



Fiddle will make music with guitar when the New York City-based fiddle-guitar duo of Dana Lyn and Kyle Sanna make their debut at the Burren Backroom series on April 4. See the BIR's Art Calendar on Page 12.

St. Patrick's Day '18 in Southie

New site, hosts; usual fare on the tables, and at the mic

By COLIN A. YOUNG
STATE HOUSE
NEWS SERVICE

The more things change, the more they stay the same. The annual St. Patrick's Day breakfast in South Boston, a chance for Massachusetts public officials to try their hand at stand-up comedy and to get a few jabs in against others, was in a new location this year with a new set of co-hosts, but the fare was still eggs, sausage, a few good one-liners, and plenty of duds.

Notably absent from the breakfast, held this year at the Ironworkers Local 7 hall and hosted by U.S. Rep. Stephen Lynch and City Councilor Michael Flaherty, were the video skits that had become common at recent breakfasts. Poles had to rely more on their ability to stand and joke from the podium.

Lynch and Flaherty took on the task of hosting the breakfast when Linda Forry resigned her state Senate seat in January to take a job as an executive at Suffolk Construction. Forry sat near the front of the room Sunday, but was not on the dais with her former colleagues. Several speakers praised Forry including Lynch, who said she had taken the breakfast "to a very high level, from which it will now fall."

US Sen. Elizabeth Warren said the fact that Lynch and Flaherty were tapped to replace Forry as hosts proves that "it takes two men to do the job of one woman."



In Dorchester, the annual holiday brunch at St. Teresa's of Calcutta hosted by the Brett family raised over \$100,000 the Mary Ann Brett Food Pantry. Above Sean Somers presents Jim Brett with a check on behalf of Somers Pubs.

Story, Page 2.
Daniel Sheehan photo

President Trump was again a popular punching bag. Warren held up photo-shopped images of politicians – Joe Biden, Charlie Baker and herself – with Trump's coiffure in place of their own. Sen. Ed Markey made reference to Russian President Vladimir Putin being "at the highest levels of the Trump White House."

Gov. Charlie Baker, one of the few Republicans at the breakfast in heavily Democratic South Boston, was also the butt of a number of jokes.

US Rep. Michael Capuano, who said he isn't a joke-teller, made the importance of driving the British from Boston Harbor in March 1776 the central piece of his remarks.

"It kind of burned me that people took Bunker Hill Day and Evacuation Day as something that was just 'payroll patriot' holiday nonsense. These are people who don't know anything about history, nothing at all," the congressman said. "People died not just in battles, they died from starvation, they died from disease, they died from freezing ... we are here today because of them."

Taoiseach gifts Trump with bowl of shamrock

In Washington, Ireland Prime Minister Leo Varadkar kept up the strong annual tradition between the two countries by handing a bowl of shamrock to President Trump in the lead-up to St. Patrick's Day.

Varadkar trumpeted Ireland's long-standing relationship with the US and mentioned the plight of undocumented Irish in America and the strong trade between both countries in his speech at the White House today.

Trump, for his part, said that he "loved the Irish" and talked about the strong influence the Irish have had on the US over the years, adding that the Irish were people "full of love, warmth, grit and resolve."

Still no deal on Irish border amid preps for Brexit moves

ASSOCIATED PRESS

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has reassured Ireland that it can rely on Germany in Brexit talks as the European Union and Britain struggle to find a way to maintain an open Irish border after the UK leaves the continental organization.

Merkel met with Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar in Berlin on March 20, a day after EU and British negotiators said there had been no breakthrough on the Irish border issue, despite announcing progress on the outlines of a transition deal after Brexit day in a little more than a year's time.

"A solution must be found for this ... and Germany fully supports the Irish position," Merkel said.

Britain is due to leave the 28-nation EU in a little over a year, and how to keep open the all-but-invisible border between EU member state Ireland and Northern Ireland, which is part of the UK, is proving one of the biggest headaches.

Varadkar stressed that a "backstop solution" under

(Continued on page 5)



Capturing the action: Galway vs. Clare at Fenway Park, November 2017. Boston Red Sox photo

April 6 dinner will support Ireland's amateur athletes

By BILL FORRY
BIR EDITOR

The Boston Friends of the Gaelic Players Association will host their second annual dinner event on Fri., April 6, at the Intercontinental Hotel in Boston. The event seeks to build on the incredibly successful inaugural event last spring that drew a packed crowd to meet and hear from an all-star line-up of Ireland's sports heroes past and present.

This year's gala is expected to require an even bigger room – with an

array of current and former GAA players on hand direct from Ireland to promote the games and the GPA, which represents more than 2,200 current Gaelic footballers and hurlers in Ireland.

The dinner will also feature remarks from DeMaurice Smith, the executive director of the NFL Players Association, about the importance of supporting amateur athletes.

The event is chaired by Aidan Browne, a partner at event sponsor Sullivan & Worcester and chair-

(Continued on page 8)

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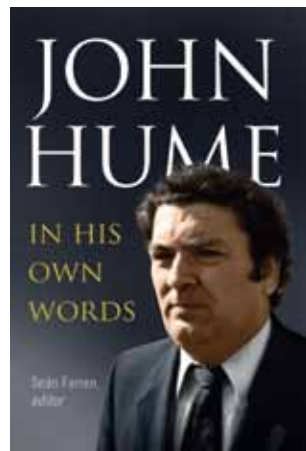
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Boston College Symposium panels to discuss ‘John Hume: His Vision and Legacy for Ireland’

Day-long forum set for April 28



In commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Movement and the 20th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, the Center for Irish Programs at Boston College will host a day-long symposium on April 28. For more than three

decades, Hume played a crucial role in upholding the constitutional tradition of Irish nationalism. His persistence in advocating dialogue and engagement as a means of resolving complicated issues and differences dividing the Catholic/Nationalist community and the Protestant/Unionist community was central to shaping and advancing the Irish peace process, from the landmark Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 to the historic Good Friday Agreement of 1998. Hume’s intellectual analysis of relationships at the heart of the Northern Irish problem provided much of the framework that enabled Irish, Northern Irish, and British and diplomats to reach agreement in 1998 and, subsequently, form the

power-sharing Assembly at Stormont in 2007. Panels will address Hume’s role in the initial civil rights campaign of the late 1960s, how his three-strand analysis was applied to healing the fractured relationships within Northern Ireland, between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and between Dublin and London. One panel will explore Hume’s role in marshaling Irish American political, moral, and economic support in pursuit of peace and justice. Panelists will include seven political activists and commentators from Northern Ireland as well as Bostonians who played positive, if distant, roles in advancing the peace process. The proceedings will

include the American launch of “John Hume: In His Own Words,” edited by Sean Farren, Hume’s long-time colleague in the Social Democratic and Labour Party. This volume includes excerpts from Hume’s speeches, articles, and essays along with contextual commentary by Sean Farren. Irish Ambassador Daniel Mulhall will launch the volume during the conference lunch. Copies of this book as well as “John Hume: Irish Peacemaker,” a collection of essays edited by Sean Farren and Dennis Haughey will also be available for purchase. This event, which will be held in Devlin Hall, Room 101, beginning at 9 a.m. is being sponsored by the Center for Irish Programs at



The Nobelist John Hume. *Irish Independent photo*

Boston College with additional support from the Global Leadership Institute, the Boston College Libraries, the Irish American Partnership, the Eire Society of Boston, the Charitable Irish Society, the Global Citizens Circle, the Northern Ireland Bureau

in Washington, the Irish and British Consulates in Boston and the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin. The symposium is being organized by Professors Sean Farren and Catherine Shannon. For more info, contact joan.reilly@bc.edu.

Dot St. Patrick’s Day brunch supported Brett food pantry



Former Irish American Partnership president Joe Leary and Sue Asci, former Reporter editor.

BY DANIEL SHEEHAN
REPORTER STAFF
More than 100 people gathered at St. Teresa’s of Calcutta church hall

on Saturday for the 12th annual Dorchester St. Patrick’s Day Brunch. The annual event, hosted by the Brett family, doubles

both as a fundraiser for the Mary Ann Brett Food Pantry and an induction ceremony into the Dorchester Hall of Fame. This year’s celebration raised over \$100,000 for the food pantry and named four new inductees: Fire Commissioner Joe Finn, Sister Barbara Gorham of Sisters of Charity Halifax, Bob Marr representing the Marr Family, and Governor Charlie Baker. Several current and former officials spoke at the light-hearted event. Mayor Martin Walsh was comfortable on his home turf, cracking jokes and welcoming everyone to “St. Margaret’s church,” as the site was known until 2004. The mayor also emphasized the lasting impact of the event on the community. “The money that’s raised here today helps the food pantry all year long,” he said. “This breakfast can help someone in need in July.” Walsh went on to introduce the first inductee, Dorchester’s Joe Finn, explaining how the fire



James Brett, Fire Commissioner Joe Finn, Sister Barbara Gorham SCH, Bob Marr, representing the Marr Family, and Father John Currie, pastor, St. Teresa Parish at St. Margaret Church. *Harry Brett photo*

commissioner “changed the mindset and brought to light the importance of occupational safety in the fire department.” The other inductees included the Marr family, who founded the Marr Club—now called the Boys and Girls Clubs of Dorchester—in 1974, and Sister Barbara Gorham, who has served the community for 59 years as a Sister of Charity, becoming known as the “Mother Teresa of Roxbury.” Gov. Baker gratefully accepted his surprise induction into the hall of fame, lauding Dorchester as “a community of dreams.” “I come here because I feel really good when I leave,” he said, speaking of the brunch. “Every year it’s a wonderful gathering that breathes hope, faith, and love.”

Host Jim Brett, who is the president and CEO of the New England Council and a former state representative from Dorchester, closed the event by invoking a sentiment that summed up the memory of his mother and the mission of the food bank. “We cannot forget our neighbors,” he said. “That’s what this is all about.”

The Irish scene: upcoming events

April 6 – The Gaelic Players Association will host its second Boston GPA Dinner at the InterContinental Hotel beginning at 6 p.m. Proceeds will support mental health and career services for GAA county players in Ireland. Tickets available at irishap.org/gpadinner. After party at Smith and Wollensky. For more information contact Natalie Metz at 617-723-2707 or natalie@irishap.org, or Karen Thorpe at 353-1-6814251 or Karen@gaelicplayers.com.
April 7 – The Eire Society’s Gold Medal Dinner at 6 p.m. at the Seaport Boston Hotel. This year’s Gold Medal Award recipient is Dorchester native James T. Brett, president and CEO of the New England Council. Tickets are \$150 per person. More information available at eiresociety.org/events/gold-medal/ or call 781-801-6316.
April 15 – Irish Hearts for Orphans will host its annual benefit dance from 3-7 p.m. at the Mar-

riott Hotel in Quincy. The benefit will feature set dancing and local music from the Kenny Academy of Irish Dance, Comhaltas Ceoloiri Eireann, Erin’s Melody, and Noel Henry’s Irish Showband. This year’s honorees include Quincy Mayor Thomas P. Koch and Christine A. Koch, Rev. Daniel J. Finn Paul, and Patricia Mikus. The event will also feature a silent auction, refreshments and light sandwiches, and a cash bar. \$20 suggested donation. Register online at nphusa.org/events/irishhearts.
April 16 – 2018: Three participants, Mary Varden, Sinead McGlynn, and Patricia Deasy will run the Boston Marathon on behalf of the Irish Pastoral Centre. To support their fundraising efforts, make donation online at ipcoston.org.
April 29 – The Irish Pastoral Centre will host its annual Spring Fling Dance at the Boston Union Teachers Hall from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. A raffle will be held during the event,

with a top prize of a round-trip to Ireland for two. Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased at ipcoston.org.
May 11 – The Eire Society will host a book launch at the Irish Cultural Centre with Cork author William Wall, who recently became the first non-US winner of the Drue Heinz literature prize for his series of short stories entitled “The Islands.”
May 11 – The Irish International Immigrant Center (IIIC) hosts a Business Leaders Breakfast from 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. at the Boston Harbor Hotel featuring keynote speaker Congresswoman Katherine Clark, Des Mac Intyre of BNY Mellon, and Raj Sharma of The Sharma Group at Merrill Lynch in a discussion on the social and economic benefits that immigration brings to our region. All proceeds benefit the IIIC. For further details, contact Megan Miller at 617-695-1554 or mmiller@iicenter.org.



Ireland Minister Michael Ring (center) represented the Irish government in a Boston visit during last months St. Patrick’s festivities. He was welcomed by the staff of the Irish International Immigrant Center. His itinerary included the Irish American Partnership breakfast, Ireland Funds’ Young Leaders reception, Irish Pastoral Centre, Irish Cultural Centre of New England, IN/Boston reception at Fenway Park, the Charitable Irish Society dinner, and the South Boston St Patrick’s Breakfast. Ring, who represents County Mayo, also visited with members of Boston’s County Mayo Association, and marched in South Boston’s Evacuation Day/St Patrick’s parade.



Warren town hall set for Dorchester next week

The Reporter will host Thurs. April 5, event at BTU hall

By JENNIFER SMITH
News Editor

The *Dorchester Reporter* will host a town hall event with Sen. Elizabeth Warren, a candidate for reelection this year, next Thursday evening, April 5, at the Boston Teachers Union (BTU) hall on Columbia Point in Dorchester.

This will be the senator's first town hall in Boston since summer 2016, although

she is a frequent presence at local union rallies, political marches, and visits with health centers and other institutions vulnerable to federal budget alterations. Her campaign headquarters are in the Mt. Vernon Street building that also houses the *Reporter* offices.

"I'm thrilled to be in Dorchester for our next town hall, and with the *Dorchester Reporter*,"

Warren said in a statement.



"Having a chance to connect with residents is one of my favorite parts of being a senator. People are energized. They see how what happens in Washington is fundamentally changing our country and neighborhoods, and I want to hear their voices."

The forum, which will be moderated by *Reporter* news editor Jennifer Smith, will

begin at 6:30 p.m. at the BTU hall — 180 Mt. Vernon St., Dorchester — with doors opening at 6 p.m. Parking is available at the site, which is also accessible from the MBTA via the JFK/UMass station. Registration will take place at the hall and audience questions will be chosen through a randomized lottery. Massachusetts's state primary is Tuesday, Sept. 4.

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 DELTA 

KEEP CLIMBING

Time is up for Yawkey Way

The Boston Red Sox, who have initiated a public process to change the name of Yawkey Way, are getting plenty of pushback from prominent apologists for the late Red Sox owner who claim that he has been unfairly portrayed as a racist.

His defenders note that the Yawkey Foundation, a charity that he and his wife created, has been a force for good since their deaths. Some, like former Sox hurler Jim Lonborg, say that Yawkey “changed” over the course of his life.

Yawkey’s most passionate defenders include leading Bostonians who have a connection to the foundation. Some are trustees, like Rev. Ray Hammond, who has become the most outspoken opponent of the name change. He and others, like Cardinal Sean O’Malley, whose various Catholic missions are aided by the fund’s largesse, signed a letter to the Boston Public Improvement Commission opposing the street name change that said, in part: “We believe it is not overstating things to say that removing his name from Fenway Park will forever taint his legacy, both as the historic owner of the Red Sox and throughout the city of Boston.”

With respect, that is overstating things.

The current Red Sox ownership under John Henry has acknowledged the good works of the Yawkey charities, but it isn’t happy that Yawkey’s decidedly poor record on racial integration — both on and off the playing fields during his ownership years — hamper their present-day efforts to make Fenway welcoming to everyone, especially people of color. The Red Sox — and their abutters — have every right to seek to present their property, their team, and their brands to the public in a new way.

Yawkey’s boosters also grossly understate the impacts of the former regime’s well-documented and deeply disturbing practice of discrimination over many years. This history is not just about being the last to call up an African-American player (12 years after Jackie Robinson joined the Dodgers.) It’s about an insidious, institutionalized brand of racism that polluted the team for years and helped further cement Boston’s national reputation as a hostile environment for black Americans.

Last Thursday’s hearing of the BPIC included testimony from Walter Carrington, 88, a former member of the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD). An Army veteran who also served in the Peace Corps and as US ambassador to Senegal, Carrington felt compelled to share his story about his own investigations into Yawkey’s business practices in the 1940s and ’50s.

Carrington was called in to probe Yawkey and his front office and not only because they wouldn’t field black players, but, he said, because they didn’t have any black employees at any level. It was a disgraceful record that was well known to black Bostonians and people across the nation.

Carrington’s testimony was that the Red Sox and Yawkey only begrudgingly agreed to bring up their first black player, Elijah “Pumpsie” Green, in 1959 after his MCAD investigation found chronic wrongdoing and forced the issue.

For Carrington, there was an immediate price to be paid for doing his job. As an MCAD commissioner, he served at the discretion of the governor and the Governor’s Council, which at the time (1950s and ’60s) was chaired by Dorchester’s Sonny McDonough. In his testimony, Carrington said that after his hearings on the Red Sox, McDonough called him into his office and “reamed me out. “He told me that Mr. Yawkey and others were unhappy and he was going to see that I was not re-appointed.”

Rev. Hammond, who also testified on Thursday and called the Red Sox behavior at that time “sad, painful, and a reality that Red Sox and Boston have to own” — dismisses the idea that this outrageous pattern by Yawkey’s company should “unfairly tarnish the legacy of [the] man.”

What’s unfair is the revisionism of the Yawkey apologists who would hold powerful men blameless for installing a systematic and sustained period of Jim Crowism in one of our town’s most important institutions. It is offensive for Cardinal O’Malley and his co-signers to suggest to modern-day Bostonians that Yawkey’s discriminatory ways were “the norm” back then, and so should thus be ignored.

Perhaps they will choose to ignore it — and that’s surely their right. But the Red Sox have every right to acknowledge it — to “own it”—and to then choose to move away from it.

We hope the Red Sox will take steps to put the Yawkey era in the proper context— as a big part of the team’s history, but not one to be so elevated in a current-day depiction of what the Red Sox are all about. And we hope that the city Commission will accept the request to change Yawkey Way back to Jersey Street.

— Bill Forry



A unique organization The Irish American Partnership

BY JOE LEARY
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Among the thousands of Irish organizations in the United States, the Irish American Partnership continues to distinguish itself as a unique organization by dedicating its resources toward education in Ireland and the long-term health of the Irish nation.

A successful education system is critical in preparing future Irish leadership to manage the country in the years ahead.



Joe Leary

Since its inception in 1987 the Irish American Partnership has worked with Ireland’s Department of Education, nearly 500 schools and colleges, the two main teacher colleges, and many independent learning centers to advance their common cause.

In the North the Partnership has funded more than 50 schools and colleges and various civic organizations to assist them in doing their work without regard for their political differences.

It all began back in the 1990s with a research program funded jointly by the Irish Department of Education and the Partnership to determine the most effective way to teach Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, known today worldwide as the STEM subjects. Using the good offices of Saint Patrick’s Teaching College in Dublin, 30 schools were selected for a year-long study, with the rural counties of Kerry, Sligo, Galway and Mayo the program’s targets. The results were revealing.

The principals and teachers of the 30 schools were key to the study’s success. Everyone was encouraged to be explicit in their comments and advice on where a new emphasis might be placed to help students learn better. The teachers, saying they had less than adequate training to fully approach the newly emphasized subjects, were anxious to learn more.

Working with the two main teaching colleges in Ireland, St. Patrick’s teaching college in Dublin and Mary Immaculate teaching college in Limerick, the Partnership set out to fund new programs to make it easier to help students with STEM subjects. Close contacts between the colleges and the Partnersip have resulted in valuable teaching programs over many years.

These efforts were the main focus of the Irish American Partnership’s Saint Patrick’s Day Breakfasts in Boston and Chicago last month. Dr. Maeve Liston, director of enterprise and engagement at Mary Immaculate College in Limerick came over to Boston and Chicago and Boston to talk about her programs with some 600 Partnership supporters in attendance at both venues.



Dr. Maeve Liston, of Mary Immaculate College, at left, and Mary Sugrue, of the Irish American Partnership, enjoyed the Irish American Partnership’s Annual St. Patrick’s Day Breakfast last month at the Boston Harbor Hotel.

Her remarks spoke to the kind of work that Partnership donors enable her to do. “Every year the Partnership funding allows us to offer professional development programs to teachers developing their confidence and ability to teach STEM skills,” Dr. Liston said, adding that “the Irish American Partnership Funding has also allowed us to develop many initiatives with 6thousands of children every year through activities in and out of the classroom as part of our National Science Week, Maths Week, Engineers Week, Tech Week, Code Week and so forth.”

The Partnership also allowed her and her team to work with DELLEMC on a very exciting robotics initiative in 21 schools in Limerick, Tipperary, Clare, and Cork last year, she said. Those were places “where we provided training and mentorship for teachers in delivering a robotics project with their class,” she said.”

Her remarks were just a few of the complimentary comments received concerning the Partnership’s work.

Another Partnership program that has received much acclaim is the support it provides for the RDS Primary School Science Fairs held annually in several Irish cities, including Belfast. It is at these events that young students present their own school science projects from to be viewed by the public and their peers. Dublin’s RDS Science Fairs program received its initial funding commitment from the Partnership in 2014.

The funding goes on. Mary Sugrue, a former Irish school teacher who is now the president and CEO of the Irish American Partnership, and her forward-thinking board of directors regularly sponsor events that ensure that Partnership supporters are well informed.

To gain a complete picture of the work and activities of the Partnership, go to its informative website, iris-hap.org, where you can use a unique feature allowing you to select the program and location in Ireland that you want to support.

Off the Bench

He hears the footsteps, yet he blusters on

BY JAMES W. DOLAN
SPECIAL TO THE REPORTER

In rare moments of reflection he hears footsteps; they are steady, measured, and unrelenting, and they send a chill through his body because he knows that the many business deals he has made are unlikely to withstand intense scrutiny. For someone unwilling to release his tax returns, the thought of someone examining his finances explains his vigorous opposition to the Office of Special Counsel.



James W. Dolan

For two people, both Republicans, with privileged backgrounds, President Donald Trump and Special Counsel Robert Mueller could not be more different. One is immature, erratic, and undisciplined; a narcissist who values loyalty to him as the supreme virtue. The other is a Vietnam War veteran, a career public servant noted for his discipline, honesty, discretion, and fairness. Trump has every reason to fear what Mueller’s investigation may reveal.

Winston Churchill purportedly said: “With integrity, nothing else matters, and without integrity nothing else matters.” In other words, honesty, truthfulness, persistence, and character will eventually overcome obstacles. Without those values, discord, conflict, and dissension will triumph. We see in the adversarial relationship between Trump and Mueller a testing of that hypothesis. Mueller will not succumb to pressure or intimidation and Trump cannot understand how anyone could be motivated by something other than money and adulation.

The footsteps are getting louder as plea deals are made to obtain incriminating testimony. Where Mueller’s methodical investigation is taking him is anyone’s guess. Presumably aware of his problems, Trump chose to assume the risk of exposure sure to follow if elected. His need for power and attention prompted him to throw the dice.

The integrity theme has long been a mainstay in

literature and movies. It’s the good guy against the bad guy; the corrupt mayor of a western cattle town being confronted by the noble federal marshal who was sent to clean up the mess and restore order and stability. The good guy usually wins. That story now is being played out on a much larger scale. The forces are much bigger and more complex, but it’s essentially the same conflict.

Mueller even looks like the image of the federal marshal — tall, lanky, taciturn, and fearless. Trump is central casting’s idea of the corrupt mayor — flashy, loud, and boisterous. The mayor tries to rally his supporters while the marshal quietly goes about his job. In the end, the disgraced mayor is forced to leave town. That’s the way it’s supposed to end.

But in the meantime, Trump will continue to hear footsteps, knowing Mueller is quietly examining aspects of his background not previously disclosed that he would prefer remain secret. How close they will come remains to be seen. Regardless of the outcome, efforts to discredit Mueller will fail. He has earned the valued reputation as a man of integrity.



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TWO STORIES FOR APRIL

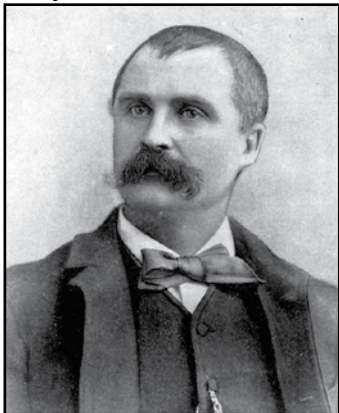
Saving The Boston Pilot and a marathon mystery runner

By PETER F. STEVENS
BIR STAFF

For the Boston Pilot, April resonates with history. For the Boston Marathon, held each Patriots Day, this April brings a mystery that remains unresolved. Irish Americans loom at the center of both milestones.

Rescuing the *Pilot* from Ruin

In 1876, John Boyle O'Reilly was a man on the rise in Boston's and the nation's literary and newspaper circles. A Fenian rebel who had first been sentenced to death by the Crown but transported instead to hard labor in Western Australia, O'Reilly had escaped from the hellish confines of Fremantle Gaol aboard a New Bedford whaler. Now happily married and living in a stylish Charlestown brownstone, he had become



John Boyle O'Reilly held traditional views of men's and women's roles in the church and in the household.

both the star writer and editorial voice of the *Boston Pilot*. The newspaper had become the focal point of his professional and civic life.

When the *Pilot's* publisher, Patrick Donahoe, O'Reilly's boss and earlier benefactor, lost most of his fortune in the Great Fire of 1872, the newspaper faced extinction. Donahoe was forced to declare bankruptcy. He was more than \$300,000 in debt and owed \$73,000 of that sum to struggling Irish immigrants who had deposited funds in his failed Boston bank.

Well aware of Donahoe's predicament, O'Reilly was determined to find a way to save the paper. In January 1876, he wrote to a friend that "there had been trouble around the office." He related: "Donahoe is bankrupt – in the worst way. Poor old man, my heart grieves for him, and I have given all my wits to help him out. I think I have done so – in a way – the only way to save his honour."

O'Reilly waited until the *Pilot's* fate was assigned to Charles Kendall, Charles Shepard, and Patrick Collins. O'Reilly then presented a plan to purchase the newspaper that bought him time from the trio. Shortly after meeting with them, O'Reilly visited Boston's Archbishop John J. Williams with a proposal that he and the prelate buy the *Pilot* for \$25,000 in cash and assume the newspaper plant's \$65,000 mortgage. Williams would own three shares – or 75 percent – of the paper and O'Reilly would hold one, for 25 percent.

On April 15, 1876, the archbishop and O'Reilly officially became the newspaper's owners, but O'Reilly's elation over rescuing the *Pilot* was tempered by his worry about a secret that only a handful of men knew: The New Bedford whaler *Catalpa* had anchored off Western Australia, and a plan to free six of O'Reilly's fellow prisoners from the horrors of Fremantle Gaol and forced labor in Australia quarries and the bush

country was nearing its climax. O'Reilly, along with future "father of the IRA" John Devoy, had played a key role in procuring the *Catalpa* and in introducing his fellow plotters to the New Bedford men who helped to launch the mission – literally.

The whaler would rescue the six Irish prisoners two days later, on April 17, and the *Pilot* would be one of the first newspapers in the world to break the stunning news of the plot's success, an event that was always to fill O'Reilly with pride for the blow it struck against his former captors.

Although the *Pilot* would one day become the archdiocese's official paper, with O'Reilly at the helm, and Williams taking a silent role, the publication was considered an "Irish newspaper." Still, as historian A.G. Evans notes, "it was also the diocesan paper serving all Catholics of whatever nationality, and Williams trusted O'Reilly's editorial judgment completely because there is no hint of disagreement in any of the routine correspondence between them, nor a record of obstruction to the editor from on high. O'Reilly seemed to have had a free hand, not only in editorial matters, but also in day-to-day management and the hiring of staff.

O'Reilly wrote on a wide array of topics that included his advocacy of equal rights for blacks, his diatribes against anti-Semitism, and his espousal of better treatment of all immigrants. He also made the *Pilot* an outlet where some of the era's finest female writers and poets could have their work regularly published. His liberal views on many social and cultural issues notwithstanding, O'Reilly proved a conservative Catholic with traditional views of men's and women's roles in the church and in the household.

A Lingering Marathon Mystery

In 1897, the first Boston Marathon had a decidedly "green" hue – the winner of the race was a man named John J. McDermott, of the Pastime Athletic Club of New York City. He has been hailed in most quarters

as an Irish American and did possess Celtic bloodlines. Still, he remains something of an enigma. Nova Scotia claims him as a native who might have been either Irish or Scottish, and a Cape Breton newspaper recently stated that "John McDermott (or perhaps also known as John J. MacDermid) was born either in Ireland or Scotland or Cape Breton, Canada, between 1868 and 1871."

Despite this little "Marathon Mystery," it is indisputable that the first winner of the grand Boston race was a runner named McDermott. He also provided one of the all-time great post-Marathon quotes. After dropping nine pounds during his victory, he told a *Boston Globe* reporter, "This will probably be my last long race...look at my feet."

McDermott came back to run in 1898, finished fourth, never competed in the contest again, and dropped off of history's stage. Fleet of foot, his turn on the Marathon stage proved equally fleeting.



John J. McDermott, of the Pastime Athletic Club of New York City.

Still no deal on Irish border amid preps for Brexit moves

(Continued from page 1) which Northern Ireland would remain part of the EU's tariff-free customs union while the rest of the UK leaves must "apply unless and until a workable alternative agreed solution is found."

He called for "more detailed written proposals" from British Prime Minister Theresa May's government that can be made legally binding.

If London proposes "something that is very close to a customs union, then I think that would solve a lot of the problems related to the Irish border, but if it's something much less and much weaker than that, then it would not," he added.

Varadkar said that "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed" and that he's reassured by the depth of support from Germany, the EU's most populous country.

"Ireland can rely on us," Merkel said.

In Brussels, European Council President Donald Tusk said that May has accepted the idea of "full regulatory alignment between Ireland and Northern Ireland if there is no other possibility to avoid a hard border. This bodes well for the rest of the negotiations."

Britain leaves the EU – the first country ever to do so – on March 29, 2019, but any Brexit deal must be sealed by October or November to leave sufficient time for parliaments to ratify it.

A draft text of guidelines for negotiating future ties between the two – seen Tuesday by The Associated Press – warns starkly of the impact that May's decision to leave Europe's single market and customs union will have on any future trade agreement.

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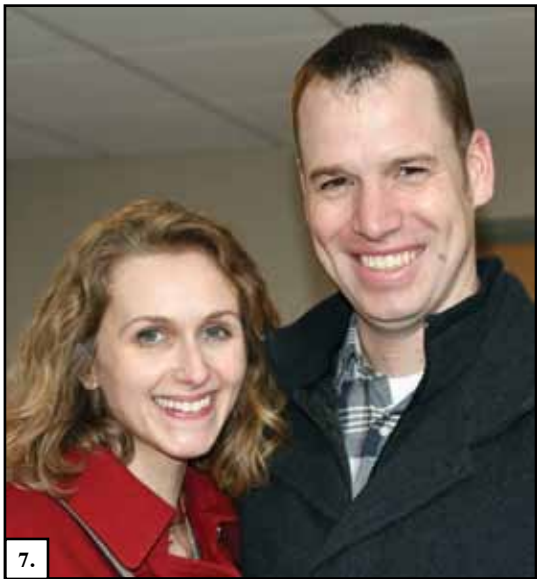
BRETT'S BOSTON

By Harry Brett

Exclusive photos of Boston Irish people & events

The Sligo Association of Boston hosted its 10th annual St. Patrick's Celebration on March 4 at Florian Hall in Dorchester. The event saluted 2018 Guests of Honor Will and Dianne Colliery, both founding members of the County Sligo Association. A full gourmet corned beef and cabbage dinner was served, and music was provided by Sligo man Andy Healy and his ban. The group has set Fri., June 1, for its annual golf tournament at Brookmeadow CC in Canton. To register and more info, call Ray McVeigh at 617-293-4069.

- 1.) Kathy Sullivan, Dedham; Kevin Johnston, W. Roxbury; Raymond and Ann Marie McVeigh, Dover; 2.) Martin and Raymond McVeigh, Dover; 3.) Fr. Brendan Darcy, SMA Fathers, Dedham; Christine McCarrick, Dorchester; 4.) John and Eileen Sullivan, Braintree; 5.) Diane Colleary; Mairead MacKenzie (2 1/2 yrs.), Quincy; 6.) Noelle, Emma and Sheila Quinn, Brighton; 7.) Courtney and Kevin Healy, Newton; 8.) Ann Marie McVeigh, Dover; Ann Joyce and Kathy Sullivan, Dedham; 9.) Lucille Brett, Braintree; Peg Brett McCobb, Weymouth; Bill Brett, Hingham; 10.) John Davenport and Kevin Johnston, W. Roxbury; Richard Archer, Dedham; 11.) Diane and William Colliery; Jim Brett, MC.



Iiic announces details of Business Leaders Breakfast

Join us for the 8th Annual Business Leaders Breakfast, where our keynote speaker will be Massachusetts Congresswoman Katherine Clark. The event will also feature an engaging conversation on immigration and the economy, with Des Mac Intyre, chairman and CEO of BNY Mellon Asset Management North America, and Raj Sharma, managing director of the Sharma Group at Merrill Lynch.

About passports for US citizen children

Q. I'm an Irish citizen who recently gave birth to a child here in the US. I want to get a US passport for my child before we take a trip to Ireland this summer. Does the child's father need to come with me or sign something to get the passport?

A. A child born in the US automatically has US citizenship, irrespective of the parents' citizenship (exception: children of foreign diplomats). But because of child custody and support issues, the US Passport Office in the State Department has set out strict requirements for the issuance of US passports to enable children under the age of 16 to travel abroad:

- Both parents must appear together and sign the application for the child; **or** one parent appears, signs the application, and submits the second parent's notarized "Statement of Consent: Issue of a Passport to a Minor Under age 16," Form DS-3053, authorizing passport issuance for the child; **or** one parent appears, signs, and submits required evidence of sole authority to apply (such as *one* of the following):
- The child's certified birth record listing *only* the applying parent; **or** a Consular Report of Birth Abroad (Form FS-240) or Certification of Birth Abroad (Form DS-1350) listing only the applying parent; **or** a court order granting sole custody to the applying parent (unless the child's travel is restricted by that order); **or** an adoption decree (if the applying parent is the *sole* adopting parent); **or** a court order specifically permitting an applying parent's or legal guardian's travel with the child; **or** a judicial declaration of legal incompetence of the non-applying parent; **or** a death certificate for the non-applying parent.

Note that these requirements apply to all US citizen children under 16, irrespective of their place of birth or the citizenship of their parents. More detailed information about applying for passports, as well as any necessary forms, can be found at the US State department's website, travel.state.gov/passport/.

- For a free, confidential consultation about any issue of immigration law, visit one of our weekly legal clinics as advertised in the Boston Irish Reporter.


NUI Galway graduate embraces life in Boston



Thomas Duignan and friend enjoy some time on the Charles.

For biomedical engineers, Boston is the "mecca of medtech," and Roscommon native Thomas Duignan wanted to live and work in such a hub of medical research. Following his graduation from the National University of Ireland at Galway, he secured the J-1 Irish Work and Travel visa, and embarked on his quest to "gain first-class experience in medical device design."

In conjunction with Iiic Director of Intern Placements, Paul Pelan, Thomas committed to the intense, and highly competitive internship hunt. "I sent a huge amount of emails to all the labs in all the hospitals in Boston,"



IRISH INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRANT CENTER

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



Members of the Irish language class gather at the Iiic.

As Irish classes conclude: Comghairdeas lenár mic léinn!

Our beginner, advanced beginner, and intermediate Irish classes are now wrapping up for the semester, and we are thankful to both our students and our Cumann na Gaeilge instructors for collaborating with us. Congratulations to all of the students who have begun their Irish language adventure. We are particularly thankful for our class instructors Karen, Pat, and Matthew for their dedication over the past eight weeks.

Beginner course instructor Matthew Caughey summarizes his course in saying, "Bhí idir fhoghlaím, roinnt scéaltaí is bia, agus craic insa bhunrang Gaeilge, le 8 seachtaine anuas. Deireadh an chúrsa buailte linn! Go raibh maith ag na mic léinn ar fad agus guíonn muid gach rath orthu leis an turas foghlama Gaeilge s'acu amach anseo! (The Irish class shared lots of learning, stories, food, and craic over the past 8 weeks. We've reached the end of the course! Thank you to all our students and we wish them good luck as they continue their journey into the Irish language!)"

Dax Bayard-Murray, a student in the intermediate learner class says, "Is aoibhinn liom a bheith ag foghlaim Gaeilge. Tá na daoine eile sa rang go deas agus tá an múinteoir go hiontach - I've loved learning Irish the last year or so. Even knowing a little really does enrich the experience of visiting Ireland. The place names and the way the people use English, it all makes a lot more sense now. It's also been great to meet everyone else who's learning Irish."

We are thrilled to be a part of this year's worldwide celebration of the 125th resurgence of the Irish language! Classes will recommence in the spring, and are being held from April 5 to May 24, \$128 or \$112 for CnG members. The beginner class will be held on Wednesdays from 6:15-8:30. The advanced beginner and intermediate classes will occur on Thursdays from 6:15-8:30.

If you are interested in taking Irish, or learning more about the course, please contact Siobhan Kelly (skelly@iiicenter.org/617-542-7654, Ext 15).

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275 West Broadway, Room 200
Boston, MA 02127

WHEN:
April 5, 2018

TIME:
4pm - 8pm

Light refreshments will be served!

CONTACT:
Irish International Immigrant Center
Siobhan Kelly
Phone: 617-542-7654 ext. 15
Email: skelly@iiicenter.org

Catholic Charities Laboure Center
Sister Maryadele Robinson, MSW
Phone: 617-464-8501
Email: maryadele_robinson@ccub.org

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Children's Hospital in the Cardiac Surgery department that offers numerous benefits, "I'm also getting a lot of experience that I wouldn't get in Ireland at this stage of my career. I'm building a medical device that has huge potential... [which] means that I will be able to include my name on the first patent. I'm able to participate in research studies and exciting projects [and] get my name on published papers."

Duignan enjoys working with his international team. "There are eight people, all of whom are from a different country, creating a diverse nature in the workplace," he says.

When he's off the clock, so to speak, Thomas enjoys Boston's lively sports and music scene, frequenting Patriots and Celtics games and attending "a lot of concerts because Boston attracts bigger artists for tours than Dublin."

Beyond continuing to explore Boston, where, he said, he "found a lot of similarities with Galway, but on a bigger scale," Duignan hopes to travel

for a few weeks after the conclusion of his visa. As he summed up his experience thus far, "It's been the best decision I've made and don't regret coming at all.... you're only young once!"



IRISH INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRANT CENTER

IRISH LANGUAGE CLASSES



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

WHEN:
April 5th - May 24th
Wednesdays - Beginner
Thursdays - Beginner, Intermediate, & Advanced
6:15pm - 8:30pm

WHERE:
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One State Street, 8th Floor
Boston, MA 02109

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

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

You're Invited!

Business Leaders Breakfast
May 11th 2018 | Boston Harbor Hotel | 7:30am

Congresswoman Katherine Clark
Des Mac Intyre, Chairman and CEO of BNY Mellon Asset Management North America
Raj Sharma, Managing Director of The Sharma Group, Merrill Lynch

Iiic IRISH INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRANT CENTER
For ticket information please contact: Megan Miller | 617-464-1554 | miller@iiicenter.org

The logo for Cumann na Gaeilge, featuring a stylized 'C' and 'G' with a harp in between.

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April 6 dinner will support Ireland’s amateur athletes

(Continued from page 1) man of Boston Friends of the GPA. The Irish American Partnership is the key local organization in support of the dinner. Details on tickets and sponsorship opportunities may be found on its website, irishap.org/gpadinner. The Boston Friends of the GPA was established in 2016 to support the athletes and to increase the profile of the Gaelic Games in the United States, a cause that has been mightily advanced after two very successful exhibition events held at Fenway Park in 2015 and 2017. The AIG Fenway Hurling Classic and Irish Festival drew nearly 30,000 fans to Fenway to watch a 2015 match between Galway and Dublin. Last year, the crowd size grew even more to watch a tournament play featuring a Dublin-Galway rematch and Tipperary facing Clare, which ended up flying home with the championship trophy.

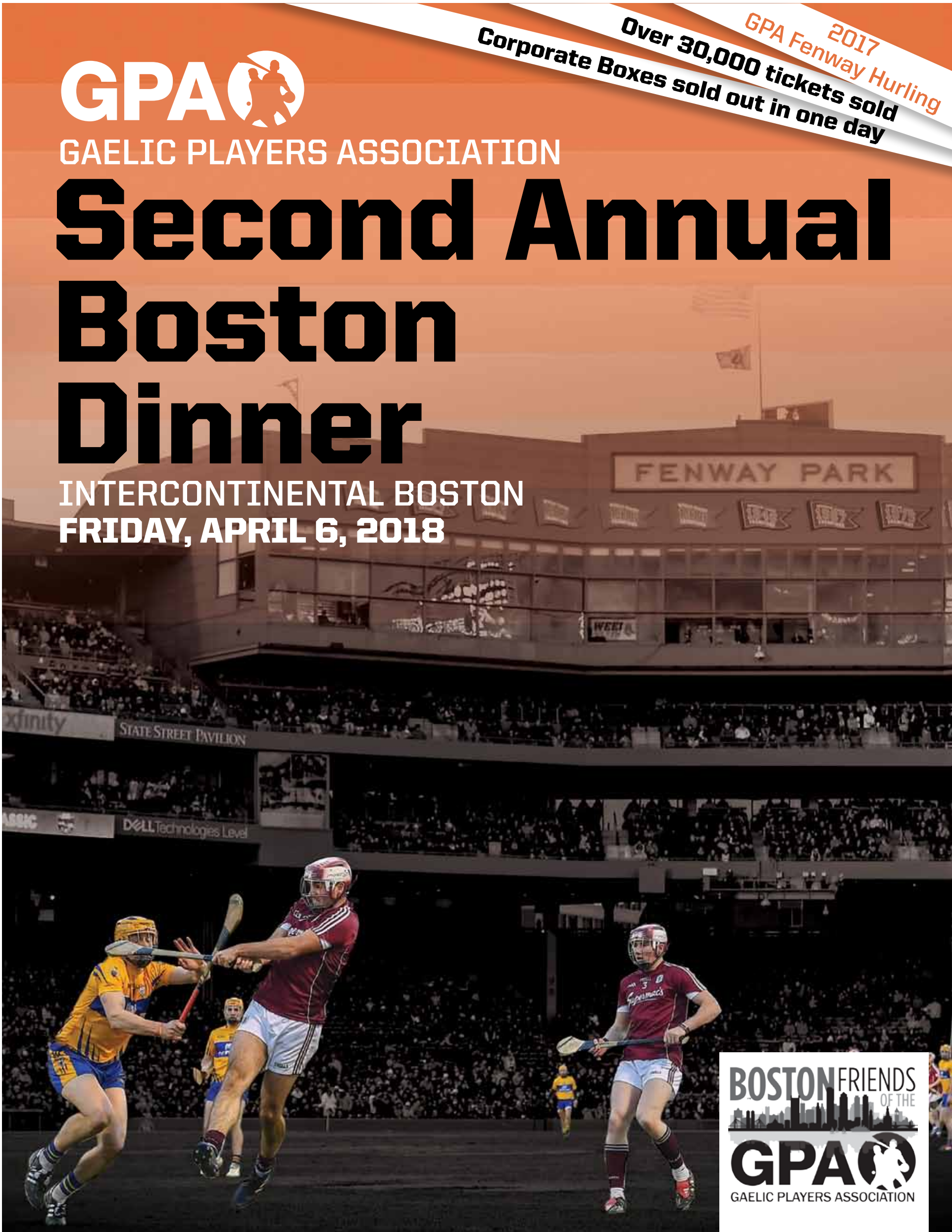


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A promotional poster for Celtic Woman Homecoming Live in Concert. It features four women in traditional Celtic attire. From left to right: a woman in a dark blue dress with a white pattern, a woman in a blue dress with a white pattern, a woman in a light blue dress with a white pattern, and a woman in a blue dress with a white pattern playing a violin. The background is a dark blue with a subtle pattern. The text "Celtic Woman Homecoming" is written in a large, stylized, gold font across the middle. Below it, "LIVE IN CONCERT" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. At the bottom, there is a dark blue banner with white text: "LOWELL, MA", "Lowell Memorial Auditorium", "April 5", "TICKETS AVAILABLE AT", and "CELTICWOMAN.COM".



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SULLIVAN & WORCESTER



Clowning around in The Big Apple Circus

By R. J. DONOVAN
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Spring is in the air and that means The Big Apple Circus is coming back to Boston. After a brief hiatus last season, the world renowned, one-ring wonder returns for its 40th Anniversary Tour, playing under the Big Top at Assembly Row in Somerville. Performances run from April to May 6.

The line-up of international, award-winning artists includes high wire legend Nik Wallenda and his family, trapeze artists The Flying Tunizianis, master juggler Gamal Garcia, acclaimed acrobats The Anastasia Brothers, contortionist Elayne Kramer, equestrian trainer Jenny Vidbel, and more.

Supplying the comedy is the clown duo Brent McBeth and Joel Jeske. McBeth is an accomplished musical theater performer, dance teacher, and choreographer who met Jeske in 2006 at the Parallel Exit physical theatre company in New York. He has also appeared in “No, No Nanette” and “Face The Music” at New York’s City Center, as well as on tour and regionally in “Fosse,” “Cabaret,” “Irving Berlin’s White Christmas” and “Thoroughly Modern Millie.”

McBeth is also well aware of his roots, thanks to his Mom, who’s a retired librarian. Using her expert research skills, she has compiled an extensive family history tracing their Northern Ireland ancestors back to a 1733 arrival in America. Many of McBeth’s folks landed in the Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee areas, with most eventually ending up as Texas ranchers and farmers.

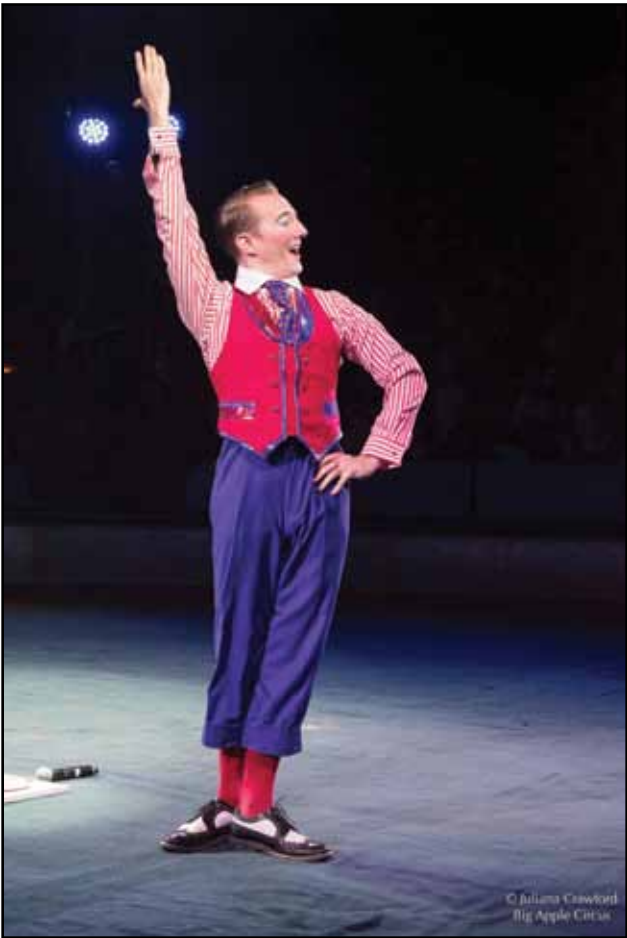
Following a childhood of gymnastics, singing and tap dancing in Texas, he earned his Musical Theatre degree at Sam Houston State University. He

Brent performed with the Big Apple in Boston two years ago and says he loves the city’s energy. He’s particularly looking forward to roaming the nooks and crannies of the North End to seek out its culinary treats.

We spoke by phone when The Big Apple was playing in Washington, D.C. Here’s an edited look at our conversation:

Q. So many kids dream of running away and joining the circus. You’re living that dream.

A. Yeah . . . Before the show starts, I go out into the audience and we meet and greet and talk and kind of warm up the crowd. I’ll run into kids all the time (who) say, “I’m gonna go with the circus, I’m gonna go with the circus.” And I say, “Well, what can you do?” They say, “I can do a cartwheel!” “All right, keep



Brent McBeth keeps the comedy coming at The Big Apple Circus.
Juliana Crawford, Big Apple Circus photo

working on that cartwheel. Make that cartwheel into two. Learn to do a back flip out of that cartwheel and you’ve got yourself an act.”

Q. Who were your favorite performers when you were growing up?

A. I was inspired by the MGM dancer-comedians Ray Bolger and Donald O’Connor. Also Buster Keaton, Charlie Chaplin. My training was pretty much in musical theater comedy. I moved to New York shortly after college and I came across Joel Jeske, the other clown in Big Apple Circus . . . Through Parallel Exit, he and I and a group of other performers have traveled the world doing non-verbal, physical comedy theater, which is kind of an odd thing to describe.

It’s basically clowning, but more on the vaudevillian story-telling side.

Q. How did you come to join The Big Apple?

A. Two years ago, when Joel wrote “The Grand Tour” for Big Apple Circus, he invited me to be a part of that. That was the first time I had ever officially done a circus. I had been in circus atmospheres, dinner theaters, variety art shows, but never under a tent, sawdust ring, live animals. So I absolutely loved it and I’m thrilled to be back this year.

Q. In a lot of your other physical comedy work, you and Joel play opposites. He’s the boss and you’re the one who messes things up.

A. That’s usually been our dynamic. I’m the bouncy, springy, playful character. He’s usually the frustrated, flustered taskmaster. The 40th anniversary tour is very different for the both of us. Our characters are not really in a battle for superiority . . . We’re both just kind of there to make merry and have fun.

Q. Tell me about creating a clown character.

A. With any clown character, I think 90 per cent of it of it comes from your own personality, your own energy. In theater, when you’re playing a character, you’re really stuck to what the playwright has written. Obviously a little bit of you comes out in that character, but you’re really trying to honor the playwright’s version of the character . . . But in clowning, you’re trying to give the audience an endearing and heartwarming character they can identify with. . . taking your personal attributes and quirks and just amplifying everything . . . There are certain things I would never do in public as a human being, but as a clown, you have free rein to do it. That’s the fun part of it.

Q. You and your Mom visited Ireland. What are your memories?

A. One of the first things that stood out for me was the personality of the Irish culture. Witty, humor-filled, joyous, musical . . . The use of English language was so sophisticated. Not sophisticated in an Edinburgh-educated way, but sophisticated in choosing the right word to make the sentence witty. To make it a little sharper . . . It was the people, I think, that I enjoyed the most . . . We rented a car, so we were able to really enjoy the lifestyle there. And living in bed and breakfasts as opposed to hotels, you’re actually living with people . . . When I told my Mom I was doing this interview today, she said, “Oh, it makes me want to go back to Ireland!” (I said) “Don’t worry, we’ll go.”

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

...

Big Apple Circus, April 7 – May 6, at Assembly Row, Somerville. Info: 800-745-3000 or BigAppleCircus.com.



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With ‘Sparkjoy,’ Rachel Reeds steps up her nurturing of the Cape Breton fiddler tradition

By SEAN SMITH
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

When she first came to the Boston area 16 years ago, Michigan native Rachel Reeds probably couldn't have found Cape Breton Island on a map, and she certainly didn't know anything about its distinctive Celtic music tradition.

But that was then. Nowadays, Reeds is for all intents and purposes an honorary member of Boston's illustrious Cape Breton community, a fixture at Watertown's Canadian American Club of New England – a hub of Cape Breton cultural and social activity – and a well-established performer and teacher of Cape Breton fiddle.

During the past year, Reeds reached another milestone, releasing her debut album “Sparkjoy,” which includes a guest appearance on piano and fiddle by Andrea Beaton, one of Cape Breton's most accomplished musicians.

[On May 1, Reeds will mark the release of “Sparkjoy” with a concert at Club Passim in Harvard Square. For details and tickets, go to passim.org]

For Reeds, her development as a Cape Breton fiddler has been more than just acquiring musical skills, but discovering and nurturing hitherto unknown aspects of herself. As she has studied the Cape Breton music tradition, she has learned something of its people, culture and history – and made quite a few friends along the way.

“I've had so many people who've supported me in learning Cape Breton music,” says Reeds, who works full-time in an investment consulting firm. “Whether it was friends who taught me, gave me advice, encouraged me to play, or simply listened to me, they all helped me in some way or another. And now I want to do the same. If I'm at a session and a kid starts playing his favorite tune, I want to play it with him, because that's what people did for me when I was starting out.

“I certainly don't consider myself an authority on Cape Breton music, but I want to help keep it alive.”

Reeds is doing her part on that score with “Sparkjoy,” which is full of traditional and contemporary Cape Breton tunes, including some penned by Reeds. In addition to Beaton, Reeds is joined by Boston-area musicians Kate McNally (fiddle), Yann Falquet (guitar), Natalie Haas (cello), and Hanneke Cassel (fiddle, piano), who also produced the album.

Those new to Cape Breton music – like Reeds was all those years ago – will get an especially thorough grounding on the duets between Reeds and Beaton: “Stepdancers' Set,” “Allie and the Alices,” “F Jigs,” “Lord Seaforth” and “For the Can-Am” (a collection of jigs dedicated to the Canadian American Club). Beaton's playing displays all the hallmarks of Cape Breton

piano accompaniment, with syncopated rhythms, walking bass lines, and complex harmonies, all of which simultaneously propel and center Reed's agile fiddling – indeed, the distinctions between lead and accompaniment frequently seem blurred. The interplay, and intensity, between Reeds and Beaton that builds during these medleys is compelling to say the least.

Even as it revels in the classic rugged Cape Breton sound, “Sparkjoy” has its quieter, sublime moments, and also takes note of the influences that have found their way into the Cape Breton and Scottish traditions over the past few decades. The title track, for instance – a Reeds original – pairs her with Cassel on fiddle, and the harmonies between the two, with Falquet's gentle backing, give the tune an American-style flavor.

Cassel switches to piano for “Da Greenhouse Wedding Set,” which also features Haas's mellifluous accompaniment, and another appearance by Falquet; the first two tunes in the set belong to Reeds, followed by two from the Shetland fiddle tradition – the first of these, “Up Da Stroods Da Sailor Goes,” evinces the tradition's Scandinavian strain, and Haas and Reeds capture it majestically. Haas, along with Cassel back on fiddle, also are on hand for the sorrowful yet resilient Scottish lament “Return to Kintail.”

Appropriately, the album ends with Reeds, McNally, and Beaton playing an epic, seven-minutes-plus march/strathspey/reel medley called “Party Set” that conveys the robust, sinewy expressiveness of Cape Breton music that has resounded in the Boston area for decades – and has a legacy as strongly held as that of the Irish population.

While Reeds had no ex-

posure to traditional music growing up, she did have a musical upbringing, and came to Wellesley College in 2002 intending to major in music and study piano. But one of her friends was involved in Fiddleheads, Wellesley's Celtic music ensemble, and when Reeds attended its end-of-the-year concert, it was the fiddles that caught her attention.

“This was around the time the Dixie Chicks got big, and I liked them – they also had a fiddle player,” she recalls. “But I didn't really have a sense of fiddle styles. I didn't know what the Fiddleheads played. Celtic? What was that?”

Reeds was intrigued enough to take lessons from the Fiddleheads director, Laura Cortese, and then from Emerald Rae, both with extensive backgrounds in Scottish and Cape Breton traditions. Reeds took part in Fiddleheads before graduating from Wellesley, and after attending graduate school in Minnesota returned to the Boston area, where she began studying under Cassel through the Passim music program. As she continued, she found herself gravitating more to the Cape Breton style, which has similarities to that of Scotland but is nonetheless distinct.

“I didn't feel like I had the classical chops to play Scottish music,” says Reeds, who did not altogether abandon Scottish fiddle – in 2013, she won the New England Regional Scottish Fiddle Championship. “Cape Breton music felt rougher in a good sort of way, and I liked the percussive, syncopated nature of the tunes. It feels happy and upbeat – even the minor-key tunes make you want to get up and dance.”

Before long, Reeds discovered the Canadian American Club, with its frequent sessions and dances, plus a friendly crowd of regulars who welcomed her into their

midst, like fellow fiddler Gordon Aucoin or pianist Lloyd Carr (“Hey, Rachel! Let's do a set!” says Reeds, mimicking an oft-delivered invitation).

In 2009, Reeds made her first trip to Cape Breton, going along its famous Ceilidh Trail and stopping in, among other places, the Celtic Music Interpretive Center and taking part in the social dances. She also had the opportunity to meet the legendary Cape Breton fiddler Jerry Holland, shortly before he died. The experience solidified her interest in the music, and also provided some important context.

“Going to the Canadian American Club, I'd met plenty of people originally from, or with ties to, Cape Breton,” she says. “So through them, I learned about Cape Breton history, landmarks, and so on. Being able to travel to those places and see them for myself made me feel more connected to the music.”

The next step in her development, says Reeds, was to start putting together medleys of tunes to perform at the Canadian American Club's Sunday afternoon “Gaelic Club” gathering, and – the greatest challenge of them all – to play for dances.

“It can be nerve-wracking at first,” she laughs. “You just can't stop, you keep playing as long as the dancers go. You wonder ‘Do I have enough tunes?’ It takes probably about seven to eight of them to play for one set. But it's really a lot of fun – you get caught up in the spirit of the whole thing.”

Reeds also ventured beyond the Can-Am Club to perform or accompany dances at other gatherings, events or venues, such as BCMFest and the Boston Harbor Scottish Fiddle School, and began teaching – she was among the faculty for the inaugural Cape Breton Weekend at Pinewoods Camp, a mecca for traditional mu-



“I've had so many people who've supported me in learning Cape Breton music,” says Rachel Reeds.

Louise Bichan photo

sic and dance.

Then, a couple of years ago, Reeds had what she calls “a moment of confluence”: “I had learned lots of tunes from CDs and friends, and while some were very familiar to many musicians, they weren't all necessarily ‘session’ tunes. I had also started composing my own tunes. I felt like I wanted to share all this music in some way, so I started to think about what kind of project I might do.

“I love it when people come out with CDs – it's not just the music but the design, the graphics, the liner notes, the whole package. So I thought, ‘Maybe I can try doing that,’” said Reeds, who launched a successful Kickstarter campaign to help fund the recording.

Lining up the musicians – all of whom are full-time touring professionals – she wanted to help her make the album required some coordination, says Reeds. “Hanneke blocks out a year in advance, but that was fine, because it gave me a lot of time to think about what I wanted to record and how to do it. I was thrilled when Andrea, Katie, Natalie, and Yaan also agreed.”

Cassel's role as producer was, if anything, even more important than as guest musician. “It's not always easy to get honest feedback about your music, but Hanneke is really good at it,” says Reeds. “She's a perfectionist, and she'll tell you what to work on, what things to think about – yet she's also positive, so you feel inspired and motivated.”

Most of what appears on “Sparkjoy” essentially came together in the studio, rather than through prior rehearsal, but without too much difficulty. “We had everything planned out, so we knew what we were going to do and when – ‘OK, this day, I'm going to have Katie for the morning, Yann in the afternoon.’ When you ask experienced people like these to come up with ideas, you have a lot of confidence in what the result is going to be.”

In a different world where Reeds is a full-time musician, she would have gone on a “Sparkjoy” tour across the US, and probably Canada, too. But in this world, she's already got a job to occupy her days, and she's fine with it.

“I can't say I don't have daydreams about what it would be like to do this for a living,” she says. “I've lived and spent lots of time with full-time musicians, and I envy their ability to travel to exciting places and make friends all over the world, or that they'll say, ‘Hey, I got a tune that popped into my head this afternoon, so I worked on it for a few hours and this is it.’

“But I've had plenty of opportunities to perform and play, and I'm very happy about that. And I can't say enough how generous people have been to me in all my musical activities. So however I can help pass the music along – even if it's just on evenings and weekends – I'm grateful for the chance to do it.”

For more, go to rachel-reeds.com.



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CD Reviews

By SEAN SMITH

The High Kings, “Decade” • This retrospective on The High Kings’ first 10 years certainly does them justice, but offers only a small hint of the quartet’s incremental movement away from its ballad-group beginnings.



the get-go that they weren’t simply going to stay stuck in the past.

Yes, they had the ballad-group trappings: full-throated, full-throttle vocals with emphatic *dramatis personae*; briskly strummed guitars and picked banjos; and a repertoire full of old reliables like “Whiskey in the Jar,” “Leaving of Liverpool,” “Star of the County Down” and “The Rising of the Moon.” But there was an unmistakable 21st-century feel to it all, with high production values and a pop-rock sensibility and style. Just as importantly, The High Kings’ work reflected a lot of the evolution in Irish music that took place after the ballad-group era.

You get a sense of this on “Decade,” which includes material from “The High Kings” (2008), “Memory Lane” (2010), “Four Friends Live” (2014) and their most recent studio album, 2016’s “Grace and Glory”; other tracks were previously unavailable and/or recorded specifically for this release. “Rising of the Moon” and “Rocky Road to Dublin,” for example, have breaks and riffs that will be familiar to anyone who’s heard, say, Planxty, Altan or Solas. Other entries (“Four Green Fields,” “Rare Auld Times,” “The Town I Loved So Well”) tend to adhere more to the classic ballad-group approach.

Three tracks from “Grace and Glory,” which showed The High Kings in their newest incarnation, are included here: the country/gospel Phil Coulter composition “Hand Me Down My Bible”; an up-tempo version of “Spancil Hill”; and a dramatically reworked “Green Fields of France”— with a vastly different, modal, neo-Appalachian melody and a faster pace, Eric Bogle’s much-covered anti-war song sounds more urgent, even a little angry.

In focusing more on the ballad-group repertoire in The High Kings’ catalogue, “Decade” doesn’t give you much of a sense of the group’s trajectory: their turn to self-penned material, for example, or their adoption of a more general pop/rock sound – such as a rendition of Thin Lizzy’s “The Boys Are Back in Town” on “Grace and Glory.”

But the guys know how to please an audience, as their live performances of “Friends for Life” and Brian Flynn’s “Irish Pub Song” on this album show. And that’s probably the ultimate measure of this band, however much they may change over the next decade. [thehighkings.com]

Noctambule, “A Sweetish Tune” • Noctambule (French for “night owl”), the West Coast wife-husband duo of Marla Fibish and Bruce Victor, has been a quiet but steady presence in Irish traditional music the past several years, not least for championing fretted-string instruments: mandolin, mandola, bouzouki, cittern, guitar and tenor guitar; Fibish in particular has drawn accolades for her mandolin playing.



This album is somewhat of a departure in that it focuses more on the Irish part of their repertoire, which typically encompasses settings of poetry and original instrumental pieces: Seven of the nine tracks feature renditions of tunes from or in the tradition, including compositions by Fibish. It’s a veritable showcase for her mandolin style, which rather than emphasizing speed involves a more holistic approach that gives attention to fine details such as the mandolin’s tone and sustain (and the importance of what pick you use).

So what you hear when you listen to her play reels (“The Tempest,” “The Broken Pledge,” “The Abbey,” jigs (“Bold Doherty,” “Bill Harte’s”), O’Carolan pieces (“Blind Mary,” “Mister O’Connor”), or other kinds of tunes, are crystal-clear ornaments and triplets, and a solid rhythmic feel. Victor’s subtle and restrained accompaniment, meanwhile, meshes so well with Fibish that at times it sounds like a single instrument.

Something of an outlier is the title track, which closes out the album, a charming Fibish-Victor waltz that – as its name implies – does indeed have a Scandinavian tint to it, and Aryeh Frankfurter’s nyckelharpa adds a hauntingly winsome touch.

There are three songs: Fibish’s take on “The Creel,” a night-visiting song whose modal key belies its slapstick nature, and Victor’s rendition of “Cold Missouri Waters,” James Keelaghan’s vivid elegy for firefighters killed in a 1949 forest fire; the pair also offer a setting of Khalil Gibran’s “Song of the Wave.”

“A Sweetish Tune” has an unhurried, low-key quality to it, but also an understated intensity and purposefulness – a different sort of listening experience for many Irish music aficionados, perhaps, but a worthwhile one. [noctambulemusic.com]

Cara, “Live”; Gudrun Walther & Jürgen Treyz, “Duo” • Cara, from Germany, marks its 15th year as one of Europe’s most popular and successful traditional/contemporary Celtic bands with a new live album, while

Cara co-founders Walther (fiddle, accordion, vocals) and Treyz (guitar, dobro, vocals) celebrate their long-running partnership with a double CD. Although not concurrent releases – they’re about a year apart – these recordings are in near enough proximity to one another that they can be considered as associated bodies of work.

On “Live,” Cara – performing mostly material from previous releases – affirms its well-deserved reputation as an outstanding concert band (as those who saw them locally at the 2007 ICONS Festival will attest), and the collective energy is prodigious: Walther and Hendrik Morgenbrodt (uilleann pipes, flutes, whistles) are masterful in leading the instrumental sets, among them “The Arm in the Cow” (which includes Charlie Lennon’s “Handsome Young Maidens”), “Hull’s” and “Heroes” (a twisty-turny reel/strathspey/polka combination) while Kim Edgar’s piano supplements the powerful rhythm supplied by Treyz and bodhran player Rolf Wägel.

The craft Cara puts into their arrangements is equally apparent in their songs, especially the epic traditional ballads such as “Little Musgrave” and “Lord Gregory,” both of which contain extensive instrumental interludes, as if the band were scoring a film. Morgenbrodt’s pipes provide an electrifying riff to bolster Edgar’s English-Gaelic benediction “Moran Taing,” and a lovely solo on the tenderly delivered “Ardkeen Boat Song,” with Walther and Edgar sharing vocals on the chorus. “Twa Magicians” – a battle of the sexes fueled by sorcery – chugs along in 5/4, highlighted by a stately piano-pipes-fiddle break.

Some tracks don’t quite live up to the standard of the others: “Isn’t It Time to Be Worried?” – a bit of social commentary written by Walther and Treyz – has some luscious bluesy licks from Treyz, but the song’s lyric structure is oddly repetitive. Walther’s “Time for a Song,” which closes out the album, is similarly well-intentioned yet falls a little flat. Nonetheless, a superior effort overall.

“Duo” is a clever presentation: Disc one offers their “German side,” featuring a number of instrumental pieces from an 18th century dance music collection that

resurfaced back in 2007, as well as songs based on works by German poets Eduard Mörike, Theodor Storm, and Gottfried August Bürger; disc two showcases their Celtic and American tastes, including traditional Irish tunes like the barn dances “High Caul Cap” and “McDermott’s,” “O’Keefe’s Polka” and “Born for Sport,” compositions by Liz Carroll, Paddy O’Brien, Liz Kane and Walther herself, traditional songs (“Maid on the Shore,” “She’s Like the Swallow”) and covers of Bill Staines’ “Roseville Fair” and “Sticks That Made Thunder,” by American bluegrass band The Steeldrivers.

Listening to both volumes, you appreciate the versatility of Walter and Treyz in essaying these different styles and genres, and the musicianship of both (Treyz’s accompaniment is consistently imaginative). Perhaps more importantly, while there are little or no obvious connections between German and Irish traditions – not in the same way there is between Irish and France (Breton) or Spain (Galician) – you nonetheless detect a certain universality: This is, after all, music for social or community dancing, with a format and integrity that enables repetition of steps and figures. As for the songs, well, folklorists can tell you how widely themes and stories can travel, across nations, cultures, and societies. Sure enough, as the sleeve notes explains, Bürger’s “Lenore” – the inspiration for Poe’s “The Raven” – has its roots in the dark and mystic side of the folk ballad tradition.

There’s more to Cara than Walter and Treyz, obviously, but taken together, “Live” and “Duo” demonstrate how this vision of finding, emphasizing, and expressing similarities in Western European music forms has proliferated, and thrived, in one band. [cara-music.com; www.walthertreyz.com]



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Traveling People

As favorite Irish places go, mine is beautiful Achill Island

By JUDY ENRIGHT
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

It is especially difficult to pinpoint a favorite place in Ireland because there are so many wonderful spots everywhere. But, after 20-plus years of traveling to and renting a house in the West, I have to say that Achill Island in Co. Mayo is my favorite, with Connemara a very close second.

There are many reasons why I love and visit Achill so much. This island has breathtaking views; amazing archaeological sites and monuments; crystal-clear water, and clean, sandy beaches; excellent restaurants; a lengthy, intriguing history, part of which includes the pirate queen Grace O'Malley (Granuaile); great shops; a variety of adventure sports; a vibrant, active tourist organization, and much more.

It has long been a magnet for artists, photographers, and writers. In other words, there's something for everyone but not enough space in a newspaper column to mention everything. You'll have to go and see for yourself.

Achill is Ireland's largest island at 12-plus miles east to west and 11-plus miles north to south. It boasts the highest sea cliffs in Europe, nearly 75 miles of spectacular coastline, and five beaches that have won Blue Flag international designations for their exceptional quality.

It's interesting to note that Achill is Ireland's nearest point to the East Coast of the US. We laughed when Gielty's, a third-generation family-run pub near Dooagh village, advertised that it is the nearest pub to New York City. It also claims the honor of being the most westerly pub in Europe.

Achill's name might be linked to the colony of white-tailed sea eagles (*Aquila albicilla*) that once inhabited the island but disappeared in the mid-19th century? (It's interesting that there is currently a project by The Golden Eagle Trust to reintroduce the Irish white-tailed eagle to the country. Breeding is reported to have been successful there with chicks born annually – not on Achill, but in other parts of the Republic. A similar project in Donegal had not been so successful but we haven't checked lately.)

THE ISLAND'S HISTORY

Visitors are introduced to the story of Achill Island when they drive, walk, or cycle across the Michael Davitt bridge that connects it to the Curraun Peninsula and swings open for boats to pass underneath.

The first bridge over that narrow sound was built in 1887 for horse and buggy traffic. It was replaced in 1949 and again in 2008. Some say the newest bridge reminds them of a whale carcass with its white ribs meeting high over the roadway. (Davitt, the



Keem Bay at the end of Achill Island.



Bridge to Achill Island in Co. Mayo that many think looks like a whale carcass. Judy Enright photos



Couple of young residents on Achill Island in Co. Mayo.

bridge's namesake, was an agrarian campaigner who founded the Irish National Land League and his work and life are remembered in a museum in Straide, Co. Mayo.)

The bridge is just the beginning of the history you'll find on Achill. Among my favorite sites are Pirate Queen Grace O'Malley's 40-foot tall, three-story Tower House ("castle") at Kildavnet (strategically positioned at the mouth of Achill Sound to protect the passage that connects Clew Bay with Blacksod Bay), and also the haunting Deserted Village on the slopes of Slievemore Mountain, where remnants of more than 70 abandoned homesteads remind visitors of the

families that left during the famine and other trying times.

The Achill Archaeological Field School, established in 1991, offers courses for all levels at the Deserted Village and other Achill sites every summer. See achill-field-school.com for more. You can also attend an Irish language summer school while on Achill.

BOYCOTT

There's much more history here, such as the coining of the word "boycott," which can be traced back to Captain Charles C. Boycott, a land agent on a nearby Co. Mayo estate who lived on Achill for about 20 years.

When he worked for Lord Erne in Ballinrobe in 1880, he was asked by



Granuaile's (the pirate queen) castle on Achill Island.

the Land League to reduce rents after an especially bad harvest. He refused, and his tenants retaliated by refusing to harvest the crops. He then hired workers from Co. Cavan. The American journalist James Redpath, who covered the story for the *New York Tribune*, was the first to use the term "boycott" to refer to this kind of social and economic refusal. Redpath credited a local parish priest with the idea of using the captain's name.

Be sure to visit the Achill Experience in Keel to learn more about the island's history, Edward Nangle and the Achill Mission, as well as the island's only aquarium.

ARTS

Achill has always been

a magnet for artists and writers stunned by the island's beauty and stayed or returned over and over. Among the many were artists Paul Henry, Camille Souter, Alexander Williams, Sean Keating, and Robert Henri. I especially like work by current resident artist Padraig McCaul (padraigmccaul.com).

Heinrich Boll was among many noted writers - including Graham Greene and Ernie O'Malley - who were drawn to Achill over the centuries. Today there is a chance for artists and writers to apply for a residency at Boll's cottage in Dugort that was purchased in 2003 by the Achill Heinrich Boll Association to ensure future benefit for the arts and

local community.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Many options are available on Achill for those wishing to stay over, including the 26-room, family-run Ostan Oilean Acla hotel in Achill Sound (we often have lunch there), and at the other end of the island, the Stella Maris B&B and Joyce's Marian Villa guesthouse.

There are many other hotels, B&Bs, and guesthouses and the tourist board office (achilltourism.com) in Achill Sound is an excellent source for visitors seeking accommodations and advice on activities, festivals, camping, hostels, self-catering cottages, water sports, and more.

Many visitors stay in nearby areas like Mulranny and drive out to visit the island. Among accommodation there is the lovely, four-star GN Mulranny Park Hotel, which was formerly a Great Southern Railway hotel. The Park is completely updated and boasts outstanding management and staff as well as a creative, award-winning chef, Chamila Mananwatta. Sunday brunches, lunches and dinners are memorable.

Speaking of food, we can't forget to mention Keem Bay Fish Products and their great smoked salmon atop McCambridge's whole wheat bread, which we enjoy nearly every day for lunch or an appetizer. In 1985, Gerry Hassett and his wife, Julie, began smoking salmon and other local fish in their smokehouse as the business grew. The Hassett family also runs the excellent Chalet Restaurant in Keel on Achill.

Also in Keel is Michael and Patricia Joyce's coffee shop, craft shop and restaurant - The Beehive in Keel - where we go for lunch several times a week and have taken every guest who has ever visited. The food at The Beehive is delicious and fresh. Michael is a gifted baker and creates too many great desserts to even begin to mention! Patricia's excellent taste shines through in her stock of Irish gifts, clothes, and cards. Most members of the Beehive staff have worked there for many years and some of their children have now joined the staff. It's a wonderful, family-friendly place to stop and enjoy.

HOTELS

It's probably no surprise to anyone who has visited Ireland that the tourism industry is the country's largest indigenous employer and supports some 230,000 jobs - around 11 percent of all employment - with about 60,000 of those jobs in the hotel sector.

Whether you stay in a hotel, B&B, guesthouse, or other accommodation, you'll find Ireland is the perfect place to visit in April when flowers are blooming, lambs gambol across the green fields, and the island comes to life again after a cold winter.

Enjoy Ireland whenever and wherever you go!

Folk/acoustic and pop a welcome presence when Low Lily pursues its goals

By SEAN SMITH
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

The New England folk trio Low Lily takes its name from a flower commonly found in the region, but its musical vision evokes the arboreal: roots and branches.

Flynn Cohen (guitar, mandolin, vocals), Liz Simmons (guitar, piano, vocals), and Lissa Schneckenburger (fiddle, vocals) – all of whom once lived in Greater Boston/Eastern Massachusetts, and now reside in Brattleboro – have solid backgrounds and extensive experience in Irish and other Celtic music. Yet Low Lily's tastes and interests have long ranged beyond those traditions, and their American descendants in New England and Appalachia, to encompass contemporary folk and even pop.

Since Cohen and Simmons (whose musical partnership predates their marriage) formally joined up about four years ago with longtime acquaintance and collaborator Schneckenburger, they've continued to move among the far branches of the metaphorical musical tree while keeping the roots within sight.

On April 12, Low Lily will return to its former Boston-area stomping grounds with a concert at Harvard Square's Club Passim to celebrate the release of its first full-length album, "10,000 Days Like These" (the trio recorded a six-track CD/EP in 2015).

"We felt like we had a bigger canvas to work with this time," says Simmons of the new recording. "So as the album took shape, we thought of how to feature each vocalist in the band, utilize more of our compositional and

arrangement skills. And we were able to work on a wider variety of songs and tunes."

"Variety" is putting it mildly. The album starts off with Simmons leading a revamp of the traditional British Isles ballad "Sovay," with a decidedly modern sheen to it – breezy backing vocals by Cohen and Schneckenburger and cruise-control rhythm courtesy of string bassist Corey Dimario (Schneckenburger's husband and the band's sometime fourth member) and drummer Stefan Amidon.

Other hints of traditional roots are found in two instrumentals, Cohen's "The Good Part" and "Single Girl," a Schneckenburger original she plays solo; the sweep of Schneckenburger's bow, Cohen's nifty mandolin picking, Simmons' fine guitar backing – there's a clear line to Appalachia and New England, and Ireland and Scotland, in it all.

But listen elsewhere, and you'll hear covers of Dire Straits' anti-war anthem "Brothers in Arms," singer-songwriter Gillian Welch's neo-gospel "Rock of Ages," and "The Grumbly One," a helter-skelter dash through the surrealistic landscape conceived by Rushad Eggleston, former cellist for Crooked Still.

In addition to "Single Girl," Schneckenburger penned two of the songs on the album, including "Hope Lingers On," an a cappella number in the style of spirituals sung to promote civil rights and social change – the trio's gorgeous vocal harmonies are on full display here.

This might be head-scratching to those who associate Cohen with his

stints as accompanist for legendary Irish accordionist John Whelan and vocalist Aoife Clancy; or who remember Simmons – who worked with ex-Solas vocalist Karan Casey – as co-founder of the Irish/Celtic/trad quartet Long Time Courting; or whose impression of Schneckenburger was formed by her performances with bands like the Scottish/Cape Breton-influenced Halali (of which Cohen is a member) and her presence in the New England contra dance circuit; or, for that matter, those who recall the early, Irish/Cape Breton incarnation of Low Lily's predecessor, Annalivia, which Simmons and Cohen formed back around 2007.

But their diverse musical interests were there all along. Cohen has always been equally at home playing bluegrass runs on guitar and mandolin as backing an Irish reel or Cape Breton strathspey, for example, and he and Simmons might just as easily belt out Natalie Imbruglia's hit "Torn" as a trad song. Three years after she released an album of New England contra dance tunes, Schneckenburger recorded covers of songs like "The Only Living Boy in New York," "You Don't Mess Around with Jim" and the Magnetic Fields' "I Think I Need a New Heart."

With Low Lily, Cohen, Simmons and Schneckenburger reside in a musical territory where folk/acoustic and pop don't eye one another warily from a distance, explains Simmons.

"We're lucky to be part of a scene – like the one in Boston – that explores American roots on into the contemporary landscape.



Low Lily (L-R Lissa Schneckenburger, Liz Simmons, Flynn Cohen) will be in town this month for a CD release concert at Club Passim.

So you're talking about not only about Irish, English, and Scottish, but also African music. And the branches keep going: They incorporate the urban sensibility, the multiple genres of music that have come about through the generations, from blues to rock to pop. We've grown up with all these influences."

Being in Low Lily also has encouraged its members' experimentation, as Simmons notes. "I've always liked 'Sovay,' because it's cheeky and clever, and the woman gets the last word. But there's no naturalized American version of the song – the only ones you find are from the British Isles. So I decided to write it as an American ballad, with a bluesy American feel and a 'crooked' chorus, that would musically communicate the sassy nature of the song."

With the title track, Simmons tried her hand at songwriting – along with friend Sarah Yanni, whose "Dark Skies Again" also appears on the album – in the domain of another folk music tradition, shape note singing. "We had the idea to write a sort of non-denominational gospel song, so we went through books about the shape note tradition. We found certain phrases that occur a lot in these kinds of songs, and so we used them to create a kind of modern-day spiritual – about being free of suf-

fering, reaching a state of heaven."

Schneckenburger's "Hope Lingers On" was crafted along similar lines, says Simmons. "There's definitely a sociopolitical dimension to it – about yearning for hope and peace in this troubled era – but the gospel/spiritual style gives the song an 'old' sound that makes the sentiments expressed timeless and enduring, rather than specifically tied to the here and now."

Amidst these creative explorations, Low Lily continues to stay connected to its roots. Over the past year or so, for example, they've teamed up with Whelan and Boston-area fiddler Katie McNally (Simmons' former Long Time Courting bandmate) for several concerts, which Simmons says is an opportunity for the trio to enjoy the various facets of its musical character.

"It allows us to express that mix of American and British Isles music ingrained in ourselves,"

she says. "We'll have a blast of tunes together and go off on our various paths – maybe it's a set of reels with John and Katie, and then Low Lily will do something a cappella, and so on. It's educational for those audiences who don't necessarily know about the connections in American and British Isles and Irish music."

"But because the three of us, and John and Katie represent different generations, we show how the joy in sharing music transcends age – we may come at it in different ways, but there's something in it all that binds us, too. I was deeply obsessed with Irish music for a good 10 years, and that's a part of who I am as a musician and a person. So even while I'm writing my own stuff or doing covers of other people's songs, I'm always glad to share that side of me."

For tickets and other information about Low Lily's concert at Club Passim, go to passim.org. Find out more about Low Lily at lowlily.com.

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