of traditional tunes. Born in Armagh to a musically active family (his brothers Cillian and Caoimhín also are highly regarded musicians), Vallely has worked with eminent performers such as Nomos, Lúnasa, Donal Lunny, and the Boston Pops Orchestra. His tunes have been recorded on more than 75 albums. The event, which is free and open to the public, will take place at 6:30 p.m. at the BC main campus in Connolly House, 300 Hammond St. Go to bc.edu/gaelicroots for registration and other information.

• Boston-area duo **Colleen White and Sean Smith** will perform at the Open Book Coffeehouse in Canton on Feb. 17 at 7:30 p.m. White (vocals, flute, whistle) and Smith (vocals, guitar, bouzouki, bodhran) sing mainly traditional songs from Ireland, Scotland, and England, but also contemporary, tradition-influenced compositions by singer-songwriters like Kate Rusby, Steve Tilston and Sean Cooney, among others. More details at library.canton.ma.us/219/The-Open-Book-Coffeehouse.

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Former Touchstone member Claudine Langille performs with Silas Hamilton at The Burren February 8.



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CD Reviews

By Sean Smith

Lankum, “Between the Earth and Sky” • Formerly known as Lynched – a reference to co-founding brothers Ian and Daragh Lynch – this quartet of self-described “Dublin folk miscreants” has made quite the impression with its populist, gritty, infectious blend of traditional, music hall, and original material. But that description really doesn’t do justice to Lankum: With unrepentant Dublin voices and occasionally cranky-sounding squeezeboxes, fiddles, whistles, and pipes, they serve notice that unpolished (yet proficient) folk music deserves as much attention as the more technically refined version. But there’s also an underlying sophistication to Lankum’s approach, an appreciation for the music’s roots and its place in the human experience.

“Between the Earth and Sky,” the band’s second release, shows a stronger focus and attention to pacing and arrangement, and projects an overall sense of a band comfortable in its collective skin. The elements that make them such compelling listening are evident from the first track, as Radie Peat leads “What Will We Do When We Have No Money?” with a voice that is piercing and harshly beautiful, set over an uilleann pipe drone – the band shows a fondness for the lengthy sustained note, whether produced by vocals or musical instrument, giving their sound an almost primal intensity that’s sometimes pervasive enough to lodge in your central nervous system.

Peat commands the closing track as well, “Willow Garden,” a murder ballad that originated in Ireland and later resurfaced in the Appalachians. Backed only by harmonium and Cormac Mac Diarmada’s softly pulsing fiddle (as if playing a waltz to the gallows), Peat unflinchingly mines the stark character of the song’s narrative, essentially the murderer’s final confession; the only comfort we’re left with is his acceptance of

his fate. Peat is one of many attractions on “Between the Earth and Sky.” They do a sprightly take on the anti-recruitment satire “Sergeant William Bailey” (credited to Peadar Kenney, author of the Irish national anthem), complete with a lively drum-aided quick-march at the end. The very next track offers an entirely different slant on political songs, Johann Esser and Wolfgang Langhoff’s anti-fascist “Peat Bog Soldiers,” sung here *a cappella* in enthralling four-part harmony.

Another study in contrast is two back-to-back band compositions. “Bad Luck to the Rolling Water” is a parody of sentimental, loved-and-lost Irish songs peppered with literary and classical references that grow increasingly hilarious each verse (“She might not have been Aurora, a Flora or Diana/But she sang songs in the back tap room along to the ould piana/She was not Euternatia, nor was she Venus bright/But she could drink much more than you and beat you in a fight”).

The sardonic tone is turned on its head in the following track, “Déanta in Éireann,” a modern-day emigration song in the tradition of broadsides or street ballads (with titles like “A Meditation on the Many Woes of Éire”); caustic lyrics reference economic and political betrayal at home, and relative success abroad that can’t quite compensate for feelings of inadequacy and guilt (“Set up in the New World with a golden passport/Free drink and kudos your eternal reward/But your heart sinks when you think upon Éireann”), with a slowly building instrumental cacophony at the climax.

There’s yet more, including their measured, deliberative rendition of “The Turkish Reveille” (sometimes known as “The Golden Vanity”), a traditional ballad of heroism and betrayal, and “The Townie Polka,” played much slower than one might expect of a polka, such that it sounds like some odd processional – and in fact, the liner notes relate the legend that somewhere in Donegal you can hear the tune played by the ghost of

a traveling musician. After four or five decades of the folk/trad revival, it’s easy to get caught up in what we think the music “should” sound like. Lankum defies many of those expectations with equal dollops of relish and unpretentiousness, as well as astute scholarship and imagination – and they sound awfully good while doing so. [lankumdublin.com]

“Goldenhair” (music by Brian Byrne, words by James Joyce) • When Joyce published “Chamber Music,” his first collection of poetry, in 1907, he remarked to his brother that some of the 36 poems were “pretty enough to be put to music. I hope someone will do so...” And sure enough, there have been numerous adaptations over the years, by the likes of Samuel Barber, Pink Floyd’s Syd Barrett, the 1960s experimental Irish folk group Dr. Strangely Strange, and two members of Sonic Youth, among others.

The latest to put his stamp on “Chamber Music” is Irish native Byrne, a Golden Globe-nominated composer whose credits include the stage production “Heartbeat of Home” and the film “Albert Nobbs.” Rather than confining himself to one musical genre, Byrne – who also plays keyboards – flavors the Joycean lyrics with big band, adult contemporary, soft jazz, bluegrass and, yes, even Celtic. Contributors include Glenn Close (she does readings of “Play On” and “Silently”); Julian Lennon, Kurt Elling and Declan O’Rourke on vocals; the RTÉ Orchestra; and North Carolina bluegrass/old-timey outfit Balsam Range.

Joao Almeida Flor described “Chamber Music” as a kind of “aesthetic laboratory” in which Joyce tinkered with the “interaction between sound and meaning,” in preparation for the works that would mark him as one of the 20th century’s greatest authors. The 36 pieces are love poems written in different styles, revisiting traditional themes and topics in European love poetry with typically Joycean vividness (“There, where the gay winds stay to woo/the young leaves as they pass/My love goes slowly, bending to/Her shadow on the grass”; “I hear an army charging upon the land/And the thunder of horses plunging, foam about their knees”; “Play on, invisible harps, unto Love/Whose way in heaven is aglow/At that hour when soft lights come and go/Soft sweet music in the air above/And in the earth below”).

So it seems entirely appropriate to hear these and other words set against a multiplicity of musical contexts: Curtis Stigers and Sara Gazarek’s fine duet on the jazzy, zesty “Winds of May,” with its “Well-a-day!” invocation; “Cool Is the Valley,” which begins with Balsam Range’s soft gospel-style vocal harmonies and ramps up into an Appalachian-Irish frolic, kick-started by Eric Rigler’s uilleann pipes; Elling’s winsome take on “Goldenhair,” highlighted by Byrne’s slick piano solo; the pub-sing atmosphere of “Flowery Bells” (complete with bodhran accompaniment), majestically led by O’Rourke; Andrew Strong’s dynamic vocals on “Why Have You Left Me Alone (I Hear an Army),” the funk/soul piece de resistance that closes out the album.

Ultimately, “Goldenhair” is too ambitious for its own good – a few too many over-orchestrated slow ballads that diminish the energy built up by some of the above tracks. But Byrne successfully locates the passion and ardor found throughout “Chamber Music” into a thoroughly modern, cosmopolitan milieu. One thinks Joyce would have given a terse but gracious nod of approval. [brianbyrnecomposer.com]

James Vincent McMorrow, “We Move” • Dublin songwriter McMorrow seems to fashion his recording projects from sojourns in remote or far-flung places. His Thoreauesque 2010 debut “Early in the Morning” was recorded in a secluded house by the sea, and the studio where he made “Post Tropical” (2014) – a definitive move away from his indie-folk style toward a more electronic/R&B sound – sat on a pecan farm in a remote desert town in Texas.

For “We Move,” McMorrow went, literally, in a different direction, spending four months in Los Angeles. And the album has an unmistakable urban sheen to it, replete with R&B, funk and soul, and various synthesizers and other electronic keyboards undergirding McMorrow’s wispy yet grainy falsetto. Where on “Early in the Morning” he focused on nature as an ever-present influence in everyday life, here McMorrow deals with internal forces, notably the mental health struggles he experienced in his youth – and which at one point landed him in the hospital with an eating disorder. It’s this episode he recalls in “I Lie Awake Every Night” (“Have you come here to save me/Have you come here to waste my time again?/Ask me too many questions/As me too many questions I can’t stand”), juxtaposed against a frothy keyboard chordal backing.

“Lost Angles” (a play on the name of his temporary home) displays a similar mix of vulnerability and determination, countering “Is it better to live your life in shallow water or risk failure drowning in the deep end?” with “Don’t let fear control you,” as does “One Thousand Times” (“I find a way to make your love more complicated/What if I could change, if I could change if you could save me?”).

Which is not to imply that “We Move” is a 45-minute excursion into self-pity; introspective, yes, but of an honest and probably healthy kind. It would have been interesting to hear this contemplation served by his earlier musical incarnation – set against a more acoustic background, rather than an electronic swirl that sometimes distracts from his words. Journeys, however, aren’t always about where you’re going, but what you feel you must leave behind to get there: As he wrote on his website, “All I can do is create what makes me happy, trust that even if that understanding doesn’t happen right away, that time and distance can change anything.” [jamesvmcmorrow.com]

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The Harvard Square-based Boston Celtic Music Festival (BCMfest) marked its 15th anniversary last month in grand fashion, with expanded programming and other new wrinkles, and featuring several dozen area performers of Irish, Scottish, Cape Breton and other Celtic-related music. The festival -- a program of the non-profit Passim -- began on Thursday, January 18, with the new Emerging Artist Showcase in Club Passim, and continued the next evening with its traditional Friday events, the Roots and Branches Concert in Passim and the Boston Urban Ceilidh in The Atrium on Church Street. Saturday's "Dayfest" saw nearly 12 hours of concerts in Passim, and the debut of BCMfest's late-night

"Festival Club." Highlighting the first-ever Sunday Dayfest was the addition of a new venue, The Sinclair on Church Street, culminating in the climactic BCMfest Nightcap concert that evening. Festival-goers also participated in jam sessions and attended workshops on Irish flute, Irish, Scottish and Acadian fiddle styles, guitar and ballad singing.



Maggie MacPhail, left, and Caroline Dressler kicked off BCMfest 2018 at the Emerging Artist Show in Club Passim. All photos by Sean Smith



Festival-goers jammed the dance floor for BCMfest's Boston Urban Ceilidh in The Atrium.



The Medford All-Star Ceili Band filled up most of the stage at The Sinclair.



Boston College Irish Dance put on an energetic performance on Sunday afternoon at BCMfest.



The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society of Boston entertained the audience between sets on Sunday at The Sinclair.



The Vox Hunters -- Armand Aromin, left, and Benedict Gagliardi -- during their set on Saturday evening in Club Passim.



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Love traditional Irish music? The Russell Memorial Weekend 2018 will be held in various locations around Doolin, Co. Clare, from Wednesday, Feb. 21, to Monday, Feb. 26. This scene is Fisher Street in the village. *Judy Enright photos*

Ireland in wintertime: Quieter, but no lack of fun things to do

BY JUDY ENRIGHT
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Although some Irish attractions may not reopen until around St. Patrick's Day, you will have no trouble finding numerous fun and interesting things to do there in February.

Traveling People

As you might expect, cities like Dublin, Galway, Belfast, and Cork, are alive and buzzing day and night all year with multiple museums, music venues, theatre, and other attractions as well as accommodations that never close.

But winter visitors are not always plentiful out in the countryside so when you leave the hubs, you might find some of the smaller hotels, museums, and local attractions closed. Your best bet is to check ahead to be sure your chosen destination is open.

Of course, there's no seasonal restriction on driving around this beautiful country to enjoy stunning vistas everywhere. Brilliant yellow gorse colors the landscape and you might even be lucky enough to see some newborn lambs enter the world at this time of year.

TAKE A RIDE

Want to do something a little different? If so, drive down to Waterford and experience the golden age of railroading at the Waterford & Suir Valley Railroad in Kilmeadan, Co. Waterford. The heritage, narrow-gauge railway follows the track of the abandoned Waterford to Dungarvan route.

Winter does curtail opening times for the railroad, but there will be trips from Feb. 15-18 during the Irish mid-term break.

The train passes Mount Congreve's famed gardens as well as the Durrow seven-arch and Kilmacthomas eight-arch stone viaducts and The Ballyvoyle brick-lined tunnel and travels alongside the Waterford Greenway. Check out this Greenway at The Deise Greenway Group (deisegreenway.com), which was instrumental in getting the 45m Greenway up and running. The Deise Group



Water sports are available all year and, because Ireland is about six weeks ahead of the US East Coast weatherwise, you won't freeze when you get wet.



The Irish countryside glistens with yellow gorse (also called Whins and Furze) in the early spring.

now offers an app and bike rental for those interested.

For more information on the train, visit wsvrailway.ie.

GET OUT

Is there ever a bad time of year for playing golf or enjoying other outdoor activities? If you're in a city, you might look for a walking tour. If you're outside the cities, how about cycling, walking, hiking, or hill walking? Hardier souls may also take advantage of superb swells and surf along the coast and enjoy other coastal and inland water sports. Don't forget that Ireland's weather is about six weeks ahead of ours on the East Coast so temperatures can be pretty mild even in February.

If you get into the countryside, do take advantage of some of the Greenways developed by local county councils along abandoned railroad tracks thanks to the cooperation of many landowners across whose properties visitors walk or cycle. Bicycle rentals are usually available along these routes if you'd rather

ride than walk.

The first Greenway (the Great Western Greenway) opened eight years ago in Co. Mayo and kicked off a trend that has spread to other parts of the country. At 42km, the Great Western Greenway is said to be the longest off-road walking and cycling trail in the country. The section from Newport to Mulranny opened in 2010 with the bits at either end – Westport to Newport and Mulranny to Achill Island – opening a year later. This Greenway attracts thousands of families and visitors of all ages to the area every year and it not only benefits existing businesses but it also inspires the creation of new business along the route.

In addition to Mayo's Great Western Greenway, Ireland now boasts numerous others, including the Old Rail Trail Greenway from Mullingar to Athlone, the Great Eastern Greenway along Carlingford Lough, and a Greenway from Waterford City to Dungarvan. And,



Birds of Prey shows are offered at numerous locations around Ireland including Dromoland and Ashford Castles, Ailwee Cave in Co. Clare and more. This is Master Falconer Jason Deasy with a friend at Westport House's Birds of Prey show in Westport, Co. Mayo.



February is a great time to see this year's newborn lambs everywhere in Ireland.

work is progressing on a Connemara Greenway that is expected to eventually connect Galway to Clifden along an unused railroad track.

THE HUNT MUSEUM

Those familiar with Limerick rave about the Hunt Museum's many programs and exhibits, and I highly recommend a visit there.

The Hunt Collection includes some 2,000 objects ranging from the Stone Age to the 20th century collected by John and Gertrude Hunt over many years and presented to the people of Ireland. Highlights include a Bronze Age cauldron and shield; a coin reputed to be one of the thirty pieces of silver; a gold cross owned by Mary, Queen of Scots; paintings by Jack B. Yeats; and a menu card by Pablo Picasso.

Among programs this winter is The Segment & Apple Drawings, an exhibition by Samuel Walsh, winner of The Savills Art Prize at VUE Contemporary Art Fair in 2017, that officially opens on Feb. 2.

The Hunt Museum is in the 18th Century (former) Custom House and is open Monday to Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays and bank holidays from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday entry is free and on Mondays, two visitors enter for the price of one. There is a gift shop and restaurant on site. For more information, see huntmuseum.com

Limerick is a lively city with many other attractions so you'll find lots to do and experience there. At certain times of year, walking tours of Limerick are available and would be fun to combine with a visit to the Hunt and some of Limerick's many other attractions.

EXOTIC PETS

You probably wouldn't think of visiting Ireland to see giraffes, monkeys, lions, wallabies, eagles, and cheetahs. But you can see all of those and many more species at the Fota Wildlife Park in Co. Cork, near Cork City. The park is open all year – 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday to Saturday and 10:30 a.m.

to 3 p.m. on Sundays. It's a fun place to walk around and visit the animals.

Cafes at either end of the park serve hot and cold food. Snacks and drinks are available in the gift shop and there are children's play and activity areas on site. For more information, visit fotawildlife.ie

Another fun day out with some exotic animals would be at the Kiltimagh Pet Farm in Co. Mayo. There are farm animals like horses, donkeys, goats, geese, cats, and chickens, but there are also civets, coatimundi, and a very interesting and strange looking "raccoon dog," which is apparently neither a raccoon nor a dog, but is known as a mangut.

For more information, see kiltimaghpETFarm.com

There are other open farms around the country where you can stop for a petting zoo or to see exotic animals. Check online or visit a tourist office in the area. And don't forget the Birds of Prey exhibits in Ireland at several hotels – Ashford and Dromoland – as well as at tourist sites including Ailwee Cave in Co. Clare.

MUSIC

The Russell Memorial Weekend 2018 will be held in various locations around Doolin, Co. Clare, from Wed., Feb. 21, to Mon., Feb. 26. This is a fun, annual music festival but accommodations fill up fast so be sure to book something if you'd like to attend.

Speaking of Co. Clare, a friend brought over a side of smoked salmon for Christmas this year from Lisdoonvarna's Burren Smokehouse. Could there be a better gift?

But when I have smoked salmon, I have to put it on McCambridge's whole wheat soda bread. I happily found McCambridge's online at Food Ireland in Mt. Vernon, NY, which shipped three loaves right out to make sure it was a perfect holiday. Food Ireland also offers many other Irish favorites. See foodireland.com and burrensmokehouse.com for more.

Enjoy Ireland whenever and wherever you go.

Abortion ban headed for ballot box in Ireland

(Continued from page 1) day that the referendum to be held in late May will ask voters if they want to keep the anti-abortion amendment or repeal it so parliament can consider new legislation. The replacement law only would be put forward if voters support repeal.

The amendment enacted by referendum in 1983 makes predominantly Roman Catholic Ireland the most restrictive country in Europe on abortion. It commits authorities to defend equally “the right

to life of the unborn” and “the equal right to life of the mother.” Abortion is legal only when a woman’s life is in danger.

Varadkar, who leads the center-right Fine Gael party, said he would campaign to ease the abortion ban. It represents a change of heart for the prime minister, who had earlier described himself as anti-abortion.

Linda Kavanagh, a volunteer spokeswoman with the Abortion Rights Campaign group, said the 1983 amendment

had made it difficult for health professionals to provide the best care for women with complicated pregnancies.

Kavanagh thinks public sentiment in Ireland has changed, as shown by the 2015 referendum vote that legalized same-sex marriage.

“I think Ireland is moving away from its dark history of trying to control women’s bodies,” she said. “We are a Catholic country. I know a lot of countries are looking at us. The world is watching.”

Galway to honor Mayor Walsh

By DANIEL SHEEHAN
REPORTER CORRESPONDENT

Mayor Martin Walsh is slated to receive a major honor from his parents’ homeland.

The Galway County Council proposed a motion last month that would make Walsh an honorary “Freeman” and citizen of Galway County.

“It is an incredible honor to be recognized as the first freeman of County Galway,” said Mayor Walsh in a statement. “As the proud son of emigrants from Connemara, it’s no surprise that Galway holds a very special place in my heart and that this recognition means a great deal to me.”

Walsh added: “To all those who helped make

this special recognition possible, I say go raibh maith agat” — a phrase that means “thank you” in the Irish language.

Nowadays, the title of Freeman is a prestigious honor, but only ceremonial in name. It is typically bestowed upon visiting dignitaries, celebrities

and valued members of the community.

In medieval times, freemen and freewomen were exempt from serfdom, afforded unique privileges, and obliged to certain duties. Many Irish cities allowed freemen to transport goods through city walls untaxed.

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