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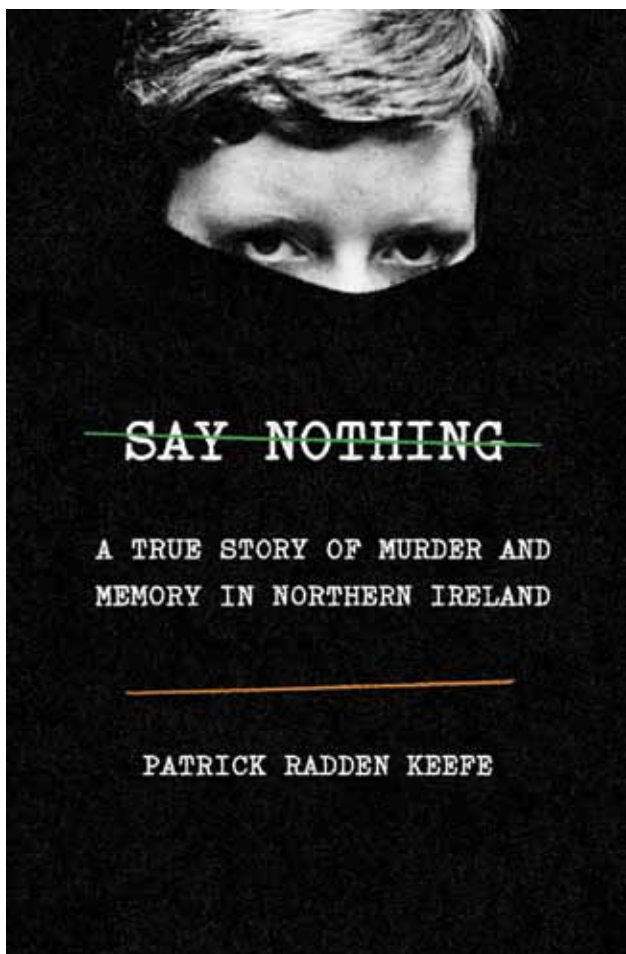
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# BOSTON IRISH REPORTER

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## Dorchester native breaks new ground in McConville case

By BILL FORRY  
BIR EDITOR

Patrick Radden Keefe grew up in the heart of Boston's Irish community—the Adams Corner section of Dorchester. His dad Frank—whose great-grandparents were immigrants from Donegal—was a regular at the Eire Pub.

But despite the name and pedigree, Keefe wasn't raised like some of his Irish-American cousins who came of age as the Troubles roiled their ancestral homeland. He wasn't regaled with rebel ballads on the Saturday Irish Hour. No plastic paddy, this one.

As he matured, Keefe—a Milton Academy graduate—read the news about the latest bombings, gun attacks, and then the breakthrough peace process of the late 1990s as though Ireland were just another foreign country.

That level of detachment, it turns out, may have served him well.

In his new book, "Say Nothing," the 42-year-old staff writer with the *New Yorker* dives deep into one of the most notorious killings in the civil war: the murder and disappearance of Jean McConville, a mother of 10 who was snatched from her Belfast family by the IRA in 1972. The book recounts the events and participants in a narrative that will grip even those well versed in the story. And—without giving away Keefe's ending—he breaks new ground in theorizing about the gunman who he believes delivered the fatal blow to McConville, whom the IRA believed was a "tout"—or snitch.

Keefe, who now lives in New York, began reporting on the McConville case in 2014. Like many journalists, he was drawn in by the controversy surrounding the Boston College Belfast Project, the well-intentioned

(Continued on page 9)

## Time to put on the green again; St. Patrick's Day festivities await

March is the month when tradition reigns across the world for those of Irish heritage who take part happily in the annual ritual of celebrating St. Patrick's Day. In Massachusetts, a parade is the coin of the realm, with music and dance supplying the background sounds, and the Boston Irish Reporter has it all covered.

- For a listing of the dates and times of scheduled parades, see Page 3.

- A voluminous and detailed schedule of Irish music and dance events begins on Page 11.

- The St. Patrick's Day Celtic Sojourn will offer its 12th edition in Cambridge on March 16 and in Beverly on March 17. See photo at right, and story on Page 19.

- Colm Keegan is on tour with a musical twist, a project entitled, "A History of Ireland Through Music." He spoke about his work recently with the BIR's Sean Smith. See below.



The Friel Sisters, traditional musicians born in Glasgow but with family roots in the Donegal Gaeltacht, will be in this year's "St. Patrick's Day Celtic Sojourn." See Page 19.

## He takes stock of Irish history in musical fashion

By SEAN SMITH  
REPORTER CORRESPONDENT

Colm Keegan was born into a musical family—his father and five brothers all singers—and he has not strayed from his lineage. With a background in both traditional and choral singing, the Dublin native is best known for his nearly four-year stint with Celtic Thunder, which came after he performed as a member of the choir for Celtic Woman.

In recent years, and especially since leaving Celtic Thunder in early 2016, Keegan has devoted time to his "other" vocation, teaching: He has taught at several performing arts and secondary schools, and launched CKonLine, a forum through which he offers instruction in subjects including music

theory, Irish mythology and Irish language. (He has also gotten married, to former Celtic Thunder cellist Laura Durant; the couple had their second child late last year.)

On March 4, Keegan will come to the Irish Cultural Centre of New England in Canton to present his new one-man project, "A History of Ireland Through Music," as part of a tour winding through the Midwest and Northeast US. Shortly before embarking last month, Keegan spoke with the Boston Irish Reporter.

**Q.** Colm, what's the idea behind "A History of Ireland Through Music"?

**A.** Well, it's combining two things that have always been special to me: performing and teaching—I'm a classroom teacher by trade. It's not a "gig," and



Colm Keegan  
Singer, teacher

it's not a lecture. There's a kind of a TED Talk vibe to it, and I use an interactive presentation to help illustrate some details. The songs are an expression of the historical events, people, places and so on in the period I'm focusing on.

**Q.** So it's not the whole history of Ireland?

**A.** No, we'd be here for days if I tried that. [Laughs] When I came up with the concept I knew that Irish history was just so vast I would have to break it up, and so I started to think about which chapter of Irish history I should concentrate

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## Labor says it will back a second Brexit vote

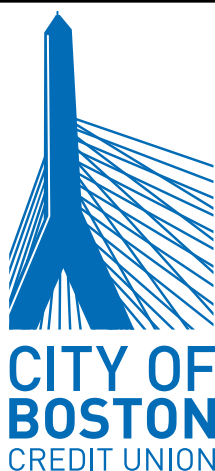
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON — Britain's main opposition Labor Party has thrown its weight behind efforts to hold a new referendum on the country's European Union membership.

The party has previously said it would support a referendum as a last resort if it could not secure a new election or make changes to Prime Minister Theresa May's EU divorce deal.

In a change of emphasis, the party says leader Jeremy Corbyn will tell Labor lawmakers that the party is committed to "putting forward or supporting an amendment in favor of a public vote to prevent a damaging Tory Brexit being forced on the country."

(Continued on page 24)



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## ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADES

## Dates and Times

**Cape Cod:** Sat., March 9 – 11:00 a.m.  
**Providence:** Sat., March 9 – Noon.  
**Worcester:** Sun., March 10 – Noon.  
**Newport, RI:** Sat., March 16 – 11 a.m.  
**Abington:** Sun., March 17 – 1 p.m.  
**South Boston:** Sun., March 17 – 1 p.m.  
**Holyoke:** Sun., March 17 – Noon.  
**Scituate:** Sun., March 17 – 1 p.m.  
**Lawrence:** Sat., March 23 – 1 p.m.  
**Weymouth:** Sun., March 24 – TBA  
**Dublin, Ireland:** Sun., March 17 – Noon.  
 Per Boston Irish Tourism Association

southbostonparade.org photo



## From Dublin to the Shannon, on cycle via the Royal Canal

Michael Shea, 55, at right, was raised in the small Western Massachusetts town of Blandford before graduating from Stonehill College in 1985. After obtaining a law degree, he practiced in Boston until moving to Ireland with his wife Margaret (a native of County Leitrim) in 1998. He has lived in Dublin since arriving in Ireland, and recently sat down to explain how he came to write a book about the Royal Canal, the stretch of water linking Dublin to the Shannon River and made famous in Brendan Behan's song "The Auld Triangle."

**Q. How did you end up in Ireland?**

**A.** With the Irish economy booming during the Celtic Tiger years we were able to move to Ireland in 1998 where I joined one of Ireland's larger firms. Eventually that led to my becoming in-house counsel for some large US corporations that have also relocated to Ireland, so we've been in Dublin ever since.

**Q. How did this book happen?**

**A.** Well – a few years



Michael Shea sitting astride the Royal Canal.

back a group at work decided to attempt the Ring of Kerry charity cycle. I thought it sounded like a good idea but then realized that I was committing to hopping on my bike and essentially cycling from Dublin to Galway.

**Q. Wow – what's a Massachusetts equivalent?**

**A.** Pittsfield to Boston.

**Q. Had you ever cycled before?**

**A.** Sure, I had a bike until I was about 12 and I'd ride it about 200 yards to the store.

**Q. So you were not an**

experienced cyclist.

**A.** That would be a "no." I needed to train because I wasn't 100 percent confident that I knew the finer points of cycling, like when to change gears - and I wasn't sure that I would be able for it "fitness wise."

**Q. You mean the Ring of Kerry?**

**A.** No – I mean the 200 yards to the store. I was 100 percent sure that I couldn't do Kerry. At least not yet.

**Q. So how does this lead to the Royal Canal?**

**A.** Well, I got a bike and started looking for places to train. If you know the roads around Dublin, they aren't bike friendly. Certainly not for a novice trying to safely re-learn cycling. So I went to the Royal Canal to train – it's close to my house, has no traffic, forces you to work hard but isn't too hilly. It was ideal.

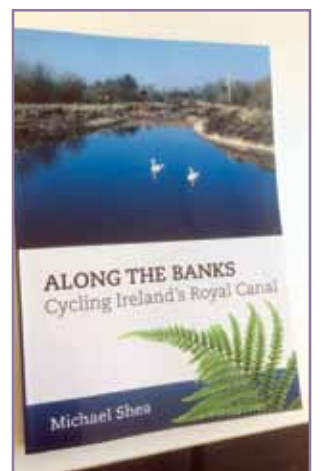
**Q. Why write about it?**

**A.** Because beyond being a great place to train I kept running into things that made me ask questions. On one bridge there was a plaque saying 16 people drowned there

in 1845. The canal is only about 20 feet across at that point – how could that happen? Another plaque had this strange mathematical equation written on it – why was that there? As I asked the questions and dug up the answers I got more intrigued by the canal itself – why was it there, how was it built, who kept it up? As the questions piled up so did the desire to write about it.

**Q. So what is the book about?**

**A.** It's a guide to cycling the canal – what towns you'll see, how far from point A to B, where to eat, drink or stay. The usual. But a guidebook these days can't just be about distances, or the name of the next town. Not because those things aren't important - they are - but everyone has a smartphone nowadays so that's their standard guidebook. What the phone can't do is get a bit more personal. It can't relate a ghost story, tell a joke, talk about friendship, Irish history, presidential rodeos, Tom Jones, Jack Nicholson, Irish politics, the pre-



servative qualities of bogs, Annie Oakley's husband, the greatest mile relay ever run – all things that attempt to make this a book not simply about how you can cycle the canal – but why you should cycle the canal.

Remember: This is a route that will soon become one of Europe's premier greenways, stretching across Ireland from Dublin to the banks of the Shannon. It will be a "bucket list" ride for people who like that sort of thing. I hope there are lots of people who like that sort of thing.

## Charitable Irish will honor Anderson at its 282nd Dinner

The Hon. Anne Anderson, former Irish Ambassador to the United States, will be the keynote speaker at the 282nd Charitable Irish Dinner on March 17 at the Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel. In recognition of her long and distinguished career in the Irish diplomatic service, the Society will confer its 2019 Life Achievement Award on Ambassador Anderson.

Born in Co. Tipperary and educated at University College, Dublin and King's Inn Dublin, Ms. Anderson joined the

Department of Foreign Affairs in 1972 and held a variety of posts at home and abroad before she became the first woman appointed as the First Secretary at the Irish Embassy in Washington, D. C. in the mid-1980s.

After four years in a senior management position at the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin, Ms. Anderson's first ambassadorial appointment was to the United Nations, Geneva (1995-2001). This was followed by subsequent assignments as Ireland's Ambassador to the European Union at Brussels (2002-2005), France (2005-2009), and the United Nations at New York (2009-2013).

In 2013, she became Ireland's 17th Ambassador to the United States, the first woman to hold that position. During her four-year tenure in Washington, Ms. Anderson focused on strengthening Ireland's economic, trade, and investment links with the United States. She was frequent speaker at various educational and cultural venues, and made her first ambassadorial appearance in Boston in



Anne Anderson

October 2017 when she spoke to our society.

Through her speeches and lobbying on Capitol Hill, Ambassador Anderson did much to highlight Ireland's interest in promoting reform of US immigration law, and also encouraged continued United States interest in and support for the evolving Northern Irish peace process and the cause of reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

The Charitable Irish Society is delighted to have her join their distinguished past honorees such as Charles S. Parnell, M.P., President Mary McAleese, President Michael D. Higgins and the late Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney.

For information on individual tickets purchase and sponsorship opportunities, go to the Charitable Irish Society website, [charitableirish-society.org](http://charitableirish-society.org).

– CATHERINE B. SHANNON

## Prof. Shannon to lecture on 'the Troubles'

The Eire Society of Boston will host a presentation on "The Troubles" by Professor Emerita Catherine B. Shannon at the Irish Cultural Centre of New England in Canton on Sun., March 3, at 1 p.m.

She will focus on the role played by the Boston Irish-American community in underwriting the multiple resources necessary to the resolution of the conflict in the Good Friday Agreement.

Admission is free.

## Minister Ciarán Cannon visits Boston for diaspora discussions

Ireland's Minister of State for the Diaspora and International Development, Ciarán Cannon T.D., was in Boston last month for a two-day program of consultations with the Irish diaspora in which he met with representatives of more than 20 Irish-American organizations as part of the preparation for the Irish government's new diaspora policy.

He also visited some of the six Irish community organizations that receive funding from the government to provide legal, welfare, and cultural activities to the diaspora in New England.

Cannon also held political meetings, discussed international relations with students of Northeastern University, and led a discussion on women in science at Boston College to mark St Brigid's Day.

Speaking about his



Consul General Fionnuala Quinlan welcomed Ireland's Minister of State for the Diaspora Ciarán Cannon, seated at right, to Boston last month.

visit, Cannon noted that "Boston is at the heart of Irish America and Massachusetts is the most Irish State in the US. Irish culture and tradition are deeply embedded there and a range of vibrant and dynamic organisations represent our diaspora. I am very much looking forward to hearing from them about the opportunities they see for greater engagement and collaboration and also learning of

the challenges they face in delivering crucial services to the Irish and Irish-American communities."

He added that the Boston discussions "will inform our work on a new strategic policy for diaspora engagement as part of Global Ireland 2025."

– BIR STAFF

BIR publisher Ed Forry met with Cannon as he visited the Irish Pastoral Centre in Dorchester. See Pub Notes on Page 4.

## Kennedy images displayed along Greenway

The John F. Kennedy Library Foundation, the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate, and the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway Conservancy have announced a new joint display of historic photos along the Rose Kennedy Greenway in downtown Boston. The banners are part of a partnership among the three Boston organizations.

The full-size banners along The Greenway feature photographs of President

Kennedy and Senator Kennedy during their time in office. The banners also feature an archival photograph of their mother, Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy, sitting outdoors. The images will be on display throughout the winter.

"We're delighted to partner with the Library and Institute to feature these iconic images in the heart of Boston," said Jesse Brackenbury, executive director of the Greenway Conservancy.



Editor's Notebook

MUSINGS/Dick Flavin

Ireland reviewing its diaspora outreach

By Ed Forry

Ciarán Cannon T.D., Ireland's Minister for the Diaspora and International Development, spent two intensive days in town last month meeting with Irish groups here. We spoke on his visit to the Irish Pastoral Centre in Dorchester.

Q. What's the purpose of your visit?

A. The predominant purpose is to engage extensively with the Irish communities here, with a view toward hearing their opinion on Ireland's diaspora engagement strategy. There are 33 million people of Irish descent living in the US and I try to get out to all of those communities as often as I can.

We're reviewing our international policy in Dublin at the moment; it is exceptionally important to talk to all of the groups that we support here in the US. We spent just over \$4 million supporting Irish diaspora organizations across the country. We want to increase our support over the coming years and ensure that it has the maximum possible benefit for those communities. So what better way to do that than come out here and meet with them?

We had just under 30 Irish community organizations down in Canton [at the Irish Cultural Centre] yesterday, and had a great conversation about how we do this job and how we can do it well in the future. So that's a really important element of my visit this week.

Q. You spoke about a program for young people called Foróige. How does that work?

A. The Irish immigration pipeline into the United States has more or less shut down after vast numbers in the millions [emigrated] to the US over the last century and a half. We'll never see those numbers ever again; that day is over. Irish Americans are doing their best to sustain an interest in Irish culture, identity, and values across all of the United States and doing a great job at it. We want to support them and ensure that the next generation of Irish Americans stay in that attachment to Ireland. There's an youth organization called Foróige [foróige. ie] working in Ireland, empowering young people 14 to 18 with the skills to build strong, successful communities within Ireland. So we're taking that model of Irish community work to the United States. The first presence of Foróige in Philadelphia happened about a year ago, and in New York about six months ago. I was encouraging the group yesterday to consider doing something similar themselves because then you'll have young Irish Americans being given the skills to build strong, resilient communities no matter where they live in the United States – with an Irish organization, Irish values, and a strong Irish culture identity. So that's what we're trying to do.

Q. What is the status of Ireland's efforts to win a seat on the UN Security Council?

A. Ireland has put herself forward as a candidate for the Security Council elections in June of next year. This is the most powerful institution on the planet in terms of peace and security and Ireland wants to have a seat at the table when discussions and decisions are being made about how exactly we approach peace and security and conflict avoidance and resolution across the world. Ireland has hugely significant experience to bring to bear in that conversation in terms of securing peace on our island and sustaining that piece now for 20 years. We just celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement last year. Our soldiers have been a constant provider of peacekeeping around the world for every single day of the last 60 years.

We also are a people who have a very long tradition of immigration and migration, and we have a collective national memory of famine. ... So we want to bring all of that understanding and empathy to bear in terms our membership of the Security Council.

Q. In addition to your career in politics, you're also a musician?

A. I compose music. I have been playing piano since I was ten; that's something that I love. My dad was a musician, his dad was a musician, so it's in our blood, and it's something that I really enjoy in terms of an alternative to the hustle and bustle of political life.

Of dogs, cats, and sports heroes

Who is the greatest sports hero in Boston history? Beats me.

The question, an age-old one, has flared up recently as Tom Brady has climbed relentlessly up the heights of the Mount Olympus of sports gods, now with six Super Bowl titles hanging from his belt. How does that compare to the eleven NBA championships won by Bill Russell? Or the two Stanley Cups in the abbreviated career of Bobby Orr? Or the zero World Series titles that Ted Williams's teams took home? And what about Brockton's Rocky Marciano, the only undefeated heavyweight champion in history? He reigned in the days when the holder of the title was by definition a huge international celebrity.

Comparing them is like comparing apples and oranges, or, perhaps more to the point, cats and dogs. Baseball, football, basketball, and hockey require different specific skills. An athlete needs extraordinary athletic ability to just to compete in each of them at the highest level, let alone be truly great.

But getting around on a fastball is not the same as catching a pass in traffic, or hitting a three-pointer with the clock running down; and none of them can be compared to blasting a slapshot from the blue line, much less making the save on it. To be sure, they all require a combination of strength and grace, almost super-human hand-to-eye coordination, and razor-sharp reflexes, but they are not the same.

Baseball, football, basketball, and hockey players are not just different breeds of athletes, they are different species.

Let's say that football players are the dogs of the athletic world. They all play the same game, but their roles in it call for different breeds. For example, mastiffs and Saint Bernards play in the line, positions requiring great bulk and strength to go along with athletic ability. The linebackers are German shepherds, with the size to plug up holes in the line and the speed to drop back into pass coverage. Defensive backs are made up of Dalmations; sleek, fast, and fierce defenders of their territory, just as their canine counterparts were bred to protect at all costs the horses who drew the fire wagons. On offense, greyhounds are wide receivers for obvious reasons. The tight ends are somewhat the same, but they are wolfhounds, possessed of not quite the speed of their greyhound counterparts but with the size to play in the line to help pave the way for the terriers, or running backs. Terriers are a breed known for their determination and fearlessness, able to use their quickness to race around opponents; or, in the case of pit bulls, straight at them. Finally, there are the poodles, or quarterbacks; they are the glamor dogs of the sport, perhaps the most intelligent of all the breeds. They get all the attention when things go well and all the scrutiny when they don't.

To carry the species analogy a step further, let's say that baseball players are the cats of the sports world. Cats come in all sizes and breeds, as do baseball players. Pitchers alone could be any number

of breeds; Roger Clemens was a lion, deadly and intimidating to all who faced him; Pedro Martinez was a panther, more graceful but no less lethal. David Ortiz was a Bengal tiger (as opposed to the Detroit kind), capable of striking with a suddenness (swing of the bat?) that was frightening in its efficiency. Mookie Betts is a cheetah, slightly smaller but a killer with breath-taking speed.

How much basketball do you suppose Bobby Orr, who was on the ice full-time from his early teens, ever played? Do you think that Bill Russell ever laced on a pair of ice skates?

One was known for his mesmerizing skating ability and his passing and shot making expertise – all with a stick and at break-neck speed; the other was prized for his otherworldly shot blocking and rebounding skills. How can you compare them as players? You can't. At least, that's what I think.

That's not to say that great athletes can't and don't excel at multiple sports. They can, and the examples are many. John Havlicek, who grew up in tiny Lansing, Ohio (population approximately 500), was an all-state quarterback in high school; he was so good, in fact, that Woody Hayes, the legendary football coach at Ohio State, wooed him earnestly to become a Buckeye. Havlicek did go to Ohio State, but on a basketball scholarship, leaving Hayes to lament for the next four years that the school had the best quarterback in the Big Ten, but he wasn't on the team.

Havlicek's reputation was such that, although he never played a minute of football in college, he was drafted by the Cleveland Browns, then one of the elite teams in the NFL. He tried out for the Browns, but at wide receiver, not quarterback. He was the last man cut when Coach Paul Brown decided to keep Gary Collins, who turned out to be a perennial all-star. Still, Brown was impressed enough with Havlicek to invite him back to pre-season camp for six consecutive years, but by then he was a superstar with the Celtics and possessor of five NBA championship rings (the number would eventually swell to eight).

For more than thirty years, Havlicek ran a celebrity fishing tournament off the shores of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard. At one of the early ones I found myself paired in the same boat with Bob Cousy. Cooz had never cast a fishing line and had to be shown how by the boat's captain, an experienced fisherman. Within minutes of learning the technique Cousy was casting his line well beyond that of the captain. As for my casts, they were well suited for stray fish who happened to swim too close to the side of the boat.

Marciano once had a tryout as a catcher with the Chicago Cubs, but his throwing arm was deemed too weak for him to be a prospect. That's the same arm that threw some of the most devastating punches in all the annals of boxing.

To paraphrase F. Scott Fitzgerald, the great athletes are different from you and me; well, different from me, anyway.



Tom Brady on Mount Olympus



Bill Russell 11 titles in 13 years



Ted Williams No World Series, but .406



Bobby Orr Wunderkind on ice



Rocky Marciano Undefeated champion

Off the Bench

Sand dollars star in a vignette about love

By James W. Dolan  
SPECIAL TO THE REPORTER

An older couple was walking along Tigertail Beach on Marco Island recently when they saw a woman in a bathing suit holding a small cloth bag and looking



James W. Dolan

forlorn as she stood at the edge of the inlet. "What seems to be the problem," she was asked. The woman said she was on vacation and hoped to search for sand dollars on the beach across the inlet but was afraid to cross to the other side.

What once was a sandbar at Tigertail Beach is now overgrown with vegetation. To get to the ocean one must wade about 60 yards across a brackish inlet and walk another 100 yards through mangroves to get to a pristine beach. The woman's husband and friends had already crossed, but she was reluctant to walk in the waist-deep water. Seeing her plight, my companion said, "I've been coming here for many years and have accumulated a large collection of sand dollars and would be happy to give you some." She told the woman she lived nearby and would leave them on a bench next to her front door for her to pick up when she was heading back.

The woman was delighted.

For the uninitiated, like myself, a sand dollar is what remains of a sea creature often found on the beaches of Southwest Florida. The fragile shells are hard to spot in the sand and are valued for their delicate beauty. They resemble silver coins, thus the name.

Later that afternoon, the sand dollars were gone from the bench. The next day, the homeowner went to her mailbox and found a thank you note, addressed simply to "Kind Lady."

Such acts of kindness often go unnoticed in this day and age when the mangroves of strife and discord have overtaken the beach. Yet they are there in abundance, if you only take the time to look for them.

Like sand dollars, acts of kindness are imperceptible expressions of love. They are generosity's manifestation – unsolicited, unrewarded, instinctive, and sublime. They are what makes humanity noble even in hard times.

To be alert to those in need,  
To offer comfort with a deed,  
May not seem important stuff,  
But oftentimes it is enough.

JWD

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



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Point of View

# Of intellectual laziness and our verbose talking-heads

By Peter F. Stevens  
BIR Staff

It's high time to add yet another word to the lexicon employed by lazy journalists and casual pundits. Whether you're viewing CNN, MSNBC, or Fox, you've heard this word ad nauseam. Cue the contrived dramatic pause as on-air anchors, reporters, and political experts furrow their collective brows, narrow their eyes, and clench their lips before announcing something so important that the moment has to be termed "fraught."

The word, usually meant to imply that something bad could be in the offing, has an intellectual, imposing ring to it, and your favorite on-air commentators have moved on to it from the fading favorite, "optics." Once again, the media have taken a perfectly good word and turned it into a hackneyed term through overuse that should be deemed journalistic malpractice. It is the newest example of intellectual laziness, and it wouldn't hurt the talking-heads society to turn to a thesaurus from time to time.

Now, let's turn to the cries of fake news, which are indeed "fraught." President Trump has bloviated yet again about "THE ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE" (his caps) in his ongoing jihad against the First Amendment. In one of his latest characteristic tweet tirades against The New York Times and all opposing media, he ranted, "The Press has never been more dishonest than it is today. Stories are written that have absolutely no basis in fact. The writers don't even call asking for verification. They are totally out of control. Sadly, I kept many of them in business. In six years, they all go BUST!" "Control" is the key word in the president's little screed. He believes that he has "executive power" to control the media and stifle any dissenting opinion or, more importantly, any facts he doesn't like. He has plenty of help from his cadre of Irish-American acolytes such as mouthpiece Kellyann Conway and the Republican House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy. In assailing the credibility of former Trump-fixer-turned "rat" – the president's Mob-esque word of choice – Michael Cohen, Conway rightfully pointed out that Cohen is a proven liar. Fair play, but when pressed as to whether the president is any more credible than his erstwhile bagman, Conway portrayed Donald Trump as a man of "huge" (my word) credibility.

Of all the head-spinning fairy tales that have escaped Conway's lips in defense of her boss, this recent one might be the biggest whopper of all. The president has so effectively uttered an endless stream of lies, prevarications, and delusions that he has numbed



Two of the GOP's Irish-American stalwarts, Kevin McCarthy, Minority leader of the US House and, behind, former House Speaker Paul Ryan. *CNN photo*

much of the American public; at the least, he is the duplicitous equal of Michael Cohen when it comes to blatant falsehoods. Of course, one man's or woman's facts are fake news to others. Trump has shown an unrivaled ability to enlarge the gaping divide between truth and fiction.

In June 2016, then-House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy opined in private to fellow GOP legislators that "there are two people I think Putin pays: [US Rep. Dana] Rohrabacher and Trump." As his colleagues laughed, McCarthy said, "Swear to God."

According to the *Washington Post* and numerous other outlets, including the Trump-friendly *New York Post*, McCarthy's fellow Irish American Paul Ryan, who was speaker of the House at the time, demanded that everyone in the room never publicly mention McCarthy's observation. "No leaks," Ryan ordered. "This is how we know we're a real family here," he said.

Ryan, McCarthy, and Kellyann Fitzgerald Conway – all espousing an Irish-American brand of "family" and "omerta," agreed to a code of silence placing party and president above country.

**A Fenian Fiasco Brilliantly Told**

With "When the Irish Invaded Canada: The Incredible True Story of the Civil War Veterans Who Fought for Ireland's Freedom," the Andover-based author and journalist Christopher Klein has crafted a riveting narrative of the ill-fated Fenian invasions of Canada in the years immediately following America's Civil War.

Klein, whose previous book, "Strong Boy: The Life and Times of John L. Sullivan, America's First Sports Hero," told the story of the famed boxer, has crafted a similarly vivid, keenly documented look at the Irishmen who fought in the Yankee and Confederate ranks and turned their hard-won martial lessons against Ireland's age-old master, Britain, with a valiant but ill-fated effort to pry Canada from John Bull's grip.

The five Fenian strikes against Canada commenced in 1866, fueled by lofty ideals of Irish freedom. Irish soldiers who had survived the Great Famine and the horrors of the Civil War viewed themselves as Irishmen first, Americans second. The US government was at first willing to "look the other way" as the American Fenian Brotherhood "established a state in exile, planned prison breaks, weathered infighting, stockpiled weapons, and assassinated enemies. Defiantly, this motley group, including a one-armed war hero, an English spy infiltrating rebel forces, and a radical who staged his own funeral, managed to seize a piece of Canada, if only for three days."

As Klein notes, the failed Fenian attacks proved a turning point in the struggle for Irish independence. Many Irish in America came to believe that any insurrection against Britain must unfold in Ireland itself, with assistance from the Irish Diaspora. Of particular interest locally, Klein presents a vivid portrait of John Boyle O'Reilly, the Fenian rebel who was seized from his Royal Army cavalry barracks in Dublin and eventually sentenced to harsh labor in Western Australia before escaping aboard a New Bedford whaling ship and ending up in Boston, where he carved out a true saga of immigrant success.

O'Reilly covered one of the Fenian raids for the *Boston Pilot*, and, Klein shows, was so disillusioned by the ragtag affair that he preached the importance for the Irish to assimilate as Americans and leave future rebellions to Ireland itself.

In short, Christopher Klein's new book is a must-read for all with even a passing interest in Irish America, Ireland, and the Civil War. His fast-flowing, often lyrical, often gritty narrative commands the reader's attention from the opening paragraphs. His portrait of this turbulent and crucial era in America's and Ireland's annals is captivating.



*(When the Irish Invaded Canada: The Incredible True Story of the Civil War Veterans Who Fought for Ireland's Freedom, Doubleday, hardcover, ISBN-10: 0385542607; ISBN-13: 978-0385542607, 384 pages, christopherklein.com)*

# Sláinte!

Happy St. Patrick's Day  
to our friends and neighbors,  
from the MCCA.

DAVID M. GIBBONS  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MASSACHUSETTS  
CONVENTION CENTER  
AUTHORITY

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Immigration Q&A

Employment:  
Know your rights

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

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

OSC has published the following guidance on this topic:

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Visit one of IIIC's weekly legal clinics as noted in the Boston Irish Reporter for a free, confidential consultation on any immigration law-related issue.**

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

IRISH INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRANT CENTER



An agency accredited by US Department of Justice

One State Street, 8th Floor, Boston, MA 02109 (617) 542-7654 Fax (617) 542-7655

Website: [iicenter.org](http://iicenter.org) Email: [immigration@iicenter.org](mailto:immigration@iicenter.org)

Save the Date: Irish for Pride!

The IIIC will participate in Boston Pride Parade again this year under the banner "Irish for Pride." Pending City of Boston approval, the parade and festival will be held on Sat., June 8, at noon. We welcome everyone to march alongside us and stay tuned for more details! Please email Francesca Paranzino at [fparanzino@iicenter.org](mailto:fparanzino@iicenter.org) with any questions and to get involved! You can learn more about the parade at [boston-pride.org/parade](http://boston-pride.org/parade).



A happy St. Patrick's Day to all from the IIIC team!

AN INAUGURAL MARCH FOR THE IIIC

Our team will be marching in the St. Patrick Day Parade in South Boston for the first time in our 30-year history!

The Irish international Immigrant Center is delighted to be participating in this year's South Boston St. Patrick's Day parade for the first time since we were founded in 1989. The IIIC is Boston's Welcome Center for immigrant families, and our vision is for a society where all are welcomed, valued, and enjoy equal opportunities and protections. We are excited that the parade is now a more open and welcoming event, reflecting our own



A happy St. Patrick's Day to all from the IIIC team!

mission. We look forward to marching alongside many groups and to celebrating our Irish heritage, diversity and inclusion, and Boston's rich Irish history on this special day!

Are you interested in joining the IIIC group to march in the parade? We welcome all to join our group! Just email Ann-Marie at [amariebyrne@iicenter.org](mailto:amariebyrne@iicenter.org) to get more information on how to get involved.

Claire McSherry loves supporting her fellow IIIC exchange visitors

Claire McSherry was living at home in Armagh, Northern Ireland, where her career opportunities were limited. Having obtained her master's in English and Poetry from Queen's University in Belfast, Claire had a solid skill set and talent in a tough job market for a recent graduate. While pursuing her options,

she looked into internship positions outside of Ireland, and shortly after beginning her search, she spotted an internship vacancy at the Irish International Immigrant Center involving providing critical operations and communications support to its Learning Exchange Program team.

Initially drawn to the

IIIC's mission, and the idea that "everyone deserves basic dignity," Claire values supporting an environment in which everyone shares similar beliefs, and for an organization that champions social justice and assists immigrants, J-1 exchange visitors, and low-income families in need.

"It was actually the only position I applied to in the US," she said, and since last October she has been a brilliant member of our Learning Exchange Program team, which helps more than 500 university students and graduates like Claire travel to the US to intern within their field of study. Claire has made a significant impact in the lives of exchange visitors who, like herself, took a courageous trans-Atlantic leap to further their professional development and career prospects.

Claire simply exudes the welcoming spirit that she praises the IIIC for having, and shares that



Claire McSherry, the newest J-1 intern at the IIIC, in warmer weather.

she loves writing newsletters and testimonials detailing different experiences that Irish J-1 exchange visitor students and graduates have had.

Here at the IIIC, we are delighted to have Claire as a part of the team, and want to thank her for hard work and dedication to supporting fellow J-1 students and graduates.

If your company is interested in hosting an Irish J-1 exchange visitor for an internship that will bring international talent and a unique perspective to your organization, please contact Paul Pelan at [ppelan@iicenter.org](mailto:ppelan@iicenter.org)!

You can help the IIIC hail our 30th year with a Boston Globe ad

Do you subscribe to the Boston Globe? If so you may have been offered the chance to vote for your favorite non-profit to receive free advertising space. Please consider voting for the Irish International Immigrant Center and help us move to the top of the leaderboard so we can share our mission. With past support from subscribers like you we were able to place a full color Globe ad. This year, help us do it again as we

celebrate our 30th anniversary.

It takes just seconds to submit your voucher online at [BostonGlobe.com/GRANT](http://BostonGlobe.com/GRANT), or if you received a form in the mail, send it back using the envelope provided. Just enter Irish International Immigrant Center, 1 State Street, 8th Fl. Boston, MA 02109. The deadline to vote is April 30. As always, we thank you and are grateful for your support.

IRISH INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRANT CENTER  
IMMIGRATION LEGAL ASSISTANCE

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

Upcoming Clinic Schedule

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

Downtown Boston

IIIC, One State Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston MA 02109  
Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> at 4:00pm

Brighton

The Green Briar Pub, 304 Washington Street, Brighton, MA 02135  
Monday, March 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm

Dorchester

St. Mark's Parish, 1725 Dorchester Avenue, Dorchester 02124  
Wednesday, March 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm

Citizenship Clinics

IIIC, One State Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston MA 02109  
Wednesdays from 10am-1pm  
Walk-ins are welcome!

Our Downtown Boston location is fully accessible by public transportation.  
Phone: 617.542.7654 | Fax: 617.542.7655 | [www.iicenter.org](http://www.iicenter.org)





BRETT'S BOSTON

By Harry Brett  
Exclusive photos of Boston Irish people & events

On Feb. 7, The Edward M. Kennedy Institute hosted a screening of the award-winning documentary “The Peacemaker” and a subsequent discussion of the award-winning film chronicling the work of Padraig O’Malley, UMass/Boston John Joseph Moakley Distinguished Professor of Peace and Reconciliation. A Critics’ Pick by The New York Times, the documentary takes viewers from O’Malley’s life in Cambridge to dangerous crisis zones all over the globe – from Northern Ireland to Kosovo, Nigeria to Iraq – as he works a peacemaking model based on his own recovery from addiction. A conversation following the film included Professor O’Malley and the director, James Demo.

Pictured at the event are: 1.) Bernadette O’Halloran, Karen Evans, South Boston; 2.) Jim Canavan; Mary Grant, President EMK Institute, Scituate; 3.) Padraig O’Malley in Chamber; 4.) Shaleah Rather; Rachelle Straker; Nancy Riordan; all of Dorchester; 5.) Chris Nevin, Hingham; Padraig O’Malley; Paul Doyle, Weymouth; 6.) Eileen and John Springer, Newburyport; 7.) Marco Diaz and Elizabeth Sanchez, Brockton; 8.) Christy Mejia, Chelsea; Allisyn Bachtta, Wakefield; Sarin Tapal; 9.) Paul Kelly and Linda Perrotto, Roslindale; 10.) Sarah Strassburger and Greg Doten, Quincy; 11.) James Demo, director of “The Peacemaker;” Mary Grant, EMK Institute president; Padraig O’Malley (“The Peacemaker”); Katherine Newman, UMass Boston Interim Chancellor; David Cash, McCormack Graduate School dean.



# ‘See You at the Hall’

## A trip back to the golden era of Irish Dance Halls in Boston

*The accompanying article was first published in the Boston Irish Reporter in the summer of 2004. Its focus was a new book by Susan Gedutis that spoke to a time in the city’s history when Irish music and dance had plenty of spaces in which to flower and plenty of participants eager to listen and take to the floor.*

*Today, the author, now Susan (Gedutis) Lindsay, and her husband Stephen, a Dublin native, performing as “The Lindsays,” are well known for delighting audiences with music that deeply honors the Irish folk tradition while also reflecting who they are and where they have been.*

*With Susan playing sax, Irish flute, and whistle, Stephen playing guitar and singing, and Ted Mello joining them on upright brass in their full-band configuration, the team’s menu of contemporary songs, old ballads, and traditional Irish jigs and reels has long been a favorite with Irish music lovers up and down the Massachusetts coast.*

**By PETER F. STEVENS  
BIR STAFF**

From the 1940s to the mid-1960s, Boston’s Dudley Square pulsated with the rhythms of Ireland. For the Boston Irish, the dance halls of Roxbury were the

places to meet, mingle, and, in many cases, find one’s future spouse. Those postwar decades were the Golden Era of Irish music and dance in these parts, and even today, men and women who danced to the finest Irish bands and musicians of the era grow misty-eyed at cherished memories of the time when everyone knew what the words “see you at the hall” meant.

Author Susan Gedutis set out to explore the impact that the Irish dance halls had both musically and culturally in the region, and her efforts have resulted in a finely crafted work entitled “See You at the Hall: Boston’s Golden Era of Irish Music And Dance.” The book not only covers the amazing array of musicians who performed at the famed venues — the Intercolonial, the Hibernian, Winslow Hall, the Dudley Square Opera House, the Rose Croix — that filled Dudley Square with song and dance, but it also captures the sights, sounds, and emotions of the people who gathered at the halls to hear their favorite performers and to meet each other.

Through interviews with men and women for whom the dance halls were social settings where they could establish connections with newfound friends and, in

the case of immigrants, could find a connection with the music of the land they had left, Gedutis has crafted a history that resonates with the voices and recollections of the people who were there.

Gedutis is eminently qualified to have taken on the history and meaning of the Dudley Square dance halls. A music book editor at Berklee Press, the publishing arm of Berklee College of Music in Boston, she is also an accomplished player of traditional Irish flute and whistle, along with the alto and baritone saxophones. She teaches music and performs regularly in clubs, pubs, and at dances in the New England area.

Fittingly, her book’s foreword is rendered by Mick Maloney, the renowned Irish singer and instrumentalist, as well as the author of *Far From the Shamrock Shore: The Story of Irish-American Immigration through Song*.

Thursday and Saturday nights were the big draws of the halls, and, as Gedutis points out, the Boston Irish found the dances and socials “a bridge from the old world to the new.” With ample reason, the social scene of the Dudley Square dance halls led to Boston’s status as the “American capital of Galway.” Irish and Irish

Americans turned out literally by the thousands to crowd the halls, and with Gedutis’s fine prose serving as an historical tour guide, the reader views the social scene from the dance halls’ heyday to their decline in the 1960s. The boom years were the post-World War II years and the 1950s; then, as immigration waned in the 1960s and as Roxbury’s demographics changed, the glory days of Roxbury’s Irish dance halls ebbed. Still, even after the last dance hall closed, the musicians kept playing - but in a reduced form at pubs, social clubs, and private parties, all of which allowed Boston’s Irish music scene to endure and enjoy a major revival in the 1990s to the present day.

Recently, Susan Gedutis discussed her book and the place of the dance halls in the over-arching saga of the Irish Diaspora.

**BIR:** What ignited your interest in writing a book about Boston’s Irish dance halls?

**Gedutis:** It began in one way as part of my master’s thesis about four years ago. But an event that really drew me to the subject was a 1999 lecture by Joe Derrane, the great Irish accordion player, in Watertown. His vivid and colorful recollections and anecdotes about the golden days of the halls — the overflow crowds, the endless gigs, the way in which so many people met their future spouses there, the sheer joy and nostalgia of it all — hooked me. Also, as a saxophone player who was learning to play traditional

Irish flute and tin whistle, I was thrilled to discover that saxophones were a part of the dance hall days - not just the traditional Irish instru-

**BIR:** In researching the book and especially in your interviews of so many of the dance halls’ patrons and musicians, did you discover anything that really surprised you?

**Gedutis:** I gained so many insights about what Irish music meant — and means - to people in Boston. Boston really is close to Ireland in so many ways, and the music is one of those ties. People’s eyes light up when I ask them about the dance halls and the music. Widows and widowers tell me all about how they met the love of their lives at the halls.

**BIR:** Of all the Dudley Square dance halls, which one did you find held “flagship” status?

**Gedutis:** They all had their fans and their unique look, but there’s no doubt that the showpiece was the Intercolonial. It was the most popular. So many people have said to me, “I danced there the Intercolonial] to Johnny Powell.” He was one of the best talented, charismatic, and had a great band.

**BIR:** When the halls shut their doors for the last time, what was the impact upon the musicians?

**Gedutis:** They kept playing, but in much smaller venues such as the pubs and smaller halls. The main thing was they kept playing - they never put their instruments away. That’s why the music remained on the scene in



Boston and paved the way for a big revival. Thanks to people such as Larry Reynolds, so much music and dance remained alive.

**BIR:** What would you most like for readers to take away from the book?

**Gedutis:** The fact that Irish music has long been part of Boston, and never more so than in the days of the dance halls and at the present time. There is a genuine and vibrant historical precedent for the local Irish music scene today. It makes people realize that they were part of this historic and cultural tradition of Irish music and dance. Speaking for myself, researching and writing the book proved an emotional experience. I met some truly wonderful people for whom the Irish Dance halls of Dudley Square were a joyous and defining period of their lives, as well as that of Boston.

*(See You at the Hall: Boston’s Golden Era Of Irish Music And Dance, by Susan Gedutis, Northeastern University Press.*

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# Dorchester native breaks new ground in McConville case



Patrick Radden Keefe  
Philip Montgomery photo

(Continued from page 1)  
oral history effort based in the university’s Irish

Studies program. It was thrust into notoriety after police in the UK discovered that audiotapes with paramilitary participants might provide new evidence into the McConville case. In particular, they wanted tapes in which former IRA soldiers Brendan Hughes and Delours Price allegedly described the McConville abduction, murder, and cover-up in granular detail. While the legal wrangling involving BC was his entrée into the case, Keefe found himself hooked by the characters’ people like Hughes, Price, and IRA commander-turned-Sinn Fein politician, Gerry Adams. (Adams has consistently denied involvement in the IRA, but as Keefe repeatedly notes, there’s ample evidence that he

was, in fact, a leading figure in the organization.) After writing a piece on the case for the New Yorker, Keefe decided to dive deeper into a book project. While he had visited Ireland once before to discover his family roots in the Republic, he found that his surname and gene pool mattered little to the people of Derry and Antrim and Belfast, where his research for the book was centered. “I kept thinking it would [hamper me] and it didn’t. I went in thinking, some folks might talk to me because I’m Patrick Keefe. But I was an outsider. The Irish name didn’t matter. They rarely asked me about the roots. As soon as I opened my mouth—accents play a huge role—it marked me as an outsider. And that ended up being a big

advantage. It was a little harder to pigeonhole me,” said Keefe. Sources in the North of Ireland are, by nature, insular and disinclined to reveal much about the past unpleasanties. The challenge was compounded by the fact that many principal players in the McConville story “felt pretty burned by the Boston College project.” But Keefe could point to his New Yorker portfolio as his “calling card.” The piece he had already written on the McConville case and the BC Belfast project was straight down the middle. “I could give it to people and say I don’t have an agenda here,” he said. One person who refused to talk to Keefe for the book is a central figure: Gerry Adams. “He’s a tricky character and I

think a part of what was most appealing to me about writing this book were the characters—Delours Price, Brendan Hughes, Adams,” said Keefe. “They’re outsized, complicated figures. I don’t think there are any real straightforward villains. You get to the end of the book, and you can relate to these people.” Keefe manages to strike a fair balance on Adams. He leaves no question that Adams was a central figure in the IRA and was likely intimately familiar with the McConville war crime. But, as author puts it: “You also see that he was the guy who had the foresight to see around the corner in a way that many others couldn’t.” Adams, of course, never participated in the ill-fated BC Belfast project. In fact, its existence was shielded from Adams and other higher-ups in the Republican movement for that very reason: He likely would have sought to shut it down. The fact that people like Hughes and Price, both deceased, did participate spoke to the rift that had developed between Adams, a key player in moving toward ceasefire and peace, and hard-liners who saw a rapprochement as a surrender. Part of the reason people like Hughes and Price participated— at risk of implicating themselves in unsolved crimes—

was because “they felt Gerry Adams and people around him were trying to create a definitive history of the Republican struggle and one that they felt misrepresented the past. “There had been this code of silence for so long,” Keefe said. “But everyone wants to tell their story at the end of the day.” We will leave it to readers to dive into Keefe’s work and discover some of his more intriguing theories about those actually responsible for murdering Jean McConville. Others close to Keefe’s hometown might find this essential reading by virtue of its focus on the Boston College angle, which in Keefe’s telling, is an “unfortunate one.” “The BC project started with a really noble and sound ambition. You’ve had this awful tragedy and we want to create a historical record and leave aside accountability. Instead, it becomes a political football used in a selective way and the people you did want to have use it — people who really want to understand and make sense of it and write about it—will never get to use it. It created a chilling effect for people to talk about the past.” “Say Nothing: A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland” by Patrick Radden Keefe went on sale in the United States on Feb 26.



“In Search of Brigid Coltrane” is a gripping tale set in Ireland during WWII. To find his abducted daughter a father battles Nazi spies, rogue catholic priests and the Blueshirts, an Irish fascist group. But time is running out. His daughter’s life hangs by a thread and the thread is about to snap.

“A thrilling adventure story, a work of fast paced fiction, skillfully woven into real events. It’s really worth a read.”  
– Darryl Greer, Readers’ Favorite

“A violent, captivating and boggy tale set in Ireland during World War II.”  
– Kirkus Reviews

Available on Amazon, Barnes & Noble and iTunes

Please come and celebrate  
Dorchester’s 13th Annual  
St. Patrick’s Day Brunch  
Saturday, March 16, 2019

9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

St. Teresa of Calcutta Parish Hall  
800 Columbia Road, Dorchester

2019 Dorchester Hall of Fame Inductees  
Councillor Annissa Essaibi George  
Dr. Jim O’Connell



Special Guests  
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Mayor Martin Walsh

All proceeds to benefit Mary Ann Brett Food Pantry

Dr. Larry Ronan and Jim Brett Co-Chairs





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–President John F. Kennedy,  
“The Arts in America,” 1962

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The Greene-O’Leary School of Irish Dancers

St. Patrick’s Day  
Saturday, March 9, 2019  
10:30 a.m.

Come enjoy a celebration of St. Patrick’s Day. Exuberant dancers demonstrate athleticism, skill, and poise while presenting traditional and contemporary styles of Irish dance.



David Zucker’s Poetry in Motion

National Poetry Month  
Tuesday, April 16, 2019  
10:30 a.m.

Poetry comes to life in this masterful performance of acting, mime, vocal gymnastics, humor, audience participation, and a trunk full of costumes, puppets,



The **Celebrate!** series, appropriate for family audiences and children ages 5 and up, highlights America’s rich cultural diversity through the arts. This program reflects President and Mrs. Kennedy’s concern for and support of the arts and culture as important components of a democratic society. All performances are free and in the Stephen Smith Center at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.

**RESERVATIONS:** In order to optimize your comfort and enjoyment, reservations are recommended for all visitors to this free program. Make reservations by visiting [jfklibrary.org/celebrate](http://jfklibrary.org/celebrate) or calling 617-514-1644 and leaving a message. Children are seated on the carpeted floor with their caretakers. Space is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

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# THE BIR’S CALENDAR OF IRISH MUSIC EVENTS

Arguably the high-tide month for Celtic/Irish events in Greater Boston is here, with “A St. Patrick’s Day Celtic Sojourn,” the Lúnasa-Natalie Merchant collaboration at The Wilbur, and Celtic Thunder member Colm Keegan’s appearance at the Irish Cultural Centre of New England [see separate stories] among the highlights. Here are some more happenings:

- Not surprisingly, The Burren in Davis Square will have a busy time of it the next few weeks, especially the Backroom series, which will welcome Irish super-group **Téada with Séamus Begley** on March 6. Founded by Sligo fiddler Oisín Mac Diarmada, Téada first came together in 2001 and has become one of the century’s most compelling Irish groups, delving deep into the tradition and presenting the music with precision and power, but not slacking on its emotional character. Along with Mac Diarmada, Téada’s members are Paul Finn (button accordion), Damien Stenson (flute), Seán McElwain (guitar) and Tristan Rosenstock (bodhrán); they’re joined by Seamus Begley, an accomplished accordionist and singer steeped in the Kerry tradition.

Now having expanded to a sextet, **Heron Valley** (Euan McNab, pipes, guitar, whistle; Nick Hamilton, banjo, drums; Alex Mackechnie, fiddle, accordion, guitar; Arlene Mackechnie, keyboards; Abigail Pryde, guitar, vocals; and Callum Cronin, bass) makes a return to the Backroom on March 13. The band plays music of their native Scotland, as well as of Ireland, while also integrating country, bluegrass, and contemporary folk. In addition to



Danú plays at the Shalin Liu Performance Center in Rockport on March 9.

John D. Kelly photo

their high-octane performances, Heron Valley is known for its ambitious videos, including “Home,” which they filmed in the midst of climbing up Beinn an Lochainn, a hill in the west coast of Scotland.

Solidly entrenched as a local favorite, Newfoundland singer **Matthew Byrne** will be back at the Backroom on March 20

at 7:30 p.m. On the strength of his resonant tenor voice and sensitive, empathetic treatment of songs from the vocal tradition of his homeland – and his own family – Byrne has built a following in New England, and elsewhere, to a great extent through his critically acclaimed recordings, including 2017’s “Horizon Lines,” which won a

Canadian Folk Music Award for “Traditional Album of the Year.” Opening for Byrne will be a new trio of local musicians, **Falquet, Heaton and Keith**: Yann Falquet (guitar, vocals); Shannon Heaton (flute, whistle, vocals); and George Keith (fiddle). All have extensive experience in traditional music and boast a lengthy list of collaborations,

formal and informal, in Greater Boston and elsewhere.

March 27 will see another visit from **RUNA**, which styles itself as a “Celtic roots” band. The international quintet of Shannon Lambert-Ryan (vocals, step-dancing), Fionán de Barra (guitar), Cheryl Prasher (percussion), Zach White (guitar, vocals, mandolin), and Maggie White (fiddle, mandolin) fuses Irish and Scottish music with Americana/roots, adding harmonies, rhythms, and tints of jazz, bluegrass, flamenco and blues. RUNA has won multiple honors at the Irish Music Awards and Independent Music Awards, and has built a strong following in New England through its appearances at, among other places, the New Bedford Folk Festival.

The above Backroom shows all begin at 7:30 p.m. Tickets, other information at [burren.com/EventsCalendar.html](http://burren.com/EventsCalendar.html).

The Burren will hold its annual St. Patrick’s Day Dinner Show on March 16 and 17, hosted by owners **Tommy McCarthy and Louise Costello** and featuring the duo of **Robert Elliott and Seamus Noonan**, along with special guests. The show includes a traditional Irish meal of corned beef and cabbage or Guinness beef stew with soda bread (a vegetarian option is also available). Multiple performances will take place on both days. Go to [burren.com](http://burren.com) for tickets and other details.

- **RUNA** also will be appearing at the Circle of Friends Coffeehouse in Franklin on March 30 at 8 p.m. Go to [circlefolk.org](http://circlefolk.org) for details.

- The Irish Cultural Centre of New England in Canton will be home to a range of festivities

(Continued on next page)

1737



2019

The President and the Board of Directors  
of **The Charitable Irish Society**  
*Cordially invite you to attend the*

**282<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Dinner**  
**Sunday, March 17, 2019**

*Guest Speaker and Honoree for 2019*

**Hon. Anne Anderson**

*Ambassador of Ireland to the United States - 2013-2017*



**The Fairmont Copley Plaza**

**138 St. James Street, Boston**

**Reception at 6:00 p.m.**

**Dinner at 7:00 p.m.**

**Tickets available at [www.charitableirishsociety.org](http://www.charitableirishsociety.org)**



# THE BIR’S CALENDAR OF IRISH MUSIC EVENTS

(Continued from page 11)

over St. Patrick’s Day weekend (March 15-17), with live music, dancing, parties, and activities for families. On St. Patrick’s Day itself, live music and dancing begins in the morning, followed by step dance performances by local dance companies and traditional music sessions into the evening.

In addition, the ICC will hold other spotlight events this month, including a performance by violin duo **Sephira** on March 10 at 2 p.m. Sisters Ruth and Joyce O’Leary are known for their dramatic stage presentation, constantly moving and dancing – and sometimes singing – while they play their instruments. Trained classically, the O’Learys have since moved into rock, traditional Irish, Americana, gypsy, and other music domains, from covering Led Zeppelin’s “Kashmir” to sets of Irish reels. They have appeared with Andrea Bocelli, Kanye West, Michael Buble, and Enya, spent two years with the Celtic Thunder show, and are shown on PBS regularly.

**The Voices of the Foyle** (Glórtha an Fheabail), a community choir from the northwest of Northern Ireland, will visit the ICC on March 15 at 7:30 p.m. Established in 2015, the multi-generational ensemble performs an eclectic mix of folk, jazz, pop, and modern styles, their repertoire including “Green Grow the Rushes, O,” “Sweet Dreams Are Made of This,” “Tenerife Sea,” and “Falling Slowly” (from “Once”).

On March 22 at 6:30 p.m., **The Great Famine Voices Roadshow** will make a stop at the ICC. The Roadshow is an open house event that will feature short talks about the Irish National Famine Museum in Strokestown Park in Ireland and provide a venue for those interested in sharing family memories and stories about coming from Ireland to America, especially during the Great Hunger and afterwards – and thus strengthen their sense of ancestry and historical and current Irish connections. A selection of these family memories and stories has been made freely available on the Great Famine Voices online archive.

A trio of Irish music and dance scholars from the University of Limerick’s Irish World Academy of Music and Dance will be at center on March 30 at 7 p.m.: **Sandra Joyce**, an innovative bodhran player whose study of the Irish song tradition has informed her vocal style; **Niall Keegan**, who learned flute from the community of Irish musicians in and around his native London; and **Orflaith Ni Bhriain**, course director for the Irish World Academy’s Master of Arts in Irish Traditional Dance Performance.

Go to [irishculture.org](http://irishculture.org) for more details on these events.

- Among the events at Club Passim in Harvard Square this month will be a CD release concert by local quintet **Pumpkin Bread** on March 10 at 8 p.m. Conor Hearn (guitar), Maura Shawn Scanlin (fiddle), Steven Manwaring (mandolin), Aidan Scrimgeour (accordion), and Jackson Clawson (piano) play original folk music flavored with Celtic fiddling, spirited improvisations, and relentless groove. With songs that range from pensive and heartfelt to driving and playful, the band draws its strength not only from keen musicianship but its camaraderie and close-knit friendship. Pumpkin Bread has performed at BCMFest, the Amazing Art Things Center, and the Burren Backroom, among other local venues, and will be celebrating the release of its second album, “Dear Starling.”
- American-Scottish fiddle maven **Hanneke Cassel** plays at Passim on March 20 at 7 p.m., accompanied by **Mike Block** (cello) and **Keith Murphy** (guitar). An Oregon native who’s been living in Boston for the better part of two decades, Cassel draws on the traditions of Scotland’s Isle of Skye and Cape Breton Island, blended with Americana grooves and other musical styles and trappings, for her strongly expressive, emotive fiddle style. Her repertoire includes original tunes written in the traditional idiom to go with the older music. She has appeared locally at BCMFest, the Boston College Gaelic Roots series, and “A Christmas Celtic Sojourn,”

among others, as well as events such as the Milwaukee Irish Fest, Celtic Colours in Cape Breton, and Celtic Connections in Glasgow.

For tickets and information, go to [passim.org](http://passim.org).

- Ireland’s **Danú** appears at the Shalin Liu Performance Center in Rockport on March 9 at 8 p.m. Representing the musical heritage of the counties of Waterford, Cork, Dublin, and Donegal, the band has, in its more than two decades and various iterations, released nine albums – including 2018’s “Ten Thousand Miles” – and a DVD while touring Europe and North America (once playing at the Hollywood Bowl), and winning Best Traditional Group honors twice at the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards. Their current line-up is Benny McCarthy (accordion, melodeon), Nell Ní Chróinín (vocals), Massachusetts resident Oisín McAuley (fiddle), Eamon Doorley (fiddle, bouzouki), Tony Byrne (guitar), and Ivan Goff (uilleann pipes, flute, whistle).
- See [rockportmusic.org](http://rockportmusic.org) for more.
- Local duo **Colleen White and Sean Smith** will perform at the Belmont Public Library on March 9 at 3 p.m. White (flute, whistle, vocals) and Smith (guitar, bouzouki, bodhran, vocals) incorporate modern influences into their arrangements of songs and tunes from Ireland, Scotland, and England while retaining the spirit and character of those traditions. They also blend works from contemporary singer-songwriters such as Karine Polwart, Steve Tilston, and Kate Rusby.
- The library’s website is [belmontpubliclibrary.net](http://belmontpubliclibrary.net).
- Another brand of entertainment, **The Irish Comedy Tour**, will be at City Winery Boston on March 2 at 8 p.m. The quartet of Derek Richards, Mike McCarthy, Damon Leibert, and Derrick Keane all have strong Irish roots and blend music with boisterous humor, simultaneously validating and exploding Irish myths and stereotypes.
- Go to [citywinery.com/boston](http://citywinery.com/boston) for tickets and other details.
- Boston-area trio **Ceol Corvus** performs at the Durant-Kenrick House in Newton on March 16 at 4 p.m. Emily Peterson (concertina, whistle), Steve Levy (vocals, bouzouki, mandolin, tenor banjo), and Sean Smith (vocals, guitar, bouzouki, bodhran) have long been active in the local music scene and performed at various events and venues including BCMFest, the Burren Backroom, the Dorchester Irish Heritage Festival, St. John’s Coffeehouse, Club Passim Campfire Festival and Boston Irish Festival. Their free-reed/fretted-string dynamic



- Singer-songwriter **Robbie O’Connell** will be on stage at the Coffeehouse off the Square in Hingham on March 16 at 8 p.m. O’Connell comes from one of Ireland’s most distinguished musical families: His uncles were the Clancy Brothers, with whom he performed for a number of years, and his cousin is singer Aoife Clancy – they’ve also done quite a few gigs together. But O’Connell has fashioned his own career as a creator of songs that are whimsical, incisive, perhaps a little sad, but all delivered with the ease and joie de vivre of a master entertainer and storyteller.

*Tickets and information at [oldship-church.org/coffeehouse-off-the-square.html](http://oldship-church.org/coffeehouse-off-the-square.html).*

combines the spontaneity and spirit of the Irish session with latter-day influences and arrangements inspired by the modern Irish folk revival.

More at [newtonma.gov/gov/historic-events/irish\\_music\\_\\_ceol\\_corvus.asp](http://newtonma.gov/gov/historic-events/irish_music__ceol_corvus.asp).

- Van the Man won’t be in Massachusetts this month, but you can still indulge in his legendary music at “**Moondance: The Van Morrison Tribute Concert**,” at the Norwood Theater on March 30 at 7:30 p.m. The show presents classics like “Brown Eyed Girl,” “Domino,” “It Stoned Me,” “Tupelo Honey,” “Wild Night,” and of course, “Moondance,” along with many other memorable songs popularized by one of Belfast’s most famous denizens.

Tickets and information at [norwood-stage.com](http://norwood-stage.com).

## Irish FilmFest taking a ‘time out’ this year; organizers will host a NE premiere doubleheader instead

“Float Like a Butterfly” and ‘Late Afternoon’ at Somerville Theatre Friday night, March 22

For the first time in almost two decades, there will be no formal Irish Film Festival in Boston this month. The annual event has played on multiple movie screens across Somerville, Cambridge, and Boston each March since 2003. But this year, the non-profit said it will take a “time out.”

Using social media, festival organizers said,

“We are taking a break from our annual festival this year, and will be using the time out to fundraise and plan for a bumper 20th anniversary festival in March 2020.”

They added, “while we will not be hosting a full-scale festival, we are especially excited to bring you a stellar program featuring the New England premieres of two of Ire-

land’s most talked about films of the year: “Float Like a Butterfly” won the International Federation of Film Critics Prize for the Discovery Program at the 2018 Toronto Film Festival, and “Late Afternoon” was nominated for Best Animated Short at this year’s Oscars.

The showings will be held at the Somerville Theatre in Davis Square, on Fri., March 22, from 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

## Friends of Irish Research release lecture schedule

The Friends of Irish Research have announced the dates of five lectures for the year:

- **Sat., March 23** – “Frederick Douglass and Ireland: From Fugitive Slave to Human Rights’ Champion,” and “An Introduction to Ireland’s Great Hunger Museum” by Professor Christine Kinealy. In addition, there will be a tour of the research facilities of the Friends of Irish Research and the

Alliance of Massachusetts Genealogists conducted by Richard Reid.

- **Sat., May 11** – Florence Burke on “Yours Faithfully”; Ellen Alden on “An Irish Immigrant Story”; and Richard Reid on “Comparing the DNA Tests.”
- **Sun., Aug. 18** – Daniel Horowitz on “Effectively Utilizing your My Heritage DNA Matches.”
- **Mon., Aug. 19** – Daniel Horowitz from MyHer-

itage on “SuperSearch with Record Matching.”

- **Sat., Oct. 26** – Kathleen Rubano on “Getting Into Genealogy”; Michael Madigan on “Bridgewater Correctional Institution – Bridgewater: A Troubled Past.”

*To register for each event, contact the Friends of Irish Research, 899 N Main St. Brockton, MA 02301 or via email at [friendsofirisresearch@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofirisresearch@gmail.com)*

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# The power of music charms all in ‘Once’

By R. J. DONOVAN  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Mackenzie Lesser-Roy was about to enter her junior year at Boston Conservatory when she was offered the opportunity of a lifetime - to play Girl, the female lead in the 2016-17 national tour of the musical “Once.” She left school to join the show.

Many roles and performances later, she’s returning to Boston to recreate the same role, this time in the SpeakEasy Stage Company production of “Once.” Nile Scott Hawver plays Guy. Performances run through March 30.

The winner of eight Tony Awards, including Best Musical, “Once” is about the power of music to draw people together. The two main characters are simply called Guy and Girl. Guy is a struggling, conflicted Dublin street musician who has lost faith in his talent and his life. Girl is a Czech immigrant who shows him his work is not yet done. Over the course of one fateful week, they make music and an unlikely love blooms. However, complications arise.

With a book by Enda Walsh and music and lyrics by Glen Hansard and Markéta Irglová, the stage musical is based on the charming 2007 independent Irish film of the same name. The sleeper hit film went on to become a cult classic, receiving the Best Original Song Oscar for “Falling Slowly.”

One of the musical’s unusual twists is having all the actors play their own instruments on stage.

A classically trained musician, Mackenzie grew up just outside of New York City and has been acting since she was a child. She says she’s delighted



Mackenzie Lesser-Roy as Girl and Nile Scott Hawver as Guy, rehearsing for “Once,” playing at SpeakEasy Stage through March 30.
Robert Leger Photography

to be back in Boston. Her return reunites her with SpeakEasy’s Producing Artistic Director Paul Daigneault, with whom she studied at the Conservatory.

She spoke about her work by phone before rehearsals began. Here’s a condensed look at our chat.

**Q.** Do you remember your first audition as a child?

**A.** I auditioned for this audio book called “Girls Rock” and I actually ended up getting it. So I was this little girl who was narrating a children’s book, and I was also one of the voices of one of the little girls in the

book. “Girls Rock” or “Girls Rule.” Something like that. I was thrilled to be doing it.

**Q.** What was the first big show that made an impression on you growing up?

**A.** My parents really spoiled me when I was a kid. They took me to a lot of theatre in the city because they knew I loved it. But the first show I saw that made me want to pursue this for real was “Hairspray” . . . I remember sitting in the audience, and I was very close to the stage, and I saw these performers giving it their all and having the time of their

lives. And I remember saying, ‘I want to do that in front of all these people. I want to bring joy to people the same way that these people have made me so insanely happy’ . . . I remember walking out of the theater with my parents and they’re like “Oh yeah, it was good, it was good.” And I was, “Are you crazy! That was the most incredible thing I’ve ever seen!”

**Q.** In terms of auditions, I hear the national tour of “Once” almost didn’t happen for you.

**A.** I had just finished 11 weeks at the Woodstock Playhouse . . . I came home and the very

bostonirish.com

At SpeakEasy Stage through March 30

next day was the open call in New York for “Once” . . . I had a friend who told me about it. I still have the original text message. He said, “Once’ is going on tour. Go book the role of Girl!” . . . So I went into the city, I put my name on the list, and it was an Open Call. So I had to wait like four or five hours. There was actually a point when I almost left.

**Q.** Because...?

**A.** I kind of psyched myself out. I saw all these older, really talented people around the room, and I just thought, “There’s no way I’m getting this. I’m way too young. Why am I doing this?” . . . But I auditioned and I just continued to get callbacks. Then it got more complicated.

**Q.** How so?

**A.** It was going into the beginning of my junior year. So I had to take the train from Boston to New York, I think three times total, to go to these callbacks. And again, I almost didn’t go. . . I was like, “I don’t want to miss school. I don’t want to upset my teachers.” But everybody was, “Kenzie, go!” . . . And I’m very glad that they pushed me to do that because it led to the greatest experience of my life.

**Q.** And now you’re back in Boston.

**A.** It’s so incredibly full circle, I can’t even begin to explain. When I first got the part in the tour, I was over the moon, but also very scared. I was 19 and I was worried that I wasn’t ready. I said, “There’s no way!” . . . All the things you tell yourself when you’re worried that you’re not good enough. But I left school to do that show. And the fact that I get to come back to Boston

(Continued next page)

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Mackenzie Lesser-Roy

# The power of music charms all in ‘Once’

and get my Equity card with the show that took me out of Boston in the first place is really special.

**Q.** Why do you think audiences are so captivated by “Once?”

**A.** I think it’s because these people are so real. They’re hilarious and silly and broken and hopeful, and it is so easy to see yourself in any one of these characters . . . They’re odd and offbeat and not these perfectly crafted people . . . This show is equal parts heart wrenching and hilarious.

And I don’t think many shows can pull that off. One moment you’re laughing so hard and then the next moment you almost want to reach on stage and give the characters a hug because of what they’re going through.

*R. J. Donovan is editor and publisher of on-stageboston.com.*

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“Once,” through Mar. 30, Calderwood Pavilion, 527 Tremont Street, Boston. Info: 617-933-8600 or [speakeasystage.com](http://speakeasystage.com).

# Two Irish holidays for the price of one

By PETER F. STEVENS  
BIR STAFF

It’s that time of year again when St. Patrick’s Day—or month—rules the Boston calendar. Too often lost in the shuffle of local revelry are two milestones testifying that the Saint’s day is far more than an opportunity to let the Guinness and song reign.

Whether one calls March 17 “St. Patrick’s Day” or “Evacuation Day,” the Irish can lay claim to both celebrations. Many men bearing surnames of “the old sod” were nestled behind bristling cannons that peered down from Dorchester Heights on that day in 1776. The redcoats, or “Lobsterbacks,” were fleeing Boston aboard Royal Navy vessels straining to haul anchor and hightail it out of the harbor – which lay directly under the Rebels’ heavy guns.

Commanding the Patriots was George Washington, who held a deep regard for Irish-born troops serving in his ranks. He placed such a high estimate upon their proven combat abilities that he honored that most cherished of Irish dates – St. Patrick’s Day – in an era when the Irish and especially Irish Catholics were hardly a favorite of many colonists.

On March 17, 1776, Washington was well aware that it was St. Patrick’s Day and that many Irishmen had fought at Bunker Hill and had just helped drag those cannon up the Dorchester slopes. He acknowledged both facts by ordering that the password of the day be “Saint Patrick.”

Washington also proffered another tip of his tricornered hat to Patriots with Irish surnames as the British troops boarded their transports. On that momentous day, he had General John Sullivan countersign the dispatch making “Saint Patrick” the army’s official watchword.

The son of an Irish schoolmaster who had emigrated from Kerry or Limerick to Berwick, Maine, in 1723, Sullivan was one of many Rebels who either hailed from Ireland itself or were the sons of native-born Irish. On St. Patrick’s Day of 1776, as one of Washington’s most trusted officers, Sullivan had long recognized the Rebels’ need for heavy artillery to enforce the siege of Boston. On Dec. 17, 1775, Washington had received a letter from Colonel Henry Knox, a man of Irish lineage who had been sent on a mission to Fort Ticonderoga, in upstate New York. The fortress, taken by Rebel Ethan Allen and his Vermont Green Mountain Boys, contained the heavy artillery so sorely needed by Washington.

According to historian James Bernard Cullen, “[Colonel Knox]...brought, over frozen lakes and almost impassable snows, more than 50 cannons, mortars, and howitzers....Colonel Knox was of a family that



George Washington at Dorchester Heights by Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze

originally came from near Belfast.... He was born in Boston, July 25, 1750.”

Washington’s men dragged the artillery up Dorchester Heights and chased the British out of Boston, the Rebels’ feat on March 17 immortalized as Evacuation Day.

One look at the muster rolls of the Continental Army proves the Irish presence on March 17 at Dorchester Heights and throughout the Revolutionary War. They witnessed what their countrymen on the “old sod” could only dream of: the British in full flight. In Boston, March 17 fittingly marks both St. Patrick’s Day and Evacuation Day – the celebration alike of Ireland’s venerated saint and the day the Redcoats departed Boston for good.



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March 17, 3pm

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**Katie McNally and Neil Pearlman**  
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For all details on participants in the shows, up-to-date ticket information and more, please go to [www.wgbh.org/celtic](http://www.wgbh.org/celtic)





# Happenings at the Irish Cultural Centre

## St. Patrick's Day celebration for Children

March 16  
9am – 12:30pm



Admission  
\$8 per person  
Family max: \$25

Join us for a fun-filled morning of music, dance, song, arts & crafts and just plain old fun!

Serving Tea/Coffee/ Juice & Home Baked Goods

9:30am: Performance by the O'Reilly School of Irish Dance

10:30: Stories of Old Ireland & the Legend Of St. Patrick with renowned Seanachie Joe Kane

11:30: Performance by the Dunleavy Boyle Bremer Academy of Irish Dance

ONGOING THROUGHOUT THE MORNING:

Sing-a-long with Katie MacTigue / Watercolor painting with artist Kristi Johnston

Irish language worksheets / Hayride around the fields

Music & hot chocolate by the fireside in the ICC Cottage / Arts & Crafts with Liz

Friday, March 15th

St. Patrick Celebrations at the ICC

Bar & Restaurant opens at 5:30pm

No Cover Charge



### FIRST FLOOR ROOM:

6pm: Art Exhibit Launch

"Interpretations of Ireland" watercolor painting  
by Krisi Johnston

7pm – late: Open Irish Music Session

Featuring our Friday night session group &  
guests

8:45pm: Harney Academy of Irish dance  
will perform with our Irish session musicians

### SECOND FLOOR ROOM:

7:30pm : Voices of the Foyle

This county Derry based choir are a contemporary ensemble who perform a lively set of folk &  
traditional classics with a modern twist.

Tickets \$15/ ICC members \$10



## Great Famine Voices Roadshow

Come to the ICCNE and share your memories & stories

The Irish National Famine Museum at Stoketown Park and Irish Heritage Trust are working in partnership with Ireland's Great Hunger Institute at Quinnipiac University to bring the Great Famine Voices Roadshow to Canton, MA. For additional information see: <http://greatfaminevoices.ie/>

March 22 starting at 6:30pm  
at  
200 Boston Drive, Canton. MA

For more information and to rsvp, contact Maudy Dooher [mduoher@irishculture.org](mailto:mduoher@irishculture.org) 781-821-8291. More information about the Great Famine Voices Roadshow can be found at [www.strokestownpark.ie](http://www.strokestownpark.ie)



## St. Patrick's Day Celebrations at the ICC

March 17th, 11am – late

Serving Corned Beef & Cabbage all day (\$15)

Admission \$10 / Kids FREE

11:15 – 2pm: Music by YOKESHIRE

12pm: Performance by The Connolly Academy of Irish dance

2:30 – 5pm : Direct from Ireland – music, songs & dancing by Joe Glynn

3:30pm: Performance by The Greene O'Leary School of Irish Dance

5pm – late: Dance the night away with DJ Dan Hallissey

6:15pm: The Kenny Academy of Irish dance

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# Collins readies the holiday breakfast table in new venue

By JENNIFER SMITH  
NEWS EDITOR

The bagpipes are getting closer, along with the dulcet tones of the Massachusetts political class, because the St. Patrick's Day Breakfast is just a few weeks off.

Set for the Flynn Cruiseport in the Seaport District on March 17, State Sen. Nick Collins will host the annual event of good-natured political jabs, cringe worthy jokes, and the dual celebration of Boston's Irish community and Evacuation Day, the commemoration of the 1776 ousting of the British forces.

After an in-between year took the breakfast

from the larger convention center back to the local Ironworkers Hall, Collins is taking the breakfast to a new location at the Cruiseport. Navy ships and a harbor view will be the background to a local tradition dating back to the early 20th century.

Performances will pepper the event, including a group of multi-instrumentalist sisters with Donegal roots from the Celtic Sojourn. "The ladies will rule the roost that day," Collins said, tipping his hat to the women behind the scenes like seasoned event planner Dusty Rhodes, former Sen. Jack Hart's chief of staff Jennifer Jackson, and the breakfast's most

recent Senator host, Linda Dorcena Forry.

"I'm excited about having a good celebration to remind us all about our roots, and how we're all Irish on St. Patrick's Day, but we all have immigrant roots, even the British," Collins said with a laugh.

"We're a center for politics in the U.S.," he said. "Democratic politics and empowerment of immigrant communities and social and economic upward mobility, and I think we still represent that. And in a city that on March 17, 1776 evacuated the British out of the city, never to be back again, represented the end of tyranny in the U.S. and

the beginning of self-government and self-rule."

The breakfast features the gamut of Massachusetts politicians every year, and this March will be no different leading into a busy presidential election season.

"We celebrate that at the breakfast with political leaders from the city and state, and we're likely to see some national figures here this year, given what's on the horizon in 2020, so that should be fun," Collins said.

Many of the guests are old hats at the event, but expect to hear from rising politicians like U.S. Rep. Ayanna Pressley, newly elected Suffolk District

Attorney Rachael Rollins, and the Bay State's 2020 presidential hopeful, U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren.

But for those still thinking wistfully of Mayor Martin Walsh's 2016 video skit, wrapped in faux fur and singing Adele songs toward Gov. Charlie Baker, the full-scale breakfast will look different this year. No videos, Collins said, but there will be a run of parody songs and banter from the dais as electeds channel their best inner stand-up comedians.

"It's using some of the cool parts of the Irish culture, using laughter and song to keep it going along," Collins said,



State Sen. Nick Collins  
Breakfast Maestro

"and we show you can get together even when you have disagreements and have some fun. We want to be funny if we can be and witty if we can be, but nice, not mean."

# He takes stock of Irish history in musical fashion



Colm Keegan: "Connecting the Celts' is only the first installment of 'A History of Ireland Through Song,' so I'm sure I'll learn some things myself in terms of how I put the presentation together. I'm very excited to be doing this, and to see where it leads."

Jade Starmore photo

(Continued from page 1) on first. But I had to find songs that would, as I said, exemplify the particular

era – and there aren't any about Vikings in Ireland, so I couldn't go back that far.

In the end, after some research, I chose the period from the 16th century to the end of the 18th century, right up to the 1798 Rebellion, which of course led to the Act of Union creating the United Kingdom. It was certainly a very eventful and significant time, and one in which the history of Ireland intersects with that of Scotland, which is why I titled this portion "Connecting the Celts": You've got the establishment of the Ulster Plantation, the Irish Confederate Wars, the Jacobite Rebellion, and important figures like Owen Roe O'Neill, Bonnie Prince Charlie, Wolfe Tone. And so the songs I present include "Mo Ghile Mear (My Gallant Darling)," which is an Irish lament for Prince Charlie; "The Skye Boat Song," another song about Charlie; and "Booleavogue," about Fr. John Murphy and his Wexford army in the 1798 Rebellion.

These are songs that may be familiar to a lot

of people, but what I'm trying to do is give some background and context, which can help explain why these songs have been so enduring. What do they say? What kind of references or other details are to be found in the lyrics? I feel it makes the music all the more enjoyable when you know those things.

Q. Did you have a special audience in mind when you put this together?

A. Well, certainly I was thinking of people who may not know a lot about Irish history; as I said, they may have heard the songs – like "The Skye Boat Song" in the "Outlander" TV series – but not know the story behind

them. But even someone who is quite familiar with Irish history can get something out of this: Perhaps it will connect some dots, or give them a deeper appreciation of these events.

Moreover, I think learning about this period can help in understanding more recent history, like The Troubles, and even current events: For example, the ongoing headaches with the Irish border, as we see with Brexit.

I really wanted to reach out to the Irish-American community, so that's why I'll be doing "History of Ireland" at places like the Irish Cultural Centre – though of course you don't

have to be of Irish descent to attend.

"Connecting the Celts" is only the first installment of "A History of Ireland Through Song," so I'm sure I'll learn some things myself in terms of how I put the presentation together. I'm very excited to be doing this, and to see where it leads.

"A History of Ireland Through Song" will begin at 7:30 p.m. Keegan also will be offering an "Introduction to Irish Language" workshop at 6 p.m., and sound check admission at 5 p.m. For information on prices for the events, see [irishculture.org](http://irishculture.org) or [colm-keegan.com/tours](http://colm-keegan.com/tours).

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## "The Éire Society of Boston"

is delighted to announce that eminent historian and Professor Emerita, Catherine B. Shannon, will deliver an insightful presentation and analysis of that historic quagmire known as "The Troubles".

She will particularly focus on the role played by the Boston Irish-American community in underwriting the multiple resources necessary to the resolution of the conflict culminating in the Good Friday Agreement. The title of professor Shannon's presentation is:

"BOSTON'S IRISH-AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND NORTHERN IRELAND: A CASE OF POSITIVE DIASPORIC INTERVENTION".

She will describe the nature of diasporic opinion regarding "homeland conflict". As she has noted, "It can often evolve from fueling conflict ... to support for a negotiated settlement and eventual reconciliation." The role of Nobel Peace Laureate John Hume, in triggering this evolution in the Boston Irish community, will be considered as a primary factor in motivating the community's leaders in using their influence to support the peace process.

The presentation will be given at  
Irish Cultural Centre of New England  
on Sunday, March 3, 2019,  
at 1:00 PM.

Admission is free. "



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# Starstruck at first, Lúnasa finds it easy to make music with Natalie Merchant

BY SEAN SMITH  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

It would seem like an unlikely collaboration: Lúnasa, the masterful traditional Irish band known for its enthralling, layered instrumental arrangements, and Natalie Merchant, who headed up the cornerstone alt-rock group 10,000 Maniacs for several years before branching out on her own as a singer-songwriter.

What's more, the collaboration had its beginnings in an equally implausible setting: Hawaii, where Merchant saw the quintet perform some years ago and floated the idea while talking with them after the show.

"We were very happy to meet Natalie and to hear how much she liked our music," recalls Kevin Crawford, who plays flute and whistle for Lúnasa. "She said, 'We should work together sometime.' And that's always nice to hear, but you figure, well, probably not going to happen."

"But turns out she was serious about it."

So serious, in fact, that Merchant invited the band to appear on her 2010 album, "Leave Your Sleep," touching off a series of occasional get-togethers on stage or in recording studios – Merchant sang "The Bonny Light Horseman" on Lúnasa's 2018 release, "Cas." And on March 19, Merchant and Lúnasa will reunite again for a concert in Boston's Wilbur Theatre.

The partnership between the band (whose other members include Cillian Vallely, uilleann pipes and whistles; Colin Farrell, fiddle; Trevor Hutchinson, double bass; Ed Boyd, guitar) and Merchant has grown and



Kevin Crawford - flutes/whistles & bodhran, Cillian Vallely - uilleann Pipes & whistles, Sean Smyth - fiddle, Colin Farrell - fiddle, Trevor Hutchinson - bass, Ed Boyd - guitar

strengthened over time, explains Crawford, who acknowledges that he and his colleagues were a tad star-struck at the outset.

"Natalie was a huge figure in our musical development; we all grew up listening to her," he says. "So we were slightly in awe of her at first, because she's a superstar. And even now, she never ceases to amaze: She's got such an amazing dynamic to her music, and she's so passionate, totally in the moment."

Although she gained initial renown as an alt-rock performer with a strident, sometimes gritty voice quality, Merchant as a solo artist showed herself to be interested in other genres of music, as demonstrated by her 2003 album, "The House Carpenter's Daughter,"



Singer-songwriter Natalie Merchant and Irish band Lúnasa will bring their partnership to the Wilbur Theater this month.

top of our form and deliver for her. And we didn't want her to feel like a karaoke singer, but to put her stamp on the songs that we did, like 'Bonny Light Horseman.' We learned long ago to leave our egos at the door – if Natalie thought something could be explored further, and improved upon, then that was what we did.

"That's what music is all about: You put yourself out there, let yourself be vulnerable, try not to think 'Oh, wow, I'm in a room with Natalie Merchant,' and let things flow. And she's so honest and gracious, things went fine."

Merchant is one of several vocalists Lúnasa has worked with in recent years, Crawford notes, and the experience has been enlightening for the band. "Ed and Trevor are used to accompanying songs, but for the band as a whole, there's been a learning curve. We have arranged songlike sets before, added layers, intros and outros and so on. For songs, though, it's a different kind of craft, and demands a subtlety in adding texture and color."

For this go-round with Merchant, Lúnasa has extended itself beyond the traditional song domain. "We visited Natalie's back catalog of material – 'Motherland,' for instance, and 'Cowboy Romance,' which is from her very first solo album – to find songs that really suited us," says Crawford.

At the same time, the band reached further back into its own portfolio. "We dusted off some old sets we haven't done in a while; Colin had never had an opportunity to play them with us. So whether you're a Natalie Merchant fan or a Lúnasa fan, you'll probably hear something familiar – maybe done in a different way than you might remember."

For tickets and other information, go to [thewilbur.com](http://thewilbur.com).

which featured traditional and contemporary folk songs like "Soldier, Soldier," "Poor Wayfaring Stranger," "House Carpenter" and "Crazy Man Michael." Crawford and his bandmates were more than a little impressed at discovering this side of her: "She's really been a huge fan of Irish singers and songs: Dolores Keane, Paul Brady – she'll go line by line through their repertoires."

After a few "one-off" appearances together, Merchant and Lúnasa went on a tour last year that took them through Ireland and then to New York City and the Albany area. It was a good bonding experience for all, says Crawford, and helped band and singer get better used to one another's personal and musical styles.

"It's definitely a different kind of gig. The five of us take our music seriously, but we don't take ourselves seriously. With Natalie, we're really trying to be on

## The film 'MAZE' will open in Hub March 29

"MAZE" is the true story of the world's most astonishing mass prison break, which became the biggest prison escape in Europe since World War II. Written and directed by Stephen Burke, it's based on the mass breakout from H Block 7 in September of 1983.

At the time, HM Prison Maze was considered the most impregnable in Europe, a fearsome place surrounded by 15-foot-high fences and comprising a labyrinth of H-shaped buildings encased in even higher concrete walls – a prison within a prison. Set in the Irish countryside, its layout was designed to disorient prisoners and make it difficult for them to plot and plan escapes.

A blend of historical context with genre filmmaking, the movie exposes how the IRA managed to crack this supposedly impregnable British fortress and spring 38 Northern Ireland Republican political prisoners, some of whom were later instrumental in forging the Good Friday peace accords. Lightyear Entertainment will release the film in New York on March 22, and in Boston and other cities on March 29.

The key relationship in Maze is between Larry Marley, prisoner and chief architect of an escape that he plans but does not go on himself, and Gordon Close, a prison warden. Initially, Larry and Gordon are enemies, born on opposite sides of Northern Ireland's political divide, and they have as little human contact with each other as possible. However, when Larry sees something in Gordon that makes him think he could be useful for his escape plan, a slow seduction begins.

This is writer/director Burke's second film. Much of the story is adapted from real events, and initially, the connection between the two is based on cold deception, manipulation and betrayal, making the relationship they eventually form all the stronger.

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# Cambridge, Beverly hosts in waiting for 12th St. Patrick’s Day Celtic Sojourn

**BY SEAN SMITH  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR**  
Ireland’s Friel Sisters, Cape Breton/Scottish fiddle-piano duo Katie McNally and Neil Pearlman, and Quebecois mainstays Yann Falquet and Pascal Gemme, along with New England guitarist-vocalist Keith Murphy, are the featured acts at this year’s 12th annual St. Patrick’s Day Celtic Sojourn.

Also joining this year’s cast will be a quartet of dancers from the Liam Harney Academy of Irish Dance in Walpole.

The show, created and hosted by WGBH radio host Brian O’Donovan, will take place on March 16 at 3 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. in Cambridge’s Sanders Theatre, and on March 17 at 3 p.m. in the Cabot Theatre in Beverly.

The Friel Sisters – Anna (flute), Sheila (uilleann pipes), and Clare (fiddle) – are traditional musicians born in Glasgow but with family roots firmly entrenched in the Donegal Gaeltacht. Their unison singing style, song repertoire, and instrumental playing are all for the most part redolent of Donegal or elsewhere in Ulster, embracing tradition even while interpolating their own impressions and ideas – some from within their family, some inspired by the likes of Planxty and The Bothy Band. The sisters have toured extensively, appearing with acts such as Altan, The Chieftains, Lúnasa, Sharon Shannon, The Máirtín O’Connor Trio, and Cherish the Ladies, and their two albums – the second of which, “Before the Sun,” released last year – have drawn critical acclaim.



Celtic Sojourn maestro Brian O’Donovan on the job. WGBH photo

Boston-area native McNally has emerged as one of the newest bright lights in Cape Breton/Scottish-style fiddling. She’s performed in the all-fiddle ensemble Childsplay and as a member of the quartet Long Time Courting, and is part of the recently formed Fársan. In recent years, McNally has teamed with Pearlman, a cross-genre pianist with a firm grasp of jazz, world, and other musical styles and influences. Pearlman – who also plays with McNally in Fársan – is co-founder of the

bands Soulsha and Alba’s Edge, which blends Celtic music with African, Caribbean, Latin, and other sounds. Falquet and Gemme are two-thirds of the popular Quebecois trio Genticorum, but their experience as a duo goes back some two decades. Falquet, who studied jazz in college, draws on guitar accompaniment from a variety of cultures – Brittany, North America, Scandinavia, and Ireland – and has become a welcome addition to the Boston folk/acoustic music scene

since moving to the area a few years ago (his most recent collaborations include playing with Katie McNally, and in a trio with flutist Shannon Heaton and fiddler George Keith). As a fiddler, Gemme is renowned as a composer as well as an interpreter of traditional tunes, and has received considerable praise for his singing, and his overall attention to collecting and preserving the music of Quebec. Murphy, who has been the show’s music director since 2012, is a celebrated figure in

the New England traditional music domain – for his prowess as an accompanist on guitar and piano, such as with the groundbreaking contra dance trio Nightingale and Childsplay, and with artists like fiddler Hanneke Cassel, and his wife, Becky Tracy, also an accomplished fiddler, and as a dynamic singer with a repertoire rooted in his native Newfoundland as well as Irish, French, and American traditions.

One member of the Harney Academy of Irish Dance contingent, Michaelann White, will not only be making her first appearance at “St. Patrick’s Day Celtic Sojourn,” but she is also working with Harney to devise the choreography.

A senior at Walpole High School, White is no stranger to the “Celtic Sojourn” franchise: She has performed in “A Christmas Celtic Sojourn” – also created and produced by O’Donovan – for the past decade. White, who began dancing when she was five and has a 2017 New England regional championship to her credit, cherishes the performance aspect of Irish dance, especially in “Celtic Sojourn.”

“I’ve loved going back every year to work with the musicians taking part in the show,” she says. “It’s never entirely the same people, of course, but that’s what makes it so good: To be able to dance to their incredible music is such a pleasure. So I’m really looking forward to meeting a whole new cast of performers in ‘St. Patrick’s Day Celtic Sojourn.’”

For information and tickets, go to [wgbh.org/celtic](http://wgbh.org/celtic).

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THE 148th ANNUAL SAINT PATRICK'S DAY BANQUET AND DANCE at the Reliefs' In, One Market Street, Lawrence, MA. Traditional Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner with dancing to John Connors & the Irish Express from 6 pm – 11 pm – Awarding of the Richard Cardinal Cushing and Irishman & Irishwoman of the Year Awards. For more information contact Charles Breen at 508 328 0323. Sponsored by Division 8 AOH – Handicap Accessible

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25th ANNUAL CLADDAGH PUB 4 MILE Classic ROAD RACE - 11 am, 399 Canal Street, Lawrence, MA (rain or shine) - For more information contact 978 314 1073 or BarryKaraFoundation22gmail.com

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### **Wednesday, March 6, 2019**

LAWRENCE PUBLIC LIBRARY - South Lawrence Branch, 135 Parker Street, Lawrence, MA: OPEN HOUSE 10:30 am – 1 pm Showcase of Irish Books, CD's and DVD's – Sponsored by Division 8 (FREE) – Handicap Accessible

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MARJORIE HARSHAW ROBIE, will discuss her book, "DUELING DRAGONS – THE STRUGGLE FOR IRELAND 1849 – 1875" - at Lawrence Heritage State Park Visitors Center, 1 Jackson St., Lawrence, MA @ 2 pm Sponsored by Division 8 AOH (FREE) - Handicap Accessible

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### **Friday, March 15, 2019**

50th ANNUAL SAINT PATRICK'S DAY LUNCHEON at the Reliefs' In, One Market Street, Lawrence, MA Traditional Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner with entertainment by the Silver Spears Irish Show Band at NOON. Awarding of the Honorable John E. Fenton Citizenship Award - For more information contact Jack Lahey @ 603 560 8192 Sponsored by Division 8 AOH – Handicap Accessible

### **Saturday, March 16, 2019**

IRISH FILM FESTIVAL at Lawrence Heritage State Park Visitors Center, 1 Jackson St, Lawrence, MA @ 10 am Sponsored by Division 8 AOH (FREE) – Handicap Accessible

### **Wednesday, March 20, 2019**

LAWRENCE PUBLIC LIBRARY - South Lawrence Branch, 135 Parker Street, Lawrence, MA: OPEN HOUSE 10:30 am – 1 pm Showcase of Irish Books, CD's and DVD's - Sponsored by Division 8 (FREE) – Handicap Accessible

### **Saturday, March 23, 2019**

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Sunday, March 24, 2019 – JOIN PIANIST TERRI KELLEY AND VOCALIST BILL DONELAN FOR AN ALL NEW PROGRAM OF CELTIC MELODIES - FROM ANCIENT GAELIC AIRES TO CURRENT SONGS - at the Lawrence Public Library, Sargent Auditorium, 51 Lawrence St., Lawrence, MA @ 2 pm Presented by Division 8 (FREE) – Handicap Accessible

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For information on AOH Membership please write to: Division 8 AOH Organizer, PO Box 1407, Lawrence, MA 01842 or e-mail our organizer @ [division8aoh@verizon.net](mailto:division8aoh@verizon.net)



MUSIC REVIEW

# ‘An Tobar Séimh’: Beautifully sung songs from a fine well

BY SEAN CAHILL  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

“Why would you want to study Irish?” is a question that Irish language learners are often asked. What I like most about Irish Gaelic is how it gives you access to an amazingly beautiful, living culture and, in a deep way, access to Irish history and tradition.

The places where Irish is still the community language, known as Gaeltachtaí, are almost universally spectacularly beautiful, isolated rural areas where mountains and sea meet. Rinn Ó gCuanach, the Gaeltacht in southwest Co. Waterford, is no exception. I and other members of Cumann na Gaeilge i mBoston (Boston Irish Language Society) have attended summer courses there. A hundred Irish speakers and learners from as far away as Japan converge at Colaiste na Rinne (the College of Rinn) in August for classes and a conference.

Less than a century ago, the Gaeltacht region stretched from east Cork up to south Tipperary, and included a big chunk of Waterford. This is incredible, considering how the region was settled by waves of Vikings, Normans, and English planters for more than a thousand years. But today the Gaeltacht is restricted to two villages—An Rinn and An Sean Phobal (the Old Parish). Still, it is a vital and culturally rich community, thanks in part to the Irish learners from around the region who study at the college throughout the year or return periodically for cultural events, as if returning to a well with fine water to drink. Even more important are the families that have transmitted the language from generation to generation, an unbroken chain of tradition.

Last summer I met Carthach Mac Craith in a singing workshop at the college. Last fall Carthach put out his first CD of old-style (sean-nós) Gaelic songs, called *An Tobar Séimh*—The Fine Well, in the sense that the water it holds is fine, mild, or smooth. The CD has already won numerous awards. Mac Craith’s collection is a powerful rendition of the local Gaelic oral tradition, which is also the tradition of Ireland. Mac Craith’s voice is itself smooth and mild, with a powerful range. Three songs in the collection have not been recorded until now. The songs include “Éamonn an Chnoic,” Éamonn of the Hill. Éamonn Ó Riain was a Tipperary landowner who was a hero of the battles again British King William of Orange in the late 17th century. Following the defeat of Irish forces loyal to the Catholic King James II by Williamite forces in 1691, Britain implemented Anglo-Protestant minority rule in Ireland. Ó Riain and other Catholics were dispossessed of their land. Legend has it that, years later, a tax collector was trying to take a peasant woman’s cow when Ó Riain challenged the man, killed him, and then went on the run. For decades Éamonn roamed the hills of Tipperary leading a band of outlaws. He became a legend, not unlike Robin Hood, defending the poor peasantry against the cruelty of the landlords and the army. The first verse of the song goes (excuse the translation):

“Who is that outside with the urgent voice, pounding on my closed door?”  
“I am Éamonn of the Hill, drowned, cold and wet, from endlessly traveling the mountains and glens.”  
“My dearest one, what can I do with you, except cover you with the lap of my dress?”  
For the gunpowder is driving heavily at you, and we will both be obliterated.”



Another song, Seán Ó Duibhir an Ghleanna, describes another Tipperary landowner dispossessed of his land who joins the outlaws in the hills. In addition to decrying the destruction of the Gaelic order, the song laments the felling of the Irish forest and the destruction of nature for the British navy and industry:

*It is my great sadness  
That the shelter for my ears [the forest] has been cut,  
The north wind numbing me,  
And death in the sky.*

While Irish history, for centuries, was one tragedy after another, many of the songs in Mac Craith’s collection are hopeful and upbeat. One example is the Gaelic revival song “Speak the Irish language with me,” which many Irish students learn in school:

*Oh speak the Irish language with me  
My heart’s love and my treasure  
The language that my mother spoke with me  
In green Ireland long ago  
She is the melodious tongue of our ancestors  
The sweetest sounding speech  
Oh speak the Irish language with me  
And dispel the sorry from my heart.*

Mac Craith learned sean-nós songs from his grandmother, neighbors and close family friends, including the legendary Nioclás Toibín, who won the national Gaelic singing championship three years in a row. Carthach’s father, Nioclás Mac Craith, was a tireless advocate for Irish language and culture, recording one of the largest collections of songs from the region in the 1950s. Most songs on *An Tobar Séimh* are taken from Carthach’s father’s collection. Joining Carthach on some of the songs are his daughter Méin Nic Craith, who plays Liam Clancy’s concertina, and Carthach’s nephew Dónal Clancy, who plays guitar. Carthach is married to Liam Clancy’s daughter Siobhán.

I highly recommend this CD to anyone who loves Irish music and tradition. While the liner notes are only in Irish, you can find English translations to many of the songs online, although some, like “Ned of the Hill,” are completely different from the original Irish. Still, even for those without much Irish, it’s worth taking a drink from this fine well of our heritage.

*The best way to get a copy of “An Tobar Séimh” is to message Carthach Mac Craith on Facebook.*

## Saving Now for Future Education Expenses

Presented by Brian W. O’Sullivan, CFP, ChFC, CLU

College costs are up — it’s in the news, part of the political debate ... it’s everywhere. But what does that really mean? Is college still a good investment? And if so, what’s the best way to save for it?

If you’re like most parents, you’re concerned about how you’ll fund your child’s education. Even if you’ve managed to start saving, the fact remains that it just might not be enough. With all the competing priorities that you need to consider, such as retirement savings, you may be left confused and overwhelmed.



### Develop Your Strategy Early (If You Can)

The earlier you can start planning, the more money you can save. It’s hard to think beyond diapers and daycare at first, but even putting a small amount aside with each paycheck can make a big difference in the long run.

### Save

When developing your saving and investment strategy, there are a lot of options at your disposal. Setting up a savings account is a good start and can be part of your long-term financial plan. Another possibility to consider is a 529 plan. Operated by a state or educational institution, a 529 plan is an education savings account designed to help families plan for college. A 529 plan can allow parents, relatives and friends to help invest in a child’s education over time.

### Reduce Costs

Applying for scholarships is one that should never be overlooked. Many local organizations offer small scholarships that may seem insignificant but can be a nice extra to pay for expenses beyond tuition, room and board. And then, of course, there are more substantial scholarships that help supplement the cost of college that are based on academic or athletic achievements.

### Borrow

You may think taking a loan is a last resort, but the reality for many is that borrowing will ultimately fund a significant portion of their children’s education. There are a lot of options, both governmental and private, that you may use to supplement what you or your child has been able to save. The good news is that loans are available and many students and their parents take advantage of them as a way to help pay for college.

There are some resources that are often overlooked. For instance, you may have a permanent life insurance policy with cash value that you could borrow against to help supplement some of the costs of school<sup>1</sup>.

### A Sound Investment

Despite challenges that come with financing higher education, college is still a smart investment and there are many options to help save for it. And when saving isn’t enough, there are plenty of other ways to help reduce the costs or help you borrow the funds you’ll need for the education that is a priceless gift.

*Brian W. O’Sullivan is a registered representative of and offers securities, investment advisory and financial planning services through MML Investors Services, LLC, Member SIPC (www.sipc.org). Supervisory Address: 101 Federal Street, Suite 800, Boston, MA 02110. He may be reached at 617-479-0075 x331 or bosullivan@financial-guide.com.*

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CD Reviews

By Sean Smith

**Manus McGuire, “The Copperplate Sessions” •** McGuire, a member of such bands as Buttons and Bows and Moving Cloud, grew up in the firmament of the Sligo fiddle tradition, but as a young man embarked on a trip to Canada that exposed him to other fiddle styles and repertoires – Cape Breton, Quebec, Ottawa Valley, Manitoba – that he brought back with him and shared on a series of seminal albums. “The Copperplate Sessions” is a recreation not just of McGuire’s journey, but also of the odyssey of the fiddle itself from Ireland and Scotland to North America, and the mutual exchange of musical influences that has occurred along the way.

Fittingly enough, McGuire has gathered accompanists from Scotland, Shetland, Canada, and the US to join him. The result is a collection of exquisitely delivered tune sets, and a pair of songs, that underscores the commonalities between the music traditions even while delineating their respective distinctiveness. The overall musicianship, especially the tight playing between McGuire and his friends, is of a high quality and an unmitigated pleasure to behold.

The “Canadian Reel Set” – starting with the justly popular “Mouth of the Tobique” – is Exhibit A, with Shetland fiddler Bryan Gear doubling up on the melody, Scottish musicians Tom Orr (piano), Duncan Findlay (guitar), and Neil MacMillan (double bass) providing rock-solid rhythm, and Canadian Emily Flack’s step dancing as the musically metaphorical cherry on top. Elsewhere, McGuire and fiddle visit the Orkney Islands – collaborating with Orcadian fiddler Fiona Driver

and pianist Trevor Hunter for a sprightly trio of reels composed by Driver – and Shetland, pairing with fiddler Bryan Gear on an air penned by the illustrious Willie Hunter, “Mrs. Mary Stevenson” (featuring more splendid piano backing by Orr), and on four reels, including compositions by Hunter, Dr. Tom Anderson, and Ronnie Cooper, celebrated Shetland fiddlers all.

The Irish tradition is well-represented here, too, as McGuire and Orr take on a set of reels with a heavy Sligo flavor (“Bonnie Kate/Hare’s Paw/Old Copperplate/New Copperplate/Mason’s Apron”) and a medley of four jigs, including one each from Tipperary’s Paddy O’Brien and Tyrone native Jimmy McHugh, ending with “The Tar Road to Sligo.”

The songs so winningly voiced by Flack are Roscommon writer Percy French’s “Gort na Mona” and a Gaelic piece, “An Chiarraíoch Mallaithe (The Bold Kerryman).” Flack, who is McGuire’s frequent musical partner nowadays, also accompanies herself on piano with taste and intelligence (this is truly an album for the piano player in your life); American Ellen Giro adds a spare but expressive cello to “Gort na Mona.”

“The Copperplate Sessions” also exhibits a personal dimension to the music. Scottish fiddler Marie Fielding wrote an air for McGuire almost two decades ago, which she plays with him here. The final track, meanwhile, begins with McGuire playing the soulful, elegiac “Stephen’s Dream,” which he wrote as a tribute to his son, who died from meningitis at age 18; and then McGuire, with Fielding, Orr, McMillan, and Flack (step dance) swing into a set of well-loved reels (“Blackberry Blossom/Maude Miller/Molloy’s Favorite/Miss Thornton”). It’s a lovely sentiment made real, how this music can express our sorrow and lift our spirits and help us move forward. The tunes go on, and so does life. [manusmcguiremusic.ie]

**Dan Possumato, “The Last Pint” •** When you’ve got a good formula that works perfectly well, why change? Possumato, a native Pittsburgher now living in Maine, has put out four CDs (plus a compilation album)

featuring his melodeon and accordion playing, accompanied by a varying cast of musical friends. Much like his previous releases “Land of Sunshine” and “Tunes Inside,” the cover photo of “The Last Pint” evokes a pub setting, an atmosphere of camaraderie and informality where musicians play for the sheer joy of it – and that’s exactly what comes across on these 14 tracks.

As before, the sets are generally played in unison with minimal arrangement, and in small combinations of musicians: trios, quartets, or quintets. This time around, Possumato’s cohort includes renowned traditional Irish performers fiddlers Kevin Burke, Billy Oskay, and Seamus McGuire (brother of Manus – see review above) and bodhran player Myron Bretholz. The others, if perhaps not quite as widely recognized, are equally deserving of attention: fiddlers Bill Verdier and Vince Burns; guitarist Kathy Fallon; tenor banjoist Bruce Molyneaux; and bouzouki player Frances Cunningham.

While there are some familiar tunes, like the jig combo “Cordal/Sweet Biddy Daly’s” and the reel set “Miss Cassidy’s/Thar an gCnoc/Lad O’Beirne’s,” Possumato and crew also have a go at, among others, Charlie Lennon’s formidable “Twelve Pins” and Phil Cunningham’s inspired “Martin O’Connor’s Flying Clog.” In fact, quite a few of the selections on the album are contemporary vintage, including the titular hornpipe, written by French guitarist Pierre Bensusan, plus Cork accordionist Dave Hennessey’s “The Phoenix” and box player nonpareil Jackie Daly’s “Fly Fishing” – the kind of tunes you find yourself thinking that you want to hear more often.

Possumato also continues his practice of going beyond the Irish domain, as he and Burke, Oskay and Baker play “Hommage till en Spelman (Homage to a Fiddler)” by Swedish musician Torbjörn Näsborn, with some lovely harmonies between Burke and Oskay, and (with Burke and Baker) a Quebecois-style waltz, “Uncle Stewart’s,” penned by fiddler Lisa Ornstein and accordionist Denis Pépin, joined to Possumato’s own “Ellen’s Waltz.” Of particular interest is a pair of Newfoundland “singles,” which somewhat resemble Irish polkas; on the second of these, “Trip to Boston,” Possumato trades off with the other musicians (Burns, Fallon, and Bretholz in this case) during the A part, and it sounds like a Breton-style call-and-response.

It’s somewhat disingenuous to say Possumato’s albums are “just like” a session captured on tape (or its digital equivalent): Clearly, “The Last Pint,” like its predecessors, was put together with preparation and forethought, rather than leaving everything to chance and inspiration of the moment. Yet Possumato, by dint of his smooth, low-key accordion style, sets a tone for his recordings that makes them seem like just naturally occurring events. And well they should be. [danpossumato.com]

**Van Morrison, “The Prophet Speaks” •** Sir Van the Man (remember, he’s a knight now) rolls on, and at quite a prodigious pace, with his fifth studio album in the past three years, and 40th overall. After using a multitude of backing musicians on most of his recent works, for these last two albums Morrison has turned to a smaller ensemble led by jazz keyboardist and trumpeter Joey DeFrancesco, with saxophonist/bassist Troy Roberts, guitarist Dan Wilson and drummer Michael Ode. This makes for a smaller but generally more cohesive sound, DeFrancesco and his mates clearly having established a rapport with the 73-year-old Pride of Belfast that invigorates both singer and band.

Following suit with this current string of releases, “The Prophet Speaks” includes Morrison’s own material with covers of songs by, among others, John Lee Hooker (“Dimples”), Sam Cooke (“Laughin’ and Clownin’”), and Eddie “Cleanhead” Vinson (“Gonna Send You Back Where I Came From”) – performers whose work very effectively illuminates the inspiration he’s derived from jazz, blues, R&B, gospel, and other sources.

In fact, Morrison’s “Ain’t Gonna Moan No More” is a slowly igniting tribute to blues/jazz singers of yore, with references – literal and otherwise – to Hooker, Louis Armstrong, Muddy Waters, and even Lord Buckley, a 1940s/50s humorist/comic who reinterpreted classical literature through jazz and jive. “When you know the score, you don’t have to moan no more,” proclaims Morrison (his phrasing makes “moan” sound like “mourn”), his blistering harmonica further fanning the flame.

All of which is to say, if anyone wondered whether at this point Morrison would be phoning it in, well, the answer continues to be a definite “no.” If any more proof were necessary, listen to his “Got to Go Where the Love Is”: Buoyed by solos from DeFrancesco and Wilson, the song is four-plus minutes of self-affirmation and self-actualization (“Got to break out of this empty shell/Start all over somewhere else/Somewhere much stronger than this/Somewhere I can be myself/Stead of sittin’ on the shelf”), with handclaps and shouts of encouragement from the band adorning classic Morrison vocalizations. It does take you back, even as you move forward.

Oh, and by the way? Later this month sees the release of a deluxe edition of “The Healing Game,” including not only the landmark 1997 album that definitively marked Morrison’s return to jazz, blues/R&B, but also a ton of rare and unreleased recordings. A late but undoubtedly welcome Christmas present for Sir Van the Man lovers old and new. [vanmorrison.com]



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# The fiddler Laurel Martin tracks the spirit of her forbears when making her music

BY SEAN SMITH  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

For Laurel Martin, the Irish traditional music she plays on her fiddle isn't simply about notes on a staff, or melody, or rhythm. It's also the suggestion of images, places and times, and the presence of the people who have inhabited the music.

"There are tunes or phrases of tunes that make me imagine, say, water on a rock or a soft wind blowing through the trees," says Martin, a Westford resident. "I love how instrumental music, while it may have no words, can convey all kinds of messages if you open yourself up to the possibilities.

"When you listen to players you enjoy, especially the musicians from other eras, it really is music from another time – even another world," she adds. "And you can find yourself asking, 'What was it the people who made these tunes were trying to say? What did they see, what did they experience, that made this music happen?' I honestly feel it's a privilege to play, and be a vessel for, this music and all that went into it."

It is this sense of wonderment and respect for her forbears in the Irish music tradition that gives Martin's fiddling a particularly empathetic quality – and has helped make her one of the most respected American-born Irish musicians of the past couple of decades. She has performed at venues and events throughout New England, including Boston College's Gaelic Roots festival (and concert series), the New World Festival, Fiddle Hell, Blackstone River Theater, Burren Backroom and BCMFest (including this year's festival, held last month). Martin also has become a valued teacher and mentor, and has been the recipient of two Massachusetts Cultural Council grants to support her work with young musicians.

Late last year, she released her second solo album, "Larks and Thrushes," the long-awaited follow-up to 2006's "The Groves." She has also recorded as a member of the Boston-based fiddle ensemble "Childsplay" [their latest album, "The Bloom of Youth," is in this month's CD reviews column] and appeared on the final album by the late Scottish singer Tony Cuffe, "Sae Will We Yet."

"Larks and Thrushes" showcases Martin's command of, and unadulterated affection for, the lyrical, unhurried fiddle style evocative of older Clare, Galway, and Sligo traditions. Instead of coming at you with metaphorical guns blazing, Martin's playing offers a leisurely, even introspective route through the jigs, reels, hornpipes, and other tunes in her repertoire. But "leisurely" shouldn't be taken to mean lackadaisical or inert: It's this approach that reveals in precise detail the nuances and subtle features – the triplets, the rolls, the turns of phrase – so integral to the music.

"I'm enthralled with the players who express a range of color and emotion in their playing," she says. "[Sligo fiddler] Michael Coleman was a master of this: Even though his playing was fast and technically brilliant, there was a sorrowful quality that ran beneath

the surface. I love the music of Sliabh Luachra, and the slower-paced music of Clare and East Galway for the same reason. The rhythmic lilt, the use of space and variation are riveting to me, and I think those elements have had an effect on my own playing style."

A good chunk of Martin's affinity for Irish music, and the personal dimension to it, came through her studies under master fiddler Seamus Connolly, some of which was supported through a Massachusetts Cultural Council grant. It wasn't just his technical ability or his encyclopedic knowledge that made an impression, but his familiarity – and in many cases friendship – with so many of the influential musicians who helped preserve and maintain the Irish tradition.

"He shared his music with me from his heart," says Martin of Connolly, with whom she would later collaborate to publish a book of traditional Irish tunes with accompanying CD, "Forget Me Not: Fifty Memorable Traditional Irish Tunes."

So it's fitting that "Larks and Thrushes" contains tunes from this association with Connolly, such as the set of reels, "Eleanor Kane/Gooseberry Bush/Miss Lyon's Fancy," which opens the album, or a variant of that venerable hornpipe "The Blackbird" that Connolly and Martin included in "Forget Me Not." "Hickey's Reel" also was part of "Forget Me Not" – but Martin acknowledges that, in the interim, the tune had dropped off her radar. Give credit to her friend and longtime collaborator Mark Roberts (he plays flute, whistle, banjo, and bouzouki on the album) for reawakening her interest in it: "Mark sent me a sound file of Paddy Cronin – a great fiddler from Kerry who lived in Boston for some years – playing 'Hickey's,' not knowing I played it. I knew right then and there I wanted to include it on the album."

The next tune on the track, "Spike Island Lasses," also has a Connolly connection: "Seamus had played for me a reel-to-reel recording of Johnny McGreevy of Chicago playing the tune, and I loved it. So I asked Beth Sweeney [librarian of the Irish Music Archives at Boston College] to find that recording for me, and I was able to learn it."

Rooted as she is in traditional music styles, Martin embraces more contemporary fashions and techniques for accompaniment and arrangement. Her primary accompanist is guitarist Jim Prendergast, who's worked in several genres and plays a rich, fairly sophisticated mix of rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic backing. Roberts's five-string banjo on the "Blackbird" set gives it an Americana feel, and his bouzouki adeptly enhances the changing rhythms in a medley comprising the slip jig "Tea in the Morning" with the hop jigs "Foxhunter's" and "Back in the Dean."

Two special guests further invigorate "Larks and Thrushes": Charlie Lennon lends his buoyant but reserved piano to two tracks, including a composition of his in tribute to Clare fiddler Paddy Canny followed by two reels from Canny's repertoire; Mary MacNamara

and her Clare-style concertina bolster a set of polkas and another of jigs, both tracks recorded at MacNamara's home just as the great Irish blizzard of 2018 was underway.

Near and dear to Martin's heart is the involvement of her daughter Sarah (fiddle and viola) and Nathaniel (double bass) – their classical influences gracefully intersect with Martin's fiddle on the medley of jigs "Miss Grace Hay" and O'Carolan's "Bumper Squire Jones" (Nathaniel also appears on a set of reels later in the album).

"It was such a treat to have my kids involved, and I feel so lucky that they love music," she says. "While they ultimately wound up going in a classical music direction, they have become more interested in traditional music – and having grown up in house with traditional music, it's natural for them."

"The Hermit Thrush" – a Martin original inspired by the birdsong of New England forests – is the shortest track on the album, but it might say the most about Martin's approach to music, and her interest in how Irish musicians of past generations were able to express moods and sensations stemming from interactions with the natural world.

"While walking in the woods, I'd always hear the hermit thrush's distinctive trill. Eventually, a little phrase of a tune would come to me, and I would sing it into my phone so as not to forget it. I felt tied to the idea of imitating the trill, but when I began working on it, well, that wasn't really possible. So instead I went for the atmosphere which produced that sound, conveying the experience of being out in the woods when you can be attuned to nature."

Martin sees the expressive power of music in global, not just personal, terms. Like many people – whatever their sociopolitical bent – she has felt despair in recent years over a perceived decline in civil discourse and an overall



**Laurel Martin: "I love how instrumental music, while it may have no words, can convey all kinds of messages if you open yourself up to the possibilities."**  
*Nathaniel Martin photo*

edginess and tension, and this formed a backdrop as she prepared to record "Larks and Thrushes."

"I believe the arts can have a role in social culture when there are events or a set of circumstances that dramatically affect us," she explains. "There are, of course, innumerable ways to express that in art. Some may choose to highlight the contentiousness and conflict. My art was meant to be subtler, through making music in which one could find a quiet sort of joy. I'm certainly not trying to save the world, but simply trying to give people a sense of where I go to when I hear this music: a deep, quiet place where you can enjoy the moment for what it is."

*For more about Laurel Martin, see laurelmartin.com.*



May luck be our companion  
May friends stand by our side  
May history remind us all  
Of Ireland's faith and pride  
May God bless all with happiness  
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*Happy St. Patrick's Day!*

CONGRESSMAN & MRS.  
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## Irish Hearts for Orphans day of merriment Sun., April 7, in Quincy

The 10th annual Irish Hearts for Orphans event, which will be held on Sun., April 7, at the Marriott Hotel in Quincy, promises a full day of Irish music and set dancing that will benefit NPH USA, a charity that promotes "raising children, supporting families and transforming lives."

NPH stands for "Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos" or "Our Little Brothers and Sisters" in English. Since its founding in 1954, NPH has assisted more than 18,000 children through its programs.

"The Boston Irish Reporter will be a media sponsor again this year," said the newspaper's

publisher, Ed Forry. "I am pleased to again support this great event, which was conceived in 2010 by the remarkable Winnie Henry and her family as a way to assist children in Haiti after the devastating earthquake that year. This agency does wonderful work, and the Sunday afternoon of Irish music and merriment is a great way to help its efforts."

"NPH USA transforms the lives of abandoned and disadvantaged children in Latin America and the Caribbean by supporting homes, healthcare, and educational programs," according to the organization's mission statement. "Together, we create families for life and teach

children the values of unconditional love, shared responsibility and helping others. Our donors help children overcome poverty and become leaders in their own communities."

NPH USA development manager Elizabeth Caletka told the BIR that the organization is once again reaching out for support from the Boston Irish community. "Join us in celebrating 10 years of transforming lives – get involved!" she said. "We are currently looking for committee members, fun silent auction items, all levels of corporate sponsorships, and day-of-event volunteers! Call us at 617-206-4920."



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# Labor says it will back a second Brexit vote

(Continued from page 1)  
Britain is due to leave the EU on March 29 but Parliament has so far rejected the deal struck between May’s government and the bloc. Parliament is due to hold a series of votes Wednesday on next steps in the Brexit process. May remains convinced that March 29 remains a realistic Brexit date, despite the EU urging Britain to delay its departure from the bloc to avoid a chaotic rupture. After meeting with several EU leaders at a summit in Egypt last week, May said that “it is within our grasp to leave with a deal on 29th of March and I think that that is where all of our energies should be focused.” She added that “any delay is a delay. It doesn’t address the issue. It doesn’t resolve the issue.” Moments earlier, EU Council President Donald Tusk had said that a delay would be the “rational solution,” later adding that the chances of a Brexit deal being sealed were receding. He urged British Prime Minister Theresa May to request that the negotiations be prolonged, noting that “it’s clear there is no majority in the House of Commons to approve a deal.” He added that May’s 27 European partners would show “maximum understanding.”




Jeremy Corbyn and Theresa May.






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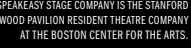
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## Traveling People

# When March comes around, St. Patrick moves to stage center

By JUDY ENRIGHT  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

March is here – and that means it's nearly spring in New England! Ireland is already enjoying spring weather and the daffodil, that cheery harbinger of warmer weather, has been blooming and brightening the landscape for several weeks and its season is now nearly over.

In addition to heralding the arrival of spring, March is also the month when that special man - Saint Patrick - is toasted and honored everywhere.

## SAINT PATRICK

We probably all know St. Patrick is Ireland's patron saint. But, how many of us knew that he is also the patron saint of engineers, and of Nigeria?

It seems that Ireland has a long history with Nigeria. Irishman Roger Casement – executed in Dublin for his part in the Easter Rising – served as a consular officer in southeastern Nigeria during the 1890s. Scholars say Casement's interest in, and sympathy for, Africans under colonial rule was unusual for a European in the Victorian era and may well have formed his views on social justice.

Irish priests from the Order of the Holy Ghost established a mission in southern Nigeria in the early 1920s. Later, St. Patrick's Society for Foreign Missions became one of many Catholic groups to bring religious and secular education to the country.

And in 1961 - when the Irish government opened an embassy in Lagos – St. Patrick was chosen as Nigeria's patron saint.

## LEGENDS

Legends abound about St. Patrick. Was there more than one Patrick? Where was he really born and buried? Did he do all the things for which he is given credit? He allegedly drove snakes out of Ireland but some scholars say there never were snakes in Ireland – and that's probably just one of many dubious but interesting legends.

According to ecclesiastical authorities, his dates of birth and death are questionable as is his birthplace - maybe Scotland, maybe England, possibly northern Wales.

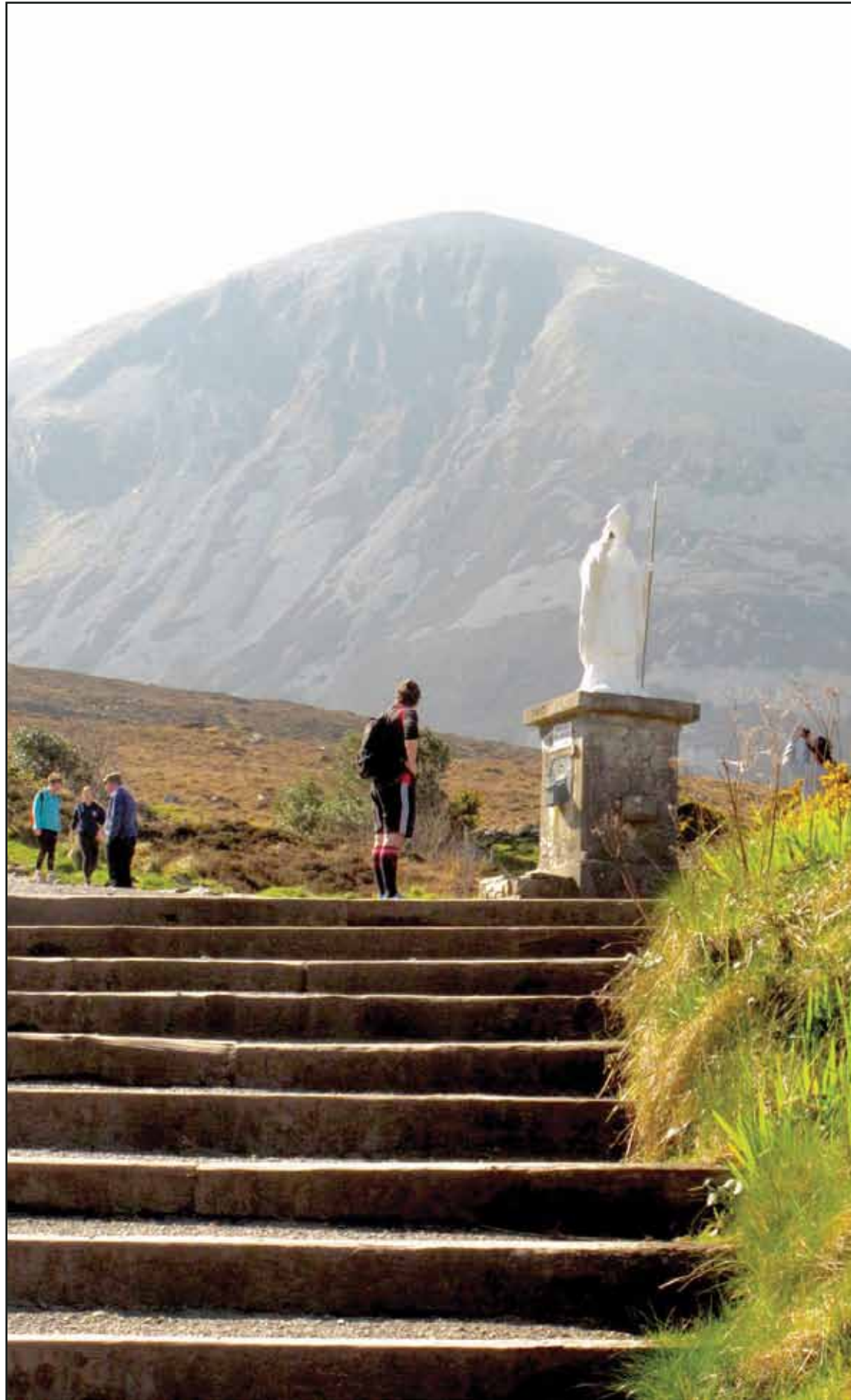
Whatever his background, childhood, or education, he was reportedly consecrated a bishop in France at the age of 43 and then traveled to the west and north of Ireland to convert pagans there. Patrick, who was protected by local kings, made numerous converts, ordained many priests, divided the country into dioceses, held church councils, and founded several monasteries.

## ST. PATRICK CENTRE

No one can predict how Brexit will affect future travel to Northern Ireland, but if you are interested in learning more about St. Patrick and his story, you won't find better or more complete information than at The Saint Patrick Centre in Downpatrick, Co. Down.

The Centre, which claims to be the world's only permanent exhibition about St. Patrick, has interactive galleries as well as IMAX, an art gallery with work by local artists, an outstanding craft shop, and a garden cafe with views of the medieval Cathedral of Down where the grave of Saint Patrick is located. Also buried in the graveyard at Down Cathedral are St. Brigid and St. Columba, also known as Columkille.

Nearby sites associated with Patrick include Inch Abbey, where the legend of the snakes was allegedly written, and the first church in Ireland at Saul, where Patrick reportedly died



Hardy pilgrims climb up past the statue of St. Patrick on their way to climb Croagh Patrick in Co. Mayo.

on March 17.

## EMERALD SOCIETY VISIT

St. Patrick's Day is celebrated in most cities and towns across Ireland - and the world. My first visit to Ireland, which coincided with the St. Patrick's Day parade in Dublin, was in 1976 with the Boston Police Emerald Society. The trip was organized by Round Tower Travel from Norwood and offered a series of options from a deluxe bus tour (\$239 per person) to car rental and hotels (varied prices from \$98 to \$159 per person.)

If you chose car rental only, the price ranged from \$85 to \$135 for eight days depending on the car size. I recently booked a car for this spring and the cost is now more than \$60 a day! Guess 1976 could truly be called "the good old days."

It was the Emerald Society's first time marching in the Dublin parade and it was exciting to see how proud marchers were to be representing Boston and their Irish heritage. My husband was a member of the group and my very important job on the 17th was to carry the group's flag covers along the parade route from beginning



Brittney LaCoste, owner of The Sheepish Dog, a Co. Mayo company that makes dog beds from sheep's wool and Irish tweed. She is shown here with a member of the board.

Judy Enright photos

to end. I nearly lost the covers several times along the way in the crush of spectators jamming every sidewalk.

During that eight-day trip, we drove all over the country; I was totally hooked.

## PIPE BANDS

Even though I visit Ireland

often now, it took nearly 40 years to experience my second St. Patrick's Day in Ireland – this time on Achill Island (Co. Mayo), to watch the traditional pipe band marches that have been held there annually since 1882. Marchers gather in the early morning and march for

most of the day – probably one of the longest St. Patrick's Day parades anywhere.

Rain poured down when I visited Achill for the parade, but marchers and onlookers weren't at all daunted and it was a fascinating musical spectacle. It's highly recommended if you're anywhere near the west coast and Achill Island on March 17.

The pipe bands (Dooagh, Keel, Pollagh, and Dookinella) march to Mass (in Irish) at St. Patrick's Church in Pollagh and then to Mass at Dookinella Church. The bands play in Pollagh, march to Dookinella, play again, and then march back to their villages.

After the pipe band parades, visitors can find refreshment in pubs or hotels. An added plus is driving around to enjoy the island's amazing scenery. In the evening, traditional and modern entertainment is offered in many of the local hotels and pubs.

## SHEEPISH DOGS

Brittney LaCoste is no stranger to making dog beds. She started a company – dawg-tired.com - in Wisconsin that makes dog beds. She has now started another company – thesheepishdog.com – with an Irish twist.

She and her husband, Harry Campbell, love fishing for trout and salmon and had visited Ireland many times to enjoy the sport – especially in Connemara. In 2015, they bought a farm in Co. Mayo where sheep abound and Brittney had what you might call a "eureka" moment. The Irish make beautiful tweeds and dog beds need covers (tweeds.) Dog beds also need stuffing – aha, wool!

That's basically how The Sheepish Dog was born. Dog beds are filled with wool from Brittney's and area farmers' sheep and covers are sewn from Irish tweed bought from Hanly in Co. Tipperary.

Sheep produce a new fleece every year and are normally sheared in the summer so they grow new fleece before winter. "It takes the wool from one sheep to fill a bed," Brittney said, adding that wool is 100-percent natural, sustainable, biodegradable, and recyclable and has balanced thermal properties that regulate a dog's body temperature keeping them warm in winter and cool in summer.

Wool is naturally hypoallergenic and resistant to bacteria, mold, and mildew, she says. It also repels dust mites and cleans with a vacuum or in cool water. Covers unzip for easy washing.

"Everyone who's bought them loves them," she said. "They are truly unique and not copied from other dog beds." Brittney and Harry have two onsite testers too – German Shorthaired Pointers Maggie and Libby – who verify that the wool-filled beds are just great.

In nearby Newport, Brittney set up a sewing studio where several women work on the beds. Others in the area sew covers in their homes.

The beds sell direct to consumers, she said, adding that wool-filled beds are more comfortable for dogs than synthetic fiber-filled beds and keep their shape even after years of daily use.

"We love sheep. We love wool. And most of all, we love our dogs - sheepish or not."

## IRELAND

March is a great time to visit the island. Many attractions that close for the winter spring to life around March 17. Enjoy the country whenever and wherever you go. See Ireland.com for information about accommodation, events, and more.



# Priest's son demands Vatican attention for clergy's children

By NICOLE WINFIELD  
ASSOCIATED PRESS  
VATICAN CITY – The head organizer of the Vatican's sex abuse summit has met with an Irish ac-

tivist who is seeking to draw attention to another issue the Vatican has long sought to keep quiet: the plight of children of priests.

Archbishop Charles Scicluna, for years the Vatican's sex crimes investigator, met late last month with Vincent Doyle, the child of a priest. Through his advocacy and self-help group Coping International, Doyle has sought to compel Catholic leaders to acknowledge the issue of priests' children and the psychological and emotional impact the church's enforced secrecy has on them and their mothers. In a statement, Scicluna said the issue needed to be addressed and the children of priests acknowledged. "Each case should

be tackled and handled on its own merits," said the statement Scicluna gave Doyle, who shared it with The Associated Press. "The interest of the child should be paramount."

Notably, the statement did not say the priest should leave the priesthood to take care of his child as a layman, which is the common default response by church superiors.

The Vatican recently acknowledged to The New York Times that it has internal guidelines

on how to handle such cases. Vatican spokesman Alessandro Gisotti confirmed that the guidelines' fundamental principle is looking out for the best interests of the child. As such, he said, the guidelines "ordinarily ask for the priest to present his request to be dispensed from the obligations of the clerical state, and as a lay person, assume his responsibilities as a father, dedicating himself exclusively to his child."

Doyle is pressing for that default position to change, arguing that it often is not in the best interests of the child for his father to be fired. Doyle also notes that these children are born under a wide

range of circumstances, with some the result of sexual abuse by priests against girls and women.

Doyle said all agreed on the need for case-by-case approach to the issue of priest's children. The Catholic Church hierarchy in Ireland has taken the lead on addressing the issue with a child-focused set of guidelines published in 2017.

"This is important, as it eliminates the default expectations that he (the priest) has to leave," Doyle said. He said he was heartened by all his meetings and that the Catholic officials were compassionate and understood the pain he conveyed to them.

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All of us at Carney Hospital wish you and your family a very happy and healthy St. Patrick's Day!



James Morgan, MD



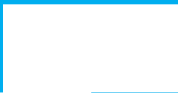
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