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Donal and Rosa O'Connor with Sergio and his twin brother, Tadhg. Sergio has been in a hospital every day since he was born in March of 2011.

A SESSION FOR SERGIO

Irish musicians will gather to play for the benefit of a Dublin boy, age one, who is facing critical – and expensive – surgery in Boston

BY SEAN SMITH
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Little Sergio O'Connor of Dublin may not know it, but he's got an awful lot of friends in the Irish music community -- including Boston's.

Sergio, who along with his twin brother Tadhg turned one on March 5, was born with several complications, the most serious of which is tracheo-oesophageal fistula, a rare condition that prevents him from eating, drinking, and swallowing due to a hole in his esophagus. A complex series of operations at Children's Hospital in Boston offers the best chance of treating Sergio, and to put him on the road to a more normal life.

It's an expensive proposition: Sergio's parents, Donal and Rosa, must contribute more than \$131,000 toward the treatment, a figure that does not include the expenses for the couple to stay in Boston (they flew into the city late last month) during the run-up to the operation and for a months-long period of after-care.

Fortunately, musical friends in Ireland have already given considerable support to the family, and this month their counterparts in Boston will have a chance to offer assistance. On May 20, The Burren in Somerville's Davis Square will hold a special fundraising

event for Sergio from 3-9 p.m. that will feature area Irish musicians, as well as raffles and a complimentary buffet [see burren.com].

As difficult as the past year or so has been for Donal and Rosa O'Connor, they have been heartened by the caring and compassion from a music community they know quite well: Donal is the son of Mick O'Connor, a renowned music historian, flute-player and former member of the famed Castle Ceili Band. Among the musicians who have taken, or will take, part in fundraising events and initiatives for Sergio are Sean Keane of the Chieftains, Noel Hill, Charlie Lennon, Matt Molloy and John Carty, The Dubliners, Colm Gannon, Damien Dempsey, Harry Bradley and Mairead Ni Maonaigh. The legendary Barney McKenna also performed at a benefit concert shortly before his death in late March.

Of course, the Irish music community extends well beyond Ireland's shores. The Burren's owners and founders, Tommy McCarthy and Louise Costello, are musicians themselves and long-time friends of the O'Connors. So organizing a benefit for Sergio in the metropolitan area that will serve as a temporary home for the O'Connor family seemed a natural, and

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Irish president will preside over Famine events

**Commemorations
set for May 5 and 6**

BY THE BIR STAFF

Boston's Irish community is preparing to welcome Michael D. Higgins, the ninth and current President of Ireland, on his arrival in the city on Sat., May 5, for a whirlwind two-day visit that will coincide with Boston's designation by the Irish government as the official site of the international commemoration of the Irish Famine.

Higgins will preside over several famine-related events in Boston, and will deliver a lecture on the "Great Hunger" and its impact on Ireland and Boston at Faneuil Hall on the morning of his arrival. The Boston observance will precede by a week the official Irish commemoration in Drogheda, Co. Louth, on May 13.

Michael Higgins, 71, is a longtime Galway politician, a former head of the Labour Party, a poet, a university professor, an author and a broadcaster. He was elected to the presidency last fall and took office in November, succeeding two-term president Mary McAleese.

Boston's Irish Consulate has announced that Higgins's May 5 address will be followed by a musical program featuring acclaimed Irish and local Boston musicians, including Frankie Gavin, that will be produced by WGBH's Brian O'Donovan. The event will last approximately one hour and will be followed immediately by a short wreath-laying ceremony at the Boston Irish Famine Memorial at the downtown corner of School and Washington streets that will feature a performance by the Boston Police Gaelic Column pipe band.

Consul General Michael Lonergan said he encourages people "to attend what should be a wonderful event for the entire community. This is the new president's first visit to the United States and we are greatly honored and delighted that he has chosen to come to Boston and lead the commemorations for the Great Irish Famine here in the capital of Irish America. I am sure very many members of our community here will want to come along and be part of what will be a wonderful event both at Faneuil Hall and the Famine Memorial, to which all are welcome."

In announcing Higgins's visit, Jimmy Deenihan T.D., the Irish Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and

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Michael D. Higgins
To speak on "The Great Hunger"

'Golden Door' was rarely opened wide in Boston

**Brahmins offered a
chilly welcome to the
Famine Irish**

BY PETER F. STEVENS
BIR STAFF

Last in a four-part series

In 1847, Boston was changing – and the city's Yankee population did not welcome that change. Shiploads of Famine Irish were arriving in the harbor almost daily, and the streams of desperate Catholic immigrants accounted for more than 37,000 ragged men, women, and children fleeing "the Great Hunger" (*An Gorta Mor*) in 1847 – "Black '47" – alone. They prayed that their exodus from the old country to Boston had led them to what one termed "the Golden Door." It proved instead a door to more struggle for most of the immigrants.

(Continued on page 15)

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New 415 Neponset Ave. Office Building is Dedicated

Local advertising executive John Carroll proudly showed off his new three-story professional office building at Neponset Circle last Saturday, April 21 during a ribbon-cutting and dedication ceremony at the 415 Neponset Avenue building. He was joined by a gathering of family, friends and local civic and political leaders, among them Mayor Thomas Menino, State Rep.

Linda Dorcena Forry and District 3 City Councillor Frank Baker for the event. In the photo below, John Carroll is pictured with his wife Jennifer and Mayor Menino at the ribbon cutting. Photo top right shows the completed building, and below that Mayor Menino speaks at the dedication as an appreciative Carroll looks on at left.



THE EIRE SOCIETY OF BOSTON

The Gold Medal Awards



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The Eire Society cordially invites you to attend the seventy-fifth annual Gold Medal Award Dinner honoring the 2012 Gold Medal Award Recipients

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The Hampshire House, 84 Beacon St., Boston

\$125 per guest.

Invitations in the mail

Information: Connie Koutoujian, 781-899-3140

Tourism Ireland launches its 'Jump In' brand at Hub parley

Don't just come and see the island of Ireland in 2012 but "Jump In." That was the message as Tourism Ireland launched its new brand to a gathering of Boston travel trade partners and industry media at the Boston Exchange Conference Center last month.

"Jump into Ireland" describes the joyful immersion of a trip to Ireland, that sense of uplifting joy that comes with taking part in Ireland's diverse iconic experiences and its welcoming people.

This theme will dominate Tourism Ireland's advertising, consumer, and trade promotional activities, co-operative campaigns and media outreach in 2012, and also be a focus for extensive social media campaigns to drive awareness of the unique nature of a vacation to the island of Ireland.

Attendees at Boston Exchange Conference Center on the Boston Fish Pier were treated to an

evening of Irish music and theatre as a group of actors engaged with tourism providers on a mythical journey around the island. In launching the new brand, Tourism Ireland's Vice President of Marketing, Alison Metcalfe, said, "We are delighted to be here in Boston profiling everything that is good about a trip to Ireland. From our sunny South-east Coast, to Northern Ireland, to the historic city of Dublin, there is a raft of wonderful things to see and do and we would encourage US vacationers to include Ireland on their calendar for 2012."

"Our trade partners also carry with them an important message this evening about the unique nature of a trip to Ireland and particularly about the great value that is on offer in 2012. The welcome for our US friends has never been warmer and with direct flights to Belfast, Dublin, and Shannon, it has never been easier to

make the trip."

This year's St. Patrick's week celebrations kicked off a wonderful year of cultural festivals throughout the country such as the Galway Arts festival, The Wexford Opera festival, The Dublin Theatre Festival, and the Cork Jazz festival. 2012 is also a year when Northern Ireland is taking center stage with a series of spectacular occasions. Titanic Belfast, the largest Titanic visitor experience in the world, opened its doors last month; the new visitors centre at the UNESCO world heritage site at the Giant's Causeway will open in the fall; and the European Tour's Irish Open golf tournament will return to Royal Portrush. These events and many more come under the banner 'Northern Ireland 2012 - Your time, our place'.

The participating trade representatives included Michelle Maguire, Ireland's Blue Book,



Participants in Tourism Ireland's April 25 "Jump Into Ireland" presentation at the Exchange Conference Center on Boston Harbor pose for a photo with Ireland Consul General Michael Lonergan (seated at center). *BIR staff photo.*

Garreth Cooke, Emerald Elite Group / Emerald Custom Tours, Fiona Herald, Guinness Storehouse, David McCoy, House of

Waterford Crystal, Pam Shaw, Globus Family of Brands, Jason Powell, Causeway Coast and Glens Tourism, Suzanne

Meade, Edward Hotels and Jim Deegan, Rail-tours Ireland-First Class.

Ireland through the eyes of an NU sophomore

By ABAGAIL SULLIVAN
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Boston is known for many things, two of which are college students and Irish pride. But what do those two have to do with each other?

Each semester, Boston's colleges send hundreds of students abroad to study and explore a culture outside their own. For years, those experiences have given students a chance to see another world for months, and sometimes years, at a time. And for students in Boston, one particular country strikes close to home: Ireland.

Northeastern University's study-abroad program sends 16 students to Ireland each year to take advantage of what the university calls "an opportunity to discover new strengths and abilities, conquer new challenges, and solve new problems."

For NU sophomore Al-

exandra Newton, that opportunity was just what she was looking for. She spent last fall's term in Ireland, living with a host family in Dunleary, studying in Ballsbridge, and working in Killarney.

Choosing Ireland was an easy decision for Newton, who during spring break last year visited with a friend and "fell in love with the country" to which she has family ties through two of her great-grandparents. But her four-month-long visit last year was far from a vacation as she balanced her schedule of five classes at the Institute of Public Administration - Irish history, Irish politics, Irish society, Irish economy, and Irish literature—with an internship with Sen. Mark Daly for him she worked at the Dail, the Irish Parliament.

Despite her busy schedule, Newton found time



Alexandra Newton and her tour guide, Travis, at the Upper Lake in Glendalough, County Wicklow, Ireland. "It was quite a hike through the hills to get there, but it was a beautiful lake," she said.

to travel with family and friends and explore new cultures and places, from Scotland to France.

But Ireland was her base and she experienced its culture firsthand, living with a host family in Dunleary, a single mother and her two boys. "I ate a lot of beef, potatoes, carrots, and fish and chips," she said.

Newton attended the boys' football games and saw the movie "Twilight" with them during its premiere month. She said her hosts were just as welcoming as everyone in her home town of Austin,

Texas.

"Living, studying, and working in Ireland was a life-changing experience for me. Not only did I get to learn about the nation's history and mythology, but I also got to be completely immersed in a rich culture," she said adding that she would have changed only one thing:

"I wish I could've stayed even longer," she said with a smile. "I didn't want it to end."

Abigail Sullivan is an undergraduate student in the Northeastern University School of Journalism.

Eire Society Gold Medals to Tynan and Mulligan

The Eire Society of Boston will present its highest award to famed tenor Ronan Tynan and Seamus Mulligan, host of the weekly "Feast of Irish Music Show" on WROL in Boston, at the society's 75th Gold Medal Awards dinner on Thurs., May 10, at 6 p.m. at The Hampshire House on Beacon Street in Boston.

Medalist Tynan has faced numerous challenges of the physical sort in his life and has endured and prevailed with enormous passion and determination. Introduced to international audiences as a member of the Irish Tenors, Tynan quickly became widely known for his unique voice and irresistible appeal and has remained true to his profession during a long solo career springing from his tenor appearances.

For his part, Mulligan lays out the mission of his Sunday afternoon show succinctly: "To present what Ireland and the Irish have accomplished - with admiration, intel-



Ronan Tynan, above, and Seamus Mulligan on the job, below.



ligence, and pride. To showcase Ireland's songs and stories of unmatched beauty, the complex music, the witty and wise proverbs and sayings, the vernacular architecture, now and again a few racy curses and the devout folk prayers."

Irish president will preside over Famine events

(Continued from page 1) Chair of the National Famine Commemoration Committee, who will be in Boston that weekend, said "Many Irish emigrants during the Great Famine, and indeed after that period, have settled in Boston and on the eastern coast of the United States of America and I know that the community in Boston are working hard to ensure that the Commemoration will be a dignified and fitting tribute to the victims of the Great Irish Famine."

"Drogheda was the second largest port of departure for over one million people who were forced to emigrate. Some travelled only as far as Britain while others travelled onwards from the UK to North America. Many of these people arrived in Boston, hoping for a more prosper-

ous life. We know from the evidence of Irish heritage in Boston that many settled and prospered in that city. I would like to thank the community in Boston for their ongoing work to ensure that the victims of the famine are remembered and respected in a dignified manner."

A reception with President Higgins will take place that afternoon at the Seaport World Trade Center beginning at 1:30 p.m.

Other events this month include:

- The Charitable Irish Society, the Eire Society, and the Forbes House Museum will jointly sponsor a Famine Commemoration program on Sun., May 6, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. The program will feature presentations that highlight significant efforts of two New Englanders

to provide aid, comfort and food to Ireland in the darkest years of the Irish Famine. The program will be given at Fontbonne Academy, 303 Adams St., Milton, with presentations by Professor Maureen Murphy of Hofstra University and Professor Emerita Catherine B. Shannon of Westfield State University. Murphy, a noted expert on the Irish Famine, will describe the work of Vermont native Asneath Nicholson, who provided aid and comfort to the sick, destitute, and starving in Ireland from 1844 to 1849. Ms. Shannon will describe the work of Captain Robert Bennet Forbes and the New England Relief Committee, who delivered crucial food to County Cork on the USS Jamestown in the spring of 1847. A wine and cheese reception at Forbes House

Museum will immediately follow the presentations beginning at 3:30 p.m. The tours will focus on the history of Captain Forbes's historic 1847 voyage and include an exhibition of various artifacts related to the humanitarian effort. Pre registration is required. Call the Charitable Irish Society at 617-330-1737 or e-mail them at charitableirishsociety@gmail.com, or call Barbara Fitzgerald of the Eire Society at 617-698-8758 or e-mail her at barbara.s.fitzgerald@gmail.com. Tickets are \$15 per person. Reservations deadline is May 1. The event is part of the 2012 Annual Irish Famine Commemoration.

- Division 8 AOH and LAOH will hold a Commemoration of the Great Hunger on Sun., May 6, at the An Gorta Mor Me-

morial in the Immaculate Conception Cemetery, 29 Barker St., Lawrence, at 1:30 pm. A host of county, state and national AOH and LAOH representatives along with other dignitaries are expected to be present.

- The Irish International Immigrant Center/Montserrat Aspirers will host the 19th Annual Black & Green Event on Sun., May 6, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. with a presentation of a program entitled "The Famine in 19th Century Ireland, and Hunger Today: Locally and Globally." The event will also include an afternoon of performance art, thematic presentations, cultural exchange, and community building, at Monserrat Aspirers Hall, 358-364 Washington St., Dorchester. For more information please

contact Ally Tzovaras at the IIIC at 617-542-7654, Ext. 43, or via atzovaras@iiicenter.org.

- On May 12, the Irish Cultural Centre will be hosting a Famine commemoration at its Canton campus. The evening will begin at 5:30 p.m. with a lecture, a meal, and a viewing of the award-winning film "The Great Irish Famine: Remember Skibbereen." Seamus Mulligan and others will conduct a conversation and Q&A.

- On May 3, the ICC will sponsor a lecture entitled "The History of the Irish Famine and its Impact Today" by Joseph Lee, Professor of Irish Studies at New York University. The evening will begin at 6 p.m. with a reception, followed by the lecture. The location will be announced later.

To Catherine Shannon, the Irish way with ‘words’ is a key to a long history of trouble – and dreams

By GREG O'BRIEN
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

You can define the Irish in many ways — some stereotypical, some political, some cultural. To many, being Irish is as simple as having a St. Patrick’s pint or two at the Eire Pub, Black Rose, J.J. Foley’s or “Dapper” O’Neil’s favorite, Amrheins in South Boston. Others are more cerebral in giving a definition.

The historian, writer, and teacher Catherine Shannon, former president of the Eire Society and the first woman president of the venerable 275-year-old Charitable Irish Society of Boston, the oldest Irish organization in the Americas, defines Irish in a single noun: “words.”

“There’s an old saying that has a certain resonance,” she says. “Words are the weapons of a conquered people.”

Shannon has written millions of them about “The Troubles,” nearly three decades of violence between Northern Ireland’s Catholic nationalist and Protestant unionist communities, about the changing status of women in Ireland, about the old Irish and new Irish in Boston, and about bringing hope to the isle of mists, among other topics. She is as expert as anyone on these subjects.

“Ireland through the centuries has gone through terrible periods of conflict, from the early invasion of the Normans, to the Elizabethan and Cromwellian conquests, to the penal laws of the 18th century when the Irish, under dominant British rule, were not allowed to carry weapons or have a horse over a certain value,” says Shannon, 74, a second-generation Irish American. “Nothing was left for the Irish to maneuver to a large extent other than the gift of words.”

Those are big words from a girl from Hingham whose later contributions to historical Irish research and writing have edified readers throughout the world and given great clarity to the definition of what it means to be Irish, the conflicts within, and the blessings beyond.

Her education on Irish issues began at home at an early age in a pastoral neighborhood not far Hingham Harbor. Her father David, a Boston wool broker from New York City whose dad came from West Cork and mother from Tipperary, instructed Shannon and her brothers Richard, David, and Christopher “to have a sense of humor, be social and gracious to all, particularly those in need.” Shannon’s mother Catherine (Cannon) from Brookline Village, whose parents came from Mayo, was equally gregarious and giving—traits passed down from the family tree.

“My paternal grandfather, also named David, was quite successful in the meatpacking business in New York,” Shannon notes. “His success made its way back to Ireland, and all sorts of people began showing up at his home when they arrived in New York. He got tired of coming home, and finding some greenhorn in his chair. So he bought the house next door, connected the kitchens and it became the annex—sort of a boarding house for new arrivals.” Shannon’s maternal grandmother Bridget worked tirelessly as a midwife for an Irish doctor in Brookline, caring for the underprivileged. A stained glass window in her honor was installed at St. Mary’s of the Assumption Church in Brookline.

Back at home in Hingham, the stress was always put on understanding history. “My parents were great readers, and we were surrounded by books in the house,” says Shannon. “That got me started with an appreciation of Irish and American history. The writing skill came with a lot of work and correction.”

The interest was honed in primary school at the private Derby Academy and at Archbishop Williams High school in Braintree where for three years she studied Latin, the root of many languages. For all that, there was time for other academics and reading and athletics, though there weren’t that many opportunities in the 1950s for women in sports. But Shannon did pick up golf from her father and once shot an 83— an impressive number by any measure. “I still play on occasion,” she says.

After high school, Shannon took up history at the University of Toronto, then took a job briefly in New York in sales promotion for the New American Library Company, which publishes paperback reprints of classics and scholarly works as well as fiction and non-fiction.

In time, the pull of Ireland and Irish history was irresistible, and so she enrolled at University College/ Dublin where she earned a master’s degree in modern



Catherine Shannon: From early on, the idea was to understand history. Margaret MacCurtain photo

Irish history in 1963 with a compelling thesis on the Irish Local Government Act of 1898, which established after years of anarchy a system of locally-controlled government in Ireland, similar to ones that had been established in England, Scotland, and Wales in 1888 and 1889.

The Irish legislation, Shannon said, was the centerpiece in the growing push of nationalism in Ireland. Prior to the act, county government was left in the hands of the mostly British aristocracy, which ignored the working class. “What the British government was trying to do was to extend democratic suffrage; they were hoping this would take away the enthusiasm for home rule and national self government. It didn’t work that way. It simply whet the local appetite for self government.”

Shannon has been interested in Irish history from her childhood. “I heard scores of stories from my grandparents,” she says, “but to some extent they had different perspectives. On my mother’s side, the view of Mayo was romantic and nostalgic, and yet on my father’s side from West Cork, there was a real pride in people family coming to America and prospering here. One of my father’s sisters would wonder why anyone would reminisce about a place of poverty, misery, and starvation.”

Shannon’s parents, she said, were perplexed as to why she wanted to study in Dublin. “What was I doing, they wondered? One reason for going was to find the real Ireland. It is a blended truth, I found. Somewhere between romance and misery.”

Perhaps the definition of love itself.

“My time there,” she adds, “was life changing. It was a wonderful time to be in Dublin. There was real optimism of a great future ahead for Ireland, a precursor of the Celtic Tiger.”

Her life there led to a resume as long as the River Liffey that flows through the center of Dublin, then out to the Irish Sea—scores of publications, major papers and presentations, fellowships, grants and awards, mostly on Irish and women’s issues, and teaching appointments at Westfield State College and at the University of Massachusetts history department as well as at academic posts like treasurer of the American Conference for Irish Studies. Among her scholarly publications and papers: “Catholic, Women and the Northern Ireland Troubles”; “The Kennedys, Ireland and Irish America”; “The Roots and Symptoms of Ulster Separatism”; and “The Past Informs the Present: The Old Irish and the New Irish in Boston.”

The old and the new has been a consistent theme in Shannon’s work — memories of her idyllic days growing up in Hingham and enduring reflections on her beloved Ireland. Never married, a resident now of Scituate, with “tons of nieces and nephews in the area, Shannon

holds dual US-Irish citizenship. One gets the impression that her state of mind often is 2,997 miles away.

Asked about her adopted nation’s indelible influence around the world, she says, “Ireland has had connections to the wider world for centuries, and many in Ireland have an outward, global outlook. At the risk of stereotyping, the Irish have a natural charm that’s infectious, and an upward mobility through education that opens doors wherever they go.”

But sadly it’s the 30 years of violence in the north that has defined, in part, modern Ireland, a history that Shannon has consumed. The history of conflict in Northern Ireland, Shannon notes as a good teacher would lecture, can be traced back to the 1600s when the English succeeded in subduing the island after squelching several rebellions, but the political separation of Northern Ireland from the rest of Ireland did not occur until the 20th century when Catholics and Protestants divided into warring camps over independence. “The Troubles” began in the 1960s and ended, sort of, with the Belfast “Good Friday” Agreement of 1998—an uneasy peace restating the previously held British position that Northern Ireland would remain under British rule until a majority votes otherwise, but acknowledging for the first time that Ireland as a whole had the right to resolve issues between the North and South by mutual consent. In all, more than 3,000 people have died during this turmoil in armed campaigns between Irish Republican and Ulster Loyalist paramilitary groups, most notably the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF).

“Early on, the unionist community in the North, not wanting to be ruled from Dublin, lived in fear of being taken over by the Catholic Church,” she says. “For them: Home Rule was Rome Rule.” But no one has absolutely clean hands in this conflict,” adds Shannon. “Each side has perpetrated atrocities.”

She is hopeful that peace will prevail and that economic and cultural ties between the North and South will be strengthened. “It’s a complex problem that defies easy solutions. Both sides must keep talking.”

It all comes back to words, and Catherine Shannon continues her good efforts in that vein with works in progress on the conflict and the ensuing peace process. As she likes to quote, “Words are the weapons of a conquered people.”

Greg O’Brien, a regular contributor to the Boston Irish Reporter, is president of Stony Brook Group, a publishing/political consulting firm based on Cape Cod. The author/editor of several books, he writes for numerous regional and national publications

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Boston Irish Reporter's Here & There

By BILL O'DONNELL

Give The Little Lady A Big Hand—This Norfolk, Massachusetts, dancer doesn't need much of an introduction to Boston Irish dance fans, given her appearances in Riverdance and Brian O'Donovan's Celtic Sojourn and her talents as a gifted dance instructor, but now **Melissa McCarthy**, 15, has a new title: winner of the prestigious World Irish Dancing Championship held last month in Belfast. She bested girls in the age 15-16 category in the Waterfront Hall contest. Melissa learned



Bill O'Donnell

to dance at the Harney Academy of Irish Dance in Walpole, founded by **Liam Harney**, himself a world champion. Harney's mother, **Sally**, an accomplished Irish set dancer, teaches at the academy.

All of which is prelude to next year's world championships, which will be held in here in Boston's Hynes Convention Center during the last week of March. Boston, considered by many to be the most Irish of American cities, has played host to numerous Irish-related cultural events, including the North American Irish dancing championships, and the national conventions of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann.

A Few Strike It Rich—While most of the financial news in Ireland involves bailouts, bankruptcies, and busted lives, a few quick-on-the-draw Irish companies are doing very well for themselves and their shareholders. Three prominent Irish companies are leading the pack in corporate value and return on investment while making millions of euros for their investors. The top three are: **Paddy Power Bookmakers**, **Glanbia Foods**, and Ireland's no-frills, cheap air fare leader **Ryanair**.

The bookmaking giant Paddy Power, like most other Irish firms, took a financial hit with the world recession but has bounced back smartly. Ryanair's founder and CEO, **Michael O'Leary**, holds 50 million shares in the airline that are now worth over \$300 million, up in value by some 70 percent since 2008. As a result of Ryanair's share appreciation, Irish farmers, small business owners, and pensioners have reaped solid profits from investments in the airline. Also benefitting from improving niche markets is Kilkenny-based dairy giant Glanbia. Its share price has increased 200 percent since the recession.

The Irish real estate and development market has not fared anywhere as well as the above noted corporate high-flyers. In Knocknacarra, Co. Galway, a 16-acre site originally planned for a large housing development has declined in value from its early asking price of \$40 million at the height of the pre-recession boom to \$2 million today.

Overdue Tribute To World War II Hero Priest—It has been almost a half-century since **Monsignor Hugh O'Flaherty** died, but his anti-Nazi activities and the thousands of people he saved during the Second World War fully justify his unofficial title as the Scarlet Pimpernel of the Vatican. Efforts are underway now to erect a statue in Killarney to honor Msgr. O'Flaherty, whose defiant heroics against the Gestapo saved at least 4,000 escaped allied prisoners and fleeing Jewish refugees.

Some readers may recall an excellent 1983 television movie, "The Scarlet & The Black," starring **Gregory Peck** as O'Flaherty. Attached to the Vatican Curia, O'Flaherty confounded the Nazis who were suspicious of the cleric's activities but could not take him into custody as long as he stayed inside sovereign Vatican City. The United States recognized the monsignor's wartime exploits by awarding him the US Medal of Freedom, and the government of Israel declared him "Righteous."

Finally, No Che Guevara Monument in Galway—The question of an appropriate monument to the late Latin American revolutionary **Che Guevara** has haunted the legislative leadership of Galway since June of last year. Guevara, who was killed by US-backed forces in Bolivia in 1967, was a descendant of the **Lynch and Blake** tribes of Galway. The original city council resolution simply voted to "honor" Guevara, and there was no mention at the time of a statue. Somehow, in the intervening months "honor" became "statue" and a full-fledged brouhaha has taken hold that now involves Taoiseach **Enda Kenny** and Congresswoman **Ileana Ros Lehtinen**. She criticized what she had heard would be a statue of Che near the Salthill promenade, describing him as a "mass murderer and human rights abuser." Galway Mayor **Hildegard Naughton** has reaffirmed that no statue to Che is planned but Councillor **Billy Cameron** has persisted. Things can change when city council members with strong opinions find themselves in heated debate, but it would surprise me if Che Guevara is ever added to the existing statuary in Galway city or elsewhere in Ireland.

Lest We Forget—With the passage of time, and with the efforts of allies within the Irish political establishment combined with his own spirited defense, former Taoiseach **Bertie Ahern** likely hopes to see the beginning of the end of the massive criticism he has shouldered since his departure as Irish leader. I doubt that will happen. One memorable line from the final report of the Mahon Tribunal seems assured to keep Bertie from rehabbing his personal and political reputations. The Mahon verdict: "Much of the explanation provided

by Mr. Ahern as to the source of the substantial funds identified and inquired into in the course of the tribunal's public hearings was deemed by the tribunal to have been untrue." Then there is, of course, the benediction by current Fianna Fail leader **Micheal Martin** when calling for Bertie's expulsion from the party: "Bertie Ahern betrayed the trust placed in him by his country and his party."

Not unlike President Nixon, who also resigned under threat of impeachment/expulsion, Ahern would dearly like to refurbish his place in history. He will, it seems, not be aided in that goal by giving high-priced speeches any longer. Early last month Mr. Ahern's listing on the Speaker's Bureau was taken down and he will have to learn to tighten his belt and live on his \$22,000 monthly stipend.

H-Block, By Any Other Name—The scene of the hunger strikes of the early 1980s is finally, after a long and contentious road, set to become the museum that Irish Republicans have campaigned for over the past few years. The H-Blocks British prison will be called, if early indications hold, a "Conflict Resolution Centre," and will cover (not unlike most American presidential museums) both the good and the bad, the triumphs and the failures, the hunger strikes, and the escapes.

The Democratic Unionist Party and Sinn Fein, co-leaders of the Stormont government in the North, have finally agreed that the hospital wing where ten Irish republicans starved to death will be preserved and other prison buildings will attempt to deal even-handedly (if that is possible) with the history of the Troubles and H-Blocks role in that accounting. **Jim Alister**, a member of the local assembly, leader of the Traditional Unionist Voice, and a severe critic of the H-Blocks being sited as a museum, has said that the prison "is guaranteed to be blighted and tainted by the toxic Maze Buildings." One man's history is another's political poison, it seems.

A Brief Primer On The Treaty Referendum—Unlike the two Maastricht treaty referenda voted on by the Irish (a rejection by the Irish voters in 2001 and acceptance a year later) that caused great angst in the European Union, the newest vote, scheduled for May 31 for Euro zone countries, does not have to be unanimous. A second major point with the May 31 vote by the Irish people is that a "no" vote would deny Ireland access to bailout funds that are enshrined in this treaty. This would mean considerable trouble if the current austerity budget plan went bad for Ireland. The IMF and ECB tap would be dry and unavailable to Ireland.

It could be a close vote but the government and most business elements are solidly behind it and except for those who want to create mischief, a "no" vote serves little purpose this time around.

Dublin, Belfast Projects Defy Recession—Two major centers of business and culture, **Belfast** in the North and **Dublin** in the Republic, have been moving forward with exciting new developments that attract tourists and enhance cultural appeal.

Dublin's port authority is under full steam to build a \$40 million cruise ship terminal that will give the local economy a major boost by bringing in tourists to Ireland's capital. Last year, 85 cruise ships with 130,000 passengers aboard them arrived in the port. The problem has been that the ships have had to dock in an area more suited to cargo ships. The new terminal will solve that problem when it is open and operational in 2015. Estimates are that passenger ships today are worth \$65 million annually to the local economy.

Across the now almost non-existent border up in Belfast, the new **Metropolitan Arts Centre**, which opened April 20, builds on the infrastructure projects newly opened in the Belfast area and beyond. In addition to the MAC, there is the **Titanic** signature project, the new **Lytic Theater**, and the freshly refurbished **Ulster Museum**.

Another recent development that adds color and context to the vibrant cultural scene in the North is the recently completed **Giants Causeway Visitor Centre** in northeast Ulster. More than enough, as I have often noted, to add on a few days or more during your Irish visit to include the very scenic North.

GAA Oral History Project Nears Completion—For four years now the **Gaelic Athletic Association** has been cooperating with **Boston College** to compile a comprehensive archive and data base that will then be handed over to the GAA Museum and Archives. The project, begun in 2008, will include some 1,000 recorded interviews with GAA members from all 32 counties and others around the world. The archives will also include, according to Professor **Mike Cronin**, Academic Director of Boston College Ireland, photographs, publications, and documents that will by the fall of 2012 be available to all on the internet. The archives (gaahistory.com) will be arranged by the 32 counties and one section on the GAA overseas, and will be the richest and most comprehensive historic overview of the GAA ever attempted.

The Disappeared That Haunt The Peace—The Troubles in Northern Ireland over a 30-year period resulted in the deaths of more than 3,500 people, many of them innocent victims not in league with either the warring Irish Republican Army, or the British Army, or other NI security units. Among the dead were at least 16 people who disappeared, with no bodies to bury or to mourn. Nine of the victims have been located with the help of former IRA members, but seven still remain somewhere buried in unmarked graves. It is difficult to believe that there are not former IRA members who could come forward to disclose burial sites and help bring closure to the victims' families, and an end to this despicable chapter of the Troubles.

In mid-April, a senior Sinn Fein figure, **Mitchel McLaughlin**, told the Stormont Assembly that he believed secretly burying some of the victims was "wrong and unjust." He added that the Provisionals should have come clean long ago with details of the location of the so-called "Disappeared." Amen!

A Few Words On The Secret Service—The news that broke in the media two weeks ago relating to the prostitution scandal in Colombia came as a total shock to this observer. The Secret Service protective detail in Colombia to do advance and security for **President Obama** was on a fairly routine assignment and reports following the discovery underline that the president's safety was never compromised, and that the president himself had not arrived before the alleged incidents. Those circumstances, however, do not mitigate unconscionable behavior.

A bit of back story: In 1980, as a road show press aide to Congressman **John Anderson**, I was a liaison between the campaign and the Secret Service, which was eager to assume responsibility for the presidential candidate's security, a move he was reluctant to accept. But following a near-dangerous public event in Seattle, Anderson grudgingly agreed to the protection. For most of the year the Secret Service provided round-the-clock security for Anderson as first a Republican candidate, and from the late summer on, as an Independent presidential candidate. I worked closely with detail leaders and individual agents throughout the campaign until election day.

Over the long months from California to New England and some 40 odd states, the agents were the most professional law enforcement/security personnel I have ever worked with. They didn't carry bags or run errands, but they knew their business and were superb and extremely well-trained, affable but serious, and working long, tedious shifts without complaint. In short they made us, the traveling campaign staff, more aware and professional.

To wrap up: Shortly after the inauguration of **President Reagan**, a number of agents from our Secret Service detail became part of his White House detachment. One of the them, who was with us through 1980, was **Dennis McCarthy**, whom we all liked and admired for his broad smile and taut professionalism. He was with Reagan outside the Washington Hilton on March 30, 1981 when **John Hinckley** fired his gun at the president. Dennis wrestled Hinckley to the ground and forced the weapon from the would-be assassin's hand. Another veteran agent, **Larry Dominguez**, who was our liaison with the Secret Service during the Anderson campaign, helped McCarthy corral Hinckley and get him into a police car. Both men were commended for their actions and McCarthy was awarded a medal by the President for his heroics.

What happened in Colombia was wrong, an unacceptable exception to the courageous service that agents on protective detail provide without fear or favor.

RANDOM CLIPPINGS

Man bites dog: Hill Holiday advertising agency fires the Massachusetts Lottery. Good move. ... Paying Liberty Mutual's **Ted Kelly** all that money while his company gets tax breaks from the state is dead wrong. But when all is said and done, whatever happened to executive/corporate performance as a barometer of CEO salaries. ... One of the most balanced essays on the BC oral history situation was a March 31 *Irish Times* column by the Boston Globe's **Kevin Cullen**. ... The North's **Orange Order** just received a \$1.35 million grant from the EU. Maybe it will help them with their anti-Catholic bigotry. ... Ireland must be in better shape financially than I thought. A \$260,000 annual salary cap has kept the top job at the Irish Department of Finance open for months. No takers at that "pittance." ... Latest report just out from the International Monetary Fund has high praise for Ireland's policy makers.

Why am I not surprised when I read that **Glen Beck** (out there somewhere) has designed a set for his TV show that is an exact replica of the White House Oval Office? ... It figures: The British have named **Michael Collins** the second greatest enemy commander, just a shade behind **George Washington**. ... The turf war between native Irish turf cutters is getting ugly with scant resolution in sight. ... **Maurice Fitzpatrick**, creator of the award-winning documentary film "The Boys of Columb," has turned his attention to Derry's statesman of the Troubles, **John Hume**. He recently talked with a number of us here in Boston who worked with Hume over the years.

The *Boston Globe* has joined with those of us who believe that the TV network Al Jazeera has the right stuff and should be available in the US on cable. ... Is Sinn Fein's **Annie Broly** really trying to get Ireland's iconic air, "Danny Boy," played over loudspeakers every day in Limavady. Wow! ... Where is **James Bulger's** memoir? Everyone else has written about Whitey except Whitey. And while we're at it, where are similar tomes from **Sal DiMasi** and **Tom Finneran**? ... One of Ireland's respected craft breweries, the **Franciscan Well Brewery** in Cork, has won top national honors for its **Shandon Century Extra Stout**. ... How about that Republican congressman from Florida who believes that there are from 78 to 81 Communists in the US House of Representative. Ah, stupid me; I thought all the wing-nuts disappeared with the end of the GOP primary debates.

RIP: To lifetime pal **Patrick "Dan" McDevitt** of the giving heart. What better and truer epitaph than "He was a loyal and generous friend."

Red Sox-MGH program a home run

By Ed Forry

The Olde Town Team is off to a bit of a shaky start this season, as the early focus of the team and the city seemed to place an emphasis on the historic 100th anniversary of the ballyard.

I was among those fortunate to be in Fenway on April 20 for the anniversary game, and the pre-game festivities were all they were advertised to be. More than 200 former ballplayers, managers, and coaches who once wore the Sox uniform marched into Fenway that day. By far the biggest cheers came for deposed former manager Terry Francona ("Tito, Tito" came the chant,) followed by Pedro Martinez, always a fan favorite, and Carl Yastrzemski.



Ed Forry

It was great fun to see again some other former standout players – Pudge Fisk, Bill Buckner, Gentleman Jim Lonborg, Reggie Smith among them – and as each player slowly walked onto the field, we 37,000 in the stands stood as one, with nary a dry eye in the house.

But there were quite a few ballplayers who came back that day that had only spent a short time in a Red Sox uniform, and when they all gathered between the pitcher's mound and second base, it occurred to me that many of those no-name guys helped explain why there was a dearth of pennants over all those years.

While acknowledging the efforts of the better players, the larger group were average players – you might say mediocre – and they all contributed to that 86-year drought that mercifully came to an end with the 2004 World Series championship.

One wag in the stands claimed that, even though the "Curse of the Bambino" is a thing of the past, given the alarming losses of the first weeks, a new misfortune, the "Curse of Tito" may be threatening the season. Let's hope not!

Even as Boston's baseball season got off to a rocky start (the team was near .500 as I write,) there is some good news from Fenway on the philanthropic front, where the Red Sox Foundation has teamed up with Mass General Hospital to form the "Home Base Program," a charitable effort to provide assistance to local veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with traumatic brain injuries and combat stress. The program also assists the families of those veterans.

The program was co-founded in 2009 by the team and the hospital, said MGH's Terry West, after the Sox visited the White House following the 2007 championship and team physician Dr. Larry Ronan arranged for them to visit Walter Reed Hospital and meet with veterans recovering from serious wounds sustained in combat.

The Home Base Program, its vision statement says, is to "serve New England by identifying, motivating, and treating service members, veterans and families affected by the invisible wounds of war – combat stress and traumatic brain injury. The program serves the nation as a successful model for private-public collaboration and is a source of new communication and education. It also strives to be a leader in finding and implementing new treatments for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI).

"Working in cooperation with the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense, the Mass General clinicians who staff the Home Base Program address some of the health and rehabilitation needs of veterans and the unmet mental health needs of their families."

On Sun., May 20, the program will sponsor a "Run-Walk to Home Base" fundraiser that begins on Yawkey Way and ends inside Fenway Park. A one-of-a-kind 9k fundraising run and a three-mile fundraising walk through Boston's Fenway neighborhood, it ends with an unforgettable experience of crossing "home base" (the plate) at Fenway Park. Family members and friends of runners and walkers, as well as members of the public, can watch participants from the stands at Fenway, and enjoy food, entertainment, and fun family activities in the concourses of America's most beloved ballpark.

The Run-Walk to Home Base will honor heroic veterans and their families, and raise funds for the Red Sox Foundation and Massachusetts General Hospital Home Base Program. Participants aged 16 and older are required to raise a minimum of \$1,000 and may participate in either the run or the walk. Participants ages 6-15 may only participate in the walk and are required to raise a minimum of \$125. The Run to Home Base has raised more than \$5 million over the last two years.

Those unable to run on race day can still be a part of the team and help raise funds by registering as a virtual runner.

Event Details: The Run-Walk to Home Base starts outside Fenway Park on Yawkey Way and ends with a timed finish (Run only) along the famed Green Monster and a photo finish (both Run and Walk) crossing home plate. The registration fee is \$25. Participants are required to reach minimum fundraising levels, but are also encouraged to fund raise beyond the minimum requirement. Prizes are awarded to participants for achieving top fundraising levels.

To learn more, visit Runtohomebase.org or call 617-226-6012.

Northern Ireland is healing; but more time will be needed

By Joe Leary
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

After years of deadly conflict, Northern Ireland is largely peaceful today, with the vast majority of citizens welcoming the absence of violence and the ability to travel without fear throughout the province. Still, it remains a divided society where some in the population quietly but bitterly continue to hate the changes that have come to their lives.



Joe Leary

The Northern Ireland Community Relations Council published its Peace Monitoring Report in February and the authors cited several examples of "a very divided society." The walled barricades between Catholic and Protestant neighborhoods have in fact grown from 22 to 48 since the Good Friday Peace agreement was signed in 1998. Always, it is fear of violence from the "other side" that has built these monstrous barricades, which

are a daily reminder for one side that those who live "on the other side" are not part of their lives even though they live in the same neighborhoods.

There will be no full understanding in Northern Ireland until these so called "Peace Walls" start to come down.

The monitoring report also cited two important conditions that are constant reminders of the previous conflicts – 92.5 percent of the schools are segregated and 90 percent of public housing communities are still exclusively Catholic or Protestant.

Politically, there are many in the Unionist community who remain in shock over the success of the despised Sinn Fein politicians, which is why many leaders of Sinn Fein try so hard to be respectful to their opposition. Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness, for instance, makes a real effort to be even-handed in governance and to reach out to his Unionist colleagues. His congenial relationship with Ian Paisley, and now his close working relationship with First Minister Robinson are good examples of the Sinn Fein approach.

Still, Sinn Fein politicians hold to their principles when they deem it necessary, as was shown when the Sinn Fein Mayor of Belfast, Niall O Donnghaile, said he would be resigning his post early so that he would not have to greet the Queen when she comes to Belfast later this year for fear he would be seen to be endorsing British rule.

Another instance of civic dissonance and a thirst for revenge between among the parties in the North is the ongoing legal back and forth involving Boston College and the North's Police Service's pursuit of interviews given by IRA members years ago and sheltered in BC archives under certain conditions for their release.

The changes in society and daily life that have taken place in the North are truly profound: great victories for

some, great pain for others. The history of the Belfast City Council over these past 30 years offers a good example of that unevenness.

The hunger strikes of 1981 and the death of the first hunger striker, the famous Bobby Sands, was a huge step forward for the Nationalist/Republican cause. While he was dying in prison, Sands's supporters entered him into an election for a seat as a member of the British Parliament under the supposition that if he won, the British government would not let a member of their Parliament die. Margaret Thatcher let Sands die, of course, but before he expired, he won the election with over 30,000 votes – a truly amazing accomplishment for him and Sinn Fein.

Today, contrary to what the authorities had been saying, thousands of people would vote for the Sinn Fein.

With this encouragement, in 1983 Sinn Fein ran one of its members, Alan Masky, for the Belfast City Council and he won, gaining 8,163 votes in West Belfast. A smallish man, articulate, and tough as nails, Masky was going to join the 51-member council as the only Sinn Fein representative legislating in the soul of Unionism.

It was a very dangerous time, with people getting shot frequently, and although Masky had been threatened several times, the police in Belfast refused to give him protection. His first day to sit in the council was July 5, 1983, but it was considered too dangerous for his family to accompany him on that occasion to which he wore a bullet-proof vest after being driven to City Hall in a bullet-proof car used by Sinn Fein and accompanied by three body guards. The screaming abuse directed at Masky that day was as severe as the City Council had ever seen.

And the rock-hard Masky survived despite attempts on his life: He opened his door one day and took a near-fatal shotgun blast to his chest. He left the country for a while to recuperate. Later, a close friend, Alan Lundy, was killed when he and Masky were working on the latter's front porch.

For all that, 19 years after he entered the Council chambers as its only Sinn Fein member, the intrepid Alan Masky was elected as mayor of Belfast by the City Council. Change had indeed occurred, and Masky followed up his election with courage and perspective, reaching out to his Unionist opponents during his entire year's term as mayor to the extent of participating in certain ritualistic Unionist activities to show that he was mayor of all the people of Belfast.

Alan Masky now is a delegate at Stormont in the Northern Ireland Assembly, but the larger point of this story is that today there are 16 Sinn Fein members of the Belfast City Council. There is still discord and frequent condemnation from the other side, but Sinn Fein is the largest political party in a council where many who were part of the long struggle on both sides can't forget the trauma and killing of those terrible days.

Given that history, it is understandable that divisiveness continues today in some quarters, albeit quietly.

The judge and the law student

By James W. Dolan
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Many years ago while sitting in the old Dorchester District Court I had a confrontation with a young law student who went on to become one of the best criminal defense lawyers in the state.



James W. Dolan

I was presiding in a busy session trying to overcome the usual inertia that develops as you try to move cases through the system. This involved calling a list of cases to determine who was present and what cases were ready for trial or plea.

As we plodded through the list, paging defendants and lawyers, I sent a court officer into the hall to try to find a student-defender and his client. The court officer returned to the session and informed me they were in the upstairs corridor and that he had told them to report to the courtroom, but his request was ignored.

I instructed the court officer to return and tell the student-defender that I would fine him \$100 for every minute he kept me waiting. In a couple of minutes the court officer returned, looking embarrassed. I asked him where the young man was. He said he was still upstairs talking to this client.

I asked: "Did you tell him what I said?" The court officer said yes and when I asked what the reply was, he said the young man told him to "tell him [me] to keep the clock running."

I was not very happy with that response and when the student-lawyer came into the session a few minutes later, I found him in contempt and fined him \$200.

Shortly thereafter, I took a recess and asked the young man to see me in my office. When he appeared, I admonished him. I said you're not even a lawyer yet; where do you get off showing that kind of disrespect? I told him he was one of the most talented defenders I had ever seen and I never expected that from him.

He apologized and we had an amicable discussion about being respectful toward judges even when they may be annoying. I told him to forget the contempt and the fine but remember the lesson. If you can't respect the person, at least respect the role.

The young man went on to graduate from Boston College Law School and become one of the most talented and highly regarded criminal defense lawyers in the state. His success came as no surprise to those who saw him representing indigent defendants as a law student. In what is the most stressful area of trial practice, J.W. Carney is known for calm, determined and forceful advocacy.

From time to time when I read about him, I think back on the incident so many years ago and smile. I think his comment about keeping the clock running was one of the quickest and funniest retorts I ever heard in my years on the bench.

Come to think of it, while I may have threatened, I don't recall ever finding anybody in contempt. In the busy District courts, you need a sense of humor.

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

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Of the Catholic Church as a political action committee

Forays into political realm raise questions for both parties

By PETER F. STEVENS
BIR STAFF

Worcester Bishop Robert McManus recently told Victoria Kennedy, the widow of Senator Edward M. Kennedy, that she was “disinvited” from delivering the commencement speech at Anna Maria College. In Illinois, Bishop Daniel Jenky, of Peoria, likened President Obama to Adolf Hitler and Josef Stalin, charging that the administration’s “radical pro-abortion and extreme secularist agenda” was “a war against religion” and that the president plans to “shut down church buildings.” Bill Donohue, president of the Catholic League, a regular on Fox News, and a vituperative critic of Mr. Obama, holds up a Pew Forum study and charges that the Democrats are “unfriendly to religion” and the Republicans are just the opposite. Interestingly, Donohue is silent when it comes to the American bishops’ and cardinals’ recent open letter in which they harangue Republican Congressman Paul Ryan’s proposed budget as an attack on the poor.

Donohue did find the time to note that Democratic political operative Hillary Rosen was a “lesbian” when he assailed her remarks about Ann Romney’s decision to stay at home to raise her family, apparently another instance of him *knowing* that Rosen was parroting the Democrats’ “war” against the sanctity of stay-at-home-moms. Donohue’s talent for *knowing* why people act the way they do seems to wobble a bit when the discussion turns to matters like capital punishment. The Catholic Church takes an admirably consistent stand for “the sanctity of life” in its opposition to abortion and to capital punishment; but the record shows that a great many conservative Catholics are every bit as selective on capital punishment as they accuse liberal Catholics of being on abortion and contraception.

What all of the above and more in recent months leads to is the question of the ever-vexing matter of the separation of church and state. The clergy and the

Catholic League have the same Constitutional right to free speech as everyone else, but “everyone else” does not, like the Catholic Church, enjoy a 501 C tax exemption from the government. While the church’s leaders are making a stand against the harsh cuts that Ryan’s budget would impose upon the poor, the elderly, the mentally challenged, and virtually every group without standing in the eyes of lobbyists and too many in Congress, Donohue and the Catholic League are broaching such canards as President Obama’s “war on religion” and the “evils of contraception,” and, Joe McCarthy-like, deriding anyone who disagrees with them.

For all that, is a tax-exempt status appropriate for the Catholic Church when its cardinals, bishops, clergy, and adherents enter the political arena and publicly align themselves with a Republican or Democratic cause? I do not believe that the church’s tax exemption should be revoked. The good works of countless nuns and many priests with the underprivileged across the globe is apolitical. Yet here in America, the church’s teachings and the federal government’s position on abortion and women’s rights are so dramatically mis-aligned that it’s hard, if not impossible, for well-intentioned people on both sides of the issues to find an inch of common ground. America’s bishops and cardinals should and do stand up for the church’s tenets, but when the manufactured fiction of a war on religion, no matter how large the divide on the issues, arises, *everyone* might be wise to quash such rhetoric. The church is never going to change its position on life and should not have to, but there is no one seeking to impose “secularism” upon religion or the nation. Ultimately, people are free to believe what they wish and practice their faith, or lack of it, as their consciences and the Constitution allow.

In these parts, Cardinal Sean O’Malley – undoubtedly a cleric with a true sense of mission to the poor

– has sided with his fellow American cardinals and bishops in their criticisms of the president. And the rising star of the American Catholic church, the brilliant and outspoken Cardinal Timothy Dolan, of New York, is revered by conservatives for publicly assailing the Obama administration’s stance on contraception rights and its decision not to support a federal ban on gay marriage. He has every right to do so, but those who disagree are not waging a war on those who agree with the cardinal.

Now, from right-wing websites and publications such as “*Newsmax*,” a conservative news media organization based in West Palm Beach, comes the news that “Roman Catholic leaders are calling for two weeks of public protests against President Barack Obama’s policies as they intensify their argument that the administration is engaged in a war on religion.” Writes Martin Gould: “The days between June 21 and July 4 have been set aside by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, which has sought to end the administration’s contraception mandate, among other policies.” On April 24, a leading lay Catholic told *Newsmax* that “the protests against the Obama administration’s policies could be ‘the game-changer’ in the presidential election. The protests, dubbed ‘A Fortnight for Freedom,’ will be an ‘unprecedented, aggressive attack’ against policies that church leaders see as an assault on religious freedom,” Catholic Advocate chairman Deal Hudson told *Newsmax*.

Excuse me, please. The ‘game-changer in the presidential election’ drawn up by the American Catholic Church? If the Catholic Church and its bishops were so aggressively plotting the defeat of a sitting Republican administration, that would be just as offensive to me, an American citizen and a Roman Catholic. I’m certain that Jesus never envisioned his Church setting up shop – as a political action committee.

Michael Collins saw what had to be done, and did it

By STEPHEN M. PINGEL
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Following is the third in a series of retrospective articles on individuals who made notable contributions to civic life in Ireland during the 20th century.

Michael Collins
1890-1922

The name “Michael Collins” is emblazoned in the annals of Irish history that tell what this remarkable man did in his short life to establish a government in Ireland that held no fealty to the British Empire.

Some consider him more controversial in death than in life, saying what he did created unity and division alike in modern Ireland, from his role in the fight for Irish independence from the British crown, to his signing the Anglo-Irish Treaty, and to his leadership of the newly founded Irish Army in the Irish Civil War. But for most, Michael Collins is remembered as a man who gave his life to the cause of a peaceful, united Ireland.

Born on Oct. 16, 1890, in Sam’s Cross, Co. Cork, he was the youngest of eight children of Michael Collins Sr., and Marianne O’Brien, who was 36 years younger than her husband. The record indicates that the eight Collins children lived pleasant lives while growing up on the 90-acre farm in Woodfield. Michael left school at the age of 15 to work for the Royal Mail Service in a civil service position that didn’t allow for much creative outlet, so five years later, he moved to London where he joined the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) of Arthur Griffith and James Connolly that would later play a pivotal role in the Easter Rising.

Following the calamitous events of 1916, Collins rose to become one of the power players in the Sinn Féin Party. He was elected to the House of Commons in London as an Irish MP, and, like other Sinn Féin members, he chose not to take his seat in the British Parliament. Instead, in January 1919, he and his colleagues set up the first Dáil Eireann (Irish Parliament) in Dublin, their action a direct affront to the hegemony of the British in Irish governance.

Up to this time of crisis, Ireland had been represented in the Commons by about 100 MPs, most of them members of the Irish Parliamentary Party who kept trying to gain home rule for the island with no success, though some legislation to that effect was in the works when World War I broke out. Despite the conflict, Sinn Féin relentlessly pressed the cause of independence, gaining new adherents all the while, dramatically so in the wake of the executions of many of its leaders after the failure of the Rising.

The first meeting of Dáil Eireann, on Jan. 21, 1919 in the residence of the Lord Mayor of Dublin, concluded with a series of resolutions, including a declaration of independence from British dominion as the Irish Republic and the setting up of a temporary constitution. The first president was Cathal Brugha, who was followed in very short order by Eamon de Valera.

On the same day as this first meeting, two members of the Royal Irish Constabulary were ambushed and killed in Tipperary by members of the Irish Volunteers, later



Michael Collins the politician, and the army commander.

known as the Irish Republican Army. In September, the Dáil was declared illegal by the British authorities and thereafter met only intermittently and secretly in ad hoc ways. By then, the war for independence was firmly in place.

Collins, already quite busy with the war, was appointed as the finance minister of the Republic de Valera, an important position and a dangerous one since any rebel minister ran the daily risk of arrest, imprisonment, even death. By 1920, there was a 10,000-pound bounty on Collins’s head.

In 1921, with the IRA’s ability to wage the battle greatly weakened by a lack of supplies, an offer of truce sprung up from the British side whereupon Collins was appointed to the delegation that headed to London to discuss and approve the terms of a treaty that would put an end to the fighting. Why Collins and not deValera remains a question for the ages in Ireland.

As it happened, the treaty that Collins and others signed promoted an end to the rebellion but with several provisions that were highly unpopular with many, especially in the ranks of Sinn Féin. The provision most in dispute was the establishment of Northern Ireland, comprising six of the 32 counties, as part of the United Kingdom. Collins took a big hit on this, being seen by some as weak and too generous with the British on the treaty terms. For his part, Collins knew how vulnerable the IRA had been before the treaty discussions, and that is why, historians say, that he pushed for a truce without delay.

Which meant another war for the Irish, a civil con-



flict pitting treaty forces against those, including de Valera and his followers, who saw the pact as a sellout to the British.

Collins, as commander-in-chief of the newly formed Irish National Army, was relentless if pained in conducting war against his former colleagues, and soon had them beaten. In many ways it was a pyrrhic victory, and its lingering effects roil Irish civic life to this day.

Hollow victory that it was ideologically, Collins didn’t have much time to help set up a permanent government; he was assassinated by anti-treaty forces on Aug. 22, 1922, as his motorcade was driving through Cork. Typically, Collins did not drive through the ambush; he stopped to return fire before he was cut down. Following a three-day lying in state in Pro Cathedral in Dublin, he was buried in the Glasnevin area of Dublin.

Michael Collins is a legend in Irish history, his story embellished by numerous books and movies, in particular a well-received 1996 film starring Liam Neeson. Debate continues about the assassination, with some suspecting it was ordered by de Valera and others content that it was the act of a small group of anti-treaty zealots. De Valera is said to have remarked shortly before his death that he would forever be associated with Collins’s death, and unfairly so.

History has yet to sort out all the details of a time when Ireland was in turmoil, first fighting the British, then fighting each other. But there is little doubt that in Michael Collins, the country had a man who did his duty in the cause of independence as he saw it, and died with his honor intact.

IRISH INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRANT CENTER



An agency accredited by US Department of Justice
100 Franklin Street, Boston, MA 02110
Telephone (617) 542-7654 Fax (617) 542-7655
Website:iiicenter.org Email: immigration@iiicenter.org

IIC to present its first Quincy Citizenship Clinic

**By TONI EARLS
IIC CITIZENSHIP
OUTREACH WORKER**
The IIC is holding its first ever Quincy Citizenship Clinic at St. John the Baptist Church hall on May 12th from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The IIC helps Legal Permanent Residents with the entire naturalization process, from completing the application to ESOL and citizenship classes. At this citizenship clinic, volunteers will help process citizenship applications and prepare them for submission to USCIS free of charge. We are doing this work in partnership with the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center. An IIC clinic is a great way to apply for US citizenship, particularly if you have questions, are unsure about the process or your eligibility, or have simply been putting it off for years. The IIC offers free in-office consultations about naturalization prior to clinics at which the application and supporting documentation (if needed) are explained. Individuals who take advantage of the expert advice available at the IIC will arrive at the Quincy clinic fully prepared for application processing. If you are a Legal Permanent Resident and

have been so for at least five years or are married to an American citizen and have been an Legal Permanent Resident for three years, you meet the most basic eligibility requirement for citizenship. For information about the citizenship process and to register for the clinic, contact me, Toni Earls, at the IIC. Pre-registration for the clinic is mandatory. Simply call (617)-542-7654, Ext. 26 or send an e-mail to tearls@iiicenter.org St. John the Baptist Church Hall is located at 44 School Street, Quincy, a short walk from the Quincy Center T station.

Free US Citizenship Classes: The next IIC Citizenship Exam and Interview preparation class starts on May 3 for 6 weeks. We have afternoon classes and evening classes. Anyone who is interested in signing up should contact Chris Tegmo at 617-542-7654.

Invitation: 19th Annual Black & Green Event, Sun., May 6, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.: We invite you to join us for an afternoon of cultural exchange and community building as we reflect on the Famine in Ireland and the current issues of hunger that people face both locally and globally. There will be an artistic presentation,



IIC host family for Wider Horizons trainees.

music and other family welcoming activities. This unique, annual event brings together African-Americans, Caribbeans, Irish, and Irish-Americans to build trust, healing, and friendship across old barriers. Join us at the Montserrat Aspirers Hall, 358-364 Washington St, Dorchester, 02124. For more information, please contact Ally at: 617-542-7654 or see our website.

Host Families Needed for Wider Horizons Program: The Wider Horizons program brings young Irish men and women to Boston for six week internships in community-based organizations. The experience provides a great opportunity for personal and professional growth for these young adults. They provide a tremendous contribution to the local

Boston community with more than 1,000 hours of service to local organizations in 2011 and return to Ireland with new skills and confidence that allow many to become future community leaders, youth workers, care providers, and more. Please consider supporting this program by opening your home to one or two of these young adults for their six-week stay! IIC Staff supports all host families throughout the six weeks, and compensation is provided. For more information, contact Ann-Marie Byrne at 617-542-7654, Ext. 16.

Calling All Employers and Landlords – Irish Summer “J1’ers” need your help: The IIC continues to help the J-1 summer students in their search for jobs and housing. We have new arrivals from Ireland visit



IIC Deputy Director Ronnie Millar participating at a recent citizenship clinic.

us every day. A lot of the students are finding it hard to secure a job and we need your help! If you are an employer or landlord, please give us a call or email us and we will include your jobs and/or housing free of charge in our resource

list. Please contact Erika Bareiss at 617-542-7654, Ext. 18 or send an e-mail to J1summer@iiicenter.org. On behalf of the young Irish men and women seeking employment and accommodation, we really appreciate your help! Thank you.

IMMIGRATION Q & A

Leaving the US is easy; getting back in may pose problems

Q. *I filed an adjustment of status application to become a legal permanent resident in the US, based on my marriage to a US citizen. I received a card authorizing me to work legally in the US, and I understand that I probably will have my green card interview fairly soon. Could I now fly back to Ireland for a couple of weeks before I actually receive US permanent resident status? I haven't been home in a couple of years, and I want to introduce my wife to my family.*

A. The fact that US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) granted you authorization to work legally in the US while your adjustment of status (AOS) application is pending does *not* mean that it is safe for you to travel abroad just yet. You did not specify your status before you married a US citizen, but we assume, since you have not been home in two years, that you currently are undocumented.

If you have been unlawfully present in the US for more than 180 days to a year, and you travel abroad (including even a day trip to Canada or Mexico) before you are granted legal permanent resident status, you face a three-year bar from re-entering the US. Unlawful presence for a year or more triggers a ten-year bar. These bars would apply to you despite your marriage to a US citizen and pending AOS application. Likewise, the fact that you may have US citizen children who were born here does not alter the situation

Therefore, it is crucial that you remain in the US until you are granted legal permanent resident status at or after your green card interview in the USCIS offices here. Then you will be able to travel abroad for periods up to six months at a time and return to the US with no problem and no need to apply for permission. (A green card holder who travels abroad for more than six months is in a different situation and should obtain legal advice before such a trip.)

In general, AOS applicants who have *not* been unlawfully present for 180 days or more must apply to USCIS to obtain permission to reenter the US *before* traveling abroad. This is called “Advance Parole.” IIC can assist with the preparation and filing of the required form. Likewise, readers should contact us if they want to travel abroad but have any doubt whatsoever about whether their current immigration status will allow them to return to the US. We frequently are contacted by people seeking to return to the US from abroad. Often it is too late: by traveling without authorization they have subjected themselves to the three- or ten-year bar, or they have stayed away so long that they have abandoned their US permanent resident status.

This area of immigration law can be confusing. Some people should not travel outside the US at all, others can do so if they obtain Advance Parole before their trip, and others are allowed to travel and reenter the US without seeking any authorization from USCIS in advance. The form for Advance Parole, I-131, contains nine pages of instructions, and it is quite likely that readers will have difficulty making sense of them and applying them correctly to their specific situations. The solution? See us first. For a free, confidential consultation on this or any other aspect of immigration law, visit one of our legal clinics as advertised in the *Boston Irish Reporter*.

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

Matters Of Substance

Suicide on the rise: A Call to Hope

**By DANIELLE OWEN
SPECIAL TO THE BIR**
Suicide rates across Massachusetts are on the rise – up from 7.7 to 8.1 suicides per 100,000 residents. Overall, it is estimated that one person dies by suicide every 15 minutes in the United States. Likewise, in Ireland the suicide rate is the highest in history with a significant increase in men in the middle-age group. This is a tragic statistic and a shared story

that brings extreme pain and heartache.

Our own experience at the IIC has shown that this epidemic of suicides has followed the Irish immigrant community to Boston. From our legal clinics and health screenings, people come to us because they don't know where else to turn.

A recent *New York Times* article (4/16/2012) noted that “the suicide rate in Ireland jumped 16 percent between 2007 and

2009 as the economic crisis hit.” Ella Arensman from the Irish National Suicide Research Foundation said that a recent study in Cork found that those who died by suicide “were predominantly men, with an average age of 36. Almost 40 percent were unemployed, and 32 percent worked in construction as plumbers, electricians, and plasterers.”

This issue is real and is happening in Ireland, across the US, and in Boston, on our doorstep. IIC's Wellness and Education Services staff is responding to this crisis by providing critical counseling and education programs to the local Irish community. We hope to empower our immigrant community to respond effectively and protect friends and loved ones from this tragic and completely preventable cause of death.

Our staff are certified trainers for the Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR) Suicide Prevention program. We want to help you recognize the warning signs that someone is having suicidal thoughts and assure that you are able to take the appropriate action to keep that person safe. Please join us and help us build a movement in this Cry for Hope.

One simple step we can



Danielle Owen

all take is to stop using the term “commit” suicide. As noted by Doris Sommer-Rotenberg, the word commit “intensifies the stigma attached to the one who has died as well as to those who have been traumatized by this loss. It does nothing to convey the fact that suicide is the tragic outcome of severe depressive illness and thus, like any other affliction of the body or mind, has in itself no moral weight.”

It is tragic that an increasing number of people are feeling so hopeless, and believe that no one understands their pain. The reality is we all can share hope, and that hope helps prevent suicide. Sign up for one of our QPR Community trainings by calling Danielle Owen at 617-542-7654, Ext. 14.

Danielle Owen is the IIC's Director of Wellness and Education Services.

Events, Classes, & Workshops

IMMIGRATION LEGAL SERVICES

Upcoming Free Immigration Legal Clinics
Tuesday, April 24 at 6:00 PM at The South Boston Labour Centre, 275 West Broadway, South Boston
Tuesday, May 1st IIC, 100 Franklin St. LL-1, Boston
Monday, May 7 at 6:30 PM at The Green Briar Pub, 304 Washington St., Brighton
Tuesday, May 15 at IIC, 100 Franklin St. LL-1, Boston
Wednesday, May 30 at 6:30 PM at St. Mark's Parish, 1725 Dorchester Ave., Dorchester
All clinics are first-come, first-served. For complete details, please call (617) 542-7654.

Free US Citizenship Application Assistance
Citizenship Exam & Interview Preparation Classes (6 weeks)
Next Session: May 3 to June 7
For more information, call Chris Tegmo at extension 41.

WELLNESS & EDUCATION SERVICES

Classes & Workshops

CPR Class	Smoking Cessation
Computer Class	Stress Management
Parenting Education Class	QPR Suicide Prevention
GED Preparation Course	Healthy Eating on a Budget
Reiki I Workshop	Financial Planning
Home Health Aide Course	Employer & Education Fair

For more information, call Kielan O'Boyle at extension 42.



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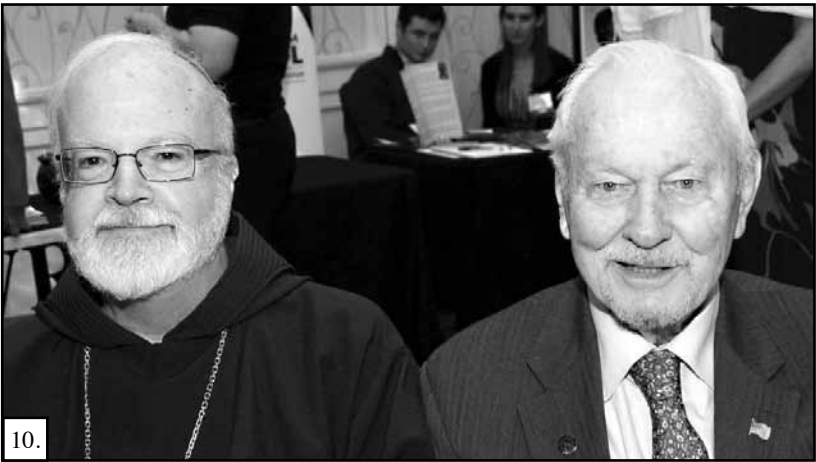
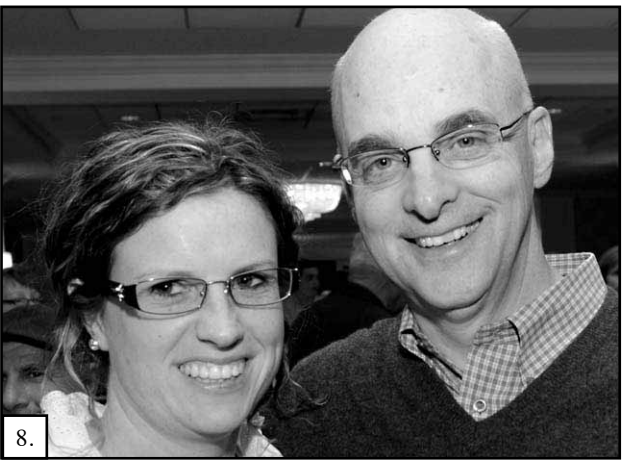
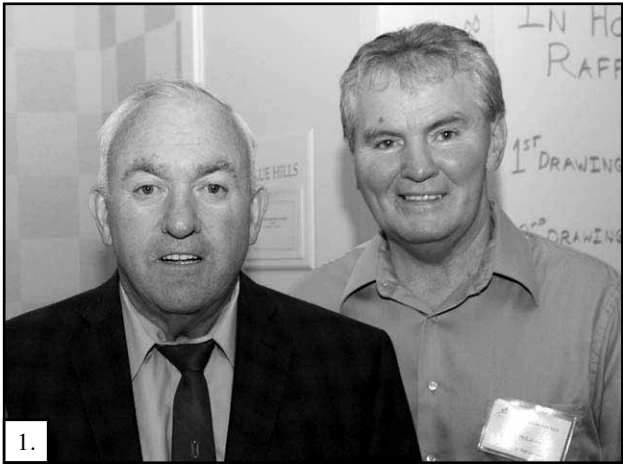
BRETT'S BOSTON

By Harry Brett

Exclusive photos of Boston Irish people & events

The third annual Irish Hearts for Haiti fundraising event was held on Sun., April 22, at the Boston Marriott Hotel in Quincy. The all-volunteer effort benefits Friends of the Orphans, a 501(c)(3) charity that operates homes for orphaned children in Haiti and other impoverished countries. The six-hour event featured non-stop Irish and Haitian entertainment. Four children from Haiti shared their colorful and culturally enriching performances and touching personal stories with audiences around Boston. "The goal is to encourage Bostonians to continue opening up their hearts and empower Haiti's children through the support of Friends of the Orphans," said Monica Henry of Milton, a spokesperson for the charity.

1.) John Joyce, Dorchester; Mike McCarron, Milton; 2.) Ishan Demr, Dorchester; 3.) John McLaughlin, Duxbury; Mike Monahan, Dorchester; 4.) Della Costello, Dorchester; Kathleen Ahern, Quincy; 5.) Sheila Harte, Dan McCauliffe, Anna McCauliffe; Milton; 6.) Patty Harford, Quincy; Mary Murphy, Dorchester; 7.) Margaret Dalton and Rep. Walter Timilty, Milton; 8.) Monica Henry, Milton; Dr. Brian Orr, Beverly; 9.) Kieran Heneghan, Billerica with great aunt Margaret Dawe, Dunstable; 10.) Cardinal Sean O'Malley, Boston; Jack Shaughnessy, Milton; 11.) John Joyce, Dorchester; 12.) Patrick Nee, W. Bridgewater; Mary O'Connor, Brighton, Patrick Griffin, Providence RI; 13.) Dancers from the Keane O'Brien Academy of Irish Dance, Reading; 14.) Tshenyca Thibaud; Mona Dalton; John Gallagher, Marie Eustache; Metshely Tibaud, all of Concord, MA.



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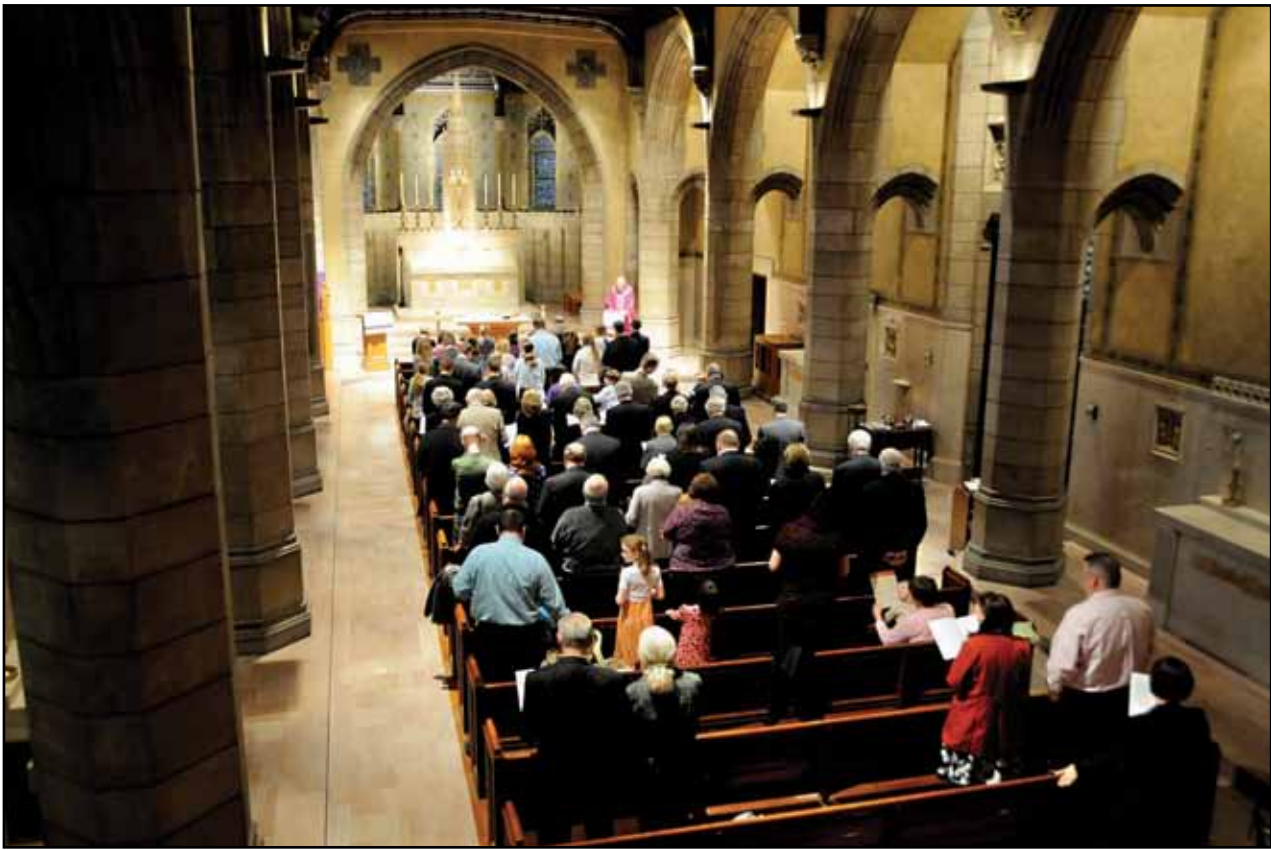
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BC “Irish Room” honors Rev. Francis Mackin, James McIntyre


Boston College dedicated a room in its landmark Gasson Hall in honor of Francis C. Mackin, S.J. and James P. McIntyre. Long known as “The Irish Room,” Gasson 100 now is identified with a plaque reading “The Mackin-McIntyre Fund for Irish Programs.” The March 25 event was made possible by a donation by “a grateful alumnus,” Gil Sullivan, C.B.A. ’66. Pictured are (clockwise from right) BC President Rev William Leahy, S.J.; James McIntyre; Kathleen Corcoran, BC ’75, Father Mackin’s niece; and Gil Sullivan; celebrants at a Mass celebrated by Rev. Joseph Duffy, S.J., in St. Mary’s Chapel; James and Monica McIntyre; and Gill Sullivan.

Photos by Margaret Brett Hastings



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BOSTON IRISH REPORTER

**BOSTON IRISH ARTS,
ENTERTAINMENT,
TRAVEL & MORE**

Tir Na Theatre explores dark comedy of McDonagh's 'Lonesome West'

Davis Square Theatre from May 17 to June 3

R. J. DONOVAN
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Award-winning playwright Martin McDonagh has been described as “the Quentin Tarantino of the Emerald Isle.” From “The Beauty Queen of Leenane” to “A Skull in Connemara” and “The Lieutenant of Inishmore,” his work is known for being dark, bloody, and sadistic.

So what led Tir Na Theatre to decide to produce “Lonesome West,” McDonagh’s inflammatory comedy set in a small Irish town that’s fast becoming the murder capital of the world; where two dysfunctional, co-habiting brothers battle it out over a dead father and an inheritance? Because “it’s absolutely hilarious,” said Tir Na’s Producing Artistic Director, Colin Hamell.

“Lonesome West,” nominated for four Tony Awards in 1999 (including Best Play), is summed up as being “full of McDonagh’s characteristic combination of farce,



Actor Colin Hamell, Producing Artistic Director of Tir Na Theatre.

aggression, and wit. The plot follows two brothers, Valene and Coleman Connor, living alone in their father’s house after his recent death. They find it impossible to exist without massive and violent disputes over the most mundane and innocent of topics. Only Father Welsh, the local priest, is prepared to try to reconcile the two before their petty squabbles spiral into vicious and bloody carnage.” Think Cain & Abel meet “The Odd Couple.”

Known for evoking laughter from the most unspeakable behavior, McDonagh also wrote the cult classic hitman film “In Bruges,” starring Colin Farrell. His next film, also starring Farrell, is “Seven Psychopaths.” McDonagh, who rarely grants interviews, has labeled his work “black comedies about loneliness.”

With a crispness of language and often wildly inappropriate humor wrung from the human condition, he has established himself as a very funny, albeit violent, storyteller. *Irish Theatre Magazine* noted that he “delights in, and makes poetry of, the ugliness of life.” Molly Ferguson, Professor of English and Women’s Studies at Lindsey Wilson College, has said, “McDonagh’s mastery of black comedy is tremendous, and he manages to create pathos in plays in which none of the characters are particularly sympathetic.”

The production from Tir Na, directed by Carmel O’Reilly and playing Davis Square Theatre in Somerville from May 17 to June 3, features three of Boston’s most formidable talents: Hamell and Billy Meleady as the two brothers, with Derry Woodhouse as the priest. In searching for someone to play the fourth character, Girleen Kelleher, Hamell said, “We really wanted to get a full Irish cast. So we’ve got this great actress from Carrick on Shannon in Leitrim, but she lives in New York . . . Lisa O’Brien. She just finished drama school in New York and it’s her first professional show. It’s perfect.”

This show also marks a reunion, of sorts. O’Reilly previously directed Hamell and Meleady in Tir Na’s production of Mark Doherty’s “Trad,” which was so popular, the sold-out Boston run transferred to Gloucester Stage Company for a second engagement.

And by no small coincidence, O’Reilly also directed Hamell and Meleady in a production of “Lonesome West” staged at her own Sugin Theatre Company a decade ago. That run “garnered a tremendous audience,” she said. “And it garnered tremendous awards here in Boston. We all just felt that this is a play that could be seen again, especially in light of the fact that many non-playgoers, maybe in the Irish community

(Continued on page 13)



Téada, along with newest member Seamus Begley, play at The Burren May 3.

Newly expanded Téada offers trad with a generational mix

BY SEAN SMITH
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Local Irish music fans are gearing up this week for a double—or rather a one-and-a-third—dose of newly expanded Téada, one of the best traditional bands to emerge from Ireland this century.

On May 2, fiddler Oisín Mac Diarmada, the founder of Téada, and accordionist Seamus Begley, its newest member, will appear at Boston College as part of the university’s Gaelic Roots series.

The following night, Mac Diarmada and Begley join the other four members of the group in Somerville’s Davis Square for a concert in The Burren “Backroom Series.” Scottish-born singer Hannah Read, a Berklee College of Music graduate and former Boston resident, will be the opening act.

Boston will be among the first stops in the US tour of this new incarnation of Téada, although Begley has been a frequent guest/collaborator with the band. [Concertina player Jack Talty also is filling in for Paul Finn, the band’s regular accordionist, on this tour.] His now official presence in Téada also makes for a fascinating blend of musical and generational influences as well as personalities: Begley, significantly older than the rest of the band, is regarded as one of West Kerry’s finest and most energetic triple threats—musician/singer/raconteur—with a repertoire and style reflective of an earlier, and largely now departed, era.

Which is all the more reason why Mac Diarmada and his mates are happy to have Begley in the ranks.

“Seamus is just a great fit,” says Mac Diarmada, who began playing in a duet with Begley a few years ago; the two recently released a CD, “Le Chéile/Together” [see this month’s CD reviews]. “It’s true he’s of a different generation than us—more of my father’s, actually—but for us, that is just a normal part of traditional music.

May 2, 3 concerts at BC, The Burren

It fits in with how we grew up with the music, being around older musicians and seeing how they experienced the tradition.

“Besides, Seamus is young at heart. He loves performing, loves the traveling, he’s great company on the off-day. He has more fun than any of us.”

The generational mix, however, shouldn’t obscure the fact that Téada is not exactly a collection of wide-eyed striplings. In addition to the talents of Mac Diarmada and Finn (and now Begley), Téada is driven by the excellent flute-playing of Damien Stenson and a powerful rhythm section of Sean McElwain (guitar, bouzouki) and Tristan Rosenstock (bodhran). The band has been around for more than a decade now, touring extensively throughout the world and along the way releasing four well-received albums, the most recent being “Ceol & Cuimhne/Music & Memory” in 2010. Accolades for them began early, notably a “Best Traditional Newcomers” honor in 2003 by *Irish Music Magazine*, and have never stopped.

So Mac Diarmada is able to draw on a wide, substantial perspective as he considers Téada’s first 10 years-plus of existence.

“We were a very young band—some of us weren’t out of college quite yet—and we were still putting stuff together when we set out on our first tour,” recalls Mac Diarmada. “From the start, we were a touring-dominated group, even though we did some albums, and we really honed our skills on the road. I can’t say any of us ever imagined being a traveling musician for

(Continued on page 13)

John McGann, 52; musician, mentor

The Irish music community in Greater Boston, and in many other places around the world, last month mourned the death of John McGann, a talented local musician who gained a large following of friends and admirers as much for his teaching and mentoring as his masterful playing on guitar and mandolin.

McGann, who died on April 5, had been struggling with health issues in the weeks prior to his death, according to friends. He was 52.

A professor at the Berklee College of Music, McGann was known for his proficiency in, and enthusiasm for, many musical genres, including jazz and so-called “progressive rock.” But he was most celebrated for his folk and acoustic work, particularly in bluegrass and Irish or other Celtic music.

McGann teamed with fiddler Seamus Connolly and accordionist Joe Der-rane to form The Boston Edge, and their CD was accorded Best Album of the Year honors in 2004 by *The Irish Echo’s* Earle Hitchener. McGann also was accompanist on Der-

rane’s solo albums “The Man Behind the Box” and “Grove Lane.” In recent years, McGann performed as a member of The Deadstring Ensemble, an all-star quartet of fretted-string musicians that also included Flynn Cohen, Matt Heaton, and Danny Noveck.

He also appeared or recorded with Irish/Celtic performers such as Karan Casey, the Celtic Fiddle Festival, Paddy Cronin, Kevin Burke, Martin Hayes, Paddy Keenan, Tony DeMarco, Frank Ferrel, and Seamus Egan, (Continued on page 13)



John McGann pursued many musical interests, but had special ties to the Boston Irish community.



A column of news and updates of the Boston Celtic Music Fest (BCM Fest), which celebrates the Boston area's rich heritage of Irish, Scottish, Cape Breton music and dance with a grassroots, musician-run winter music festival and other events during the year.
— SEAN SMITH

Tir Na Theatre explores McDonagh's dark comedy

(Continued from page 12) even, were not aware of McDonagh. McDonagh has since [established] such a profile outside of the theater, for those who like movies. They might not know the play but they certainly know him.

Of the casting, she explained, "There's some very funny material in this play and it needs certain actors. Billy and Colin did a fantastic job when we did it before, when we did it at Sugin. They still have that perfect understand of the script. They understand the irony, they understand the black humor. They know how to go with that kind of material . . . and McDonagh's material is very dark and dangerous."

Additionally, McDonagh has a way of creating very identifiable characters. Hamell remembered, "When we did it before, people did come and say, 'This reminds me of my two uncles in the west of Ireland.' There are people like that, bachelors who never left home. And when the parents go, they live on the farm and they don't really communicate enough together." Hamell, who's originally from Navan in County Meath, said, "I grew up

going to Connemara on holidays, and it's full of these characters that really don't talk. They spend ten months of the year in semidarkness with constant rain with no other people really around . . . They're definitely extreme characters of the west of Ireland, but they definitely exist."

Critics have noted that, in part, "Lonesome West" symbolizes the public's changing attitude towards the power of the Church. In the play, the character of the priest has lost such influence and relevance in his own community that the locals can't even get his name right.

Addressing McDonagh's irreverent stance, Hamell said, "He was kind of the first person to bring up the whole, should I say, the ridiculous nature of the Church in Ireland . . . He was ground-breaking for doing that. Now people aren't as shocked because the Church since has gone through such a difficult time in Ireland with all the scandals and that."

O'Reilly acknowledges that some of the play's content might have "seemed terribly sacrilegious maybe ten or twelve

Session time: The BCM Fest monthly Celtic Music Monday series will present "The BCM Fest Session" at Club Passim on May 14. The event, which is free of charge, is an opportunity to relax and enjoy an informal evening of music hosted by some of Boston's best session musicians. Anyone is welcome to bring an instrument and join in, or to share a song, a poem, a story -- or even to showcase his or her stepdancing skills. Leading this month's session will be fiddler Jenna Moynihan, a member of the Folk Arts Quartet and an aficionado of the Scottish/Cape Breton style.

The session starts at 7 p.m. Club Passim is located at 47 Palmer Street in Harvard Square; see passim.org for more information.

Next month's Celtic Music Monday event will be a

years ago. But we know that Ireland has come through its own washing machine, it's own sort of exposing of the undercurrents of issues that have been going on there."

She also feels that the play is born of a dark pain. "Ireland has always had that pain and managed to bring humor to the pain because that was the only way to deal with that pain. It was a survival mechanism. But also, I think so much has transpired in Ireland in the last ten years that we may come to this play with a newer eye for some of our own cultural issues that have surfaced." Still, she said, "The bottom line is it's a very, very funny play . . . It's about family and bickering . . . It's about love. But sometimes love is hurtful," she cautioned. "The inability to communicate. And that struggle to communicate. I think that's what we're all about."

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

"Lonesome West," from Tir Na Theatre, May 17 - June 3 at Davis Square Theatre in Somerville. Tickets: tirnatheatre.org; 1-800-838-3006.

John McGann, professor at Berklee; accomplished musician, celebrated mentor

(Continued from page 12) and was a faculty member and performer at Boston College's Gaelic Roots festival -- the two-CD Gaelic Roots retrospective features his spellbinding rendition of a medley of reels on mandolin.

McGann, whose achievements included winning the national flat-picking title on mandolin and a host of regional competitions, was highly regarded and appreciated for his nuts-and-bolts knowledge of music, which he put to good use as a transcriber and arranger in many genres; he created orchestrations and arrangements for The Boston Pops, among others. He filled his website [johnmcgann.com] with practical advice and suggestions as well as philosophical observations not only on how to play music well, but how to enjoy playing it.

News of his death was met with an outpouring of grief and reminiscences, some of which was expressed via Facebook and other social media. Besides sharing video clips of McGann in various perfor-

mances -- whether playing Irish, bluegrass, jazz or other music -- colleagues, friends and acquaintances remarked on his kindness and generosity. McGann was remembered as someone who had been a steadfast and supportive teacher, had helped land a much-needed gig, or had simply taken the time to offer a quick bit of encouragement. Fellow musicians paid tribute to McGann a few days after his death with a massive impromptu gathering in the Cantab Lounge in Cambridge, and at a more formally organized April 30 event at First Church Boston.

McGann's long-time friend and collaborator, Matt Glaser, wrote, "John was beyond category and beyond compare. He was like a garden of musical and human gifts. That garden is gone."

McGann graduated from Berklee in 1981, and taught there on an adjunct basis before joining the college's faculty in 2004. He also gave clinics, seminars and workshops at numerous music camps and programs, including the Concord School of Music and Ashokan Music and Dance Camp.

McGann leaves his wife Sharon and daughter Hannah. — SEAN SMITH



Oisín Mac Diarmada, left, and Seamus Begley, the newest member of Téada.

Newly expanded Teada offers trad with a generational mix

(Continued from page 12) a living; I know I didn't. You just get pulled into it, and when you find that you have a good time doing it, why not continue?

"What's been the most exciting is to take the music I grew up with, and to explore it in a meaningful way. I think the power of the music, and the variety, connects with people, even those who aren't 100 percent trad/folk fans. When you tour around like we do, you can't always assume the world will be interested in what you do. So if you try to keep it interesting for yourself, at least, hopefully that will attract other people, too."

Mac Diarmada was all of five years old when he began playing traditional music, and he didn't have to travel very far to do it: The local Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann class was almost literally across the street from his house in Crusheen, Co. Clare. By the time he was 10, Mac Diarmada had won All-Ireland honors, which helped encourage him to continue playing. He gravitated at first to the West Clare style, helped by classes through the Willie Clancy School, and was fortunate enough to meet up with fiddle legends like John Kelly, Bobby Casey, and Joe Ryan.

"I'd listen to them talk

about the music, as well as play it, and that was a great education," says Mac Diarmada, who later moved to Co. Sligo and began developing an interest in the North Connacht style. "There was just an excellent, exceptional standard of playing among them. It was amazing to meet these practitioners of the tradition -- you appreciate it all the more."

Are these regional styles, of the kind represented by Kelly, Casey, and Ryan, in danger of dying out? Mac Diarmada is not overly concerned. "I don't think it's a big worry, because those styles are preserved, thanks in a large part to technology. They have now been opened up to anyone living anywhere."

In fact, Mac Diarmada believes the very phrase "regional style" may be somewhat misleading. "I think it's more a case of a strong individual style that had some influence in a region. To me, someone growing up in a particular area should never feel they have to play a certain way because other people around there have, too. When you see someone attracted to a style of playing, maybe it has more to do with their interest in the dynamics of that style, and how it sounds,

rather than because it has a geographical association for them."

When it comes to geographical associations, the Boston area represents some very pleasant ones for Mac Diarmada and Téada. "The Burren was the second place we played during our first tour in the US," he says. "There have been some years when we've been in the States but just haven't had the opportunity to play in or around Boston, and we've missed that. There are enjoyable sessions and great musicians all over, and we've the audiences to be quite informed. So it will be a real delight to have not one, but two, gigs in town."

The Oisín Mac Diarmada-Seamus Begley concert at Boston College -- which is free of charge -- will take place May 2 at 6:30 p.m. in the Walsh Hall Function Room, located on the university's Chestnut Hill Campus. See bc.edu/gaelicroots to get transportation and parking information.

The May 3 Téada concert in The Burren will start at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$28 in advance, with a \$5 discount for WGBH members. For more information, see brownpapertickets.com/event/237141.

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CD ROUNDUP

BY SEAN SMITH
 SPECIAL TO THE BIR
“Le Chéile/Together,” Seamus Begley and Oisín Mac Diarmada: Yes, we know you’re not supposed to judge CDs, or books, by their covers, but one look at “Le Chéile/Together” and somehow you just know it’s going to be a good, fun listening experience. That’s because it’s been made by two performers who, while of different generations, easily rank among the mainstays of traditional Irish music today: Mac Diarmada, a top-notch fiddler and founder of Teada; and Begley, renowned for his just-short-of-outrageous accordion playing, his powerful singing and energetic personality—all of which, by the way,



he now brings to Teada as its just-announced newest member [see story elsewhere in this section].
 Sure enough, Begley and Mac Diarmada present rollicking sets of tunes—mainly reflecting, but hardly limited to, their orientations in the West Kerry (Begley) and Clare/Sligo (Mac Diarmada) traditions—interspersed with songs joyously sung by Begley in English and Gaelic, and fetching harmonies added by his daughter, Meabh Ni Bheaglaoich. The sleeve notes provide useful

background on the tunes and songs, underscoring the care and respect the duo shows the tradition.
 If Kerry is in the mix, you know slides and polkas have to be played, and Begley and Mac Diarmada open the album with the former (“The Scartaglen”—a tune associated with the legendary Kerry fiddlers Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford—and “Trasna na d’Tonnta”) and close it with the latter: “Connie Fleming’s,” credited to the great Sliabh Luachra box player Johnny O’Leary, and “The Ballinahulla,” from the repertoire of fiddler Denis Doodu. You’ll also see the name of Kerry accordionist Finbarr Dwyer—a major figure in Begley’s musical development—crop up quite a bit in the sources, such as for an exquisite set of hornpipes (“West the Hill/The Druid’s Field”) and a trio of jigs.
 Mac Diarmada and his fondness for Sligo fiddle comes to the fore with a solo pair of reels, the sweetly voiced “King of the Clans” (from Andy McGann) and that Michael Coleman classic “Woman of the House,” and another medley—played with Begley—that includes “Over the Moor to Peggy,” associated with Lad O’Beirne.
 Begley’s voice is an instrument all its own, as he demonstrates on the tender “Eibhlin a Run (Eileen Aroon)” and “An Tseanbhean Bhocht,” or “Shan Van Vocht”—he and Meabh sing it in both Irish and English—which evokes the hoped-for Napoleonic assistance in Ireland’s 1798 rebellion. His rendition of “The Banks of the Bann” is nothing short of masterful, with accordion and fiddle doubling the song’s grand, stately melody between verses.
 The one complaint is that the album is over far too soon, clocking in at a little less than 35 minutes. But presumably, these guys will have plenty more material to come up with—and they’ll have loads of fun doing

Worldwide at www.bostonirish.com
 so. All the better for us.
Seamus Begley and Oisín Mac Diarmada will give a free, public concert as part of the Boston College Gaelic Roots series on May 2 at 6:30 p.m. in the Walsh Hall Function Room on BC’s Chestnut Hill Campus. bc.edu/gaelicroots for information.

“Cuan,” Colleen Raney & Colm MacCárthaigh: With the level of attention typically centered on the US Irish/Celtic music scenes in the East (Boston, New York, Philadelphia) and Midwest (Chicago, Minnesota), this album is the latest reminder not to overlook the Northwest, either. A Seattle native now living in Portland, Ore., Raney brings a rich, hearty and inviting voice—unmistakably American and without affectation or pretense—to her music. Dubliner MacCárthaigh (guitar, cittern, tenor guitar and vocals) has often collaborated with Raney, including on her previous releases, “Lark” and “Linnet.”

“Cuan” is more a stripped-down affair than those albums, which focuses all the more attention on the material and their treatment of it. Raney and MacCárthaigh are not found wanting. The repertoire here, as with Raney’s other albums, comprises traditional and contemporary songs that will be generally familiar to anyone who’s paid reasonable attention to the Irish, Scottish, and English folk scene for the past few decades: “Lord Franklin,” “The Flower of Magherally,” “The Night Visit,” “Mary and the Soldier,” “Annachie Gordon,” Gerry O’Beirne’s “Western Highway” and Brian McNeill’s “The Lads of the Fair,” among them. But Raney and MacCárthaigh do a good job of giving the songs fresh takes without resorting to gimmicks or diversions (i.e., no beatboxes, symphony orchestras or sudden bursts of wah-wah guitars); their well-matched voices, along with MacCárthaigh’s splendid, just-right accompaniment, are all they need.

The two set the right tone with the opening track, as Raney fires up a winsome version of “Belfast Mountains,” her vocals waltzing to MacCárthaigh’s breezy guitar. She also does a suitably brooding “Flower of Magherally.” If “Lord Franklin” and “Annachie Gordon” are perhaps a little derivative of, respectively, Michael O’Dhonnai and Mary Black, “Bound for Caledonia” has a refreshingly up-tempo bounce to it (with some distinctive chord voicings by MacCárthaigh). Even “Wild Mountain Thyme,” which closes out the album, sounds revitalized in Raney and MacCárthaigh’s hands—they play with the time signature a little, and once again MacCárthaigh’s guitar adds some cross-hatching to the vocal texture.

The two just completed a mini-tour last month of the East Coast that did not include a stop in the Boston area; here’s hoping they can get at least a bit closer next time.
“The Essential Clannad”: Compilation albums invariably invite criticism or at least second-guessing—“How do you include [insert song title here] yet leave out [insert other song title here]?”—but there is ample reason for both on this two-CD, 30-track release. The most obvious shortcoming is that, while it’s touted as a “career-spanning” collection, “The Essential Clannad”



would have you believe that Clannad started out in 1982 -- ignoring the group’s first decade and first three albums.
 Which raises the question: Was Clannad’s work in the 1970s not “essential,” then? It’s true that this period came before they developed their quintessential sound: mystical/New-Agey, reverb-heavy, suffused with Gregorian chant-like harmonies that, along with Moya Brennan’s ethereal vocals, seemed to evoke some remote, mist-shrouded glen in their native Donegal, yet also securely in the vernacular of pop and rock. But it would have been illuminating to include, say, “Nil Se Ina La” and “Dulaman,” as examples of how, even in its early, all-acoustic phase, the band showed a proclivity for inventive vocal work and experimentation with jazz and world music influences—and, oh yes, a considerable use of Gaelic—that was unlike anything else in the ‘70s Irish folk revival.
 So, in the Zen-like words of a certain football coach, “The Essential Clannad” is what it is: their greatest (commercial) hits, namely “In a Lifetime” (their breakout duet with Bono), “I Will Find You” (from “Last of the Mohicans”), “Robin the Hooded Man” (from “Robin of Sherwood”), “Newgrange” and “Theme from Harry’s Game,” as well as other songs—“A Bridge That Carries Us Over,” “Mystery Game,” “Something to Believe In”—that add further context in assessing their peak years in the 1980s and ‘90s.
 It does bear mentioning, however, that several songs in Gaelic, including the traditional “Buachaill On Eirne (A Boy from Ireland),” are included on the compilation, to demonstrate their unique musical, and cultural, heritage. Affirming this in his liner notes is musician/journalist/iconoclast Larry Kirwan, who also points out a political dimension to Clannad, in their insistence on recording songs in their native language “at a time when it was commercial suicide to do so”; along the same lines, he notes that “Harry’s Game”—the theme song to a TV show about The Troubles—became the first song in Irish to make the British top 20. Clannad was indeed a groundbreaking band; it just would’ve been nice for this set to show the full extent of that ground.

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A Session for Sergio, a little boy who needs help

(Continued from page 1) wholly appropriate, thing to do.

"We want, most of all, to let Donal and Rosa -- and Sergio and Tadhg -- know that they are not alone," says Tommy. "It's impossible to imagine what they're going through, and what lies ahead for them. We want to do whatever we can on our end to help them through this ordeal."

Donal O'Connor says he and his family can't believe how far Sergio's story has travelled, and how much response it has elicited.

"The traditional Irish music community both at home and abroad have been so supportive and generous to date," he says. "We are overwhelmed and indebted by the level of kindness that people have shown to us during our difficult times. It's as if the Irish music community is one big family, with everyone looking out and supporting each other. I often get very emotional when I know that there are so many people out there thinking and praying for the well-being of my son."

When Rosa was first pregnant, Donal recalls, she had a kind of "motherly inkling" that she was carrying twins, and sure enough, a visit to the doctor confirmed her intuition. For months, the couple experienced much of the anticipation and anxiety common to expectant parents. Then came

the 29th week of pregnancy, and a routine check-up yielded a disturbing revelation: A stomach "bubble" wasn't showing up in one of the twins. Medical consultants later confirmed the diagnosis of tracheo-oesophageal fistula, which occurs in about one of every 3,000 live births.

This condition is severe enough that since his birth, Sergio has had to spend every day of his life in Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children in Crumlin, Dublin. Sergio has a tube in his throat to stop his trachea from collapsing and is fed through a peg in his stomach. He also has a continuous suction tube through his nose and requires regular ventilation treatment to prevent him from choking on his saliva. Sergio also is missing a bone in his left arm and has experienced heart and liver problems.

Boston, long a port of hope for generations of Irish, beckoned to the O'Connors when they found out the city was home to the Oesophageal Advanced Center and John Focker, a world expert in tracheo-oesophageal fistula. Ireland's health services administration sanctioned the treatment and reached an agreement with Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children and Boston Pediatric Hospital to allow Donal to be treated in Boston.

Focker's approach to

treating Sergio's condition will be to induce the little boy into a coma for three to six weeks while surgeons use a procedure to stimulate the growth of his esophagus. The estimated time for the procedure and after-care could be as much as six months.

Donal and Rosa, along with Tadhg -- who has had no health issues -- have visited Sergio constantly to keep their family bonds strong. The couple has tried to establish as much of a routine as possible: They take turns making the 45-minute drive to the hospital at different times of the day, since one of them has to remain home with Tadhg. But they also are aware of how critical it is for the boys to have time together, which is a tall order, given the circumstances.

"Sergio's hospital room is very tight in space, so there's basically no room for his brother to play freely there, especially in the morning when the ward is rather busy with doctors and nurses in and out doing their rounds," says Donal. "That's why we leave it to the quieter evening time for the boys to play with each other. There is a small courtyard near Sergio's ward and when the Irish weather permits us, we like to take Sergio outside with his entourage of medical equipment."

Tadhg will stay in Dublin with Donal's parents



One-year-old Sergio O'Connor of Ireland has a rare condition his family hopes can be treated at Children's Hospital in Boston.

while Donal and Rosa are in Boston with Sergio, although after a while Rosa will fly back to look after Tadhg. Donal intends to stay for the duration of Sergio's treatment.

"Hopefully, when Sergio comes out of his induced coma, the entire family will reunite once again in Boston," says Donal.

The O'Connors have set up a website, helpsergio.com, to provide information and updates on Sergio's story and invite donations. It also includes a gallery of photos showing visits in the hospital with Sergio, who looks

alert and bright-eyed in most pictures, and is often seen flashing a radiant smile that seems to come from his very heart.

Donal and Rosa's joy in their son, and their hope for his future, is continually tested -- Rosa was unable to celebrate Mother's Day (which is observed on the last Sunday of March in Ireland) this year with Sergio because she was suffering from a chest infection that doctors worried might be contagious to him. They try to be as patient and collected as possible, and as Donal notes, to dwell on the

positives.

"It's hard to tell what the whole experience has taught me so far, as I still find myself right in the middle of the action and heading shortly into uncharted territory overseas. One thing is for certain: More than ever before, I value the strong support of my family and friends as I realize the importance of what they have already contributed in order for us to remain strong and focused on ensuring that Sergio gets what he rightly deserves -- love and affection."

'Golden Door' was rarely opened wide in Boston

(Continued from page 1)

Anglo-Protestant families who had ruled over the city since their Puritan ancestors set foot in the region in 1630 embraced still the anti-Irish, anti-Catholic prejudice of Boston's founders. Ephraim Peabody, whose family ranked high among Boston's founding fathers, lamented that the Irish were infesting "proper Bostonians" turf with a horrific "social revolution." As the city's population swelled from some 115,000 to over 150,000 in just 1847, the newcomers quickly discovered that they were not welcome. They had escaped the Famine only to find themselves in a new battle for survival among what historian George S. Potter dubbed "the chilly Yankee icicles."

The age-old prejudices that the Irish had encountered on the "ould sod" now confronted them in the New World, and even though some one million Irish poured into America from 1845-1850, the roughest reception awaited them in Boston.

In all fairness to some of the city's Protestant families, not all treated the Irish with contempt by throwing up every possible social, cultural, religious, and economic roadblock to keep the immigrants "in their place" -- the bottom rung of society. Still, one of the first greetings the Irish received as they trudged into the city was laughter at their ragged clothing and jibes about their ignorance and "Popery." Irish who had lived and farmed in rural

counties now took their places in teeming North End tenements already crowded with Irish families who had emigrated in the years before the Famine. Chased from their tenant-farming plots in Ireland by avaricious landlords, the newcomers were preyed upon by Boston "slumlords" who reviled the Irish, but not enough to pass up charging them \$1.50 a week to live in a single nine-by-eleven-foot room with no water, no toilet, no sink, no ventilation, and no daylight. With more "coffin ships" plodding into the harbor every day, landlords expanded the tenements for "shanty Irish" into East Boston.

In the mid-1800s, Boston, as was the case in every American city, had few sanitary regulations and virtually no enforcement of the extant few. Building and fire-safety codes were nonexistent. Yankee merchants and wealthy property owners sneered at the Irish but seized the opportunity to convert three-story, single-family waterfront houses into "rookeries" -- tenements -- with a hundred or so one-room flats for the Irish. The landlords also charged "rent" for hordes of other immigrants to throw up ramshackle lean-to's in the gardens, backyards, and alleys of the once-genteel homes. As many thousands more of the Famine Irish arrived, property owners turned musty, fetid old waterfront warehouses into rooming houses with



The Irish Famine Memorial in downtown Boston at the corner of School and Washington Streets.

no pretense of any real rooms, just tiny spaces separated by thin wooden partitions. At high tide, seawater seeped into the buildings and pooled ankle-deep. There was no semblance of privacy for families and, in particular, young Irishwomen, in the squalid rooming houses.

To make the \$1.50 rent, the "new Irish" competed

against those already in Boston for any menial job from cleaning out stables and yards to unloading ships and pushing carts. Wherever manual labor was needed, there were too many Irish literally fighting each other for any job, no matter how menial.

The Irish battled not only each other for unskilled jobs, but also working-class Protestant

Bostonians, who made a dollar a day or more. Realizing that Irish immigrants accustomed to earning eight cents a day in Ireland would eagerly work for less than the Yankee workmen, upper-class Bostonians and Yankee laborers and tradesmen, unified by a hatred of all things Irish and Catholic, pressured factories, construction companies, stores, and businesses of every sort into posting "No Irish Need Apply" signs in shop windows and on factory and workshop doors throughout the city.

As the Irish tenements and rooming houses predictably became incubators for disease and crime, pangs of conscience and practicality tugged at some of Boston's civic leaders. A study by the Boston Committee of Internal Health on the slums related that the Irish languished in "a perfect hive of human beings, without comforts and mostly without common necessities; in many cases huddled together like brutes, without regard to age or sex or sense of decency. Under such circumstances self-respect, forethought, all the high and noble virtues soon die out, and sullen indifference and despair or disorder, intemperance and utter degradation reign supreme."

The lack of sanitation in the rookeries unleashed a wide array of disease, cholera proving the most lethal. Of Irish children born in Boston during the Famine years, approximately 60 percent

died before the age of six. Of the men, women, and children who staggered from the coffin ships and into the city's slums, the average life span was six years from the day they reached Boston.

Illness, poverty, hopelessness, and sometimes rage reigned in the rookeries. Alcoholism and crime soared, and small armies of children, with little or no schooling available, roamed the streets begging and stealing. Rowdy behavior fueled by alcohol and boredom spilled out into the streets of Boston and the city witnessed a staggering increase in crime, up to 400 percent for such crimes as aggravated assault. Men and boys cooped up in tiny rooms and without employment or schooling got into serious trouble. An estimated 1,500 children roamed the streets every day begging and making mischief.

Slowly, doggedly, things would change for the Irish in Boston. The struggles of those who escaped the Famine and then joined with the Irish who had already planted roots in the city and survived the deeply entrenched antipathy of Yankee society led to a unique chapter in the annals of the Diaspora. The Boston Irish did in every sense establish themselves through travail and eventual triumph as "Ireland's next parish over," a relationship reflected in the Republic of Ireland's selection of Boston for this year's commemoration of the Great Famine.

Traveling People

Gastronomically speaking, the Irish have the right stuff

BY JUDY ENRIGHT
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Let's talk food – Irish food. In short, it's great! You may still be able to find a pub that serves dry, tasteless ham or cheese sandwiches on bland bread, but for the most part, food is fresh, locally sourced, and truly outstanding and not just in the high-end restaurants. Pubs have come into their own, too, and many serve fresh soups and stews, paninis, and other trendy sandwiches along with other pub fare.

We recently attended the dedication of the Titanic Memorial Park in Lahardane, North Mayo, and stopped for lunch at **Leonard's Pub** there. For 10 euro, we were treated to an extensive buffet that featured a huge assortment of offerings from curried chicken to cold salmon to assorted cold meats, breads and rolls, pasta and green salads. The selections went on and on. For an extra three euro, you could add dessert, tea, or coffee, and we did. (Leonard's serves lunch every Sunday from June through the end of August starting at 12:30. If you're in the area, the lunch is highly recommended, as is the Titanic Memorial Park, which is very well done.)

This spring, we enjoyed several delicious dinners at **McDermott's Pub in Doolin**; a very nice lunch at **Cashel House Hotel in Connemara**; excellent fresh fish specials at dinner in the beautiful **Lough Inagh Lodge Hotel** (where we also relished afternoon tea with homemade jam and scones) and lunch at the **Beehive on Achill Island** (chicken, mozzarella, and roasted red pepper panini with garlic mayonnaise – yum!)

I always make a point when I'm in Connemara to stop in **Clifden at Mitchell's Seafood Restaurant**, which serves

consistently excellent fare. The fishcakes are divine and, although the menu offers other yummy luncheon selections, we couldn't resist and had fishcakes on every visit. (Warning: if you hope to have dinner at Mitchell's, be sure to stop in and make a reservation or call because dinners are usually booked out well in advance.)

In addition to seafood, Mitchell's dinner menu includes duckling, Irish beef, Irish stew, chicken, and more. Written on the menu: "We would like to advise our customers that, as we only serve fresh seafood, we depend on daily landings and we cannot guarantee the availability of all varieties mentioned on this menu." Doesn't that say it all?

Memorable: We've had terrific meals at many places but the highlights this year have been, in addition to Mitchell's: Café Rua (heavenly pate) in Castlebar; Nicola's (everything is freshly made and delicious) in Westport; Heaton's Guesthouse (especially outstanding breakfast) and Global Village (delicious mussels) in Dingle; Cullinan's and the Roadhouse in Doolin (everything is delicious in both); The Granuaile Pub and Newport House in Newport and Nevin's Pub in Tiernaur, Mulranny, all in Co. Mayo, Farmgate in Middleton, Co. Cork, and many, many more.

Ireland is also home to a number of world-famous chefs including **Nevin Maguire** who, with his wife, **Amelda**, runs **MacNean House and Restaurant in Blacklion, County Cavan**. And, there are many other well-known chefs, some of whom are connected with the better hotels and restaurants.

Medieval castle banquets are fun too. Some of the better known include **Dunguaire** in Kinvara,

Bunratty Castle in Bunratty, and **Knappogue Castle**, all in Co. Clare. See shannonheritage.com for more details.

The larger cities, of course, are teeming with excellent eateries but we don't specifically mention them because, in this waffly economy, it's impossible to keep track of the establishments that are still in business. Travelers will no doubt find their favorite eateries as they meander about Ireland.

Food organizations: Irish food has no doubt improved so dramatically in the past decade or so due to the influx of visitors from all over the world who demand good food and to the many, many Irish organizations designed to govern food suppliers and ensure that standards are met and exceeded. Good Food Ireland, for instance, began in 2006 and links food producers with the hospitality sector. Bord Bia, the Irish food board, acts as a link between Irish food, drink and horticulture suppliers and existing and potential customers. All these groups have websites and you can download recipes from most of them.

There's also a group, The Irish Farmhouse Cheesemakers Association, that promotes the cheese industry. If you haven't tried Irish cheese yet, you are in for a real treat. My personal favorites are St. Tola Goat Cheese and Cashel Blue. But, those are just two of many, many Irish cheeses, all of which are different, interesting and well worth trying. I recommend sampling them in Ireland as the Irish cheeses I've eaten in the states just don't taste the same.

Another group is called Love Irish Food and I see their logo on my morning cup of Yoplait strawberry/peach yogurt (made by Glanbia in Dublin.) Love Irish Food's website says



Nothing soothes the weary traveler quite like tea and scones served in style at Lough Inagh Lodge Hotel in Recess, Connemara. *Judy Enright photo*

the group's aim is to help consumers make informed choices about buying Irish manufactured food and drink. Their overall aim, the website writer adds, "is to safeguard the future of food and drink manufacturing in Ireland."

And then, of course, there's the food you cook and eat at home. There is an immense selection from any of Ireland's many good grocery chains like Tesco, SuperValu, and Centra. There are also Lidl and Aldi stores in many areas as well as the smaller "Mom and Pop" stores where you probably wouldn't do a week's shopping but you could certainly pick up necessary bits.

I love raw oysters and in Ireland you can find them in many restaurants or buy them to shuck and eat at home. Connemara oysters are delicious, served with a small glass of Guinness, and Clew Bay oysters, with just a squirt of lemon, are divine.

Kylemore Abbey: Magnificent Kylemore Abbey, deservedly one of the West of Ireland's most popular tourist destinations, has an impressive



A platter of raw oysters, straight from Clew Bay, Co. Mayo, to the dinner table. *Judy Enright photo*

listing of events on its 2012 calendar. A series of musical performances are scheduled in the lovely Gothic Church with its amazing acoustics. The church can accommodate an audience of about 80 and choirs are scheduled to perform there from many countries, including Canada and the US, throughout the summer. Visitors are welcome.

During July and August, the Benedictine nuns of Kylemore sing Latin Vespers in the church each Sunday at 3 p.m. Visitors are invited and no booking is required.

Events are posted and constantly updated on the Kylemore website – and there is lots of other information there about the garden, teahouse, and the craft shop. Kylemore's chefs also post a recipe every month, which would be fun to try at home. See kylemoreabbey.com for more.

GOINGS ON

- From May 2 to 7, the Fifth Annual Roscommon Lamb Festival will be held in Roscommon Town. Co. Roscommon, the website says, has the highest lamb output in Ireland. For more information, visit roscommonlambfestival.com.

- How about taking a painting workshop on Achill Island? Workshops with Padraig McCaul are planned for May 12 and 13, June 9 and 10, July 14 and 15, and on a number of

dates in August. For more information, try e-mail at info@padraigmccaul.com or visit the website: padraigmccaul.com;

- Painting workshops are also taught at Lough Inagh Lodge Hotel in Connemara by Rosemary Burns. Get more information by e-mailing info@rosemaryburnspainting.com or by visiting her website at rosemaryburnspainting.com.

- Ballyvaughan, Co. Clare, celebrates the mystical Burren in May with assorted events. Talks on many subjects are scheduled as are walks, films, a farmer's market, a book launch of "A personal Record: Wildflowers of Ireland," an art exhibition, treasure hunt, concert, art and crafts fair (every Sunday at 10 a.m.) and a full, half and mini marathon (walk, jog or run) on May 26. The Burren College of Art, Burrenbeo Trust, and Clare Burren Marathon Challenge organized the events.

- Check out the website visitconnemara.com for details on the Peter Bailey Cup Sky Road 10K challenge set for June 3 in Clifden, Co. Galway. Walkers are welcome and prizes abound. Medals will be awarded too to all successful participants.

For details on other activities going on in Ireland – and there are many at this time of year – visit discoverireland.com and enjoy your trip whenever you visit.



The Titanic Society in Addergoole Parish, No. Mayo, constructed this memorial park and garden in what was an empty field last spring in memory of 14 neighbors from the valley who boarded the ill-fated liner 100 years ago. Life-size bronze statues depict one of the 11 Addergoole women - waving goodbye - and one of three men who left this tiny village in search of better lives in America. Three women survived. The park was dedicated by Taoiseach Enda Kenny on April 15.

Inset: This 76-foot Titanic replica was the best-kept secret in Addergoole Parish, Co. Mayo, this year. A small group of talented, volunteer craftsmen secretly worked on the engineless replica since Christmas. It was launched on Lough Conn, accompanied by fireworks, on April 13 for 400-plus guests attending a Titanic Ball in the Pontoon Bridge Hotel.

Judy Enright photos

The Irish Language

by Philip Mac AnGhabhann

Is sí an Bhealtaine i arís. /iss shee uh VAHL-tuhn-uh ee uh-reesh/ “It is May again”. How time flies! **Bealtaine** is the traditional beginning of the Celtic “New Year.” Last May we had the months in the English order. Now here they are in the Celtic order although several are of non-historic origin -- **Meitheamh** (m.) “June” and **Iúil** (f.) “July” were introduced by the Irish government through the school system.

Bealtaine (f.)	/BYAL-tuhn-uh/	“May”
Meitheamh (m.)	/MyEH-uhw/	“June”
Iúil (f.)	/yool/	“July”
Lúnasa (m.)	/LOO-nuh-sah/	“August”
Meán Fómhair (m.)	/mown FOO-wer/	“September”
Deireadh Fómhair (m.)	/JER-uh FOO-wer/	“October”
Samhain (f.)	/SAU-uhn/	“November”
Nollaig (f.)	/NOHL-eeek/	“December”
Eanáir (m.)	/EY-nahr/	“January”
Feabhra (f.)	/FAU –vruh/	“February”
Márta (m.)	/MAR-tuh/	“March”
Aibreán (m.)	/AY-bruhn/	“April”

Remember that you may hear “March, April, and May” preceded by the article: **An Márta** /uhn MART-uh/, **An t-Aibreáin** /uhn TAY-bruhn/, and **An Bhealtaine** /uhn VYAL-tuh-uh/. **Others** are often be preceded by **Mi** “Month” or **Mi na** “month of” as in **Mi Lúnasa** and **Mi na Nollag**.

Aibreán requires that “**T**” because it begins with a vowel.

Notice the difference between **Nollaig** /N/ OHL-eeek/ and **na Nollag** /nuh NOHL-uhk/. This is because following a preposition, **na** “of”, **feminine nouns** require the **Genitive Case**. (You remember how to form that, don’t you? If not we’ll review it later.)

Here are the seasons – but “Spring” doesn’t begin in Ireland until May. Ireland is farther north than the United States – roughly parallel to Canada’s Labrador. Take your woollens even in summer when sixty degrees Fahrenheit is a “hot day.” Of course, Ireland as part of the European Union is on the metric system so we will be using that system from now on. The “Boiling Point” is 100 degrees Celsius; “freezing” is zero degrees.

Earrach	/AY-rahk/	“Spring”
Samhradh	/SOW-ruh/	“Summer”
Fómhar	/FOO-wuhr	“Autumn”
Geimhreadh	/GEE-vree-uh/	“Winter”

Notice that the word for “September”, **Méan Fómhair** literally means “Middle Autumn” and “October”, **Deireadh Fómhair**, really means “End of Autumn.” The word. Fall” for “Autumn” is not used in Ireland although some people may understand it as when “the leaves fall.”

You will know the word for “year” from the traditional “**Bliain Mhaith Úr**” /BLEE-uhn vah oor/, “Good” or “Happy New Year.” The phrase for “this year” is **i mbliana** /uh MLEE-uhn/. The word for “last year” does not use **bliana** at all. It is **anuraidh** /uh-NOH-ruh/.

Bhí anuraidh fuar!

“Was last year cold!” or “Last year was cold!” /VEE uh-NOH-ruh FOO-uh/

Bhí sí. Ach beidh i mbliana te.

“Was it. But will be this year warm” or ...

“It was. But this year is warm.”

/VEE shee. ahk BEE uh MLEE-uhn CHEY/

Recall that way back when we started this column we learned these words to describe the weather:

fuar	“cold”
te	“hot, warm”

fiuch	“wet”
tirim	“dry”
geal	“bright, sunny”
dorcha	“dark”

This set can be modified by adding the prefix **an-**, equivalent to the English “very.”

However, these words do not take the prefix **an-** since they already have a prefix, **go-**.

go brea	“fine”
go dona	“bad”
go deas	“nice”
go hálainn	“beautiful”
go maith	“good”
go hiontach	“wonderful”

In the next column we will introduce the **habitual present** and **habitual past** of **tá**.

Bíonn Iúil go deas.

“July is usually fine.”

Bhíodh na samhraíocha an-fluich.

“Summers used to be very wet.”

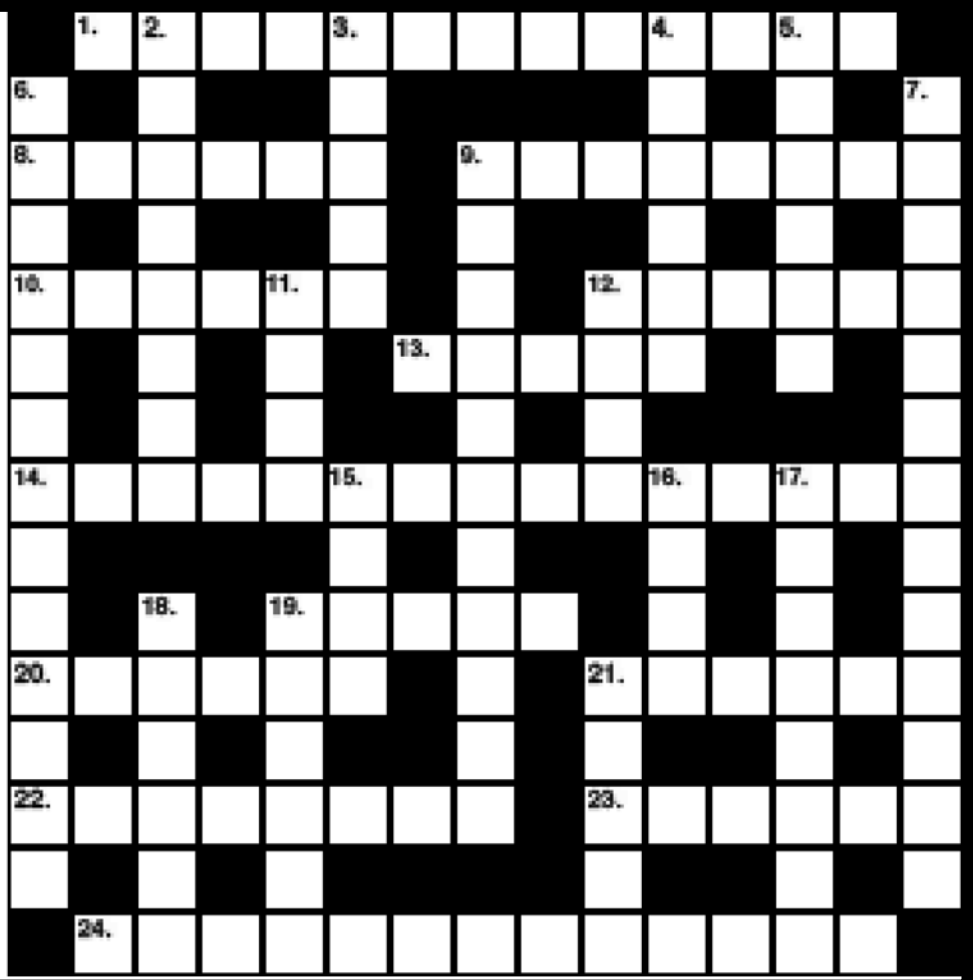
CELTIC CROSS WORDS

The Irish crosswords are a service of an Ireland-based website which provides Irish Family Coats of Arms by email. You are invited

to visit

[www.](http://www.bigwood.com/heraldry)

[bigwood.com/](http://www.bigwood.com/heraldry)
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IRELAND IN CROSSWORDS ©-bigwood.com

ACROSS

- Or find chiller. (anag.) Stepchildren of Aoife whom she turned into Swans on Lough Derravaragh. (8,2,3)
- Protection found in popular Mourne location. (6)
- Pout face up until refreshment appears. (3,2,3)
- Fry air? No, but reduce its pressure. (6)
- Get up on hind legs about per can order. (6)
- Impulses scrambled the last of the Carrickfergus letters. (5)
- Then avoid by cute diversion around engineering work carrying the Dublin - Belfast rail line over Drogheda. (3,5,7)
- Tree falls over after a century on Mediterranean island. (5)
- Threw in at the Gaelic game? (6)
- Make a quick grab for ants all over the small church. (6)
- Stretch little Leonard starts, then finishes after note. (8)
- Salty pool covered up back in Portnoo gallery. (6)
- Sweet stew clan. (anag.) Limerick market town with a Knights Templars castle built in 1184. (9,4)

DOWN

- Oh, lure me in disorder for Bill first proposed and lost by Gladstone in 1885 and passed in 1912. (4,4)
- “Hail fellow, well met. All — — and wet: Find out, if you can, Who’s master, who’s man.” Swift. (5)
- Storeys one knocks to the ground. (6)
- Recite with a singing voice to nine others in Rosses Point one time. (6)
- Hour train call. (anag.) Kerry mountain popularly ascended through the Hag’s Glen and up the Devil’s Ladder to the peak at 3,314 feet. (13)
- Jests shame pen. (anag.) Irish writer and poet (1880-1950) who wrote “The Crock of Gold”. (5,8)
- Owners latch up in neat Mayo village on the Sligo border. (11)
- You must see the faithful dog in Glengarriff, I do insist. (4)
- Ripe conversion of fairy on Greek roundabout. (4)
- Squirrel’s home back in the American garden in pretty Ardmore. (4)

- Last word in mean fashion. (4)
- Greasy sun out over U.C. (8)
- E.g. rang up Sligo village underneath Ben Bulbin on the Bundoran road opposite Inishmurray Island. (6)
- “This goat-footed bard, this half-human visitor to our age from the hag-ridden magic and enchanted woods of — — — antiquity.” Baron Keynes - (describing Lloyd George) (6)
- Soothe in the meandering vales. (5)

CROSSWORD SOLUTION ON PAGE 19

Irish Sayings

“Youth does not mind where it sets its foot.”
“Both your friend and your enemy think you will never die.”
“The well fed does not understand the lean.”
“He who comes with a story to you brings two away from you”
“Quiet people are well able to look after themselves.”
“A friends eye is a good mirror.”
“It is the good horse that draws its own cart.”
“A lock is better than suspicion.”
“Two thirds of the work is the semblance.”
“He who gets a name for early rising can stay in bed until midday.”
“If you do not sow in the spring you will not reap in the autumn.”
“Put silk on a goat, and it’s still a goat.”
“Listen to the sound of the river and you will get a trout.”
“A persons heart is in his feet.”
“It is a long road that has no turning.”
“Necessity knows no law.”
“The wearer best knows where the shoe pinches.”
“There is no luck except where there is discipline.”
“The man with the boots does not mind where he places his foot.”
“The light heart lives long.”
True greatness knows gentleness.
When wrathful words arise a closed mouth is soothing.

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PUZZLE SOLUTION FROM PAGE 16

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Melissa McCarthy, 15, of Harney Academy takes a first in World Irish Dance competition

A winning performance by Melissa McCarthy highlighted the participation of a number of Massachusetts and Boston-area Irish dancers in the recent World Irish Dance Championships held in Belfast. McCarthy, 15, a student at the Harney Academy of Irish Dance and a featured performer at last year's "Christmas Celtic Sojourn" show, won first place in the Girls 15-16 age category at the competition.

Students in the O'Shea-Chaplin Academy of Irish Dance also scored noteworthy achievements in the championships: Conor O'Brien and Kevin McCormack placed sixth and seventh, respectively, in the Under-18s, and Claire O'Brien was 10th in the Under-21s; in addition, the academy's senior mixed team took fourth place, and senior girls team 12th. Other O'Shea-Chaplin competitors included Alana O'Brien (25th in the 21 and Over category) Joe Harrison (20th in the Under-21s) and Harper Mills (45th in the Under-15s). Boston will host the World Irish Dance Championships next March in the Hynes Convention Center.



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