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‘The Olympics of Irish Dancing’

Boston readies for 7-day festival

By SEAN SMITH
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Already known as a hub for education, culture, medical science, and sports, among other things, Boston will claim an additional distinction later this month: For a week, it will be the world's capital of Irish dancing.

From March 24-31, Boston will serve as host for the 2013 World Irish Dancing Championships — only the second time in the event's 40-plus years that it has taken place in the US (Philadelphia was the first, in 2009). Some 7,000 dancers, along with family members, friends and spectators, from Ireland, the UK, Canada, Australia, and elsewhere in the US, are expected to hit town for the competition, which will be centered in The Hynes Convention Center and Sheraton Boston Hotel.

Hosting the “Worlds,” as they are popularly known, marks another chapter in a rich his-



Dancing feet like these will be a familiar sight when the World Irish Dancing Championships come to Boston later this month. Some 7,000 competitors are expected to take part in the event.

Sean Smith photo

tory of civic achievement for Boston, which was awarded the event over 20 other cities around the world, and will bring some late-winter/early-spring excitement to the area — along with, of course, a hoped-for economic windfall.

But the week also will be awash in literally thousands upon thousands of individual stories, built around the culmination of hopes, dreams, sweat, and sacrifice, not just on the part of the competitors but their teachers and often their families

as well. And more than a few of these sagas have taken shape in the shadow of the Hynes and Sheraton.

So, the word from Worlds participants past and present and other observers is: Get ready for seven days of spectacle, thrills,

fun and, most of all, some of the best Irish dancing you're likely to see.

“These are the top Irish dancers, competing on equal footing in a city long known as a center of Irish culture,” says World Irish Dancing Championships Chairman Terry Gillan, a Dublin native now living in Connecticut who for some years taught Irish dance in Boston. “There's skill, athleticism and drama — it's the best day's theater you can get.”

The Worlds are held under the auspices of An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha, or Commission for Irish Dancing, created as an authority in 1930 to promote and foster all forms of Irish dance. In the decades since then, the commission has established regional councils in the US, Canada, Australia, and other parts of the world. Dancers compete in local *feisanna*, sponsored by dance schools or Irish cultural associations, with the highest finishers advancing to the Oireachtas, or regional and national competitions, and from there onto the Worlds, which until recently have been held in Ireland.

Dancers will compete in age-grouped solo competitions from under 11 years old up to senior level, which is for dancers over

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Sister Lena Deevy steps down after 24 years as IIC head Millar succeed center's founder

The Irish International Immigrant Center (IIC) announced last month that after 24 years as executive director of the center, Sister Lena Deevy LSA has decided to step down from her day-to-day responsibilities, and to take up the role of executive director emerita, effective April 1. Sister Lena will be succeeded by Ronnie Millar, who has

served as deputy director for the past two years.

“We are deeply grateful to Sister Lena for her incalculable contributions to the IIC and her deep commitment, care, and focus on the mission of helping people over the past 24 years,” said Mike Buckley, President of the IIC board. “To continue building upon the success of Sister Lena in serving



Ronnie Millar and Sister Leena Deevy.

Photo courtesy IIC

and advocating for immigrants, we are very fortunate to have in Ronnie Millar, as our new ex-

ecutive director, someone who has the experience,

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For many famine Irish, Deer Island proved their only glimpse of America

By PETER F. STEVENS
BIR STAFF

In 1847, a crisis unfolded nearly daily along Boston's docks. Leaking, lurching vessels aptly dubbed “coffin ships” unloaded hordes of ragged Irish passengers who had fled the Great Famine, An Gorta Mor. Some 25,000 arrived in “Black '47,” and with thousands wracked by “ship fever,” likely a form of typhus, Boston officials so feared a citywide

epidemic that they ordered a medical receiving room erected on Long Wharf. As overwhelmed physicians dispatched the gravely ill to hospitals, the city of Boston frantically made emergency preparations to set up Deer Island as “the place of quarantine for the Port of Boston.”

The swelling influx of Irish crowding Boston-bound famine ships posed such a health risk that

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Gavin Foundation helps those in recovery find a haven

By Jackie Gentile
Special to the BIR

It can be difficult for those recovering from alcohol or drug abuse to find a place that not only welcomes them, but also helps them navigate their return to their community and their families. The Gavin Foundation in South Boston does just that and has recently expanded to do even more.

Its new Recovery Center officially opened its doors early last month, then hosted an open house last week that drew more than 200 people. Since the expiration of a federal grant for the organization's YARD program, the Center has been a substantial replacement, modeled after its predecessor's "best practices" and other Massachusetts recovery centers.

Last Monday, during normal business hours (9 a.m. to 10 p.m.), 66 people visited the Center for participant-driven activities.

"I think it speaks vol-

umes to the need," said John McGahan, president and CEO of the Gavin Foundation. "I think it really speaks volumes for the word circulating amongst the recovery community that it's a good place to go."

In 1962, former parole officer James F. Gavin founded the organization, then known as the Arch Foundation, to provide a safe haven for men who had been incarcerated for crimes related to substance use. The space allowed them to regroup, rejuvenate, and eventually return to their community. Gavin House was the program's first project – a residential rehabilitation program for adult men getting back on their feet. In the mid-1990s, the Gavin Foundation was formed and created the Total Immersion Program (TIP) to offer an alternative to incarceration. TIP started as a collaboration with the South Boston District Court in 1996 and has since branched



Southie's Gavin Foundation offers open doors to those in recovery. "I think it really speaks volumes for the word circulating amongst the recovery community that it's a good place to go," says John McGahan, the foundation's president and CEO, at right. Photo courtesy Gavin Foundation

out to district courts in Dorchester, Somerville, Quincy, Hingham, and Brighton. It provides a 12-step participation program, anger management, drug screenings, and other services for members aiming to live drug- and alcohol-free.

"I think this is an opportunity. Dorchester has access to this Center. Anybody in the recovery world has access to this Center," said local advo-



cate Craig Galvin. "That's going to give us an oppor-

tunity to let that grow."

Members and staff alike hail from Dorchester, South Boston, the South End, and other Boston neighborhoods.

A number of employees are from Dorchester, "which was by design because we really tried, when we hired people, to get people that we felt were going to be energetic," said McGahan.

The Center operates on a peer-to-peer model, making all of the establishment's activities purely member-run, not administratively concocted. "So the things that have happened already are things that people that are going there have said, 'I want to do this. Can we do this?'" said McGahan.

He and his staff provide the space, the materials and the know-how, but it's ultimately up to the members to make it all happen. The membership is also responsible for officially naming the Center "so it'll mean something to them. I want them to

really feel a connectedness to the program," McGahan added.

Though other similar centers reported that it took 4-6 months to come up with a name, McGahan anticipates a sense of pride among participants. "I've been pretty clear with people that we want the name to be driven from within."

With activities such as yoga, a women's group, Alcoholics Anonymous, a meditation group, and the Massachusetts Organization of Addiction Recovery (MOAR) among others, options for those in the recovery community are numerous. What McGahan hopes the Center will become in addition is a resource for affected family members.

"It's a family disease," he said. "We want to support not just the individual trying to overcome, but the whole family."

For more information, visit gavinfoundation.org.



Daniel Berger-Jones and Phil Tayler.

Savin Hill's Tayler stars in Lyric's Irish-themed comedy

By Chris Harding
Special to the BIR

Running through March 16, halfway through St. Patrick's month (as it is known by our neighbors in Southie), the Lyric Stage Company of Boston presents the popular two-man Irish comedy, "Stones in His Pocket." Savin Hill's Phil Tayler shares the task of portraying 15 different characters with Daniel Berger-Jones in this piquant, but hardly light-hearted satire about two lads hired as extras when a Hollywood crew takes over a small village in County Kerry.

Tayler and Berger-Jones are the two "background bogmen," who in real life "have nothing and are going nowhere," and are ironically cast as "dispossessed peasants," but only in the way American moviegoers expect to see them. Each actor also portrays other extras, townspeople, the film's star, director, and crew members. Berger-Jones as "cheerful" Charlie Conlon, the more optimistic of the duo, appears, for example, as the film's sexy star Caroline Giovanni and the Scottish bouncer Jock Campbell. Tayler, as the more moody and hot-tempered Jake Quinn, takes, among other roles, Mickey, the oldest surviving extra from "The Quiet Man," and Aisling, the bossy third assistant director.

"Stones" can be staged with elaborate projections, but Director Courtney O'Connor, an adjunct professor from Emerson College, wisely keeps the focus on the mercurial performers. Audiences get a mental workout keeping track of who's playing whom.

Belfast playwright Marie Jones expressed surprise in 2001 when her work won the UK's top honor, the Olivier Award for Best Comedy. Though there are chuckles galore throughout the show, her subplot about a young man who commits suicide mid-production by drowning

himself with the titular "Stones in His Pocket" generates nagging conscience twinges.

Written before the Irish film industry really started booming, "Stones" revolves around a fictitious "fil-um" called "The Quiet Valley," (a title that harkens back to "The Quiet Man" and "How Green Was My Valley"). Its clichéd plot traces the love between Maeve and Rory and features the heroine arriving on horseback during "the big turf-cutting scene."

In the play, the extra characters get the stage time of a star, while the movie star characters get the stage time of an extra. Jones' condescending foreigners idealize and sentimentalize the Irish people, while the clueless townsfolk idealize and glamorize the Tinseltown types. Irish-Americans will particularly enjoy the way the Brits and Americans scold the locals for not acting properly Irish enough. However, true to life, by the end of the show none of the characters seems to have wised up.

Though set designer Matthew Whiton plunks a costume rack on his simple set and flanks it with two columns of various styles of hats on pegs, the two actors make no significant costume changes during their instant transitions between characters. They just duck behind each other, drop their suspenders or turn their scally caps around.

Tayler's hair may be tinted an unconvincing shade of red, but there's nothing unconvincing about his quickly shuffled accents. Berger-Jones is equally spot-on. Kudos, therefore, to their internationally known dialect coach, Nina Zendejas.

Tayler's next gig at the Lyric will be as one of the three sailors on 24-hour leave in the revival of the 1944 musical *On the Town*. Keep up with him at philtayler.com.

St. Patrick's Day parades

Following is a calendar of St. Patrick's Day parade events, courtesy of the Boston Irish Tourism Association:

West Dennis: Sat., March 9, 11 a.m.

Worcester: Sun., March 10, noon.

Abington: Sun., March 17, 1 p.m.

South Boston: Sun., March 17, 1 p.m.

Holyoke: Sun., March 17, 11:50 a.m.

Scituate: Sun., March 17, 1 p.m.

For people traveling outside of Massachusetts this month, check out these other St. Patrick's Day parades:

Quebec City: Sat., March 23, 1:30 p.m.

Manchester, NH: Sun., March 24, noon

Dublin, Ireland: Sun., March 17, noon

For a schedule of Irish music and dancing, literary and theater events, and other cultural activities this month, visit IrishMassachusetts.com/march.php.



ST. PATRICK

A blessing

The headline in Gaelic atop this month's front page means 'St. Patrick's Day Blessing on You.' It is pronounced Ban-ick-tee na fay-lah pwad-rig or-iv.

March concerts roundup, Page 24

‘Celtic Crossing’ boosts ‘Cops for Kids with Cancer’ March 2 at Norwood Theater

On Saturday night, March 2, at 7:30 p.m. at the newly re-opened Norwood Theater, a brilliant cast of singers and dancers will join local singer Pauline Wells to kick off a celebration of Boston's Irish heritage and the upcoming St. Patrick's Day holiday.

Anyone who has attended any of Pauline's concerts can appreciate the inspiration and emotion each show brings. The 2013 production of "A Celtic Crossing" will, the producers say, "evoke the emotion and spirit of Irish song and dance to support the "Cops for Kids with Cancer" organization while showcasing traditional Irish music and highlighting contemporary Irish, country and some rock and roll music.

One of Boston's finest Irish Country bands DEVRI, featuring, Declan Houston, Larry Flint, Chuck Parish, Steve O'Callaghan, Martin McPhilemy, and Caroline O'Shea will supply the sound for the evening.

Wells, a Cambridge Police Lieutenant in her day job, is supported by DEVRI and has hosted nearly a dozen concerts, from Boston's Wilbur Theater to the Blue

Ocean Music Hall, raising needed dollars for many charities, including Dana Farber and the Jimmy Fund, Military Veterans, Foster Children, and many others. They are just returning from a week in the Caribbean with Andy Cooney's "Cruise of Irish Stars."

In the music community, Pauline is described by many as a "heartfelt and inspiring singer." It is her work supporting the Jimmy Fund that conceived the first production of "A Celtic Crossing" in 2006.

Joining the production as a featured guest for the first time is Dublin native, Cape Cod resident, and extraordinary fiddle player, Patsy Whelan.

Also joining in will be the masterful dancers of the O'Dwyer School of Irish Dance and longtime radio host, WROL's Matt O'Donnell, who this year is celebrating 25 years of broadcasting the Irish Hit Parade.

Tickets are \$25 and are available by going to the Norwood Theater website, norwoodstage.com, or calling 617-696-7172.

Publisher's Notebook

Deer Island memorial getting a second look

By Ed Forry

The awful years of *An Gorta Mor*, the great hunger that ravaged Ireland in the middle of the 19th century, saw thousands of Irish board ships that took them across to America. Between 1847 and 1849 some 25,000 souls arrived in Boston Harbor on the “coffin ships,” which under an edict by the city’s health officials were steered to Deer Island, where the passengers would be examined, and if necessary, quarantined to prevent the spread of any communicable diseases from coming ashore.

Hundreds failed to survive, and most who died were laid to rest in unmarked paupers’ graves right there on Deer Island. The names of Irish burials reads like a roll call of Irish Boston: Ahearn, Barry Doherty, Dolan, Donahue, Foley, Gallagher, Leary, Looney, Mahoney, Regan, Riley, Ryan, Shaughnessy, Twohig, Walsh, York – more than 500 Irish surnames, many of whom very likely were ancestors of families who survived the journey and went on to build new lives in America.

Some twenty years ago, a small group of met with then-Mayor Ray Flynn and his staff to plan a memorial for the Deer Island deceased, those hundreds of poor Irish emigrants who had escaped the terrible famine only to fall just short of the “promised land.” A committee led by Dr. Bill and Rita O’Connell of Duxbury researched the site’s history and resolved to establish a lasting memorial.

A small amount of money was raised, and they reached out to others for design and fundraising ideas, eventually creating a website (deerislandirishmemorial.info). The island is now connected to Winthrop by a causeway, and Boston’s MWRA sewage treatment plant is adjacent to the burial grounds.

The agency pledged support, and the city of Boston committed \$50,000 from the Edward Ingersoll Browne Trust Fund for construction costs. But the initial design, calculated to cost ten times as much, proved impossible to raise.

In addition, when the Deer Island plan was first conceived there was no local Irish famine memorial. But in 1997, philanthropists John O’Connor and John Flaherty established a memorial near Harvard Square, and then-Ireland President Mary Robinson presided at the dedication. In 1998, at the corner of Washington and School streets on the Freedom Trail in downtown Boston, a committee led by the late developer Tom Flatley dedicated a dramatic memorial featuring two plaintive statues that evoke both the suffering of the famine victims and the hope of those who fled by boat to Boston and began the city’s Irish transformation.

The hopes to create a memorial at Deer Island continued to drive the O’Connells, and even after Bill’s wife Rita was diagnosed with cancer, the Duxbury couple kept the dream alive. Last year, when Boston hosted a worldwide Irish famine commemoration, Dr. Bill tried without success to arrange a Deer Island visit for new President Michael D Higgins; then, at year’s end, Rita succumbed to her disease.

Two months ago, Ireland’s Consul General to Boston Michael Lonergan reached out to revive the Deer Island effort. “As you are aware Dr. Bill O’Connell has been very involved with this project for some time and as you know, sadly his wife Rita passed away over Christmas,” Lonergan wrote. “I wondered if we might meet ourselves just to have a chat about the feasibility of this and what we might be able to do to get this project back on track and in a reasonable timeframe.”

Early last month, a small group gathered to begin the effort, and I was delighted on behalf of our newspaper, the *Boston Irish Reporter* to join the effort. Already, contact has been made with the sculptor Ted Clausen, the MWRA, and the Browne Fund. It is likely that a more modest memorial will be designed, but the new supporters bring with them a resolve to get it done. It would be a fitting tribute not only to the famine victims, but also to Dr. Bill and to the wonderfully dedicated Rita.



Sixth class pupils gather around the school sign: Nicole Monks, Aaron Doody, Siobhán Calnan, James Allen, Rachel O’Donovan and Bridget Brabazon. *Murray Tidmarsh photo*

West Cork school gets a surprise

By Joe Leary
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Every weekday, 24 Irish children, ages 5 to 12, attend a two-room school house in the remote West Cork countryside between the villages of Drinagh and Drimoleague. It is here, under the caring guidance of Principal Teresa Holland, that these children prepare themselves for Irish high school and entrance to the ferociously competitive Irish University system.

The Derryclough National School, however, has barely enough funds to keep operating. Located in the famous West Cork rolling farm country, the school has been seriously limited by constant government budget cutbacks.

According to reporter Jackie Keogh in her February column published in *The Southern Star* newspaper, in Skibbereen, West Cork, “The pressure that all such small schools are under is compounded by the fact that the minor works grant was cut in 2012. The capitation grant – which covers schools’ day-to-day expenses – was cut last year, and again this year. In addition, resource hours have been cut, as has the ancillary services grant.”

Keogh goes on to say this is no different than other small schools the length and breadth of Ireland, all of whom have difficulty raising funds for any kind of special activities.

Americans may not understand the nature and fetch of these funding reductions, but it is easy to appreciate how so many of them might impact a school’s hard working teachers.

The Dublin government has little choice in making these cuts if they are to reduce Ireland’s dependency on European lenders.

But the parents and teachers of the Derryclough National School aren’t giving up. Recognizing the acute need, the school community is actively fund raising to provide the funds to help teachers continue a high level of educational excellence.

After becoming aware of the school’s plight through Jackie Keogh’s column, Boston’s Irish American Part-

nership contacted her to obtain more information after which the decision was made to issue a grant of \$2,000 to the Derryclough School, which was sent to Ireland last month.

“Principal Teresa Holland has only been here two years,” Keogh noted in her column. “She and her assistant and a part-time special needs teacher take care of the 24 students. Holland takes charge of the ‘Senior room’ with 15 students and teacher Suzanne Murphy is responsible for the ‘Junior room’ with 9 students. One visit to Derryclough National School confirms why small schools are so deeply valued by pupils and their families. Here, children learn how to be confident and relaxed, how to get along with each other, and how to get their work done.”

Keogh goes on to note that “Derryclough National School is a Catholic school, under the patronage of the Bishop of Cork and Ross, but many of the children and families of different backgrounds find an open mind and warm welcome there. Indeed, the school community prides itself on the atmosphere of acceptance and children have the confidence and communication skills to deal with difference by learning from it.”

After the Irish Partnership grant was received by the school, Keogh wrote a second story the following week in which she quoted Principal Holland saying, “I could hardly believe it. It’s the last thing you would expect. No one ever thinks they are going to get a call from the United States offering them a sizable donation for the school. I received the message from Boston on my answering machine. When I played the message I was amazed and rang them back straight away.

After I got over the initial shock I was able to thank them. \$2,000 is, by our standards, a lot of money and the fact that it came completely out of the blue was a source of great joy and celebration for all of us.”

The Partnership transmittal letter suggests that the funds be used to strengthen the school’s library and assist science teaching through the purchase of appropriate materials.

As we go into March celebrating our Irish heritage, Partnership donors can take pride in what they have done for this treasured school in West Cork.

Joe Leary is CEO and president of the Irish American Partnership.

An apology to women of Catholic laundries

By Shawn Pogatchnik
ASSOCIATED PRESS

DUBLIN – Ireland ignored the mistreatment of thousands of women who were incarcerated within Catholic nun-operated laundries and must pay the survivors compensation, Prime Minister Enda Kenny said last month in delivering an emotional state apology for the decades of abuses in the so-called Magdalene Laundries.

“By any standards it was a cruel, pitiless Ireland, distinctly lacking in a quality of mercy,” Kenny said, as dozens of former Magdalenes watched tearfully from parliament’s public gallery overhead.

Kenny told lawmakers his government has appointed a senior judge to recommend an aid program for the approximately 1,000 women still living from the residential workhouses, the last of which closed in 1996. He also pledged government funding for the erection of a national memorial “to remind us all of this dark part of our history.”

A government-commissioned report published early last month found that more than 10,000 women had been consigned to the laundries after being branded “fallen” women, a euphemism for prostitutes, even though virtually none of them were – and instead were products of poverty, homelessness, and dysfunctional families. More than a quarter were directly referred

by public officials, such as judges or truancy officers, and all spent months or years in menial labor without access to education. Most did laundry for local hotels, hospitals and prisons, while others scrubbed floors or made rosary beads for the church’s profit.

“The Magdalene women might have been told that they were washing away a wrong, or a sin. But we know now – and to our shame – they were only ever scrubbing away our nation’s shadow,” Kenny said. “I believe I speak for millions of Irish people all over the world when I say we put away these women because, for too many years, we put away our conscience.”

Kenny’s voice faltered with sorrow as he neared the end of his address and addressed the former Magdalenes directly. “As a society, for many years we failed you. We forgot you or, if we thought of you at all, we did so in untrue and offensive stereotypes. This is a national shame, for which I say again: I am deeply sorry and offer my full and heartfelt apologies,” he said. Lawmakers and spectators applauded.

Pressure groups have called for the government to provide each former laundry resident payments of 50,000 euro to 100,000 euro (\$67,000 to \$135,000) and full state pensions, a difficult bill for an Ireland struggling to reduce a 15 percent unemployment rate, slash deficits, and escape from its 2010 international bailout.



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An ombudsman will review *Reporter's* coverage of the State Senate campaign

Spurred by state Rep. Linda Dorcea Forry's announcement on Monday that she will be a candidate in a special election to replace state Sen. Jack Hart, who resigned from office last week, *The Reporter* has taken immediate steps to avoid political bias or impropriety, or the appearance thereof, in its coverage of the First Suffolk Senate race by hiring an ombudsman who will review that coverage for the duration of the campaign.

Rep. Forry, who is serving her fifth term in the Legislature, is married to Bill Forry, the publisher and editor of the *Reporter* newspaper group. He has worked since 1995 at the family-owned company, which publishes the weekly *Reporter* and two monthlies, the *Boston Irish Reporter* and the *Boston Haitian Reporter*, and also produces a website, dotnews.com. He took ownership of the company last year.

Bill Forry issued the following statement on Tuesday: "The *Reporter* intends to cover the First Suffolk district race as we would any other political contest in our coverage area. But as we have done in the past, we have taken immediate steps in addition to inviting an ombudsman to review our work to install all reasonable safeguards to ensure the integrity of our newspaper and fair play for all sides involved in the campaign ahead. We owe that to our readers and to the community that we have served for 30 years.

"All of our newspapers will remain neutral in the race. We have full confidence in our team of reporters, led by Gintautas Dumcius, who has rightfully earned his own reputation as a trusted source of political news across the city. We are in good hands with Gin leading our coverage. He will work closely with Associate Editor Thomas F. Mulvoy Jr., a former managing editor of the *Boston Globe* who has worked in the *Reporter's* newsroom since 2001.

"Neither I nor my father, Associate Publisher Ed Forry, nor any other family member will influence coverage, write, editorialize, supervise, or otherwise have an impact on our newspapers' reporting of the campaign. I will continue to contribute to the *Reporter* newspapers editorials and stories that do not pertain directly to the campaign."

Forry said that Michael Jonas, executive editor of *CommonWealth* magazine, has agreed to serve as the newspapers' ombudsman over the course of the upcoming campaign. The position of ombudsman, often called "a reader's representative," is uncommon at community newspapers, but such an individual is sometimes employed by major daily papers to aggressively review its coverage of an issue, explore reader complaints, gain responses from reporters and editors, and publish his or her findings on a regular basis.

"Michael Jonas will do just that for the *Reporter* papers on this special election campaign," Forry said. "He will help ensure that the *Reporter's* coverage of the campaign for the First Suffolk district seat will be balanced, equitable, and fully transparent."

The *Reporter* has previously employed an ombudsman, in 2004-2005, when Ms. Dorcea Forry was a candidate in a competitive special election for the House of Representatives.

Jonas is a 32-year resident of Dorchester who has worked in journalism in Massachusetts since the early 1980s. Readers and individual campaigns are invited to contact him with their comments, concerns, or questions regarding the *Reporter's* coverage of the campaign. "All candidates will be given full and equal access to Mr. Jonas, who will work outside of the *Reporter's* offices," said Forry. "He can be reached via e-mail at dotnewsombudsman@gmail.com."

"Our actions this week are an acknowledgment that the circumstances of this race oblige us to go to the greatest possible lengths to ensure that our reputation as a professional news organization, and the best interests of our readership, are of paramount importance," Forry said.

Other measures announced this week include:

- In conformance with its standing policy on campaign coverage close to an election day, the *Reporter* will not publish any unsolicited commentary on the election in the April 25 issue, which immediately precedes the special election on April 30.
- The *Reporter* newspapers will not endorse a candidate in this election.

About Michael Jonas

Michael Jonas, a 32-year resident of Dorchester, will serve as the *Reporter's* ombudsman beginning this week. He will be reviewing the *Reporter* newspapers' coverage of the campaign for the First Suffolk State Senate seat, receiving and exploring reader feedback, and publishing his findings in a regular column and online at DotNews.com.

Jonas is the executive editor of *CommonWealth* magazine, an award-winning quarterly magazine covering politics, ideas, and civic life in Massachusetts. *CommonWealth* is published by the Massachusetts Institute for a New Commonwealth (MassINC), a nonpartisan public policy think tank that focuses on a broad range of issues affecting life in Massachusetts.

Jonas has worked in journalism in Massachusetts since the early 1980s. He got his start at the *Dorchester Community News*, where he covered a broad range of urban issues. Starting in the late 1980s, he was a regular contributor to the *Boston Globe*. For a number of years he wrote a weekly column on local politics, "The Political Trail," for the *Globe's* Sunday City Weekly section.

He can be reached via e-mail at dotnewsombudsman@gmail.com.

• Any political advertising for this campaign will be handled by *Reporter* Advertising Manager Jack Conboy. All candidates and their supporters will be charged the same rate for advertisements. Placement of ads in the paper will be done by Conboy on a first-come, first-served basis.

"Obviously, I will support my wife's candidacy on my own personal time and outside the pages of the newspaper," said Forry. "But we will not use the newspaper to assist her in any way. I think that we are up for this challenge and that our coverage will speak for itself."

IT WASN'T ALWAYS EASY BEING 'GREEN' IN BOSTON

By PETER F. STEVENS
BIR STAFF

On March 17, Boston will be awash in St. Patrick's Day revelry. All nonsense such as green beer, green plastic derbies, "Kiss Me, I'm Irish" badges, and faces reflecting various stages of inebriation and embla-

Point of View

zoned with painted shamrocks or the Irish tricolor aside, the Saint's High, Holy Holiday can be celebrated with unabashed abandon. It is worth remembering, however, that what we take for granted in 2013 was not ever so. For the Boston Irish, honoring – let alone celebrating – St. Patrick's Day proved a long struggle.

The first local stirrings to commemorate Ireland's patron saint came in 1737. On March 17th of that year, 26 men gathered in the heart of Puritan Boston to hold a decidedly Improper Bostonian event. They were Irish-born men living in a place where most locals loathed anything that smacked of "Popery," and celebrating a Catholic saint's holy day could well have proven a risky proposition.

The reason that the 26 men pulled it off was that they were Protestant; however, since some were formerly Roman Catholics who had "embraced" a new faith to assimilate in Boston, their devotion to Protestantism may have been wan. The religious question aside, the men drew up a charter that professed their pride as sons of the Emerald Isle when they met on the day dedicated to Ireland's patron saint. The first St. Patrick's Day celebration of The Charitable Irish Society was under way.

To become members, men had to be reasonably successful and "natives of Ireland, or Natives of any other Part of the British Dominions of Irish Extraction, being Protestants, and inhabitants of Boston."

Of the first members of The Charitable Irish, historian James Bernard Cullen has written: "An important part of the membership of The Charitable Irish Society was the Irish Presbyterian Church, established in Boston in 1727. They first worshipped in a building which had been a barn on the corner of Berry Street and Long Lane (now Channing and Federal streets); and this unpretentious building served them, with the addition of a couple of wings, till 1744..."

Despite Boston's vehement prejudice toward Catholics of the 18th century, the society ignored the religious restriction in 1764, after a historically short term of 27 years. The members officially removed the Presbyterian requirement in 1804. Today, the tradition that began on March 17, 1737, continues. The Charitable Irish Society holds a unique place in the annals of the Boston Irish and Irish America alike.

Perhaps the best-known Boston Irish symbol of St. Patrick's Day is The Parade. Locally, the phrase means one thing – South Boston's annual St. Patrick's Day Parade. It all started officially in 1901, but the procession that so many both enjoy but take for granted today did not arrive easily for the Boston Irish.

As Irish-Catholic immigrants landed in Boston in ever-increasing numbers in the 1840s and 1850s and staked their claim to a new life in America, they soon thumbed their collective nose at Yankee antipathy to



Marine artist E. D. Walker's depiction of the USS Jamestown, a vessel borrowed in 1847 from the US government by Capt. Robert Bennet Forbes, of Milton, MA, to bring food, medical supplies, and other materials to help the famine victims in Ireland.
Art work courtesy of Forbes House Museum

any commemorations of St. Patrick's Day. One of the early manifestations of the local Irish love for their old sod's patron saint was the Shamrock Society, a social club that gathered on March 17 to defiantly toast the saint and "sing the old songs," the revelers' voices pealing from Dooley's, the Mansion House, and Jameson's. No single building, however, would long serve to hold the growing numbers of local Irish longing to celebrate the day in a bigger way. A historian noted: "No banquet room was broad enough to comprehend all the Sons of Erin, even had they the price of dinner."

There was only one way, Boston Irish leaders decided, to include not just Irishmen, but also women and children, in a celebration of St. Patrick. The solution was a parade.

As early as 1841, without official sanction by Boston's government officials, more than 2,000 local Irish had marched through the North End, their bands booming, crowds singing. Earlier, they had honored their patron saint at a traditional Mass.

The cant of Brahmins who reviled the St. Patrick's Day Masses and revelry notwithstanding, the Boston Irish prayed and paraded on March 17. In 1886, Hugh O'Brien, Boston's first Irish-born mayor, infuriated the Yankee nabobs of Beacon Hill with his decision to close the Boston Public Library in honor of the revered saint and the celebrations in his name.

By 1900, St. Patrick's Day parades organized by the Ancient Order of Hibernians, which numbered some 8,000 members in Boston alone, had become the norm. Bands, organizations, refreshments – all were handled by the Hibernians' Entertainment Committee. In the hands of Ward 17 boss "Pea Jacket" Maguire and other Boston Irish leaders, fun, festivities, and pride in Irish roots ruled the city on March 17.

In March 1901, the blare of bands and the vibrations of marchers' feet pealed above South Boston's streets. Banners awash with glittering shamrocks, harps and images of the patron saint himself nodded in the gusts racing in from the Atlantic. The date, however, was March 18 – with good reason. The city's leaders had sanctioned South Boston's first official St. Patrick's/ Evacuation Day Parade for the 18th because the 17th had fallen on Sunday and was subject to the Blue Laws. On that Monday morning, the procession commenced with a rattle of drums, the cries of pipes, and the pounding notes of brass bands.

A newspaper column captured the essence of St. Patrick's Day in Boston then – 1901 – and now: "A sign that, although scattered far and wide, Irishmen still hold to their love of country and countrymen, and never forget the verdant home they fondly call the gem of the sea."

Boston Irish Reporter’s Here & There

By BILL O'DONNELL

Cullen & Murphy’s Bulger Book A Winner –I have ordered it, so I haven’t read it yet, but the true crime story of **Whitey Bulger** as written by the Globe’s **Kevin Cullen and Shelley Murphy** is no doubt the real thing. It has it all, say the early reviews. Cullen and Murphy have decades of experience in covering Whitey and the Boston underworld and as journalists and urban historians they have written what will likely be the definitive account of the Bulger era, warts and all.



Bill O'Donnell

There have been a succession of books about Whitey and Southie and the myths about the longtime crime boss and accused murderer, but if the early line from reviewers is even close to accurate none have come as close to the bone as the Cullen-Murphy writing team.

Eire Society Honors Sister Lena Deevy – After 24 years as executive director of the organization she founded, Boston’s Irish International Immigrant Center, **Sister Lena Deevy** is stepping down, effective April 1. (See story on Page One). Her energetic and committed stewardship of the IIIC has been recognized by Ireland and America with national honors from both countries, and now it is time to honor the immigrants’ friend here at home. Sister Lena will be feted at the Eire Society’s annual Gold Medal dinner on Thurs., April 25, at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel. Previous honorees have included **President Kennedy, George Mitchell, Cardinal Cushing, Siobhan McKenna, Thomas “Tip” O’Neill, The Chieftains, John Hume, and Seamus Heaney**. Reception at 6 p.m., dinner at 7. For information or ticket reservations, contact Barbara Fitzgerald at 617-698-8758.

Senator Warren Comes Out Swinging – In an earlier meeting with the media following her election, Elizabeth Warren was low key, showing little of the dynamism and sure-fire resolve she displayed on the campaign trail. That was then. This is now! Her inaugural appearance as a member of the Senate Banking Committee saw the tenacious Warren at her patented best as friend of the consumer and dogged pursuer of a table full of senior banking regulators.

Her question at the hearing for **Elisse Walter**, chair of the Securities and Exchange Commission, cut to the core of the appalling lack of US government indictments of Wall Street money managers, when she asked Walter, “Can you identify the last time you took the Wall Street banks to trial?” The reply from the SEC chair to Warren was telling, “I’ll have to get back to you with the specific information.”

Watching the edgy exchanges between the regulators and the Bay State’s senior member of the Senate, reminded this viewer of something out of a “Mr. Smith Goes To Washington-type film, where constituents, yes voters, actually have a voice and are heard.

Ryanair Pursuit Of Aer Lingus Stalls – The decision of the European Commission to deny **Michael O’Leary’s** Ryanair bid for Aer Lingus likely hinged on the anti-competitive aspects of Ryanair’s proposal. But not to be ignored when analyzing the EU decision is the unwavering opposition of the Irish government, which retains a partial stock position, a 25 percent stake, in Aer Lingus.

O’Leary has long coveted Aer Lingus, long known as Ireland’s National Airline, because O’Leary believes that his short-haul carrier (famous for low fares and novel if bizarre marketing) would give Ryanair a big boost into long-distance flights and a good piece of the North American air traffic.

Ryanair continues to be a profit-maker but in recent times has implemented or at least tried to exact fees for everything from in-flight toilet use to draconian baggage and booking charges. In this observer’s opinion, Aer Lingus can find a far more compatible partner than Michael O’Leary and Ryanair.

Seamus Heaney, The Poet As Realist – All the polling from a variety of sources strongly suggests that a united Ireland, as **Gerry Adams** and Sinn Fein have been promoting via a

referendum, is not on. Even in Catholic/nationalist areas there is solid support for the present status quo.

Change is often traumatic and with the border between the six counties and the twenty-six more a mindset than a reality, there seems to the average nationalist punter (and certainly his unionist neighbor) no cause for undue haste.

And that’s what **Seamus Heaney**, Ireland’s Nobel Laureate and poet of the ages, also believes. In a recent interview in *The Times*, Heaney suggests that these are “very dangerous times indeed.” He strongly suggests that there still remains much work to be done to bring the divided communities closer together. Heaney cites the damage the flag protests have done to both unionists and nationalists to the point that the unity issue may best be left for another day. He also believes that the North’s reputation has been harmed by street riots. “Now is not the time,” Heaney believes.

JFK memorabilia auction stirs memories –Dave Powers, special assistant to President John F. Kennedy, who in his lifetime traveled from Charlestown in 1946 to Dallas in 1963 with Kennedy, died in 1998. His family, in preparing to sell the Powers’s home in Arlington, came upon a political treasure trove from Dave’s 17 years with JFK. The large collection of photos, artifacts, and personal Kennedy-era objects went to auction last month and brought in nearly \$2 million.

The news of the auction and photographs of the leather bomber jacket with the presidential seal that JFK gave to Powers brought back warm memories of visiting with Dave at his office at the JFK Library & Museum. During the decade of the ‘80s, I was the editor of the *Irish Echo* in Boston and I would stop by the library to visit with Dave from time to time. He would reminisce from behind his desk in a smallish room that seemed more cramped museum than curator’s office. It was a continuing history lesson that I devoured.

Many times Dave would be wearing the old bomber jacket, once noting that it was his favorite item from “President Kennedy.” The auction price in mid-January for that bomber jacket was over half a million dollars.

We talked about many things but as a history buff, I was more the listener to the unique travels and adventure of this former townie who was at President Kennedy’s side until Dallas, and then spent 15 additional years organizing the president’s archives and personal possessions at a government facility in Waltham until the presidential library opened at Columbia Point in Dorchester in October 1979.

On many occasions Dave recalled JFK’s June 1963 visit to Ireland and how happy the president was on the trip. He repeated JFK’s words that he would have loved being a candidate in Ireland and also about returning there after his years as president.

Not on every visit but on very special occasions, Dave would ask me to pull down a bottle of Irish whiskey from a standing cabinet behind where I sat and we would share a quiet toast together. I’m not sure what the rules were then about drinking in government offices but I am sure that the statute of limitations is long past.

John Kerry’s Ancestors Aided Famine Relief – The newly appointed US Secretary of State is not Irish but **John Forbes Kerry’s** ties to Ireland are strong as a direct descendant on his mother’s side of Captain **Robert Forbes** and his brother **John Murray Forbes**. During the heartbreaking 1840s in Ireland as millions were dying from starvation or emigrating, John Kerry’s ancestors defied a ban on the use of US government funds for famine relief and sent tons of food by ship to Ireland.

These and other fascinating details of John Kerry’s ancestors and the seminal role in famine relief played by the Forbes brothers are the product of research by a popular Boston personality, **Dr. Francis Costello**, a historian, author, and economic consultant. Costello, who is based in Belfast, is writing a book on the global impact of the Great Famine and is the author of several books relating to Irish history.

He has unearthed the details on the Forbes brothers’ outfitting and staffing of a number ships out of Boston loaded with critically needed food for the starving Irish. During the severest days of the famine the Forbes brothers sent food and other essentials directly to Irish ports with a value in today’s value that would be \$30 million. The two Forbes-sponsored ships that carried the food to Ireland, according to Costello, were the Jamestown and the Macedonian.

Unionist-Sinn Fein Election Comes with A Subplot – There will be a unique contest in mid-Ulster on March 7: the election of a new member of the British Parliament to replace **Martin McGuinness**, who is stepping down to concentrate on his Belfast leadership duties. What is different and unusual about this particular contest is that it pits two men against each other who share a terrible moment from the Troubles. **Nigel Lutton**, a unionist, is facing the Sinn Fein candidate, **Francie Molloy**, in the Westminster by-election.

The two men know each other, they have a history. Lutton’s father, Frederick ,was shot dead by an IRA gunman in 1979 in Moy, County Tyrone. His opponent this month, Molloy, a veteran republican, was once accused in the murder of the elder Lutton. However, Molloy has always strongly denied involvement in the Lutton attack. Other political factors, logistics, and voter numbers, will decide the by-election, while the truth of what happened 30 years ago remains undetermined but, as always, poisonous.

Moloney and McIntyre To Move Forward on BC Case – In a statement on Feb., 12, **Edward Moloney and Anthony** said, “We will continue to press ahead with our petition [separate from the BC appeal] to the US Supreme Court for a writ of certiorari, and we will keep a watchful eye on developments in the Boston College appeal as they unfold.”

At issue is material about the Troubles era in a BC archive of interviews that the police in Northern Ireland have demanded by subpoena, a move that the US Justice Department so far has acceded to, pending resolution in the courts.

The two men, organizers and interviewers of the oral history of participants in the Troubles, are contending that “ they are entitled to be heard on these matters which involve the First Amendment rights of academics and journalists in the confidentiality of sources and materials in opposition to subpoenas issued on behalf of foreign law enforcement agencies.”

The government has admitted, the Moloney-McIntyre statement says, that Boston College’s appeal “continues to present a live controversy in spite of the death of **Dolours Price** [a controversial figure from the Troubles

time], whose public remarks...were the excuse by foreign law enforcement agencies to raid a confidential academic archive housed at Boston College...” Stay tuned.

Brown Goes For the Gold as GOP’s Top Candidates Hide – **Scott Brown**, the former senator but unwilling participant in the John Kerry succession sweepstakes, has taken the Fox Network’s soup and agreed to be a talking head for the Murdoch-owned conservative TV outlet. The last attractive familiar Fox face hired at big bucks was **Sarah Palin**, who reportedly made a million a year looking good but saying little.

While Brown skittered to the sideline before signing on with Fox, his high profile colleagues in the Republican party have all taken a powder. Neither of the two decent Democratic congressmen are world beaters but Massachusetts is a blue state and that was enough to make **Kerry Healey, Charlie Baker, Bill Weld** and others decide to wait for a softer landing down the line.

Meanwhile Bay State Republican spokes-people have been trying desperately to put a shine on the sneakers of two-year state Rep. **Dan Winslow** and former navy SEAL **Gabriel Gomez**, who are looking for their Scott Brown moment. GOP strategist **Todd Domke**, who should know better, is pushing the Winslow-Gomez peanuts up the hill, saying, “I think both candidates are strong and surprisingly encouraging.” Of course they are.

New Team Energizes WGBH Radio – It was a pleasant surprise to hear that **Jim Braude and Margery Eagan** have exited toxic WTKK and signed on for a weekday 12-2 p.m. show on Boston Public Radio’s WGBH, 89.7. The duo’s presence with several of the deadbeats who have been heard on TKK had made some listeners reluctant to tune in that station but they should be flying on public radio, which is a good platform for the intelligent and entertaining Braude-Eagan team.

Bloody Sunday Families Deserve Fair Settlement – One of the lasting verities of life is that money never properly recompenses victims of injustice. This does not mean that those who wreak injustice on others should be excused from reparations or compensation. Not at all!

Forty years after the massacre, and following months of discussion, the British Ministry of Defence has settled on an offer to the families of Blood Sunday victims. The British government has publicly affirmed that “we found no instances where it appeared to us that soldiers either were or might have been justified in firing.” And the killing of 13 innocent people was described by Prime Minister Cameron as “shocking.” The sum total compensation for 40 years of unresolved injustice? A paltry \$77,418.09 per family. Laughable if not so painful.

That kind of chump change is regularly awarded in British courts for defamation, libel, or illegal discharge of an employee. Not for decades of trying to tell neighbors that your dead son or husband had no gun, no bomb, no semtex explosives. We so often hear folks say, “It’s not about the money,” when it is about the money. One of the victim’s families described the government payment as “an insult.” If a similar charge and an admission by the defendants in a US court along the lines of the Bloody Sunday tragedy had been coupled with John Edwards or another sharp tort attorney, the plaintiffs would need barrels to cart off the damages award. \$17,418.09 is grossly inadequate to the insult. And yes, it seems it is about the money!

RANDOM CLIPPINGS

It appears that **Cohans**, the pub in Cong used in the film “The Quiet Man,” is up for sale and has attracted several serious potential buyers. On our last visit to Cong we had chats with some of the movie extras and attended Mass there. ... **Rupert Murdoch’s** media empire, under assault for phone hacking, has had six former employees newly arrested last month. ... Polling support for same-sex marriage in Northern Ireland in a survey by the unionist protestant Newsletter shows almost 75 percent in favor. ... **Pope Benedict**, in his leaving and his pledge to stay away from the conclave, has never displayed more grace and a grasp of reality. Re the conclave: It is an absolute moral disgrace and a serious PR blunder to allow the disgraced retired L.A. Cardinal, **Roger Mahony**, to vote for the next Pope.

The superb linen Hall Library, the Archive of the Troubles, is now online and that’s a treat. ... The Irish government has arranged to have many world monuments turned green this St. Pat’s holiday. They await word from Buckingham Palace. ... The former CEO of the giant Irish Nationwide was with the company for 37 years and had no computer access in his office. ... Fianna Fail, counted as dead last year, has rebounded and leads the polls against Fine Gael and Labour. Amazing! ... It just keeps coming and coming. The new Magdalen Laundry Report has more of the same unspeakable, long-term abuse.

Answered prayers: Red Sox pitcher **Dice K** has been dealt to **Terry Francona** and his new team in Cleveland. God is good. ... The DUP’s angry unionist, **Gregory Campbell**, caught Sinn Fein’s **Martin McGuinness** and the Derry mayor making a quick exit just before the dinner toast to the Queen. ... There appears to be a growing consensus that the two parties in Washington can get together with the president for meaningful immigration reform. ... The Financial Times has given a thumbs up on an Ireland deal with Europe’s Central Bank. ... So big deal, **Bill Flynn** picked up **Gerry Adams**’ prostate surgery fee in the states. ... If Florida Senator **Marco Rubio** is the successor to **Ronald Reagan**, they better get a double.

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Profile

A passion for helping youth at risk drives 'JP kid' O'Neill

BY GREG O'BRIEN
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Michael Delaney O'Neill, a big Irish name for a gangly boy, spent his early years in the shadow of James Michael Curley. To be precise, O'Neill, now chairperson of the Boston School Committee and senior vice president of marketing and distribution for Savings Bank Life Insurance of Massachusetts – the “no-nonsense” guys – grew up in a house just behind the Curley home in Jamaica Plain famed for its shamrock-laden shutters.

Clearly the politics and street sense of Hizzoner have rubbed off on O'Neill. “I’m a JP kid,” he boasts, “and proud of it!”

So was his late father, John Henry O'Neill, Jr., who was born in the Moraine Street house, and who later served as Boston Mayor John F. Collins's co-campaign manager and executive secretary for eight years. Michael O'Neill's paternal grandfather, John Henry O'Neill, a Cork farmer who emigrated to Boston, then became the owner of O'Neill's Meat Market on Mission Hill, built the Jamaica Plain home as testament that a butcher could have game.

His grandson has game, too, in the family manner. Holder of an Irish citizenship, with a degree from Boston College, and an MBA in entrepreneurial studies at Babson, Michael O'Neill is one of the brightest bulbs in Boston banking and insurance circles, and the fiduciary head of the oldest public school system in America, to which position he brings a passion for helping youth at risk.

“I was trained in my Irish heritage to help the underdog,” O'Neill said recently in an interview with the *Boston Irish Reporter*. “To whom much is given, the Jesuits told us, much is expected.”

His passion for the underprivileged is a model for corporate America. When some of his buddies ask him why he cares so much about inner city dropouts, he has his answer at the ready: “Statistics show that the average high school dropout will earn a million dollars less in a lifetime than a college graduate, will die a decade earlier, will have a much higher divorce rate, far more children born out of wedlock, and will cost taxpayers about a half million dollars in assistance. We need to break the cycle of poverty. It has a ripple affect across society.” Spoken by a true entrepreneur, the words are a wakeup call.

The term “entrepreneur” first appeared in the French dictionary in 1723. As defined by the Irish-French economist Richard Cantillon, it describes an individual who is a champion for needed change no matter the risk. O'Neill is all of that.

“Michael is the perfect choice to lead the school committee,” said Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino upon O'Neill's election in January as chairperson. “He will serve as an advocate for youth across our city.”

With a school district of 57,000 students, 125 schools, 8,500 employees, and close to a \$1 billion annual operating budget, O'Neill must turn advocacy into results, as he has done in the past on professional fronts in his work with SBLI, Bank of America, Citizens Bank, and the US Trust Corp, all places where he has turned numbers, the beans of an organization, into motivating and meaningful results.

He has had much help along the way, starting with his defining roots in Jamaica Plain where it gradually became clear that he is a blend of his parents' resolve for fulfillment in life. His mother Joan (Delaney), a housewife, was a “warm, loving and gracious woman, but always to the point,” a New Yorker by birth who ultimately became a Red Sox fan, yet until the day she died, she spoke in a Big Apple vernacular spouting words like “cawfee.”

She was a wordsmith of sorts. Her father was a successful Manhattan publisher of detective and crime magazines, and upon her husband's retirement, she informed him, “You may have retired, but I'm not.” And with that, she became highly active in community service, serving as president of the Brigham & Women's Faulkner Hospital volunteer group.

O'Neill's late father, with ties to the pastoral village of Rossmore outside Clonakilty, was a devoted husband, “abide-by-the-rules man, and an individual of achievement in his tenure at City Hall and as a longtime member of the board of directors of Depositors Trust Company in Medford.

There was a bit of fighter in him, passed down to his five children. The family ancestral fields of Rossmore, Sam's Cross in particular, are near the birthplace of the Irish revolutionary leader and legend Michael Collins. It's a family bragging right; cousins still farm the land in nearby Ferlihanes.



The gang's all here: From left, front row: John H O'Neill III, Michael O'Neill, Mayor Menino, School Superintendent Dr. Carol Johnson. Second row: Zachary Murphy, Tyler Murphy, Rana Murphy-O'Neill, Megan O'Neill, Shavaun O'Neill, Robert Emmett O'Neill.
Photo courtesy Mayor's Office

The immediate O'Neill family hasn't strayed far from Jamaica Plain. His four siblings live in West Roxbury, and O'Neill now lives in Charlestown. “I might as well be in California as far as they're concerned,” he jokes.

Educated at JP's Joseph P. Manning School at the top of Moss Hill, then Boston Latin, O'Neill played competitive neighborhood hockey and baseball, and at the Latin School, he excelled on the swim, tennis, and sailing teams.

Sailing? How does a landlocked kid learn how to sail? On the Irish Riviera, of course. Generations ago, grandfather O'Neill, the butcher who would be king, built a family summer home in Scituate where his grandson learned to sail in the harbor where today he keeps his sleek Cal 33 sailboat, named *Rossmore*.

O'Neill and his wife, Rana (Haidar)—a retail banker and Beirut native who as a child moved with her family to Cape Cod due to the civil war in Lebanon—were married at Scituate Harbor Yacht Club in a waterfront ceremony that invoked the sands of heritage.

“My cousins in Rossmore shipped over some beach sand, which was added to sand from the Cape, Jamaica Pond, and Beirut,” says O'Neill, the stepfather of Rana's three children from a previous marriage. “We mixed the sand as symbolism that we were blended together.”

O'Neill's career itself is a blend of lots of ingredients, most of them having to do with selling. As an eighth grader at Boston Latin, he was a “soda man” at BC games. “Get ya Coke, heah, get ya Coke, heah!” he mimics. He was so good at it that when he was in college at Boston College, Boston University hired him to manage its concessions stands, although he fell into some disfavor by wearing his BC jacket at BU hockey games. Luckily, he didn't get the puck beat out of him; he was “finally asked not to wear it.”

After graduation, BC Athletic Director Bill Flynn offered O'Neill the position of running all concessions at school athletic events during the Doug Flutie years, an offer he jumped at, forming a concession company with his dad, called Delano Enterprises (short for Delaney and O'Neill). Not fully satisfied with selling hot dogs and popcorn and watching Hail Mary passes, O'Neill attended night school at Babson for a masters in business administration, which opened a surfeit of opportunities with: US Trust as a commercial lender and a regional president; senior vice president of Citizens Financial Group; president of Citizens CFG Insurance Services; a board member at SBLI; senior vice president and private client advisor for US Trust Bank of America's Private Wealth Management; and senior vice president of marketing and distribution at SBLI, a position he has held since April 2010 under the mentorship of former CEO Bob Sheridan and now Christopher Pinkerton.

Along the way, O'Neill supplemented his education at the American Banking Association's Stonier Graduate School of Banking and the Royal Bank of Scotland's Harvard Business School Executive Education program in Edinburgh. Citizens Bank is the US extension of the Royal Bank of Scotland.

“The irony of this was that I was traveling to Edinburgh to be taught by Harvard professors whom I could see out of my window at work in Boston,” said O'Neill. “But it was a great education, and I got to play golf at St. Andrew's!” He describes himself as “a sailor who golfs,” code for pack the golf bag with extra balls.

As if O'Neill's corporate resume isn't full of accomplishment, that passion for assisting youth at risk keeps driving him forward. Like his mother, he will never retire. His involvement in schools began in his late 20s when he was living in Hyde Park. While walking his dog one day near the Hyde Park High School campus, he came across a sign that read: Academy of Finance. “I called the headmaster, told him I was a young banker living in Hyde Park, and asked how could I help,” O'Neill recalled.

It was the start of years of service to Boston Public Schools that led to his appointment as board chairman of the Boston Private Industry Council's Youth Council and, in July 2008, a seat on the seven-member Boston School Committee. He's in his second term on the board.

“The decisions facing this committee will have an important impact on the future of the school district,” outgoing chairperson Rev. Gregory Grover, Sr., said at O'Neill's election to the post about two months ago. “I have no doubt that Michael will lead the committee well, and consider the many voices in all aspects of the decision-making process.”

Still many challenges lie ahead in improving student test scores, reducing the dropout rate, coordinating a complex student assignment plan, adding, where possible, student enrichment programs, juggling a tight budget amidst rising transportation and health care costs, and increasing the district's graduation rate, the highest today in 20 years.

“We have to do more with less,” he says, referencing funding constraints on Beacon Hill.

All of which will take the political acumen of a James Michael Curley, the leadership and drive of a Michael Collins, and the patience of Michael the Archangel.

O'Neill is up to the task, with encouragement and support from SBLI, a firm that defines community commitment. “It's about the kids,” he says, quoting the counsel of an early mentor, Neal Finnegan, a prominent Boston banker who served as chairman of Northeastern University's board of trustees “Our youth are Boston's greatest resource, its best hope for the future. A life ought to be measured by one's commitment to youth, perhaps the highest calling in a world filled with temptation and distraction for personal gain.”

By any measuring stick, Michael Delaney O'Neill stands tall with his passion for that commitment.

Greg O'Brien, a regular Boston Irish Reporter contributor, is president of Stony Book Group, a publishing and political/communications consulting firm based on the Cape. He is the author/editor of several books, and has contributed to regional and national publications.)

Former Reporter editor O'Sullivan joins *Globe* political team

After more than two years at National Journal as chief analyst, deputy daily briefings editor and White House correspondent, Jim O'Sullivan — the former news editor of the *Dorchester Reporter* — is returning to Massachusetts to fill the *Boston Globe's* Political

Intelligence post held until recently by Glen Johnson, who left the paper to work for Secretary of State John Kerry. O'Sullivan was the editor in chief of *The Heights*, the student-run newspaper at Boston College. O'Sullivan worked for the *Reporter* while still at BC

and then served as the *Reporter's* news editor from 2003-2006.

O'Sullivan plans to start on or before March 11, according to a memo from deputy managing editor for local news Jen Peter, a former Associated Press reporter who, like O'Sullivan,

also spent a solid stint reporting out of the State House. “For Jim, this will be a homecoming. He grew up in Cohasset, graduated from Boston College, and worked at the *Dorchester Reporter* and *State House News Service*, before heading down to Washington

three years ago. At *State House News*, he covered it all — the health care law, gay marriage, Patrick, Romney, leadership battles, budgets, etc.—and broke just enough stories to irritate the *Globe*,” Peter wrote.



Sister Lena Deevy stepping down as IIC head

(Continued from page 1) talent, and dedication to lead our organization in meeting the challenges of the future.”

This transition comes at an important time for the immigrant community as comprehensive immigra-

tion reform may finally happen after many years of stalled progress. In collaboration with other immigrant organizations, the IIC says, it will be involved at every stage as elected representatives grapple with this issue. If

legislation passes, a path to legal residence and US citizenship will open to many who have been living in the shadows.

In 1989, Sister Lena and a group of Irish immigrants founded the IIC to meet the needs of a large

Irish immigrant population in New England. Over the years, the organization has developed into a multi-service center serving immigrants from Ireland and from 120 other countries with legal, well-

ness, and education services, learning exchange programs, advocacy, and cross-cultural community building.

Over the course of the past year, Millar has been working closely with Sister Lena and the IIC Board to ensure a smooth

leadership transition and to position the organization for a successful future. “I am delighted to have Ronnie as my successor,” said Sister Lena, “and I will be available to help out whenever he calls on me.”



To all our friends in the Boston Irish community.

Heart felt thank you to all who sent expressions of sympathy, mass and novena cards, in memory of my lovely Rita who passed on Dec. 31st 2012. She loved all of you dearly. Each one of you brought a smile to her face and warmth to her heart.



As I am unable to thank each one of you personally, please accept my deepest thanks.

Dr. Bill O’Connell

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J-1 IWT couple find job success at Covidien

By GAIL BATUTIS
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Gerard Hanna and Nicole Quinn began planning their United States adventure long before they reached the shores of Boston. As undergraduates studying biomedical engineering at the University of Ulster, Northern Ireland, they were aware of the opportunity to work in the United States for their placement year to gain experience in their field of study. However, their hopes of simple applications and abundant job offers soon turned into a nightmare of “e-mailing, calling, and writing letters to over 100 companies in the US asking about the possibility of an internship but with no success.”

They worried they wouldn’t be able to get a job at all; much less their vision of working for one of Boston’s leading biomedical companies, but their luck changed after they reached out to the Irish International Immigrant



Gerard Hanna and Nicole Quinn

Center.

Following their eligibility interview with Jude Clarke, Hanna and Quinn were referred to Megan Carroll, the Director of Intern Placements. There was an instant connection, “From the first e-mail we knew that we had met someone who shared the same ambitions for us as we did for ourselves. We were very lucky to have [Carroll], who supplied us with lists of contacts within our field that she

had made from previous experiences. One of these contacts happened to be from Covidien, one of the leading medical device companies in the world.”

Carroll introduced them to two senior managers and the vice president – who gave Hanna and Quinn opportunities to apply for three openings. In preparation, Carroll worked closely with the two Antrim natives on their cover letters, resumes, and interview

skills. Within a week, they were asked to come in for an interview. In Hanna’s words, “everything went brilliantly,” and in just a few days, they both had jobs in distributor rebates and tracings.

Hanna and Quinn are now “settled in a beautiful apartment in Mansfield, just ten minutes away from our new workplace. We are experiencing so many new things and developing our skills more every day. We look forward to these next eight months before we return home to Belfast, and are so grateful to Megan, Jude and everyone else at the IIIC for all of their help in providing us with this promising opportunity; setting us up for a very successful career in the future!”

With the help of the IIIC, these two hard-working students have no doubt achieved just the first of many dreams to come.

IMMIGRATION Q & A

When children travel abroad with one parent

Q. *I plan to take my two small children on a vacation to several countries. My husband will be joining us a little later. We are all US citizens. Will there be any problems because the children will be traveling initially with only one parent?*

A. The US government does not have exit requirements for people leaving this country. However, some airlines may have policies regarding documentation for children traveling with one parent (or guardian), and some countries definitely do have entry requirements that cover this situation. This is true irrespective of whether the travelers are US citizens, legal permanent residents, or visa holders.

What should you do? First, check the entry requirements for the countries that you will be visiting by going to the website of the country’s embassy in the US. Countries may, for example, require a notarized statement from the parent not traveling that clearly shows consent to the children’s travel. Or they may have requirements that are ambiguous, or they may not address the issue at all in information available from the particular embassies.

So we recommend that you be prepared for scrutiny as you travel with your children, just in case. You must, of course, have passports (including any necessary foreign visas) for the children. In addition, you should get a notarized letter from your husband precisely describing and consenting to the dates and destinations of travel. Also, you should take along certified copies of the children’s birth certificates to prove that you are the parent. Actually, travelers coming to the United States are advised to take these steps as well.

The same advice applies in situations where parents are no longer together. In addition, the traveling parent should be sure to take along a copy of any child custody orders issued by a court as part of divorce proceedings, as these typically address issues surrounding travel by the children, especially out of the state of the custodial parent’s residence. (If they do not, we strongly advise that they be modified to avoid future misunderstandings.)

International child abduction is of course the very serious issue underlying such precautions. Any parent who has a concern in this regard should go to the US State Department’s website at travel.state.gov and click on the link to “Children and Family” for a full discussion of the legal and practical issues involved, as well as the resources available to parents dealing with abduction issues.

If you have questions about any aspect of immigration law, you can have a free, confidential consultation at one of our legal clinics advertised monthly in the *Boston Irish Reporter*.

Disclaimer: These articles are published to inform generally, not to advise in individual cases. US Citizenship and Immigration Services and the US Department of State frequently amend regulations and alter processing and filing procedures. For legal advice seek the assistance of an IIIC immigration specialist or an immigration lawyer.

Matters Of Substance Exploring the legend of ‘Pota Phadraig’



Danielle Owen

By DANIELLE OWEN

“It’s a matter of concern to a lot of people that there is a very close connection between alcohol and a lot of our national celebrations in this country. It plays a very central role in our lives. We know that St. Patrick’s day should be a great day for Ireland, but too often it’s marred by alcohol.”

(Former) Irish Health Minister
Roisín Shortall in 2012

Where did this “close connection” begin, the one between alcohol and St. Patrick’s Day? There is a great deal of myth and legend surrounding Ireland’s National Holiday, but very little of it is actually substantiated. The legend of “Pota Phadraig,” or “Patrick’s Pot,” says St. Patrick was short-changed on a shot of whiskey and told the landlord of the tavern that the devil was in his cellar gorging himself on the landlord’s dishonesty. Terrified by this prospect, the landlord vowed to change his ways and when Patrick returned to the tavern some time later, he found that the landlord now filled everyone’s glass to overflowing! Patrick then announced, the legend goes, that the landlord’s newfound generosity was “starving the devil in his cellar,” and proclaimed that thereafter everyone should have a drop of the ‘hard stuff’ on his feast day, hence “Patrick’s Pot.”

When read in its most

positive light, this parable could be viewed about how being generous with our family, friends, and neighbors keeps the “devil” starved and at bay. The Irish are known for and proud of their generosity, as indicated by the World Giving Index that in 2010 some 72 percent of the Irish population gave to charity and 60 percent helped a stranger in the month before they were surveyed. So why don’t the Irish celebrate their generosity on their national holiday? St. Patrick suggests we “have a drop” of the hard stuff, but did he really mean for us to drink all day? As proud Irish and Irish Americans, we can decide what we want St. Patrick’s Day to mean for us and our families. However, this close connection can mask if someone has a problem with alcohol.

In my work here in Boston, those who have problems like this find that this holiday can hide their heavy alcohol use in the name of St. Patrick.

No one plans to have a problem with alcohol but if you are wondering, ask yourself the following:

Have you ever felt you should cut down on your drinking? 2. Have people annoyed you by criticizing your drinking? 3. Have you ever felt bad or guilty about your drinking? 4. Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or get rid of a hangover (eye-opener)?

Change is *always* possible but sometimes we need support. We never plan to have problems with alcohol but if you are worried, there is somewhere to go to chat about your concerns. Contact Danielle, in confidence and without judgment, at the IIIC by phone at 617-542-7654, Ext. 14 or by e-mail at dowen@iiicenter.org.

Lá Fhéile Pádraig Sona Daoibh!

Danielle Owen is the IIIC’s Director of Wellness & Education Services.

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IRISH INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRANT CENTER
Calendar of Events

March 5th Free Legal Clinic
IIIC, 100 Franklin St., Downtown Boston
All clinics are first-come, first-served. For complete details, please call (617) 542-7654.

March 5th QPR Suicide Prevention Workshop
6:00 PM Hancock Adult Day Center, 164 Parkingway, Quincy
For more information, please contact Ann Marie Cugno at (617) 542-7654 ext. 32.

March 11th Free Legal Clinic
6:30 PM Green Briar Pub, 304 Washington St., Brighton
All clinics are first-come, first-served. For complete details, please call (617) 542-7654.

March 19th Free Legal Clinic
IIIC, 100 Franklin St., Downtown Boston
All clinics are first-come, first-served. For complete details, please call (617) 542-7654.

March 27th Free Legal Clinic
6:30 PM St. Mark’s Parish, 1725 Dorchester Ave., Dorchester
All clinics are first-come, first-served. For complete details, please call (617) 542-7654.

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Rep. Marty Walsh



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For many famine Irish, Deer Island proved only glimpse of America

(Continued from page 1)

local leaders deemed it “a settled matter that the City must support a Physician at Deer Island, and that that is the suitable and proper place to attend to all the nuisance and sickness accompanying navigation...”

The Deer Island Quarantine Hospital and Almshouse was established in 1847. All famine ships plodding into Boston Harbor and judged by port officials to be “foul and infected with any malignant or contagious disease” moored at Deer Island until the port physician quarantined Irish men, woman, and children suffering from typhus, cholera, and an array of fevers and oversaw the “cleaning and purification” of ships. Only then could the healthier immigrants set foot in Boston. From 1847 to 1849, approximately 4,186 people were quarantined at Deer Island “as a precautionary measure to ward off a pestilence that would have been ruinous to the public health and business of the city.” Not all were to make it off the island.

Today, an effort continues to erect a memorial to the immigrants buried on Deer Island that would be visible from virtually every point of the harbor’s edge.

The brainchild of Dr. William O’Connell and his wife, the late Rita O’Connell, the memorial would stand as a poignant and dignified symbol of the Irish who fled their famine-gutted country and survived the terrifying Atlantic crossing only to perish on Deer Island. Rita O’Connell once noted, “It’s important we don’t forget the stories of people such as Patrick J. McCarthy, who lost his mother, father, and six siblings on Deer Island but went on to graduate from Harvard and become mayor of Providence.”

Even before Bostonians grasped the health hazard posed by Famine ships clotted with direly ill passengers, the Irish newcomers were not welcomed. In 1847, the city was changing – and its Yankee population did not welcome that change. As the shiploads of Famine Irish arrived almost daily, Anglo-Protestant families who had ruled over the city since their Puritan ancestors set foot in the region in the 1620s embraced still the anti-Irish, anti-Catholic prejudice of Boston’s founders. Ephraim Peabody, whose family ranked high among Boston’s founding fathers, lamented that the Irish were infesting “proper Bostonians” turf with a horrific “social revolution.” As the city’s population swelled from some 115,000 to over 150,000 in just 1847, the newcomers quickly discovered that they were not welcome. They had escaped the Famine only to find themselves in a new battle for survival among what historian George S. Potter dubbed “the chilly Yankee icicles.” The age-old prejudices that the Irish had encountered on the “old sod” now confronted them in the New World, and even though some one million Irish poured into America from 1845-1850, the roughest reception awaited them in Boston. For many, the first and last site they would see in America was the Deer Island Quarantine Station.

It was scant surprise that so many Irish reaching Boston were sick after the perilous six-to-eight-week Atlantic crossing from Famine-ravaged Ireland. During the Great Hunger, over a million people perished in Ireland from starvation and associated diseases between 1845 and 1852. Over two million emigrated to the United States, Canada, Australia, and other sites, and roughly six percent of the Irish emigrants fleeing to Boston and other North American cities died at sea from disease or went down with vessels ill-suited to the crossing.

Before Boston-bound Irish caught their first glimpse of the city or Deer Island, they endured physical and emotional nightmares that few had ever dreamed to encounter. The logs and records of Famine ships sailing to Boston and elsewhere recorded unforgettable scenes of human fear and misery. In an 1848 letter penned by British official Stephen E. De Vere, the description of the berths is chilling: “The passengers have not more [room] than their coffins.”

A Parliamentary Report of the Select Committee to Investigate the Operation of the Passengers Acts related: “I have known cases of females who had to sit up all night upon their boxes in the steerage,” said one eyewitness, “because they could think not of going into bed with a strange man.” With men and women packed into steerage so tightly, there were scant or no means to preserve even a semblance of privacy or modesty. Fevers spread rapidly and lethally.

Irish men, women, and children, all thrashing with sickness, crying out in their fitful sleep, and dazed by the growing realization that no matter whether their ship went down in a storm or disgorged them at Deer Island, they had probably had their final glimpse of Ireland, of home. The desperate enormity of each step and every Famine refugee gathered at a ship’s gunwales had taken materialized as Ireland faded in the distance. An elderly woman slumped against the rail of a coffin ship and exclaimed, “God save me. Old as I am, I should never have left Ireland. Who knows where I’ll be buried now.”

For some 721 to 850 Irish – various sources place the number as high as 1,000 – the burial place proved to be Deer Island’s old Rest Haven Cemetery between 1847 to 1850. Of 4,816 persons admitted to the hospital from its opening, in June 1847, to January 1, 1850, 4,069 were ailing; At least 759 (15.8 per cent) died on the island. Figures as to how many were buried in an unmarked grave vary because a number of bodies were claimed by family members and buried elsewhere in or around Boston. Those who were unclaimed – literally dying alone – were laid to rest on the island at the city of Boston’s expense.

Many immigrants who were not weak enough for quarantine on Deer Island did not last long in Boston’s North End Irish tenements and rooming houses where



Waiting for the voyage from the Famine lands to America in hope of relief.

conditions were little better than the crowded coffin ships. A Boston Committee of Internal Health study of the slums related that the Irish languished in “a perfect hive of human beings, without comforts and mostly without common necessities; in many cases huddled together like brutes, without regard to age or sex or sense of decency. Under such circumstances self-respect, forethought, all the high and noble virtues

soon die out, and sullen indifference and despair or disorder, intemperance and utter degradation reign supreme.”

The lack of sanitation in the slums, or “rookeries,” unleashed a wide array of disease, cholera proving the most lethal. Of Irish children born in Boston during the Famine years, approximately 60 percent died before the age of six.



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Nanny charged in child assault wins evidence motion

**By DENISE LAVOIE
ASSOCIATED PRESS**
A lawyer for an Irish nanny charged with beating an infant who later died won a request last month to preserve evidence in the case, including the baby's travel records and a list of people who had access to her.
Aisling McCarthy Brady, 34, made a brief appearance on Feb. 22 in Cambridge (MA) District

Court as her lawyer asked a judge to preserve an extensive list of potential evidence in the case.
Brady is accused of assault and battery in the beating of Rehma Sabir in January. The girl was hospitalized with severe head injuries on Jan. 14, her first birthday. She died two days later. Prosecutors are alleging that Brady was the only person with the child when she

received her injuries.
Brady's lawyer, Melinda Thompson, asked authorities to preserve all records related to the baby's travel from June 2012 until her death, including whom she traveled with, where she stayed, and whether she was examined by medical personnel during any trips.
Thompson said last month that the baby had traveled overseas – in-

cluding trips to Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and London – and was malnourished when she returned to the United States.
The defense also asked for a list of all occupants and visitors to the Cambridge apartment where Rehma lived with her parents, as well as all Internet searches, e-mail correspondence, and the hard drive from the family's laptop computer.

Brady is "devastated because she didn't do this," Thompson told reporters outside court.
Authorities have said Brady could be charged with murder once an autopsy is complete. A spokeswoman for District Attorney Gerry Leone said that as of Feb. 22 prosecutors had not seen autopsy results.
In court documents, state police said a pillow, blanket, and baby wipes stained with blood were found in the baby's bedroom. Police also said an upstairs neighbor told police that on the day the baby was taken to the hospital, she heard the girl crying for almost an hour before the sound changed to "extreme cry-

ing." The woman said her knocks on the door went unanswered.
Dr. Alice Newton, medical director of the Child Protection Team at Boston Children's Hospital, diagnosed Rehma as a victim of abusive head trauma, according to a police report.
The baby's parents, Nada Siddiqui and Sameer Sabir, told police Aisling had been their nanny for about six months, caring for the baby while they worked.
Immigration officials have said Brady had been living in the United States illegally since 2002, when she arrived from Ireland under a tourist program. She was only authorized to stay 90 days.

Galway Rovers headed to Ireland next month

The Galway Rovers Football Club is a Massachusetts non-profit organization based on the South Shore that enables more than 1,000 kids to participate in competitive youth soccer. Next month, the U15 boys and girls teams are headed to Galway to participate in a soccer tournament and experience the culture and people of Ireland.
Funding the cost of the trip is the responsibility of each player, and during these difficult economic times, they are optimistic that they can count on

the support of our greater Irish American community for help.
There are several levels of sponsorship and the boys will be wearing t-shirts during their trip with a list of their generous supporters prominently displayed. If you, or your company, are able to sponsor the U15 boys team in any capacity, please contact Nella Stern by e-mail, opalkramer@hotmail.com, phone (+1 781-588-0519), or visit the website Galway Rovers FC.

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‘Little Bit of Ireland’ remembers Larry Reynolds

Regal’s celebration plays March 15 - 17

By R. J. DONOVAN
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

The atmosphere is always lively at “A Little Bit of Ireland,” Reagle Music Theatre’s annual celebration of Irish music, dance and lighthearted comedy. This year’s 15th edition takes place March 15 - 17 at Robinson Theatre in Waltham.

Featured among those returning to the company will be: World Champion Irish Step Dancer Liam Harney (star of the London production of “Riverdance”) along with a troupe from the Harney Academy of Irish Step-Dancing in Walpole; harpist Judith Ross, leading The Massachusetts Harp Ensemble of more than a dozen pedal harp players ranging in age from seven to 70; and Comhaltas, this year led by Gaelic fiddler Sean Clohessy, the recipient of multiple All-Ireland titles.



Broadway’s Sarah Pfisterer (“Phantom of the Opera,” “Showboat”), who’s become a beloved part of the Reagle family over the

past few years, will appear as featured soloist. The company will be rounded out by Reagle favorite Harold “Jerry” Walker, delivering his impish brand of comedy, plus a sizable company of singers, dancers and musicians.

This year’s show will carry a bittersweet touch due to the absence of world-renowned Celtic fiddler Larry Reynolds. Larry not only performed in every “Little Bit of Ireland” show since the beginning, but helped Bob Eagle, Reagle’s Producing Artistic Director, pull the first show together.

In tribute, this year’s production will be dedicated to Larry, who died last October at the age of 80. At the Opening Night performance, Larry will be presented posthumously with the Golden Eagle Award, which has only been given once before.

Larry’s wife Phyllis and their children will attend to accept the award. As well, a host of Larry’s friends and fellow musicians will present personal songs and



stories in Larry’s memory during a special section of the Friday performance.

Born in Ahascragh, Larry arrived in Boston in 1953. He earned his living as a master carpenter, but it was his dedication to sharing his love of Irish music that was the center of his being. A favorite of everyone from Tip O’Neill to Ireland’s President Mary Robinson, Larry played an integral role in popularizing Irish music in Boston and throughout New England. Among his many achievements, in 1975 he helped form the Boston chapter of the Irish cultural organization Comhaltas, and in 2006, he was named one of the Top 100 Irish



Featured at the Reagle Theatre’s production of “A Little Bit of Ireland” will include a tribute to the late Larry Reynolds (inset at far left), along with (clockwise from top left above): Members of The Massachusetts Harp Ensemble, led by Judith Ross; World Champion Irish Step Dancer Liam Harney and members of the Harney Academy of Irish Step-Dancing in Walpole; Broadway star and Reagle regular soloist Sarah Pfisterer; and Tara Lynch, accordionist and chairwoman of the Boston chapter of Comhaltas.

Photos by Herb Philpott

Americans by *Irish America* magazine.

Remembering the inception of “A Little Bit of Ireland,” Bob Eagle said the idea came about partly by necessity. While Reagle’s summer musicals have always been popular with critics and audiences alike, Bob was looking for a way to present performances during the fall and winter months to help keep the company fiscally sound.

(Continued on page 22)

Old dances can inspire new ones

By KIERAN JORDAN
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

As an Irish dancer, I work with traditional steps and rhythms that are hundreds of years old. Irish dance steps are usually not transcribed or written down, and there is little standardized terminology for the movements. Steps are passed on through live teaching, and are retained through practice and performance. The repertoire lives in the dancer’s body and mind.

Creating new choreography with “old-style” steps allows me to participate in the Irish dance tradition in an exciting and personal way. The traditional steps provide the vocabulary, but the themes, designs, and new steps that emerge are very much part of a contemporary creative process. I suppose this is why we call it a “living tradition.” As a choreographer, I honor my traditions and continue to

probe them — learning and contributing, reviving and creating. Digging into old dances inspires new ones.

I am particularly involved in the “sean-nós” form of Irish dance, which is an improvised, free-form style, so there is even less documentation or standardization in this style, compared to the traditional step dance style. For example, I have seen at least half a dozen versions of the popular sean-nós “Connemara step.” Connemara is an Irish-speaking region in Galway in the west of Ireland, and while the base rhythm for the Connemara step is recognizably the same, the weight shifts, number of sounds, technique, and look of this step vary greatly from one dancer to the next. So it’s not an exact science. Sean-nós dance is more about individual style — a here-and-now, emotional response to the music.

Sean-nós dance is expe-



Kieran Jordan

riencing a huge revival, in Ireland and abroad. The tradition almost died out completely in the 20th century, as it was considered a “wild” marginalized style that was less celebrated than the more formal competitive step dancing. But younger dancers have embraced sean-nós in the last couple of decades, and are bringing new energy and new artistry to it. It’s something old that is new again. Or it’s something new that’s old.

Kieran Jordan is a Boston-based performer and choreographer. She will be performing with the sean-nós Irish dance show “Atlantic Steps” at the Berklee Performance Center on March 23. More info is available at KieranJordan.com or atlanticsteps.com.

The Burren’s McCarthy takes pen in hand, result is ‘The Fiddlers of Inishbofin’

Premiere at author’s pub; performances March 13-16.

By SEAN SMITH
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

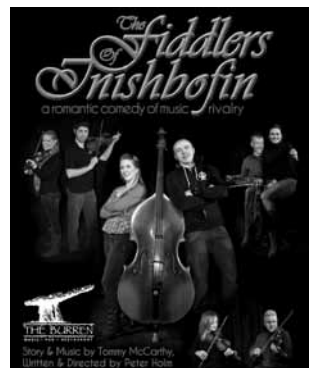
A musical disaster en route to a picturesque island off the coast of Galway may seem an unlikely inspiration for a play, but these elements suited the imagination of long-time local Irish music personality Tommy McCarthy.

A West Clare native, McCarthy is well known as musician, promoter, and organizer, and as the owner of the popular Boston-area Irish pub The Burren in Somerville’s Davis Square and its sister pub, The Skellig in Waltham.

Now, McCarthy has turned his talents to theater, penning “The Fiddlers of Inishbofin,” a play built around comic mishaps, rivalry, intrigue, romance, drama and — of course — Irish music. “The Fiddlers of Inishbofin” will have its premiere at The Burren with performances on March 13-16.

McCarthy’s role in the play isn’t limited to writer and musical director. He’ll be appearing as part of the cast, which also includes Janine Gunning, Brendan Quirke, Michelle Glynn, Desmond Rushe, Joanne O’Connell, Shane Lally — all staff members of The Burren or Skellig — and McCarthy’s wife, Louise Costello. Singer-songwriter SeanOg will perform the songs, while McCarthy (fiddle, mandolin) and Costello (fiddle, banjo, accordion) join backing vocalists Hugh McGowan (guitar) and Tom Bianchi (double bass) in the play’s musical ensemble.

The play’s major characters are two fiddlers, Liam and Fiona, who wind up at a party being held on a boat en route to the island of Inishbofin. While they may share an interest in Irish traditional music, the two could not be more different: Fiona is a thoroughly urban,



professional musician with a Type-A personality; Liam, a former instrument maker of considerable reputation, opted for a simpler life and moved to Inishbofin to become an organic herb farmer.

It is at the party where a key plot development involving Liam and Fiona occurs, one that McCarthy took from a true-to-life experience, as he explains: “A couple of years ago, we went to attend a friend’s birthday celebration. The island was full of visiting musicians and friends, and everyone was in fine form — except that one of the local musicians wound

(Continued on page 22)



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‘The Olympics of Irish Dancing’

(Continued from page 1)

21 years old. The program of events will also include ceili and figure dance competitions as well as dance drama. Separate competitions are organized for male and female competitors in solo events. Team competitions have sections for mixed and unmixed teams. [For general details on the World Irish Dancing Championships, see clrg.ie; a separate website for events and activities during the Worlds at Boston is at clrg.ie/boston2013]

The impact of the Worlds, however, extends considerably beyond the Irish dance community, says Pat Moscaritolo, president and CEO of the Greater Boston Convention and Visitors Bureau. Competitors and other visitors will account for almost 20,000 total hotel room nights, he notes, and the total impact for the regional economy is expected to be close to \$13 million.

“That’s quite a spending kick for the region and our hotels, restaurants, and retailers,” he says. “Much like a Super Bowl, the economic and tourism impact ripples out beyond the week-long activities. Those that come to Boston for the World Championships will likely come back again in the future, with family and friends and business colleagues. That second economic kick is priceless — no convention and visitors bureau has an advertising budget to rival what the Worlds deliver.”

“This is a huge plum for Boston,” agrees Brian O’Donovan, host of WGBH-FM’s “A Celtic Sojourn.” “It’s fascinating to see the proliferation of Irish music and dance around the globe over the past decade or so, and the Worlds is a perfect example of the extent to which that has happened. All those competitions and rituals that go along with Irish dance now happen in places from Dublin to Brisbane to LA, and keep the tradition alive and well.”

“The Worlds are like the Olympics of Irish dancing — every dancer dreams of going,” says Milton native and Boston College senior Elizabeth Woods, sounding an oft-repeated comparison.

“All of the best dancers and teachers are there to give it all they’ve got after months and months of practice,” says Woods, who competed in the 2003 Worlds in Killarney. “It was definitely a stressful atmosphere leading up to the days I danced, but they were also filled with excitement.”

“Just participating is an accomplishment in itself, and to get that far is very rewarding. Although injuries kept me from returning to the Worlds, I think it was the years of hard work and dedication to Irish dancing that were the true learning experiences for me. I learned how to set goals and how to be disciplined enough to achieve them. I will never forget going to the Worlds and I think it is one of the reasons why I have remained involved with the Irish dance world today,” says Woods, now the co-president of BC’s student Irish dance troupe.

Two of Woods’s fellow BC Irish dancers, freshmen Bridget TeeKing and Madeline Jacob, are Worlds veterans: Both are making their seventh appearance this year. “There is an intense, electric feel to the event that is both intimidating and exciting at the same time,” says TeeKing, of Brookfield, Connecticut. “The scene is beautiful and terrifying, as you walk into the hall seating thousands of spectators intently watching a massive stage.”

Jacob, a native of Media, Pennsylvania, adds: “There are different accents, different languages, and different clothing styles wherever one looks. Although everyone is from different places, we are all there for the same reason: the dancing. Dancers are warming up in every open space, teachers are giving their last words of advice, mothers are running everywhere. Some may say this is a chaotic time with wigs, fake tanner, and rhinestones everywhere you look — but I would say that this is normal.”

A few miles east along Commonwealth Avenue, another college-age Irish dancer is eagerly anticipating her first Worlds. “I can’t begin to describe my excitement,” says Boston University sophomore Elizabeth Morlock, a native of San Diego. “I’m looking forward to the entire experience: the hard work beforehand, the pre-dancing nerves, the post-dancing relief, being there with my dance teachers and family, and the awards ceremony.”



Another student of Quinn, 11-year-old Zenaïda McKinney, will be competing in the Worlds. Quinn’s advice, says Zenaïda, is “Just go out and dance your best, and if you feel good inside then you’ve already won.”

Morlock has another reason to be enthusiastic, as the first from her Irish dance school — the Rose-Ritchie Academy of Irish Dance — to compete in the Worlds. “I am so excited to welcome my dance teachers, Patricia and Rori, to Boston. It means so much to me that they are flying across the country so that I can experience the Worlds alongside them. I’ve dreamed of this experience for 13 years and I can’t wait to be wrapped up in this crazy, extremely Irish event.”

Morlock’s comment underscores one of the key facets of the Worlds, and of Irish dance itself: the teacher-student relationship. Dancers and teachers alike will tell you that, when the rapport is right, it can lead to wonderful things — and that includes reaching Worlds-level status. Sometimes, maintaining and nurturing that kind of bond requires life-changing commitments.

Such is the case with Brighton native and Irish dance teacher Attracta Quinn and two of her Worlds-bound students: Emily Stewart, 19, the North American champion in her age category, who has competed in the Worlds five times — including last year, her first as a student of Quinn, when she placed 11th overall; and 11-year-old Zenaïda McKinney, who will be in her first Worlds.

Quinn, whose parents are from Roscommon and Sligo, began dancing at age 7 under the tutelage of Rita O’Shea, founder and director of the O’Shea-Chaplin Academy of Irish Dance. She qualified for the Worlds every year and went several times, in an era when few Americans would compete in the Worlds. Right after high school, she spent two years in the cast of “Lord of the Dance,” then returned to Brighton, got her Irish dance teacher certification in 2002, taught at

of ‘Quinns’ in business, so I thought I’d try something a little more distinctive.”)

It was during these past several years when Quinn crossed paths with Stewart and McKinney, who share key characteristics: Both are from California, grew up in families with little or no roots or involvement in Irish culture, and were inspired by performances of Irish dance at their respective elementary schools to take it up themselves. Both had the opportunity to work with Quinn when she spent time in California teaching and giving workshops, and both found their connection with her was so good they relocated to Boston to maintain it.

These decisions to uproot, however, were not hastily or impulsively made. Stewart was nearing the end of high school, and since attending college was in her plans, Boston presented a wealth of educational opportunities (she wound up enrolling in Emmanuel College). Zenaïda and her mother, Beth, also had other considerations for moving to Boston: It brought them closer to other family members, and put them in an area with vast offerings of activities that appealed to Zenaïda’s considerable artistic interests.

Make no mistake, though, the chance to have Quinn as a full-time teacher, and the shot at going to the Worlds, was the decisive factor for Stewart and the McKinneys.

“Zenaïda was raised in a family where, if you have a love of something, you give it everything you can,” says Beth. “I was amazed when she got so interested in Irish dance; she pulled it out of nowhere — or, actually, I think the dancing picked her. But she kept at it, and once you could see how connected she was with Attracta, and how Attracta helped to bring out her best, all the signs pointed to us coming here.”

“Irish dancing has become part of me,” says Zenaïda. “It’s a way I can really express myself, and Attracta has helped me to improve how I do that. One of the best things she told me about competitions was, ‘Just go out and dance your best, and if you feel good inside then you’ve already won.’ And if I don’t win, I know what things I didn’t do well.”

Stewart also is grateful for the role Quinn has played in her development. “I owe a lot to her. She played a huge part in my becoming good enough to win the Nationals. Attracta just helped me to focus on my goal, and to believe that I was a good enough dancer to make it happen.”

Quinn, for her part, is glad she has been a positive force in Stewart and Zenaïda’s lives, and flattered that both felt strongly enough to want to come to Boston to maintain their connection with her. But, she emphasizes, she’s made it clear that however much she might be able to do for them, in the end they are the ones who will determine the extent of their success, or failure.

“I never force or expect any of my students to do competitions,” says Quinn. “If I see they’ve learned the steps, I’ll tell the parents that they can try out a competition — and I’ve never had a kid say they don’t want to. I don’t push it, but my message is, if you want to advance, you have to put in the work. And because there are now so many others in Irish dancing who are also working hard, you have that much more competition to face.”

Quinn says the footwork and other aspects of the dance technique are important, obviously, but she also has dancers pay attention to strength and posture, and those elusive, intangible and oh-so-critical elements of confidence and self-esteem.

“I think everyone has a certain amount of natural talent for dance, but it takes a good work ethic to do something with that talent,” she says. “You can have beautiful footwork, but if you don’t come out and absolutely love what you do — and show that you love it — you won’t get the most out of dancing, whether in competition or in performance.”

“Fortunately, Zenaïda and Emily have shown they are capable of doing the work, keeping their minds on what they have to do, and most of all, loving Irish dance. It may sound like a cliché, but I tell them, like all my students, not to worry about winning or where they place, but to be confident that they will dance the best they can.”



Emily Stewart, the North American Irish dancing champion in the age 19 group, with her teacher, Brighton resident Attracta Quinn. Stewart decided to attend college in Boston in part so she could study with Quinn.

O’Shea-Chaplin while attending Boston College — she graduated in 2006 — and in 2008 opened up her own school, Scoil Rince Naomh Attracta, Gaelic for “St. Attracta’s Dance School.” (Explaining the choice of the school name, Quinn says her father’s family is from Tubbercurry, the birthplace of St. Attracta, for whom she is named. “There are already a lot

CD Review/ Sean Smith



Heidi Talbot, “Angels Without Wings” • Talbot has established her place among Ireland’s leading female vocalists, on the strength of her stint with Cherish the Ladies and four solo CDs (the previous one being 2010’s “The Last Star”). “Angels Without Wings” sees her make a definitive transition to contemporary material, albeit with folk/traditional roots, most of its 11 songs written by her and/or husband and bandmate John McCusker, with some assistance from frequent collaborators American country and bluegrass singer-musician Tim O’Brien and English singer-songwriter Boo Hewerdine.

Talbot’s dark-hued soprano voice “so well-suited to the traditional music realm” adapts to a more acoustic-pop, Americana-flavored sound just fine, thanks. In fact, she erases any doubts about this right away on the first (and titular) track, a winsome, accordion-dappled musing about believing in the possibilities of goodness. Talbot later brings a reflective, no-regrets torch-song demeanor to “I’m Not Sorry,” a getting-the-last-word-in missive “she’s described it as a mini-psychodrama” to a former lover: “I wanted to tell you that I had a baby/Since then you don’t drive me crazy/Since then hope you got happy.”

The list of guest vocalists and musicians on the album is lengthy and impressive – including O’Brien, Hewerdine, Scottish singers King Creosote, Julie Fowlis and Karine Polwart, Dire Straits frontman Mark Knopfler, dobro player Jerry Douglas, guitarist Ian



Carr, accordionist Phil Cunningham and piper-flutist Michael McGoldrick – but at times threatens to overshadow Talbot. To be sure, there are certainly instances when the balance is right, such as Talbot’s duet with O’Brien on the quasi-spiritual “When the Roses Come Again” (which has echoes of Kate Rusby’s “Walk the Road”) and the bittersweetly nostalgic “Wine and Roses.” The tracks with Polwart – “Dearest Johnny” and “New Cajun Waltz” – are among the album’s best, and “Will I Ever Get to Sleep” (a comical take on domestic frenzy) is graced by a break featuring McGoldrick’s classic harmonized whistles, punctuated by a brass fanfare.

Yet at times you wish Talbot would get more space for herself. It will be interesting to see how she performs this album on tour, with what one assumes will be a far smaller contingent of backers and guests. The betting here is a stripped-down “Angels Without Wings” will be just as, if not more, enjoyable.

Emerald Rae, “If Only I Could Fly” • North Shore native Rae has been one of the Boston area’s best Scottish/Cape Breton-style fiddlers and tradition-influenced composers for what seems like years now – even though she’s only 27 – but of late she has expanded her

considerable talents to Irish and Appalachian music, in part through her work with the Celtic-Americana band Annalivia. She can now add songwriting to her resume on this, her second CD, comprised largely of Rae originals.

Unlike her 2005 release “Contemplation,” which had several guest musicians, this is an all-Rae production: She musters fiddle, guitar, foot percussion and, most distinctively, the crwth (“krooth”), an ancient Welsh fiddle characterized by a resonant, modal sound quality. The latter instrument enables her to concoct some fascinating textures, notably on the title track, which includes an overdubbed fiddle harmony alongside her honeyed vocals. This song, like many of the others on the album – notably “Go Dig My Grave” or “The Marauder” – is unquestionably of this day and age, but it’s quite possible to see a commonality with the folk tradition in the imagery, themes and lyric structure. “Sugar Baby” and “Truly Understand” are in fact traditional songs, Rae supplying a melody for the latter; she marries a traditional tune to her “Summer Will Come.”

The instrumental tracks are a fascinating prism of sounds, from the rhythmic twists and turns of “Fire Fly” and “Moon Dance” to the mesmerizing fiddle-crwth duet in “Mountain Chant,” that – with Rae’s use of various fiddle tunings – seem rooted in several regional musical styles. You’re treated to driving Appalachian-like riffs, harmonies re-imagined as if out of some Scandinavian valley, passages mined from Celtic traditions – all sounding simultaneously ancient and new.

Rae might not be able to achieve actual flight, but she has shown herself quite capable of spreading her wings.

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‘Little Bit of Ireland’ remembers Larry Reynolds

(Continued from page 18)

At the time, the “Riverdance” storm was sweeping the country. When the show’s national tour arrived in Boston, it playing to packed houses. “That kind of motivated me,” Bob said. “I used to sit around at parties and family would get up and do step dancing. But nothing like (‘Riverdance’).”

He decided he’d take advantage of the renewed enthusiasm for Irish entertainment by creating an Irish revue for Reagle. One of his first calls was to Larry Reynolds, whom he’d known for years.

As a result of that friendship, Bob witnessed a traditional Irish session. “One night I went with Larry to the Green Briar in Brighton, and was so struck by the experience,”

he said. “There were people walking in, not even acknowledging one another necessarily, and a musical number would have started. And they’d just opened their case, get out their instrument and start playing . . . I thought that was very, very special.”

Bob is especially pleased that Larry’s son, Larry, Jr., who has toured for years playing the accordion with Noel Henry’s Irish Band, will be taking his father’s spot in the orchestra pit this year.

Accordianist Tara Lynch, who has been a member of Comhaltas in three countries, four branches, and who currently serves as chairwoman of the Boston chapter, worked closely with Larry through the

years. She recalled their first meeting after she relocated to Boston. “I was playing Irish music in New Jersey and when I was leaving to come up here, they said, ‘You need to make sure you get ahold of Larry Reynolds.’”

She arrived in town on a fall weekend, unpacked and headed off to a session in Watertown where she was instantly welcomed into Larry’s circle of family and friends. “I’ve traveled a lot and lived in different countries,” she said, “but to walk into a place full of people dancing, playing music, having a great time, and immediately everyone just pulls you in and makes you feel like family. I’d never come across it, and they’re still that way. Larry set the tone for that.”

The following March, Larry invited her to join the company of “A Little Bit of Ireland.” “I was introduced to Larry through music,” she said, “but was lucky enough that he became a close personal friend outside of music. And that was one of the special elements related to Larry. Your level of musicianship might be the way you were introduced to Larry, but he really got into how you were as a person – as a human being. That was a priority. If you happened to play or sing or dance, wonderful, but he always kept that up front in the relationships he had with people. It was the person.”

“Through his personality and being a musician and working as a carpenter, he got to know

everyone,” she said. “If you ever wanted to do something – ‘How do I do this Larry,’ or ‘Who would I go to for that’ – he was a tremendous enabler. Quietly so. ‘I’ll put you in touch with so and so’ and then he’d step out and let you do your thing. That’s hard to find in any community. He crossed a lot of boundaries.”

Since the beginning, “Little Bit of Ireland” has been founded in tradition. Bob Eagle works to make the show a bit different each year, but there are always touchstones that people look forward to, whether it’s “The Irish Blessing” or some of the favorite choral pieces.

With a sense of pride, he said, “My dad’s folks all came from Athan Rye, and I’d sent over a DVD of the show (for them to watch) at one point. They’re country folk and very Irish. And a note came back – ‘How’d you make it so Irish?’ I thought that was a great compliment.”

Tara, who’s helping to coordinate the tribute to Larry for the Friday night performance, says this year’s show will

once again deliver an outstanding evening’s entertainment. “There’s a beautiful range of songs that Bob and his crew have picked. . . On top of that, you have things like the harpists. Visually, that always makes me choke. I have not seen anything like that, this array of 16 or 20 harpists. I mean wow! But that’s the range that’s in the show.”

A high spot in every performance is the traditional sing-a-long. “It’s hysterical,” Tara said. “You get to raise the lights and everyone’s singing these songs, and they’re old as the hills – crazy old songs – but the audience loves it and they’re really engaged. It’s like a kind of crazy, whacked out party.”

No doubt, as the party rages on at Reagle, somewhere Larry Reynolds will be playing along.

(R. J. Donovan is publisher of OnStageBoston.com)

“A Little Bit of Ireland,” Reagle Music Theatre, 617 Lexington Street, Waltham. Tickets: 781-891-5600 or reaglemusic-theatre.org.

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Another Reynolds salute

The Green Briar Irish Pub in Brighton will hold a special “Tribute Seisiun” on Mon., March 4, in honor of the late Larry Reynolds, who helped establish and for many years co-led the pub’s now-legendary weekly music session. The event will begin with a reception at 6 p.m., followed by the seisiun at 7 p.m. A dedication will take place at 8 p.m.

The Green Briar is located at 304 Washington Street in Brighton. For more information, see greenbriarpub.com.

The Burren’s McCarthy takes pen in hand, result is ‘Fiddlers of Inishbofin’

(Continued from page 18)

up sitting on the fiddle of a female guest from Dublin.”

The play follows Liam and Fiona through the fall-out from this catastrophe, as they warily size up each other and alternate between flirtation and insults in classic romantic comedy fashion (there also is a subplot involving another pair of fiddlers, Enya and Sean, and their own budding relationship). When the two aren’t trading compliments, they’re sniping at each other’s choice of lifestyle, with repartee worthy of a screwball comedy:

Liam: “Don’t worry, I’ll have you on that five o’clock ferry, for sure.”

Fiona: “You have a clock, do you?”

Liam: “Nay, I have a sun-dial outside. But if it’s cloudy it’s always noon.”

Will Liam be able to fix Fiona’s fiddle, so she can get off the island and return to her familiar existence? Will true love, and music, conquer all?

McCarthy isn’t about to aspire to the credentials of a J. M. Synge, but he does trace his interest in the theatrical arts to that playwright’s most celebrated work. When McCarthy was growing up in London, his father, also a musician, often took part in musical plays, including Synge’s “The Playboy

of the Western World,” along with McCarthy’s sister Marion and legendary Clare fiddler Bobby Casey; McCarthy was able to sit in for Casey during some of the performances, and found it “a great experience.” In fact, McCarthy and his family became friends with one of the leads in the play, Stephen Rea, who would go on to major roles in films like “The Crying Game,” “The Butcher Boy,” and “V for Vendetta.”

McCarthy has great praise for the actors in “Inishbofin” (“I feel they are all perfect for their parts,” he says) and for the play’s director and scriptwriter, Peter Holm.

Although the play has a generally light tone to it, McCarthy notes there is a serious undertone: Proceeds from the performances will go to benefit breast cancer research.

“The Burren and Skellig staff have always been very close,” he explains, “and, unfortunately some staff members or their relatives have been struck with breast cancer. There is great will amongst all the actors who are also staff members to make “The Fiddlers of Inishbofin” the finest play Boston has ever seen, and to raise as much money as we can towards breast cancer research.”

For ticket information and other details on “The Fiddlers of Inishbofin,” see burren.com.

CONCERTS GALORE FOR ST. PAT'S MONTH

By SEAN SMITH
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Not that Greater Boston doesn't have plenty of Irish/Celtic music events during other months of the year, but March is unique in its offerings of concerts and special performances and celebrations evoking the name of St. Patrick or other things Celtic. Here's a look at just some of the personalities who will be in the spotlight in and around town during the next few weeks.

• **Richard Wood & Gordon Belsher, March 5, Johnny D's, Somerville:** Wood is an award-winning Prince Edward Island fiddler noted for melding his traditional style with rock-and-roll energy, and his appearances with The Chieftains, Shania Twain and former "Riverdance" star Jean Butler, among others; Belsher has featured his guitar, mandola, bodhran and vocals on two CDs, both nominated for the "Roots/Traditional Solo Recording of the Year" category of the East Coast Music Awards. [johnnyds.com]

• **Karan Casey & John Doyle, with Maeve Gilchrist, March 6, Davis Square Theater, Somerville:** Charter members of the legendary group Solas, these two have become two of the more outstanding Irish music performers of the past decade or more. Casey has released five well-received solo albums and, among other collaborations, has appeared in "A Christmas Celtic Sojourn" — as has Doyle, who has cultivated a multifaceted career as guitarist, vocalist, producer and, lately, songwriter. Casey and Doyle joined forces two years ago to make the acclaimed album "Exile's Return."

Opening for Casey and Doyle will be Scottish-born harpist Maeve Gilchrist, who brings jazz and world music influences to her repertoire of mainly traditional songs and tunes. [davissquaretheatre.com]

• **Sharon Shannon, March 8, Somerville Theater:** Ireland's squeezebox siren returns to the Boston area, where she played an enthralling set at last July's Summer Arts Weekend festival in Copley Square. For the better part of three decades, Shannon has cultivated a reputation as one of her generation's best Irish traditional accordionists while, at the same time, exploring other musical forms from Appalachian to classical to hip-hop and rap. Her collaborators have included Bono, Adam Clayton, Sinéad O'Connor, Jackson Browne, John Prine, Steve Earle, Mark Knopfler, The RTE Concert Orchestra, The Chieftains, The Waterboys, Willie Nelson, Nigel Kennedy, Alison Krauss and Shane MacGowan — not to mention an assortment of canine friends, who have helped her exhibit her considerable spark and sense of fun, as well as her humanitarian side (watch her "Top Dog Gaffo" video on YouTube). [somervilletheatreonline.com]

• **Cherish the Ladies, March 8, Shalin Liu Performance Center, Rockport:** The groundbreaking all-female Celtic ensemble has branched out in recent years to incorporate American roots music into its splendid renditions of Irish tunes and songs— their 25th-anniversary release from 2010, "Country Crossroads," included guest performers like Vince Gill, Nanci Griffith, Maura O'Connell, Rob Ickes and Alison Brown. [rockportmusic.org/newperformance.html]

• **Boston Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann School of Music, March 9 Barnes & Noble, Peabody:** CCE music school teachers and students, along with dancers from Scoil Rince Naomh Attracta, will perform for a "book fair" fundraiser beginning at 3 p.m. at the Barnes & Noble in Peabody (210 Andover St.). The CCE music school will receive a portion of proceeds from merchandise sold to patrons having a CCE book fair voucher.

• **Matt Cranitch and Jackie Daly, March 14, Boston College:** Between them, these guys seem to have played with most every Irish musician of note of the last four decades or so, and appeared on about a thousand recordings. As individuals and as a duo, they exemplify the storied Sliabh Luachra music tradition from the west of Ireland — think lots of polkas and slides. Cranitch (fiddle) was a founder of the pioneering trio Na Fili, and also plays with **Sliabh Notes**, who will be at The Burren [burren.com] on **March 7**. Daly, in addition to his solo work, has been a member of De Dannan and Patrick Street and collaborated with such musicians as Seamus Creagh, Kevin Burke, and Seamus and Manus Maguire.

In addition to appearing at BC as part of the Gaelic Roots series [bc.edu/gaelicroots], the duo also will be part of this year's "A St. Patrick's Day Celtic Sojourn" — speaking of which:

• **"A St. Patrick's Day Celtic Sojourn," March 16, Sanders Theater, Harvard University:** Much as its Christmas counterpart has become a holiday tradition for audiences around Boston and elsewhere in New England, the "Celtic Sojourn" event for St. Patrick's Day — now in its eighth year — has gained a following of its own. WGBH-FM radio host Brian O'Donovan has once again assembled a cast of performers with local, regional and international ties, and whose styles and repertoires evoke not only Ireland but also Scotland, Appalachia, New England, and other places.

Besides the aforementioned Matt Cranitch and Jackie Daly, this year's "St. Patrick's Day Celtic Sojourn" includes vocalists Moira Smiley and Maureen McMullan; the duo of tenor Kevin McDermott and pianist Ralph Richey; pianist and guitarist Keith Murphy, the show's musical director; uilleann piper Patrick Hutchinson; tin whistle player Kathleen Conneely; fiddler-guitarist-pianist Mark Simos; hardanger fiddle player Mariel Vandersteel; pianist Jacqueline Schwab; The Coyne Family with vocalist Bridget Fitzgerald; percussionist Eoin McQuinn; pianist-vocalist Lindsay O'Donovan; the Harney Academy of Irish Dance; and appearances by actor Billy Meleady.



Boston-based group Long Time Courting, along with the duo of Katie McNally and Eric McDonald, performs at Club Passim.



Vocalist Moira Smiley is among the impressive cast of performers at this year's "St. Patrick's Day Celtic Sojourn" event in Sanders Theater.

"We're focusing on a smorgasboard of roots and branches this year, with visiting musicians as well as others who make their home in the Boston area," says O'Donovan. "Having often incorporated spoken word — poetry and storytelling — in the 'Celtic Sojourn' shows, this time we thought it would be great to have another voice in Billy Meleady, who was integral to this year's Christmas Revels production that focused on the Irish experience." [wgbh.org/celtic]

• **The Saw Doctors, March 15, House of Blues, Boston:** One of Ireland's cleverest, quirkiest and best-loved bands is marking its 25th anniversary with a North American tour that includes a stop in Boston, and the release of a double CD, "2525," that traces their quarter-century career from its Galway beginnings. Stalwart fans will likely, and perhaps rightfully, carp about songs left off the album (no "Green and Red of Mayo"? no "I'd Love to Kiss the Bangles"?), but "2525" nonetheless provides a most effective overview of their assorted tastes, styles, influences and temperaments: There are classic concert sing-along favorites like "N17," "Galway and Mayo" and "Tommy K"; their 2011 hit remake of "Downtown," complete with Petula Clark; straight-out yet melodic rock-and-roll ("Friday Town," "Takin' the Train," "Hazard") and ceili/showband rock ("Presentation Boarder"); there's also evidence of the band's cheeky, even scandalous personality ("Bless Me Father," "I Useta Lover") and its romantic, heartfelt side ("Hope You Meet Again," "Share the Darkness"). And one track even suggests a prescient political view: their 1994 composition, "Michael D. Rocking in the Dail," honoring an academic-turned-politician and early Saw Doctors supporter — none other than Michael D. Higgins, now president of Ireland. [houseofblues.com/venues/clubvenues/boston/]

• **Matt and Shannon Heaton, March 16 and 17, The Beehive, Boston:** Equally admired for expressive singing as well as instrumental prowess, this Boston-based flute-guitar husband-wife duo have put their inimitable stamp on Irish music, interpolating their own compositions and perspectives into the Irish tradition they revere and represent with a passion. [beehiveboston.com]

• **Bob Bradshaw and Flynn, March 17, Club Passim, Harvard Square:** Two Irish-born and now

Boston-based singer-songwriters share a bill to present a more contemporary side of Irish music. Born and raised in County Cork, Bradshaw started off as a writer but then hit a long and winding musical road that took him through Europe, New York City, San Francisco, and, eventually, Boston, where he wound up studying at Berklee College of Music. His songs have a country-rock/acoustic folk-pop feel, shaped by influences like Guy Clark and The Waterboys; you can hear for yourself on his 2012 CD "Home."

Flynn, who hails from Wicklow, was a co-founder of the popular Boston band Cliffs of Doneen, which won two Boston Music Awards. After a serious accident temporarily derailed his career, he rebounded to release his first solo CD, "On Your Way." Since then, he has recorded three other albums, cultivating a reputation for an honest, emotionally powerful writing and singing style. More recently, Flynn has composed music for film and TV, including "The Legend of Lucy Keys," "The Young and the Restless" and "Road Rules." [passim.org]

• **Long Time Courting, with Katie McNally & Eric McDonald, March 20, Club Passim, Harvard Square:** Long Time Courting combines four talented New England-based female musicians and singers in Liz Simmons (guitar), Shannon Heaton (flute, whistle, accordion), Sarah Blair (fiddle) and Val Thompson (cello), offering up riveting and often exquisite neo-traditional Celtic music with a lively, personable stage presence. They'll be splitting the bill with an exciting young fiddle-guitar duo of McNally and McDonald, whose Scottish-influenced music is imbued with a contemporary dynamic and winning charm. [passim.org]

• **Atlantic Steps, March 23, Berklee Performance Center:** Ireland's *sean nós* (old style) dance tradition is at the center of this production, the brainchild of young Connemara native Brian Cunningham — his resume includes appearances with De Dannan, The Chieftains, Sharon Shannon, Altan, Dervish and Téada, among others — who got the idea for Atlantic Steps during a massive ceili on the Galway docks in sight of the ocean. Boston-area dancers Kieran Jordan and Jackie O'Riley are among the cast of Atlantic Steps, which incorporates songs along with music and dance in its telling of the *sean-nos* story.

"What we're doing is creating a world on stage that draws the audience into the spirit of *sean-nós* dance," says Jordan. "It is a theatrical show — with lights, costumes, and choreography — but we're also trying to maintain the rawness and realness of *sean-nós* dance. The audiences so far seem to appreciate the story line — the journey of *sean-nós* dance as it came across the Atlantic — and they also seem to feel the energy and fun that we are having on stage. Brian is definitely the most high-energy *sean-nós* dancer I've seen, and that positive spirit affects the whole show." [berklee.edu/BPC/]

• **Irish Cultural Centre of New England:** You'd think the ICCNE, based in Canton, would be making a pretty big deal of this month, and you'd be right. The center will have an assortment of special events leading up to St. Patrick's Day weekend, including: "Roots of American Music," a lecture and performance by distinguished scholar-musician **Mick Moloney** (March 8); cult favorite "jig-punk" Irish American band **The Prodigs** (March 10); that **Matt Cranitch-Jackie Daly** duo again, if you can't get out to see them (or even if you can) at BC or "St. Patrick's Day Celtic Sojourn" (March 13); and the **Joshua Tree**, Boston's acclaimed U2 tribute band (March 15). The weekend itself will include plenty of music and other entertainment, all family-friendly. [irishculture.org]

Traveling People

‘The Gathering’ and ‘The People’s Parade’ give an added boost to St. Patrick’s Festival in Dublin

By JUDY ENRIGHT
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Dublin’s St. Patrick’s Day celebration is always extraordinary and lasts for much longer than just a day. But as spectacular as the annual festival always is, this year’s event promises to be the biggest and best yet thanks to the tourist industry’s massive global promotion, “The Gathering Ireland 2013.”

The Dublin festival runs from March 14 to 18 and one of the many interesting new attractions this year is The People’s Parade, which will precede the annual parade. As many as 8,000 visitors have been invited to fill out applications and march on the 17th along a 2.5 km (a little over a mile) route through Dublin’s streets. If you’d like to be included in The People’s Parade, an application form is available on the website (stpattricksfestival.ie)

The regular parade promises to be especially spectacular this year with performances by high school and university marching bands from at least 12 US states as well as Dublin, Canada, Germany, Italy, and more. Included is a band from the New York Fire Department that will perform in the NYC parade, jump on a plane, arrive in Dublin in the early morning hours of St. Patrick’s Day, rehearse with their Irish counterparts, and then join the parade.

The Dublin Festival will be a week filled with assorted music and street performances, a road race, family fun fairs, a treasure hunt, and more.

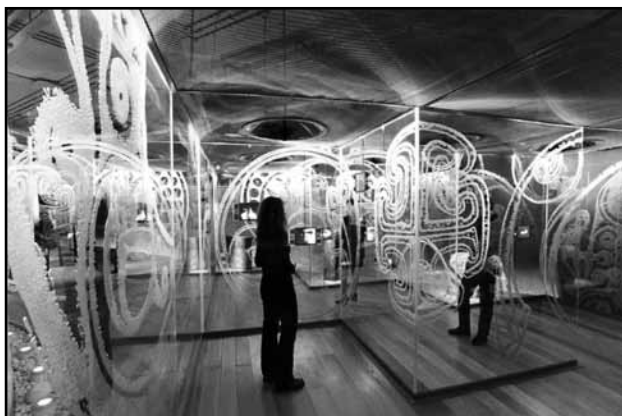
Of particular interest for visitors during that week will be guided walks with a Dublin historian who will focus on St. Patrick and the Dublin of Patrick’s day (385 to 461 A.D.) The tours last a little over 2 hours and will include Christ Church and St. Patrick’s as well as interesting places that many tourists never see.

For more information on all the St. Patrick’s Festival events in Dublin, visit the website at: stpattricksfestival.ie

GREENING THE WORLD

According to *The Irish Times*, Minister for Tourism Leo Varadkar recently launched the largest global St. Patrick’s Day promotional drive in the history of the country.

If you can believe it, cash-strapped Ireland will spend 35,000 euros on a “Global Greening” that will shine green lights March 17 on dozens of the world’s major landmarks, including the Pyramids of Giza, the Christ the Redeemer statue in Rio de Janeiro, the “Welcome” sign in Las Vegas, and the Little Mermaid statue in Copenhagen. In addition, Dublin landmarks that will be “greened” include the Irish Architectural Archive, The Gibson Hotel, O’Connell Tower at Glasnevin Cemetery, The Odeon Bar, The Custom House, Convention Centre, The



Mansion House, Dublin City Council Building, and Palace Street.

Perhaps we’re a bit “jaded” but this does seem somewhat over-the-top and a long way from the days when the Irish celebrated March 17 in Dublin with a live shamrock in their lapels or pinned to their coats, attendance at Mass, a viewing of the parade, then lunch with the family. However, tourism officials say this Global Greening initiative returned five million euros to the country last year and they are expecting to at least double that this year. We wonder if President Obama, with his Irish roots in Moneygall, Co. Offaly, will light the White House green on March 17?

The Times also reported that Tourism Ireland, as part of the genealogy television show “Who Do You Think You Are,” traced the ancestry of Duchess of Cambridge, Kate Middleton, to Ireland! All of this hoopla has been created by a Tourism Ireland promotion dubbed “The Gathering,” which is reportedly “on target” so far with passenger numbers at Dublin Airport up three percent in January compared with last year. The Gathering is designed to bring an additional 325,000 visitors to Ireland this year, which would generate some 170 million euros for the economy, they say.

Last September, Michael Ring, Minister of State for Tourism and Sport, announced a partnership between “The Gathering Ireland 2013”

and “Ireland Reaching Out” that is designed to enhance tourist numbers.

Ireland Reaching Out (Ireland XO) works with parishes across the country to help people trace their roots to specific Irish parishes. The Ireland XO website (irelandxo.com) is working to provide a profile for every parish and is currently identifying and training volunteers in local parishes there who will guide returning members of the diaspora to places of interest, including family homesteads, grave-stones or land connected with their families. You can leave queries on the website and receive a response from local, trained volunteers, who can help link you with an ancestral home.

For further information on The Gathering Ireland 2013 or for information on how to plan your own Gathering, log on to gatheringireland.com.

ST. PATRICK CENTRE

You can celebrate St. Patrick’s Day wherever you are, but if you happen to be in Ireland this month, you could scarcely find a better place to learn about the patron saint than at the St. Patrick Centre in Downpatrick, Co. Down. It is the world’s only permanent exhibit dedicated to telling the story of Ireland’s patron saint.

The Ego Patricius Exhibition at the Centre is an interactive interpretive experience that explores in a fun and fascinating way the saint’s story as well as the impact of Irish



missionaries on Dark Ages Europe. The Centre also has a wonderful restaurant, extensive craft and gift shop, conference facilities, a tourist information center, and it often features special exhibits in the art gallery. There are many well-known artists in Northern Ireland, including one of my favorites, Gail Kelly, who holds an M.F.A. from Louisiana State University here, returned home in 1992 and now trades as Algan Arts. We have bought many of her prints and cards over the years.

While you’re at the St. Patrick Centre, be sure to visit Patrick’s grave at the lovely Down Cathedral next door and stop by the Down County Museum in town. Downpatrick has planned many events and activities to celebrate St. Patrick’s Day. Details are available on the Northern Ireland Tourism site: discovernorthernireland.com.

LEGACY TOUR

A group in Milwaukee that is associated with the St. Patrick Centre is planning a trip to Northern Ireland and the Republic from Oct. 4-13 called “The Legacy of St. Patrick Tour of Ireland.” The group, called Friends of St. Patrick, have designed the tour to include hidden and legendary sites, meetings with politicians, visits to Belfast’s Titanic Centre, attractions in Galway

and Dublin and much more. Details are on the Centre’s website (saintpatrickcentre.com) or you may email Dr. Tim Campbell, director, (director@saintpatrickcentre.com) or call Jane Anderson here at 414-405-1118 for more.

Because of the connection with Milwaukee and the Friends group, Dr. Campbell and many other representatives of Ireland’s counties and attractions often visit the Milwaukee Irish Fest in August every year. I’ve attended several times and it is an amazing festival. Nearly every imaginable Irish tourist group is there and it’s a long and delightful weekend of music, food, Irish products and fun. If you have an opportunity to go, it’s well worth it.

ST. PATRICK’S TRAIL

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board has created a St. Patrick’s Trail (discovernorthernireland.com/stpatrick) that is fun to explore with all kinds of landmarks ranging from St. Patrick’s Cathedral in Armagh, to Bagenal’s Castle in Newry, Struell Wells in Downpatrick, Bangor Abbey, and more. Northern Ireland is really a lovely part of the island and the gardens at some of the manor homes are worth a trip on their own. There’s a lot to see there, but do remember that the monetary unit is the pound Sterling and not

the euro.

While you’re in the North, Bushmills Inn in Bushmills, Co. Antrim, is a lovely place to stay – and has a wonderful restaurant. Be sure to take the Bushmills’ distillery tour the next day and carry on to visit other beautiful and interesting Northern Ireland sights.

Another favorite hotel where we’ve stayed a number of times is the 35-room Londonderry Arms Hotel in Carnlough Bay, a lovely little harbor town and a delightful hotel, also with great food in-house (two restaurants – for formal or informal dining.) Originally built in 1848 as a coaching inn, the hotel has been owned for 60 years by the O’Neill family, the longest established hotelier family in Ireland.

Wherever you choose to celebrate Ireland’s patron saint, we hope you will enjoy that special day.

SPRING

Spring has arrived in Ireland with fleecy, white lambs gamboling across the greenest of green fields and golden daffodils nodding in masses planted along roadsides everywhere. This is an absolutely brilliant time of year to visit the Emerald Isle. Travel information is available from your favorite travel agent or online at Aer Lingus and other airlines that serve Ireland.

Photos courtesy of Saint Patrick Centre

Enshrining Patrick Kavanagh

By THOMAS O'GRADY
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Recently, but not for the first time, I paid a visit to a roadside shrine (as it were) that remembers one of the iconic figures of so-called Bohemian Dublin of the 1940s and '50s. Actually, the "shrine"—commemorating poet Patrick Kavanagh—has two separate but related parts. The earlier part is a bench dedicated by his friends on St. Patrick's Day of 1968, the year after his death, fulfilling a wish Kavanagh had made a decade earlier in a poem titled "Lines Written on a Seat on the Grand Canal, Dublin." Sitting on a bench erected to the memory of Mrs. Dermot O'Brien (the wife of a well-known Dublin painter of landscapes and portraits), Kavanagh wrote a sonnet requesting the same for himself: "O commemorate me where there is water, / Canal water preferably, so stilly / Greeny at the heart of summer." He got his wish, and forty-five years after its dedication, that "canal-bank seat for the passer-by" remains "Where by a lock niagarously roars / The falls for those who sit in the tremendous silence / Of mid-July." Located on the south bank of the Grand Canal along Mespil Road, that bench, which has the poem inscribed on one of its granite trestles, is about a ten-minute walk from St. Stephen's Green in the heart of Dublin.

And so is another bench, the second part of the Kavanagh shrine—but this one, on the north bank along Wilton Road, has incorporated onto it a life-size bronze sculpture, created by John Coll and unveiled in June of 1991, of the poet seated in a reflective pose as if he were composing the poem that prompted the first bench. Or perhaps Coll imagined Kavanagh drafting "Canal Bank Walk," another sonnet inspired by that slow-moving man-made waterway—a remarkable feat of engineering that took most of the last half of the eighteenth century to complete—that ultimately linked the River Liffey in Dublin with the River Shannon in Co. Offaly. Written in 1958 in the aftermath of his recovery from lung cancer, and also from legal difficulties, "Canal Bank Walk" represented a sort of manifesto of renewal for Kavanagh, who by 1939 had transplanted himself more or less permanently from rural County Monaghan to Ireland's mostly unwelcoming literary hub: "Leafy-with-love banks and the green waters of the canal / Pouring redemption for me, that I do / The will of God, wallow in the habitual, the banal, / Grow with nature again as before I grew."

If those two benches comprise a shrine to Kavanagh, an essential place of pilgrimage for his devoted readers, then surely some of the pubs that he frequented during his quarter-century or so in Dublin might be thought of as chapels. I have paid visits to some of those too—again, recently and not for the first time. Aptly enough, one of them, McDaid's on Harry Street (just off Grafton Street, the city's central shopping thoroughfare), was in a previous life a literal chapel of the Moravian Church, a Protestant denomination from eastern Europe that made inroads in Ireland in the eighteenth century. Still a going concern today, in the 1940s and '50s McDaid's was what James Joyce might have called the *omphalos*—the very cen-

ter of Ireland's literary world dominated by Kavanagh, his urban archrival and nemesis Brendan Behan, and the multi-monikered Brian O'Nolan/Flann O'Brien/Myles na Gopaleen.

Before McDaid's, the *omphalos* would have been another public house sacred to the memory of Kavanagh and company, The Palace Bar on Fleet Street. The watering hole of choice for most of the leading literary and artistic figures in Dublin during Kavanagh's early years in the city, The Palace was presided over by R. M. "Bertie" Smyllie, the larger-than-life (both physically and in personality) editor of *The Irish Times* and in that capacity a frequent benefactor providing journalistic piecemeal work to hungry (or thirsty) poets and other literary types. In 1940, New Zealand cartoonist Alan Reeve published in *The Irish Times* a now-famous sketch of the back room of The Palace. Titled "Dublin Culture," the drawing caricatures upwards of forty regular denizens of the bar, including Francis McManus, Maurice Walsh, Austin Clarke, Padraic Fallon, F. R. Higgins, Flann O'Brien, Brinsley MacNamara, Harry Kernoff, and Seán O'Sullivan. Kavanagh too is in the picture, but as a newcomer to the Dublin literary scene he looks a bit uncomfortable and appears ready to leave the others to their heavy imbibing and their barbed-wit gossiping.

Located just off Westmoreland Street at the edge of the once decrepit but now hip Temple Bar area of Dublin, The Palace seems to have changed hardly an iota in more than seventy years: like McDaid's, it remains an inviting and hospitable oasis in "the heart of the Hibernian metropolis" (Joyce's phrase) and an essential port of call for devotees of Kavanagh.

But the enduringness of pubs like McDaid's and The Palace only accentuates the loss of another "house of worship"—perhaps the cathedral to those mere chapels—associated with Kavanagh: that is, Parsons Bookshop, which used to be located in a building known as the Bridge House, on Baggot Street Bridge that spans the Grand Canal just a minute's stroll from the two Kavanagh benches. During my student days in Dublin in the late 1970s, I visited Parsons a number of times, usually in search of books missing from the shelves of the bigger bookshops in the city center. I recall specifically picking up the Millington editions of Benedict Kiely's *The Cards of the Gambler* and Mervyn Wall's *Leaves for the Burning* and the Helicon edition of Wall's *The Unfortunate Furse*.

As it turns out, Kiely and Wall were both regular visitors to Parsons Bookshop—but apparently no one was as regular as Patrick Kavanagh. In his engaging and illuminating book *Parsons Bookshop: At the Heart of Bohemian Dublin, 1949-1989* (The Liffey Press, 2006), Brendan Lynch tells the story of the shop in entertaining and illuminating detail, much of it gleaned from interviews with the shop's founder and owner, Miss May O'Flaherty, and her longtime assistant, Mary King. Early in the book, Miss O'Flaherty recalls that author Mary Lavin once exclaimed: "Parsons, where one met as many interesting writers on the floor of the shop as on the shelves!" In Lynch's narrative, no one was more "interesting" than Patrick Kavanagh.



The author with John Coll's bronze sculpture of Patrick Kavanagh on a bench on the north bank of the Grand Canal along Wilton Road.


Recounting the shop's evolution from a local hardware store to the magnetic center of a literary community, Miss O'Flaherty remembers that "it was Patrick Kavanagh who provided the greatest encouragement when I was starting off." When the shop opened in 1949, Kavanagh lived nearby on Pembroke Road and, as Miss O'Flaherty explains, quickly became a fixture: "Soon he was part of the furniture and if he ever missed a morning, customers would ask 'Where's Patrick today?'" Legendary for his cantankerousness, Kavanagh had a particularly toxic relationship with playwright and memoirist Brendan Behan, another regular visitor to the shop. Yet, according to Miss O'Flaherty, their personal animosity never intruded on the sacred space of the shop: "Though Patrick sometimes got in people's way while sitting in the door, particularly in the good weather, I think we kept him on the straight and narrow. Even though Brendan Behan called a few times while he was here, Patrick never said anything untoward. I think the only time I saw him cross was when he observed a book he didn't like in the window. 'I'll never darken this door again,' he growled. But he was back looking for his stool the

following morning as usual."


Asked by Brendan Lynch about Kavanagh's death in 1967, Mary King remembered his funeral entourage winding its way through Ballsbridge en route toward Monaghan: "they brought Patrick on a final lap of his favourite stomping ground, past Parsons to Pembroke, Raglan, and Waterloo Roads. The morning was miserable and dark, grief seemed to overhang the canal, but it was heartwarming that so many people turned out along the street to see him off to Inniskeen."

In 2004, the centenary of Kavanagh's birth, the Monaghan Association of Dublin mounted a plaque on the wall of the Bridge House recognizing the poet's lengthy and deep connection with Parsons Bookshop. The shop outlasted Kavanagh by twenty-two years. But recently, pausing beneath that plaque, I realized that, as in most matters, Kavanagh himself had the last word in the form of a ballad he wrote in 1953: "If ever you go to Dublin town / In a hundred years or so / Inquire for me in Baggot Street / And what I was like to know."

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



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Saturday, March 16, 2013
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Irish Heritage Month

March 2013 • Lawrence MA



Preserving and Fostering our Heritage and Culture

Sona Feile Padraig ort.

The Men and Woman of the Reverend James T. O'Reilly Division 8 Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Irish Foundation of Lawrence have joined forces to present a series of cultural programs for Irish Heritage Month in the City of Lawrence and other venues throughout the Merrimack Valley. These events are the largest celebration of its kind north or Boston. All are welcome. You don't have to be Irish or a Hibernian to come and enjoy these events. They include special exhibits, lectures and presentations, concerts and other musical events, food, children's programs and for the sports minded a Four Mile Road Race. And last but not least the Lawrence St Patrick's Day Parade.

Friday, March 1, 2013

IRISH FLAG RAISING Across from City Hall – Common Street at 11:00 a.m.

Sunday, March 3, 2013

OPENING RECEPTION and EXHIBIT on The Lawrence Fire Department with a **LECTURE** by **Retired Lawrence Fire Chief Richard Shafer and James Regan, Sr.** Vice President and Chief Underwriting Officer, Starr Technical Risks Agency, Inc at Lawrence Heritage State Park Visitors Center, 1 Jackson Street, Lawrence, MA 01840 2:00 – 4:00 pm Sponsored by Division 8 AOH and the Irish Foundation (FREE)

Sunday, March 3, 2013 – 20th ANNUAL CLADDAGH PUB ROAD RACE – 11 am (rain or shine) Part of the Wild Rover Race Series - For more information runthecladdagh.com

Wednesday, March 6, 2013

LAWRENCE PUBLIC LIBRARY, South Lawrence Branch, 135 Parker Street, Lawrence, MA 01843: Showcase of Irish Books, CD's and DVD's – All Month (Monday, Wednesday, Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.) Sponsored by Division 8 AOH and LAOH and the Irish Foundation

Saturday, March 9, 2013

THE 142nd ANNUAL SAINT PATRICK'S DAY BANQUET AND DANCE at the Lawrence Firefighters Association Relief's In, One Market Street, South Lawrence, MA 01843. Traditional Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner with dancing to the Jolly Tinkers from 6:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. - For more information please contact Robert Gauthier at 978 686-2786. Sponsored by Division 8 AOH

Sunday, March 10, 2013

White Fund Lecture - Michael Patrick MacDonald who will speak on his book "*All Souls*" at Lawrence Heritage State Park Visitors Center, 1 Jackson Street, Lawrence, MA 01840 2:00 p.m. (FREE) – Handicap Accessible

Sunday, March 10, 2013

FAMILY DAY AT THE CLADDAGH 3pm – 6pm Irish Music, Pipers, Dancers Claddagh Pub and Restaurant, 399 Canal Street, Lawrence, MA 01840 For further information please call 978 688-8337.

Friday, March 15, 2013

44th ANNUAL SAINT PATRICK'S DAY LUNCHEON at the Lawrence Firefighters Association Relief's In, One Market Street, South Lawrence, MA 01843. Traditional Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner with entertainment by the Silver Spears Irish Showband at NOON. Awarding of the Honorable John E. Fenton Citizenship Award - For more information please contact Jack Lahey at 603 898 7766. Sponsored by Division 8 AOH

Friday, March 15, 2013

AN EVENING OF IRISH MUSIC - 3 pm until ? at the Claddagh Pub and Restaurant, 399 Canal Street, Lawrence, MA. For further information call 978 688-8337.

Saturday, March 16, 2013

IRISH FILM FESTIVAL at Lawrence Heritage State Park Visitors Center, 1 Jackson Street, Lawrence, MA 01840 (First Floor) 10:00 a.m. Sponsored by Division 8 AOH For further information please call 978 794-1655. (FREE) - Handicap Accessible

Saturday, March 16, 2013

OPEN HOUSE – Music all day long at the Claddagh Pub and Restaurant, 399 Canal Street, Lawrence, MA 01840 for further information call 978 688-8337.

Friday, March 15, 2013

ANNUAL IRISH ART EXHIBIT (March 1 – March 31) at Lorica Artworks, 96 Main Street, Andover, MA 01810 for information please call 978 470-1829. Sponsored by the Irish Foundation – Handicap Accessible

Sunday, March 17, 2013

HAPPY SAINT PATRICK'S DAY – OPEN HOUSE - Music all day long at the Claddagh Pub and Restaurant, 399 Canal Street, Lawrence, MA 01840 For further information please call 978 688-8337

Saturday, March 23, 2013

Paula de Fougerolles will speak on her books, "*Prophet*" and "*The Chronicles of Iona*" at Lawrence Heritage State Park Visitors Center, 1 Jackson Street, Lawrence, MA 01840 2:00 p.m. (FREE) – Handicap Accessible

Sunday, March 24, 2013

IRELAND IN SONG - CELTIC MELODIES FOR VOICE AND PIANO - A Tribute to the late great Fiddle Virtuoso Larry Reynolds - performed by Terri and George Kelley at the Lawrence Public Library, Sargent Auditorium, 51 Lawrence Street, Lawrence, MA 01840 at 2:00 p.m. Presented by the Friends of the Lawrence Public Library. (FREE)

Irish heritage month is sponsored by the Ancient Order of Hibernians Division 8, Division 8 LAOH and the Irish Foundation of Lawrence

Irish Heritage Month is supported in part by a grant from the Lawrence Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.



Cancellation of Events For information on cancellation of **AOH & LAOH events**, please contact the **AOH/LAOH Cancellation Line @ 603-893-5802**

For information on AOH Membership please write to: Division 8 AOH Organizer, PO Box 1407, Lawrence, MA 01842.

Happy St. Patrick's Day

“May you have the hindsight to know where you’ve been, the foresight to know where you’re going, and the insight to know where you are.”

Happy St. Patrick's Day
from
Rep. Linda Dorcena Forry
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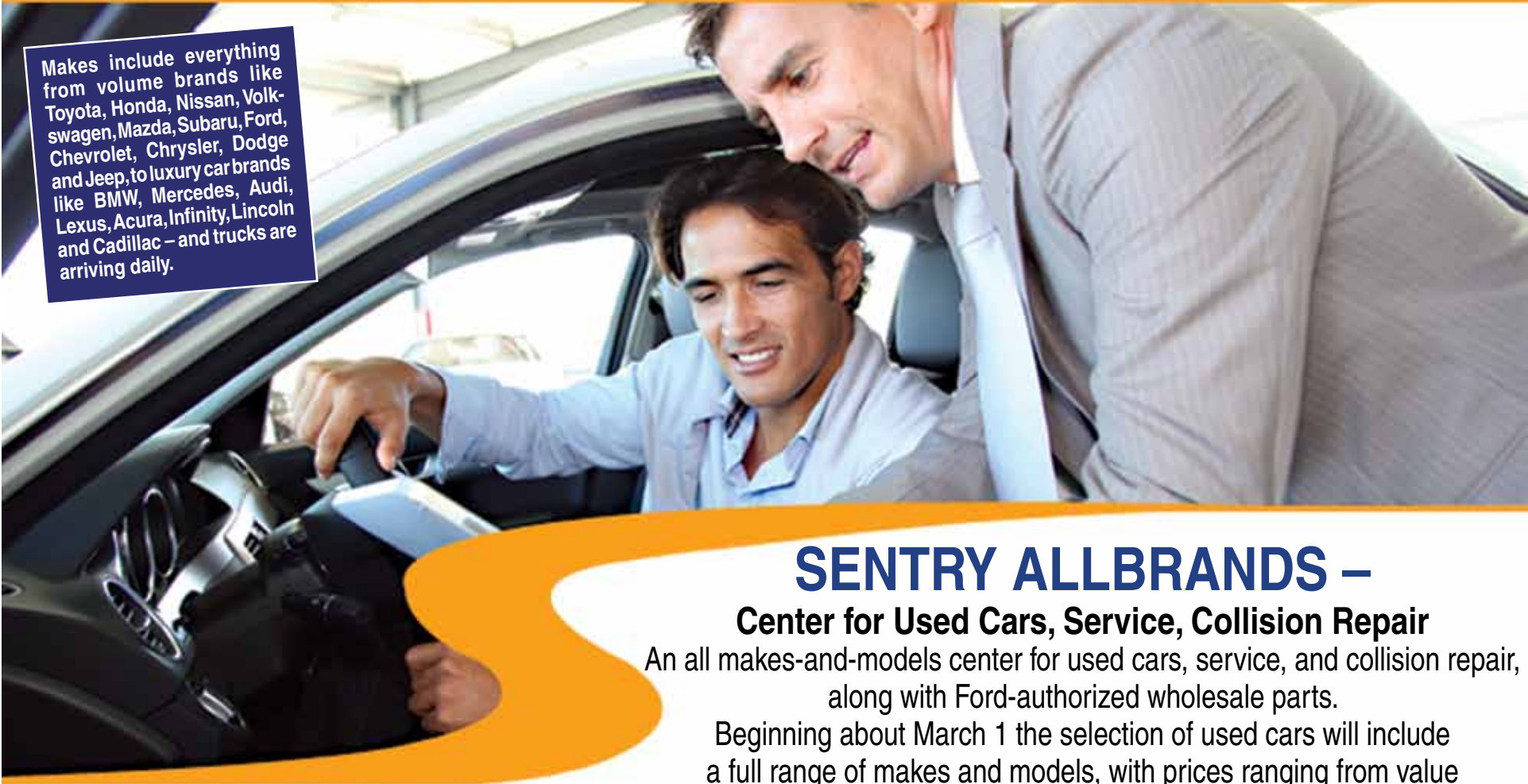
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The County Donegal Association, Boston

St. Patrick's Day Dinner Dance


Saturday, March 2, 2013

7:00 p.m.

Florian Hall
55 Hallet St., Dorchester
Hot & Cold Buffet
Entertainment by **Erin's Melody**
Harney Academy of Irish Stepdance



Tickets \$40.00 per person
Hope to see you all there!



For tickets and info:
President JP Doherty
617-605-9878 or
Chairman Michael McCarron
617-696-1702



Or any officer of the County Donegal Association



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with Brian O'Donovan



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Moira Smiley, Vocals ▪ Keith Murphy, Guitar and Piano
Pat Hutchinson, Uilleann Pipes ▪ Maureen McMullan, Vocals
The Coyne Family with Bridget Fitzgerald
Traditional Irish Family Band
Kathleen Coneely, Tin Whistle
Eoin McQuinn, Percussion
Mariel Vandersteel, Hardanger Fiddle
Mark Simos, Fiddle, Guitar, Piano
Kevin McDermott, Tenor; Ralph Richey, Piano
Billy Meleady, Actor ▪ Jacqueline Schwab, Piano
Lindsay O'Donovan, Piano/Vocals
The Harney Academy of Irish Dance

Saturday, March 16 8pm
SANDERS THEATRE Cambridge, MA

For details on tickets and show participants,
visit www.wgbh.org/celtic

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CELTIC THUNDER CRUISE

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Ryan Kelly & Neil Byrne - Acoustic by Candlelight
George Donaldson - Folk Favourites
Emmet Cahill & Colm Keegan with guest Rebecca Harkin
Deirdre Shannon
Sandra O'Hara
The Celtic Thunder Band - Traditional Music
Goitse - Traditional Irish Band
Gaelic Rhythm - Dance Show



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Introducing a new travel option for people that LOVE traditional Irish music, dancing, food and fun...it's the inaugural **CELTIC THUNDER CRUISE**. You can join the entire cast of Celtic Thunder for a full ship charter aboard Carnival's Victory for a one of a kind cruise experience.

Celtic Thunder, hailed by Billboard as 2011 Top World Artist, Album and Imprint, is going to be rockin the high seas for 5 days. With ports of call in Miami, Ochos Rios and Grand Cayman, the Celtic Thunder lads along with their special guests will create a very magical Irish experience for you as we transform the ship into a floating Celtic party!

In addition to the electrifying nightly Celtic Thunder shows, the lads will be performing their own personal shows... Keith Harkin, solo gig; Ryan Kelly & Neil Byrne, Acoustic by Candlelight; George Donaldson, Folk Favourites; Emmet Cahill & Colm Keegan with guest Rebecca Harkin and Deirdre Shannon (formerly of Celtic Woman). Every guest will have the opportunity to have a photo with the cast and receive autographs

What's more, the Celtic Thunder Band will be performing as will the traditional Irish band Goitse. Our own Belinda Murphy, choreographer and dancer in the original Riverdance, will be introducing her new Irish Dance show, Celtic Rhythm. Belinda will also teach you to dance and show you how to join in the fun at our Ceili Night! Sandra O'Hara, a world famous Psychic Medium, will be offering an evening spiritual session. The ship's bar will be transformed into THE authentic Celtic Thunder pub and the menu hand selected by the lads.

SO JOIN US NOVEMBER 2-7, 2013 FOR THE CELTIC THUNDER CRUISE.
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Each guest to have their photo with the cast and their autographs



The Boston Gathering June 2013

Tour price is \$2,499
per person, double occupancy
including airfare.

As space is limited on this tour, please book early. A non-refundable deposit of \$500 per person is required at time of booking with the balance due 60 days prior to departure (Monday, April 8th, 2013).

All prices quoted are
per person,
double occupancy.
Single room supplement
for this tour is \$499.

All local taxes, hotel
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Travel insurance is recommended
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Please ask for more information
if you would like additional
details on it.

Join the Lord Mayor of West Roxbury Richie Gormley on a nine day / eight night tour of Ireland to celebrate The Gathering 2013. Depart Boston on Wednesday, June 5th and return on Friday, June 14th.

Day 1: Wednesday, June 5 -

The journey begins!

Day 2: Thursday, June 6 -

Dublin

Day 3: Friday, June 7 -

Dublin

Day 4: Saturday, June 8 -

Dublin to Donegal

Day 5: Sunday, June 9 -

Donegal to Mayo to Athlone

Day 6: Monday, June 10 -

Athlone to Roscommon to Galway

Day 7: Tuesday, June 11 -

Galway

Day 8: Wednesday, June 12 -

Galway to Killarney

Day 9: Thursday, June 13 -

Killarney to Shannon

Day 10: Friday, June 14 -

Shannon to Boston

Visits and admissions:

The Book of Kells at Trinity College
Dail Eireann - The Irish National Parliament
Guinness Storehouse
Jameson Distillery
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Donegal Castle
Knock Shrine
Viking River Cruise
Athlone Castle
Kylemore Abbey
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7 dinners (D) including Merry Ploughboy Pub
dinner and traditional show
Molly Darcy's Traditional Irish Night dinner
and show
Moran's Oyster Cottage dinner
Farewell dinner at Durty Nelly's Pub
3 table d'hote dinners

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Park Inn Hotel - Shannon (1 night)

Call today to reserve your seats.
We recommend reservations by March 18
to be sure you're on the plane!
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CELEBRATE ST. PATRICK'S WEEKEND

At the Irish Cultural Centre of New England!

Friday, March 15: Kick off the weekend with Joshua Tree!
@ 8pm | Tickets: \$15 pp



Saturday, March 16:

Doors open at 1pm.

Featuring:

Live Irish music by The Auld Locals | Traditional Irish session by Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann | Dan Hallissey | Irish Dance performances

Tickets: \$5pp at the door after 5pm

Sunday, March 17:

Doors open at 7am

Featuring:

Irish Breakfast | GAA games | 5k RUN
Live Irish Music | Irish Dance Performances | Corned Beef & Cabbage | Kid's entertainment

Tickets: \$10pp online or at the door
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Kids under 12 are free!
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Purchase tickets at www.IrishCulture.org



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- *Collection of Irish Government Documents* — the only comprehensive U.S. collection of Irish government reports, parliamentary papers, debates and special studies — housed in Stonehill's MacPháidín Library.

For more on Irish Studies at Stonehill, contact Director of Irish Studies Professor Richard B. Finnegan at 508-565-1135.



In the ring with the Boxing O'Briens

By JACKIE GENTILE
SPECIAL TO THE BIR
With two Golden Gloves titles under her belt,

Maureen O'Brien is flying high. The 30-year-old Dorchester native won the Lowell Golden Gloves on February 15 in the light welterweight division. "It feels good," she said. "It was exciting having all the hard work pay off." O'Brien beat Dean-na Supernor of Worcester, the Holyoke Golden Gloves champ of the Western New England team. Though she was more



Maureen O'Brien and her father, John O'Brien.
Photo by Bill Forry

Happy St. Patrick's Day to all Boston Irish Reporter readers



Congressman Ed Markey
Paid for by the Markey Committee

nervous than last year, O'Brien was "a better caliber fighter this year." After a lot of running, sparring, being in the gym and doing pad work with her trainer, she was ready for victory.

"It's a little more intense because you've got your sights set on getting ready for that and winning," she said.

Two other notable Grealish gym veterans came up big at the 67th annual competition held at the Lowell Auditorium. Daniel Higgins and Ramon Rodriguez both won their respective bouts.

Now a resident of Hull, O'Brien travels back to her hometown daily to the Grealish Boxing Club and Fitness center to train with owner Martin and a familiar face: her father, John.

Boxing runs through the 30-year-old's veins. John has been boxing for nearly 40 years and imparts his wisdom on his daughter.

John's grandfather, an Irish immigrant, got him into boxing when he was a kid. He started training at the Quincy Boxing Club, but has trained at many gyms since, including the Somerville Boxing Club, Arlington's Boston Sport Boxing Club in the 1990s, and now at the Grealish gym. In addition, he has taught boxing at BU for 13 years.

"There's a very positive atmosphere there," he said of the family-run club. "We all work together there, the kids help each other – it works out that way."

Both John and Maureen train and teach at the Freeport St. facility. She currently teaches a women's boxing and fitness class on Mondays and Thursdays, showing students boxing basics and conditioning techniques

including punches, the basic boxing stance, sit-ups and pushups. O'Brien also works as a personal trainer at Boston Sports Club where her boxing specialty helps set her apart from other trainers, she says.

"She picked it up pretty easy," John said of his daughter getting into the sport.

O'Brien remembers sitting on her father's lap, watching matches on TV. With John as her main influence, it became a big part of her life. She took up taekwondo when she was 7 and went on to compete with three national teams. A leg injury steered her more toward boxing.

"Boxing's something I always wanted to do," she said. "I did it as a workout [after the injury] then I wanted to compete, so that's kind of how it happened."

Though she is following in her father's footsteps, and though they both have a good jab, O'Brien is paving her own way in the boxing world.

"I was really proud of Maureen," John said of her recent win. "She worked very hard."


The now two-time champ trains hard and fights hard, but stresses that safety is a big factor when training to get in the ring.

"The biggest thing is if you're gonna do it, you gotta be serious about it," O'Brien cautioned. "The main thing is staying in shape and stay disciplined and reach your goal."

Since her last fight was her tenth, she can now compete as an open fighter. Her next goal is to join a national boxing team.

"Gonna keep going with it. At least, for a little while," she laughed. "See how far I can get."

Please tune in on
Sunday, March 17th at 10am on NECN



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St. Patrick's
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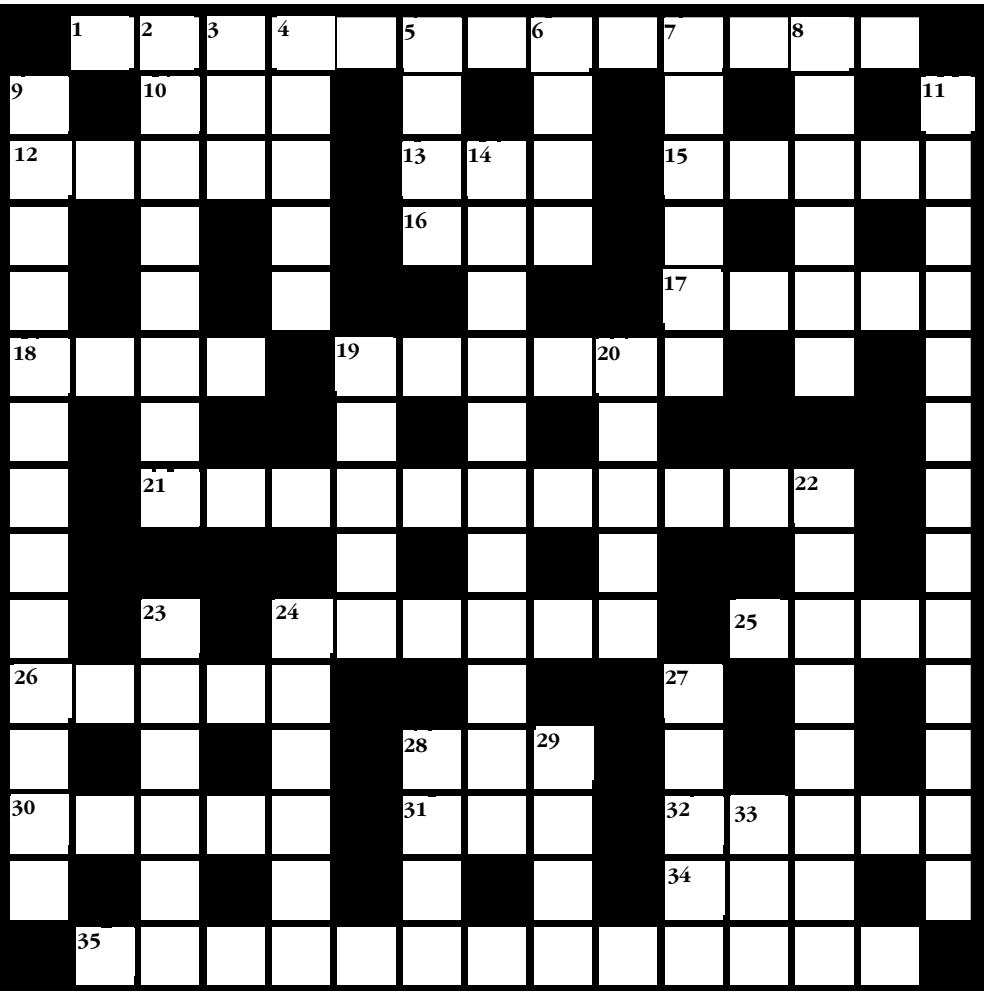
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by Philip Mac AnGhabhann

Answers: 1.) Chonaicemar Liam ag an siopa aréir. 2.) Téann Nora go Baile Atha Cliath go minic. 3.) An dheachaidh sí amarach? 4.) Ní. Chuaigh sí inné. 5.) Nach dhearna Pádraig an mbord seo anuraidh? 6.) Tháinig an bhfear go an doras arís. 7.) An fhaca tú Éamann inniu? 8.) Chonaic. Agus chonaic mé Liam freisin. 9.) D'ith an bean sa óstán go minic. 10.) An rug tú ansin? 11.) An fhuair tú an gcóta nua inniu? 12.) Ní fhuair. Cheanaigh mise sé anuraidh. 13.) Bhí sí ag damhsa aréir. 14.) An bhfuil sé ag ithe bricfeasta sa chistin anois?

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 “Both your friend and your enemy think you will never die.”
 “The well fed does not understand the lean.”
 “He who comes with a story to you brings two away from you”
 “Quiet people are well able to look after themselves.”
 “A friend’s eye is a good mirror.”
 “It is the good horse that draws its own cart.”
 “A lock is better than suspicion.”
 “Two thirds of the work is the semblance.”
 “He who gets a name for early rising can stay in bed until midday.”
 “Quiet people are well able to look after themselves.”
 “A friend’s eye is a good mirror.”
 “It is the good horse that draws its own cart.”
 “A lock is better than suspicion.”
 “Two thirds of the work is the semblance.”

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ON ST. PATRICK’S DAY, TAKE TIME TO REMEMBER THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE



Boston’s Irish have created a Memorial Park to the Irish Famine. Located downtown on the Freedom Trail at Washington and School streets, it is a place to pause and remember our ancestors and all they suffered.

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BOSTON IRISH REPORTER

Aisling Nally of Canton is featured in ‘Lord of the Dance’; 2 Bay State dates

“After a successful tour in France, Michael Flatley’s “Lord of the Dance,” featuring Aisling Nally (from Canton and former dance student of O’Shea-Chaplin Academy of Irish Dance) in the lead role of “Saoirse” kicked off a 60-city North American tour at the K-Rock Centre in Kingston, Ontario, on Jan. 29.

The tour includes dates at two Massachusetts venues: Wed., March 6th, at 7:30 p.m. at Lowell Memorial Auditorium in Lowell, and Thurs., March 7th, at 8 p.m. at

the Hanover Theatre for the Performing Arts in Worcester.

AislingNallyhastoured all over the world and has danced on stage with Michel Flatley in “Feet of Flames” in Taiwan. She is a certified Irish Dance teacher with the Irish Dancing Commission (An Coimisiun leRinci Gaelaca) Dublin.

Described by the *New York Post* as “fascinating, rewarding and above all, entertaining,” and by the Los Angeles Times as “a showpieceextravaganza,” “Lord of the Dance” fea-



Aisling Nally

tures a blend of traditional and modern Celtic music and dance. The story is based upon mythical Irish folklore as Don Dorcha, Lord of Darkness, challenges the ethereal lord

of light, the Lord of the Dance. Battle lines are drawn, passions ignite and a love story fueled by the dramatic leaps and turns of dancers’ bodies begins to build against a backdrop of Celtic rhythm. The action is played out over 21 scenes on a grand scale of precision dancing, dramatic music, colorful costumes, and state-of-the-art staging and lighting.

For ticket information, go to lowellmemorialauditorium.org or hanovertheatre.org.



Jim Brett has been elected president of the board of directors of the Massachusetts Association for Mental Health. Brett is the president and CEO of The New England Council, a group that represents businesses across all six New England states, and has worked for more than 20 years as an activist on behalf of those with intellectual disabilities. That work has included serving as chairman of the President’s Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities and the Massachusetts Governor’s Commission on Intellectual Disability. The Boston-based Massachusetts Association for Mental Health is a non-profit that advocated for the creation of services for those with mental illness.

Friends of Irish Research have new home in Brockton

The Friends of Irish Research is a collection of friends with more than 100 years of experience in helping families find their Irish roots. For the past 10 years the group has met in the library at the Irish Culture Center of New England in Canton, and now the Friends have relocated to a new location at 899 North Main St. in Brockton, a comfortable space with multiple conference rooms provided by North Baptist Church.

The Friends meet on Friday evenings from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 pm. A schedule of meetings and events can be found on their website

icclibrary.info. Upcoming meetings are scheduled for March 1, March 8, and March 22.

The Friends library is home to over 5,000 digital books and the list is growing every day. The focus of the research center is to provide a place where individuals and groups you can come and discuss solutions in their genealogical search. The Friends have high-speed internet access to use web research tools from Ancestry, FamilyLink, Archives, and BeenVerified and a host of free websites.

The Friends have undertaken several other projects, including the building a searchable database of all the grave markers

in the Old St. Mary’s Cemetery in Canton. Periodically, the Friends will offer seminars and clinics to share ways to improve your skills in genealogical research.

To make an appointment for assistance in your

family research, simply send an email to friendsofirishresearch@gmail.com. The Friends provide all of this for free, though donations are welcomed to help them acquire additional reference materials and subscription services.

Holiday 5K set at ICC

Get your St. Patrick’s Day celebration started the right way with a flat-as-a-pancake 5k at the Irish Cultural Centre in Canton where the gun will go off at the starting line at 10 a.m. on March 17.

All are welcome – runners, walkers, strollers, wheelchairs – there’s room for everybody.

Free parking, indoor bathroom facilities, and the best after-party with live Irish music by The Locals with plenty of Guinness and Smithwicks on tap.

While the race will begin at 10 a.m., come on down as early you’d like to take part in a 7 a.m. Irish Breakfast with Irish charm.

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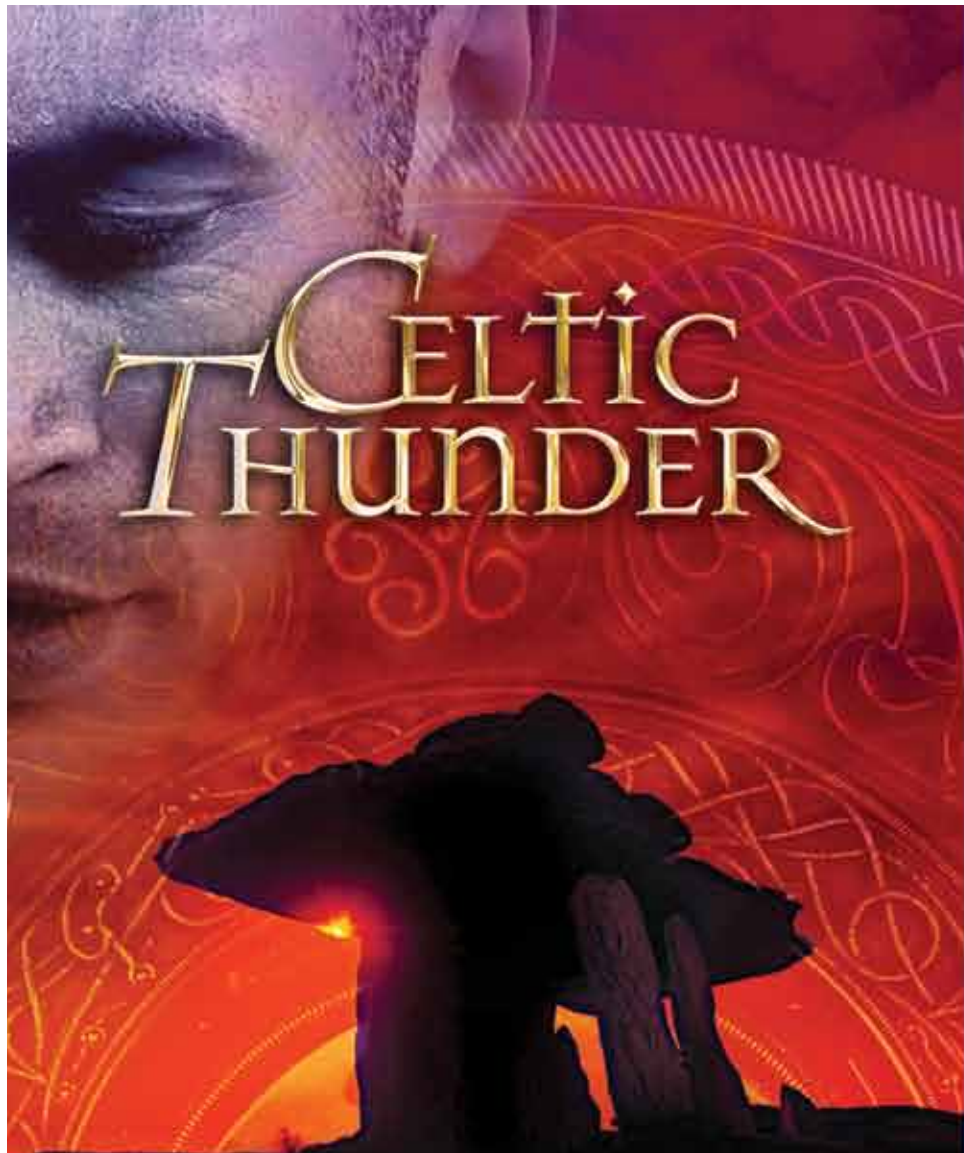
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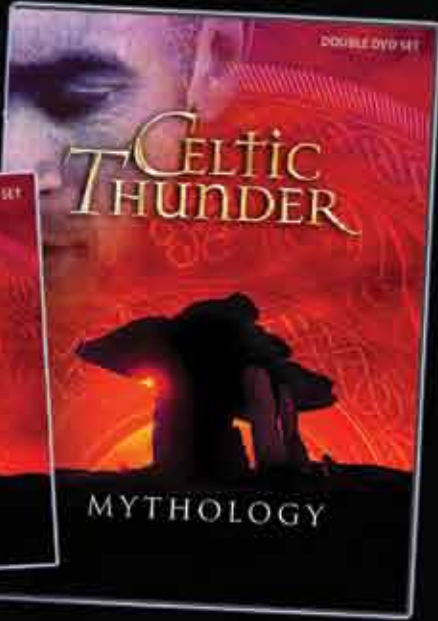
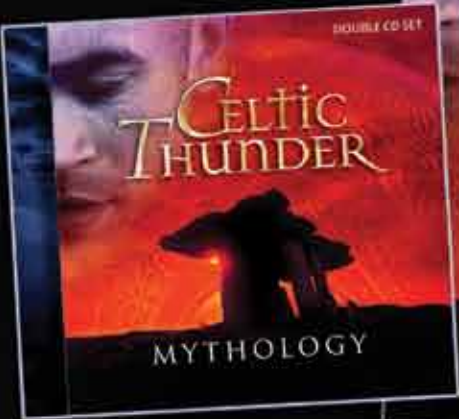
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