

A big 'yes' by the Irish on repeal of abortion ban



Jubilation was the order of the day after the "yes" referendum vote on May 25. AP photo

Vote is 66 percent in favor; bishop calls result 'chilling,' and then asks for 'healing'

BY GREGORY KATZ AND RENATA BRITO
ASSOCIATED PRESS
DUBLIN – Irish voters last month overwhelmingly repealed a constitutional ban on abortions and asked the country's parliament to enact laws that reflect the popular will and make abortions legal in the country for the first time, final results from a historic referendum showed the day after the May 26 vote.
Elections official Barry Ryan said more than 1.4 million voters, or 66 percent of those who cast valid ballots, favored repealing the Eighth Amendment of the Irish Constitution while roughly 724,000 wanted to keep the abortion ban in place.
The outcome was a historic victory for women's rights in a traditionally Catholic country. The size of the win exceeded expectations and will make it much easier for Irish women to obtain abortions legally for the first time. It will also make it easier for the government to claim a mandate for more liberal laws when the divisive issue goes to parliament later this year.
The vote removes a 1983 amendment that required Irish authorities to defend the lives of a woman and a fetus equally on almost all abortions.
Prime Minister Leo Varadkar, a medical doctor who campaigned for the repeal, called the result the culmination of a "quiet revolution," adding, "the
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Lean on us, friends tell Kieran Jordan
One of our town's most treasured artists, the Irish dancer Kieran Jordan, shown above with her husband, Vincent Crotty, is fighting a debilitating illness while her many friends are pitching in to help them get through the crisis. Page 4.

All roads lead to Canton for Irish Festival

BY SEAN SMITH
SPECIAL TO THE BIR
Irrepressible, nationally renowned Celtic rock band Gaelic Storm will return to the Boston Irish Festival when the annual event takes place June 2 and 3 at the Irish Cultural Centre of New England in Canton. Also headlining the festival are bluegrass-folk-Irish performers JigJam from Offaly and Galway traditional band BackWest.
As always, Boston's wealth of local music and dance performers will be well represented, and families and children will find plenty of activities and amusements during the weekend, including a special "living history" recreation of early 20th-century rural Ireland.
Gaelic Storm, which will close out the festival on June 3, has built a solid, loyal following through more than two decades

of constant touring, the release of 13 albums and, most of all, a crowd-rousing mix of Celtic, country and rock/pop. The group – Steve Twigger, Patrick Murphy, Ryan Lacey, Pete Purvis, and Katie Grennan – has regularly placed at number one
Festival schedule, Page 16.
in the Billboard World Music albums chart and appeared on the same bill with such acts as the Zac Brown Band, the Goo Goo Dolls, Emmylou Harris, and Lyle Lovett, and at various events and venues including the Telluride Bluegrass Festival, and Milwaukee's Summerfest.
JigJam's four members – Jamie McKeogh, Cathal Guinan, Daithi Melia, and Gavin Strappe – have considerable traditional Irish credentials, having collectively earned more than 20



Offaly-based quartet JigJam will be among the headliners at this weekend's Boston Irish Festival.
All-Ireland titles at Fleadh Cheoil competitions. To this they add an appealing blend of bluegrass and Americana styles
and a lively stage presence, not to mention dapper wardrobes – a combination that, along with
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Did you once tuck away some punts?
A bonus in euros is awaiting your call

BY ED FORRY
BIR PUBLISHER
If you have some old fashioned Irish currency, either punt (at left) banknotes or coins, you may have a small windfall coming your way.
It was 15 years ago that Ireland made a sweeping change to its legal currency, replacing the Irish punt with the euro, the

common currency used across a large part of Europe. At the time, Ireland went on an aggressive campaign to convert the old money for the new, but many of the old coins and banknotes remain unclaimed and unused. And it's a safe bet that many Boston Irish have their own little hidden troves where the old money sits.
In late May, 100 Irish punts were worth about \$147, and Ireland's Central Bank still has what the Irish media term a "treasure chest of cash waiting to be claimed." For all that, there's little likelihood the full reserve will ever be converted.
In 2002, the Central Bank set aside a pot of money when
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COMINGS, GOINGS, AND DOINGS



Oyster Harbors Golf Tournament to benefit MGH's Durant Fellowship

The annual Thomas S. Durant, MD, golf tournament is set for Mon., June 18, at the elegant Oyster Harbors Club in Osterville on the Cape. There'll be a shotgun start at 1 pm. The tournament chairman is **Bill Reilly Jr.**, and honorary chairman is **Dr. Roman De-Sanctis**. The event benefits the Durant Fellowship for Refugee Medicine at Mass General Hospital. Pictured above, Tom Durant (1928-2001) spent his life bringing medical treatment and hope to sites of catastrophe and chaos in some of the world's most forsaken and forlorn spots.

To register for the tournamen, contact **Mary Sugrue** at mary@irishap.org, or register online at tinyurl.com/y7zym3pn.

Boston Magazine is out with a listing of what it terms "The 100 Most Influential People in Boston." In a May cover piece prepared and edited by longtime political writer **David S. Bernstein**, the magazine anoints **Linda Pizzuti Henry**, managing director of *The Boston Globe*, as the No. 1 "Shaper" in our town. Mayor **Marty Walsh** is No. 2.



Linda Pizzuti Henry

"Who really runs this town?" Bernstein wrote. "That's the question we asked ourselves – and dozens of insiders – when we sat down to put this delightfully subjective list together. "We weren't looking for the richest people in Boston, or even the smartest. Instead, we sought out the businesspeople, tech moguls, politicians, and tastemakers that the rest of us are all watching, the folks who are truly shaping the city."

Of naming Walsh in second place, the magazine said: "He won reelection as mayor with nearly two-thirds of the vote – without bothering to run ads or really dip into his multimillion-dollar campaign war chest. It's his town now."

Some 18 Bostonians with Irish roots were listed after Walsh: **John Fish**, Suffolk Construction, 5; **Bob Rivers**, Eastern Bank, 8; **Jim Rooney**, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, 9; **Attorney General Maura Healey**, 10; **Philanthropist Jack Connors**, 11; **Massport's Tom Glynn**, 18; Mass Biotech Council's **Bob Coughlin**, 33; Boston City Planner **Brian Golden**, 37; HYM Investment Group developer **Tom O'Brien**, 46; Boston Medical Center's **Kate Walsh**, 49; UMass president **Marty Meehan**, 56; Mayor Walsh policy advisor **Joyce Linehan**, 59; PR guru **George Regan**, 71; State Street Bank's **Jay Hooley**, 72; **Cardinal Sean O'Malley**, 81; Congressman **Joe Kennedy III**, 95; and Boston Red Sox CEO **Sam Kennedy**, 98. No. 100? **Tom Brady**.

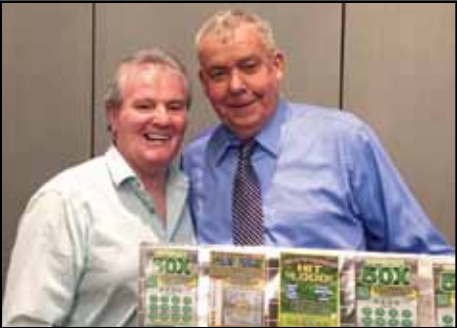
Come to Coffee Hour at the Irish Consulate

Ireland's Consulate in Boston has extended an open invitation for visitors to its "First Friday" Networking Breakfast on June 1 from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. at the Consulate General of Ireland in Copley Square, Boston. The office began the regular informal sessions last month. Interested persons are invited to "stop by for scones and hear the latest community, cultural and business news," the consulate said in an email, adding, "come in for a cup of tea and promote an event of interest to the Irish diaspora. Spread the word and bring your friends! Please bring a valid photo ID to present at reception on arrival." The offices are located at 535 Boylston Street, 5th Floor, Boston MA 02116. Pre-register at tinyurl.com/ydylnj7f.

Irish/Network Boston New Orleans-bound

Members of Irish Network/Boston

are making plans for a fall trip to New Orleans for IN/USA '18, the sixth annual gathering of Irish Network groups from across the country. The national umbrella group consists of 19 chapters with 3,527 members, and allows members to connect with their peers across the country. The Boston chapter is headed this year by co-presidents **Cathal Conlon** and **Victoria Denoon**.



Mike McCarron and Pat "Doc" Walsh at the Orphans benefit.

Hearts for Orphans benefit raises \$144k for its cause

The 9th annual Irish Hearts for Orphans benefit dance on April 15 at the Boston Marriott Quincy raised more than \$144,000, organizers said. Since 2010, this annual event has supported orphanages in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Mexico, and several central and south American countries. The charity provides children in need with education, food, healthcare, love, family, hope, and the opportunity for a better life.

The April event featured three bands- Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann, Erin's Melody, and Noel Henry's Irish Showband – and local Irish step dancers from the Kenny Academy of Irish Dance. A grand prize raffle for a round-trip flight to Ireland was won by **Paul Miller** of Westfield. Other raffle winners were **Miles Allen** of Manchester, who received a weekend getaway at Cape Cod Irish Village, and **Delia McInerney** of West Roxbury, who won a \$200 purse.

IIIC breakfast audience hears US Rep. Clark

She was the featured speaker at last month's Business Leaders Breakfast hosted by the Irish International Immigrant Center (IIIC). "I lean on the



Katherine Clark

stories and advocacy of the IIIC and guests of the Business Leaders Breakfast to push our federal partners into action," Clark said in a tweet after the event. "Thank you for working to make sure immigrants have a voice and that leaders in Washington hear it loud and clear."

\$100k grant to the IIIC from the Cummings Foundation

Ronnie Millar, the executive director of the Irish International Immigrant Center, offered thanks last month to Joyce and Bill Cummings and their foundation for a \$100,000 grant award to assist the center with its programs and its mission. Millar also took note of recent action in the state Senate, which added four key protections for immigrants into the state budget, citing the leadership of the Safe Communities Coalition, MIRA, and **Sen. Jamie Eldridge** of Acton.

NY Mets call up Irish-born pitcher

Amidst much ballyhoo, a 24-year-old pitcher made his first major league appearance when he started a game last month for the New York Mets. When **PJ Conlon** (Patrick Joshua) was called up from the minors, he made a bit of history: He was the first MLB player in 70 years to have been born on the island of Ireland.

Conlon was born in Belfast in 1993 to an Irish father and Scottish mother who had met when at college in California. The couple returned to Belfast, where they were living when PJ was born. The family returned to the US in 1995. PJ was a 15th round draftee out of San Diego State College in 2015 who spent the last two years in the minor leagues. The numbers in his major league start: 3.2 innings pitched, a 7.36 ERA.

The last Irish-born big leaguer was **Joe Cleary**, who pitched in one game for the Washington Senators in 1945, recording just one out – a strikeout – and allowing seven runs on five hits.

Walsh returns again to Galway, takes part in civic functions

Mayor Martin Walsh returned to Ireland last month for a five-day visit, his second international trip as mayor, during which he received several ceremonial awards and participated in the unveiling of Kilkerrin Rock.

The son of parents from Connemara, Walsh spoke on the ties between Boston and his family's home country, according to a city of Boston press release, highlighting the importance of cultural richness, acceptance of immigrants, and economic partnerships.

"Ireland and the Irish culture hold a special place in my heart, and are a large part of Boston's overall identity as well," Walsh said in a statement. "Our economic and cultural ties to Ireland are undeniable, and it's beneficial for Boston to continue to embrace, support and learn from other countries and cities. I'm honored that our work in Boston is being acknowledged overseas."

The mayor's official itinerary included a stop at the Galway City Hall to accept the "Freedom of The City" award on May 11. The ceremonial award has been bestowed on John F. Kennedy, Pope John Paul II, John Hume, Hillary



Mayor Martin Walsh is shown with city officials during his visit to Galway City Hall on May 11.

Photo courtesy Mayor's office

Clinton, Richard Daley, Nelson Mandela, Ms. Garry Hynes, President Michael D Higgins and Senator Billy Lawless.

On May 12, Mayor Walsh visited the Emigrant Commemorative Centre in his dad's home village of Carna, Co. Galway. The Centre educates visitors on the changing face of the rural Gaeltacht area and Galway's rich immigrant history. He also

joined local dignitaries in the presentation and dedication of the Kilkerrin Rock in his honor. The rock has been inscribed with the words, "To all of our brothers and sisters who had to leave their families and homes, some never to return, in search of a better life abroad," along with the Mayor Walsh's name, the date, and the Irish and US flags intertwined.

THE BIR'S MONTHLY CALENDAR June 2018

The 1st: The Irish Consulate of Boston will host its monthly "First Friday" networking breakfast from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. on the 5th floor of 535 Boylston Street. The event is free and open to the public.

The 2d and 3d: The Irish Cultural Centre of Canton presents its Boston Irish Festival. Tickets and more info at irishculture.org.

See story on Page One.

The 9th: In an event called "Irish For Pride," a collaboration of Irish organizations will march under one banner in the 48th Boston Pride Parade. The Irish International Immigration Center and the Irish Consulate invite the Irish, Irish-Americans, and friends of Ireland to join them in a celebration of the country's commitment to equality and inclusion. Check-in will be at Copley Square at noon.

The 11th: The George Wright Golf Course in Hyde Park will be the setting for the Irish Pastoral Centre's annual tournament. Patrons can opt to play 18 holes followed by dinner, or just golf or dinner. Shotgun tee-time is 8 a.m. Register now at ipcbboston.org.

The 16th: The Irish Cultural Centre of Canton will present a concert by Sean Tyrell, who will tell through spoken word and song the story of Irish hero John Boyle O'Reilly. Concert begins at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$20 for members, \$25 for non-members. To purchase tickets call 781-821-8291 or visit irishculture.org.

The 19th: The Boston Irish Business Association (BIBA) will host a summer networking event from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. on the terrace of the Hyatt Regency Boston. The event will include appetizers and a cash bar. Free for members, \$25 for guests. Register at bibaboston.starchapter.com.

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Coming together for Kieran Jordan

“You just call on me... when you need a hand We all need somebody to lean on.”
– “Lean on Me,” composed by Bill Withers.

By Ed Forry

One of our town’s most treasured artists, the Irish dancer Kieran Jordan, has discovered the meaning of that sentiment from Bill Withers. But it’s a lesson she learned the hard way.

Kieran has been struggling since last July with an ailment that leaves her tired, listless, and with little energy – and for a performer of her caliber, the experience has been devastating.

Only a few of her friends knew of her problem, which had gone undiagnosed since last summer. Then early last month, she took to social media with a sad message: “I got sick last July with a crushing flu-like illness, and I have not been right since. Debilitating fatigue, scary low blood sugar episodes every day, chronic sleep problems, day chills and night sweats, nausea and low appetite, aches, tingling, twitching, shooting pains, anxiety/palpitations, and more.



“If you haven’t seen me around much, this is why! I’ve had to cancel or turn down so much of my work, and have missed so many friend and family experiences and the activities I love. I’ve now seen *eight* doctors, two acupuncturists, a therapist, a herbalist, and an energy healer.”

Finally, in late April, she was diagnosed with Lyme Disease.

“I was never aware of a tick bite last summer, but ticks are everywhere in the Northeast, and they are so tiny – many people are never aware of being bitten. I never had the classic Lyme ‘bull’s eye’ rash. Many don’t. My story is not unique – Lyme is often missed and misdiagnosed – and I’ve been dismissed or misdirected by doctors for the past 9 months.”

After the diagnosis, she began treatment at a specialist clinic in Cohasset, and is now six weeks into antibiotic treatment.

“The holistic doctor and, finally, the ‘Lyme-literate’ nurse practitioner I have seen don’t take health insurance. The out-of-pocket costs have been staggering. This whole year has been truly a nightmare – physically, emotionally, and financially!”

Kieran now says she is “hoping for the best possible recovery. Late-Lyme detection can make the disease difficult to treat and heal, but I am hopeful. Thanks to everyone close to me who has been a huge support.”

When the word got out about her situation, Kieran’s friends immediately rallied to show their support, with her sister and brother artists setting up a GoFundMe page – Kieran Jordan’s Healing Fund – and pledging to lend her a hand while telling her to lean on them.

“Kieran and her husband Vincent are both self-employed and an illness like this brings overwhelming financial stress,” the organizers wrote. “They have made incredible contributions to our flourishing Boston music/dance/art scene and it is times like *these* when we, as a community, are able to give back and help ease the burden. “Funds raised will go directly towards recouping out-of-pocket medical costs and lost income, and for continuing expenses, including non-covered doctors’ visits, lab tests, and supportive therapies for Lyme Disease treatment.”

In just 11 days, 284 donations totaling over \$20,432 were pledged, and the fund continues to grow.

“I am trying to find the words to say thank you for all the support and generosity coming my way in the last few days,” Kieran said. “It is truly overwhelming. This has been a very hard year, and one of the worst parts has been the isolation (spending so much time at doctors, or Googling, trying to figure out what was wrong with me, or just at home feeling sick) and not being able to participate much in my community or the activities I love.

“My body and spirit have been pretty beaten down by all of this. Thank you for showing your love so tremendously. I am feeling it, and Vincent and I are both feeling brighter and encouraged and relieved by your amazing support.”

Speaking with me on Memorial Day weekend, Kieran said she still hopes to be strong enough to travel with her dance partner, Kevin Doyle, to Miltown Malaby, Co. Clare, to participate in the 46th Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy 2018, a legendary Summer School with instrument and dance classes, lectures, workshops, and recitals that runs July 7-15. She and Kevin are scheduled to teach four afternoon classes that week, and give two performances. With just five weeks before the school begins, Kieran says she is unsure if she will be able to fulfill the commitment. “It’s overwhelming, a situation I have never been in before,” she said.

Even so, she says, she has already booked her flight, and although she might have to change to a later date, she is optimistic that the treatments will enable her to return to Ireland and resume her teaching and performing career.

(Contributions to the Kieran Jordan GofundMe site may be made online at tinyurl.com/ybdeua8d.)

Squabbling over the Brexit process brews confusion, discontent in Britain and Ireland

By Joe Leary
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

For most Americans, the British vote to leave the European Union is not a daily concern. Or even a concern at all. But the vote by British citizens to leave Europe is requiring complex new agreements between the leaders of both sides that are proving to be very difficult and may be impossible to fulfill. If the balloting were held today, there is little doubt that most British would vote to stay with Europe.



Joe Leary

With respect to Northern Ireland, a poll taken last month showed that 69 percent of its residents would now vote to remain in the EU. In the original Brexit vote, that number was 56 percent.

As to the process itself, little has been set in stone to date while much has been changed on matters previously agreed to. And the main negotiators, Michel Barnier of France and David Davis of Britain, are being

regularly attacked by those who oppose their stances.

The British Government is in constant turmoil trying to decide key issues without having to hold a new election. The “Leavers” and the “Remainers,” as they are called, are fiercely defending their positions: Should Britain stay in a sort of halfway customs agreement or should it completely separate and go its own way.

The problem of the status of border between Northern Ireland and Ireland at this point seems to have no solution. Will it be a hard border, with guard towers and passport control, manned by police and soldiers? Or will it be soft border, with little control between the two parts of the island? Barnier and Davis each walked parts of the border last month – separately.

These are only two of the issues that threaten to oust the government of Prime Minister Theresa May, which is constantly under fire.

There will be a much-anticipated meeting on June 28 in Brussels at which Theresa May has promised to give full details of the break-up agreement from the British perspective. This meeting was initially scheduled for March but no one was prepared for it.

In the meantime, the final dates for separation are

Off the Bench

When they tried to fire the chaplain

By James W. Dolan
SPECIAL TO THE REPORTER

The controversial firing and rehiring of the US House chaplain Father Patrick Conroy, a Jesuit priest, has generated much discussion over the last few weeks. Some members and commentators have questioned whether the House needs a chaplain. The controversy was due at least in part to a prayer Fr. Conroy delivered on the floor that was mildly critical of the recent tax bill in which, he said, tax policy should be fair and balanced and not favor the rich.

Some argue that religion should stay out of politics, that it was a mistake for Fr. Conroy to comment, even in a prayer, on the merits of an issue before the House. In other words, a cleric, particularly one employed by the House, had no business injecting religion into a matter under consideration. An elected member can address the morality or fairness of a bill before the House, but the chaplain should not; he should provide pastoral care but avoid commenting on the social justice



James W. Dolan

implications of public policy.

This takes partisanship to new levels. It’s apparent that the objections came from House members who favored the president’s tax bill. Had Fr. Conroy praised the bill, they would have been pleased. I support the separation of church and state, but it is absurd to interpret that boundary as one that prevents religion from defining morality and vigorously advocating for social justice.

Politics and governance are the instruments by which we establish and enforce social policy. Religion has a responsibility to influence policy. If that means offending one side or the other, so be it. Religion has a duty to identify and promote those social precepts believed to be in furtherance of God’s will. At the center of many faiths is the admonition “love thy neighbor.”

This concept is at the very foundation of our democracy. The Declaration of Independence states that “all men are created equal ... endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights... among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” But how? The document goes on to state “that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men.”

Government is identified as the means by which we try to achieve balance and promote social justice, which is essential in promoting those founding principles. As messy, complicated, and confusing as that process can be, achieving the common good is how we express love of neighbor. That should be self-evident. How we accomplish it in a secular world of competing interests

getting closer and closer. As of June 1, there will be 302 days until the process officially begins. Since agreements are seen as unlikely to be concluded by that time, the EU countries have already set a 21-month transition period between March 2019, when Britain is scheduled to leave, and the end of 2020.

It seems that the positions of Ireland and the provinces in the North have not been taken seriously in all of this. In the North, the government is in complete shambles with Unionists seeing conspiracies behind every door and lashing out at anyone who disagrees with them. And with no legislature by which to give voice to their opinions, the principal political parties are getting more feisty every week at their press conferences.

Ireland’s prime minister, Leo Varadkar, and Simon Coveney, the foreign minister, have both received fire when they spoke up to protect the republic’s interest. Specifically, they took heat from an old Paisleyite, MP Sammy Wilson, a very effective Unionist spokesman, for interfering in matters in the North. He called them “Brit Bashers and Interferers.”

The Unionist position in the North is not a comfortable one at this point. Population trends suggest that Catholics will outnumber members of all other religious denominations within the next two years. That development will be reflected first in the control of the town councils and in the Assembly at Stormont – if it ever recovers. For Unionists, this will be the ultimate change.

The 1998 Peace Agreement states that if in the opinion of the secretary of state the citizens of Northern Ireland would approve of a United Ireland, then he or she must call for a vote on the matter. Theresa May has confided to a cabinet member that she is “not confident of a certain Unionist victory if we held a vote now.”

A friend of mine from Belfast, a faithful Unionist, was in Boston last month. She said she was very troubled about the atmosphere in Northern Ireland and worried about the collapse of the government there, and about Brexit. She sees the threat of trouble as real and fears that an incident or misspoken words might initiate violence once again. As a Unionist, she is very concerned about what a United Ireland would be like and how life for people like her will change.

Let us hope that good sense will prevail, and that whatever happens with the Brexit process will be pain free for all.

where money and power often control outcomes is the problem. It can be done; Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt are obvious examples of those who did so.

There are some who see morality as abstract, unrelated to governance, something to be confined to the pulpit. Even there, they object to morality being translated into social policy, preferring instead abstract bromides about individual responsibility rather than collective obligations.

By telling House members that tax policy should be fair and balanced, Fr. Conroy was doing his job, alerting them to the moral dimensions of their task. Debased and hyper-partisan politics is likely to be more concerned with self-interest than the common good. It sees governance as a process unrelated to narrow, abstract notions of personal morality. While most people will probably agree that they should love their neighbor, many consider it irrelevant or impractical when applied to public policy in the “real world.”

Fr. Conroy discovered he was not there for substance, but for show. Deliver a prayer and get off the podium. We’re not interested in your reflections on matters outside your jurisdiction. Do your pastoral duties, help us feel better, but don’t rock the boat by telling us morality and social justice are factors we should consider in this most worldly occupation.

Politics involves flawed human nature in collective action or inaction. It’s a noble profession except when ambition, power, money, self-interest, and political survival dominate. It’s at its best when mindful of the underlying creed at the center of our democracy.

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Point of View

DEMOCRACY IS DYING IN PLAIN SIGHT

By PETER F. STEVENS
BIR STAFF

The stench of corruption has spread across the United States from Washington where The Potomac Swamp has swelled into President Trump’s Lagoon, and as our immoral, and amoral, Prevaricator-in-Chief continues to shred the Constitution, the free press, the courts, the Department of Justice, the FBI, the entire intelligence community, and democracy itself, Irish-American pols and advisors cravenly carry the president’s rancid water.

“Nothing is politically right that is morally wrong.” Those words, quoted several times in this space over the past year, were uttered some 170 years ago by Daniel O’Connell, the Irish leader who devoted his life and career to the battle for Irish Catholic rights and on behalf of his homeland’s poor. In supine service to a man who believes the Department of Justice should be his own Praetorian Guard to prosecute and persecute anyone he deems an enemy or a personal threat, lame-duck Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, Trump Budget Director Mick Mulvaney, and, sadly, Brighton-born-and bred General John Kelly have wholeheartedly embraced a corrupted and perverted twisting of O’Connell’s words: “Everything is politically right from a president who is morally wrong.”

Take Trump’s desperate, fraudulent, and perhaps ultimately successful effort to derail the Mueller investigation of the president himself. Take Trump’s daily violations of the Constitution’s Emoluments Clause to further enrich himself

Irish-American sycophants in step with ‘The Man Who Would Be King’

and his family. Take the tax returns he refuses at all costs to release while knowing that Mueller has them. The Trumpian list that dwarfs the corruption of the Harding and Grant Administrations reveals a president who believes that he is above the law and who is aided and abetted in this stance by the aforementioned Irish Americans.

It is sad and sobering to see General Kelly, a man whose stellar military career seemingly embodied devotion to the Constitution. As a Gold Star father whose son was killed in action in Afghanistan, Kelly has sacrificed more than most Americans can imagine in service of the nation. That is why his willingness to tarnish his legacy in service to a president who would be king has baffled so many of his former admirers in these parts.

Kelly has not only derided Mueller’s all-too-legitimate investigation by parroting the president’s “witch hunt” mantra, but he has also voiced a Trumpian bias against immigrants not so different from the general’s own immigrant ancestors from the “old sod” and Italy.

Recently, Kelly griped on NPR that “today’s” immigrants are of little benefit to America. Why? According to the general, they “don’t have skills” ... “don’t speak English” ... are poorly educated ... and come from “rural” areas. As the Washington Post and various genealogists have noted, Kelly’s criticisms

aptly describe his own immigrant ancestors from Ireland and Italy.

Paul Ryan, whose eyes turn misty when waxing nostalgically about his ancestors who fled Famine-wracked Ireland, has groveled to Trump by abrogating the House’s Constitutional duty to provide oversight of the executive branch, swearing his fealty to King Donald even though his ancestors trudged onto “coffin ships” to escape a queen’s realm (Victoria and Parliament). Ryan has given his blessing to the House Intelligence Committee – an oxymoron for certain – to work with the president to shut down the Mueller investigation.

Mick Mulvaney, the White House budget director and interim head of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, loves to wear little shamrock pocket squares attesting to his Irish heritage. His addition to that heritage? Corruption in service to the Trump Administration with his recent advice to large banks that if they want the administration to do their bidding, they need to donate more campaign money.

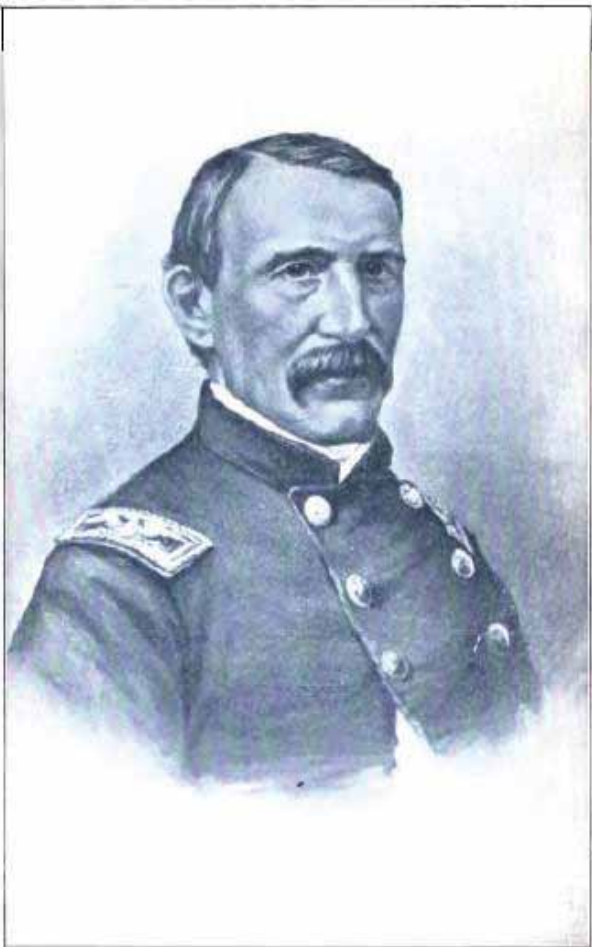
Roughly a year and a half into the presidency of Donald Trump, a dilemma that should not be a Red versus Blue is a watershed juncture in the nation’s history. If he shuts down the Mueller investigation, all patriotic Americans should take note that the president will have established that he is above the law and that Constitutional norms are null and void. Do benighted Democrats

counting on a Blue Wave and dreaming of impeachment believe that Trump will not make a move on the special counsel long before November? Do delusional or cowed Republicans and other Trump supporters actually believe that the truth about what Trump and his inner circle did or didn’t do during the campaign and beyond will be buried?

Democrats can rant until they’re blue in the face – all puns intended – but the truth is that only Republicans willing to stand up to the president can stop his power grab over the Department of Justice. He is now the face of the GOP, like it or not. To the world, he is the face of our nation. From that face each and every day come words that embody the chilling credo of the Big Lie: “... when one lies, one should lie big.” Today’s lies are “witch hunt” and “Spygate.” Courtesy of that Scots-Irish paragon Mitch McConnell, a feeble Senate attempt to protect Mueller from Donald Trump will never come to the floor for a vote.

As of this writing, a just-released CBS poll asserts that 53 percent of Americans believe that the Mueller investigation is “politically motivated.” If the figure is accurate, Trump and his minions are winning the political and public-relations battle. The demagogue in the White House grows more autocratic by the day. The adage says that democracy dies behind closed doors. If Trump’s acolytes – including his Irish-American Hall of Shame – plant him squarely above the law, what remains of American democracy will die in plain sight.

PROVING THEIR METTLE
Immigrant Col. Thomas Cass and his fellow Boston Irishmen proved they would readily fight and die to protect the union



Colonel Cass, of the Old Fighting Ninth Regiment.

By PETER F. STEVENS
BIR STAFF

In American military annals, “the Fighting 69th” New York Regiment is steeped in legend. Comprised largely of Irish Americans, the unit deserves its hard-won status. The same can be said of the 9th Massachusetts Regiment – “the Fighting Irish 9th.” The gallant organizer and first commander of that Union Army regiment was the North End’s Col. Thomas Cass.

Born in Farmly, Ireland, in 1821, Cass emigrated to Boston as a boy with his family. As with most Irish immigrants to the city in the pre-Famine era of the 1820s and 1830s, the family lived in ramshackle North End “rookeries,” or tenements, that clotted Ann and Water Streets, among others. Thomas attended public schools for a few years in classrooms not always welcoming to boys and girls with a Celtic lilt in their speech. He eventually was apprenticed as a currier (a tanner) and went into business with his father in the North End before marrying and raising a family.

In the following years, Cass became a successful businessman and was elected to the city’s school committee.

He enlisted with numerous other local Irishmen in the Columbian Artillery of the Massachusetts volunteer militia and rose to the rank of captain, convinced that local Irishmen were as patriotic and willing to fight for their new country as any Yankee. In 1861, that chance came after Confederate cannon opened fire on Fort Sumter in April.

Cass began to recruit Irishmen throughout April and May to raise a regiment, with the effort’s primary funder Boston Irish entrepreneur Patrick Donahoe, the publisher of the *Pilot*. Six companies of Irishmen from Boston and one each from Salem, Marlborough, Milford, and Stoughton signed the muster rolls of the 9th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry. Cass was named colonel and commander of the regiment, which set up an encampment at Faneuil Hall before being assigned to Camp Wightman, on Long Island in Boston Harbor. There, the regiment was officially mustered into the federal army on June 11, 1861.

As the 9th began to drill, their commander looked every inch a man born to lead troops in battle. With an athletic frame, a bristling mustache, and penetrating eyes, Cass took his men’s measure beneath his brimmed blue federal officer’s cap. He liked what he saw in the 9th.

The regiment was ordered to depart for Washington on June 25, 1861, and join the Army of the Potomac. Throngs of people – Irish and Yankee, Catholic and Protestant alike – turned out to cheer the regiment as it marched in neat array, brass buttons glinting on blue tunics, muskets shouldered, through Boston’s streets to an official ceremony at the State House and then to the waterfront to waiting transports headed south. At the State House, Cass accepted the regimental colors -- a green banner emblazoned with the gilded words, “Gentle when stroked, fierce when provoked.” To thunderous cheers, Cass led his men off to war, the bold green flag nodding in the June breeze.

A few days later, the 9th was welcomed along the Potomac by President Lincoln and then set up camp in near Arlington, Virginia, drilling each day and helping to build a small bastion they dubbed “Fort Cass.

The regiment broke winter camp on March 10, 1862, and headed south to Fort Monroe, Virginia, on March 23 as part of the Army of the Potomac, commanded by General George B. McClellan. His goal was to drive to Richmond, the Confederate capital, and crush the rebellion. In the soldiers’ parlance of the day, the 9th was about to “see the elephant” – that is, battle.

In June 1862, the 9th Massachusetts earned the praise of its fellow regiments and that of their Confederate foe at the battles of Mechanicsville and Gaines Mill. As Cass and his regiment tore apart the Rebels again and again, the Boston Irishmen’s valor came at a high price: by the end of the battle of Malvern Hill, on July 1, 1862, nearly 50 percent of the members of the 9th had been killed or wounded.

Their commander was among that number. Hit in the face and mouth, the grievously wounded Cass was transported home to Boston and died on July 12. He was buried with full military honors at Mount Auburn



Colonel Cass is commemorated with this statue in the Boston Public Gardens. Below, his gravestone at Mount Auburn Cemetery.



Cemetery. His regiment fought valorously until 1864, when it was officially mustered out of service, and its remnants returned to Boston to a stirring public welcome.

Today, a statue of the Colonel Cass stands in the Boston Public Garden, the sculpture is a fitting testimonial to a man who proved that he and his fellow Irish would fight and die to protect the Union.

For further reading, see “Commanding Boston’s Irish Ninth: The Civil War Letters of Colonel Patrick R. Guiney Ninth Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry,” by Christian Samito.

Immigration Q&A

Getting a passport when time is short

Q. *I recently became a US citizen but have not yet obtained a US passport. I have a family situation that will require me to travel abroad as soon as possible. What do I do?*

A. Normal processing time for a US passport application is currently 4-6 weeks, according to the State Department. There is an expedited processing option available, which is currently estimated to take 2-3 weeks. For first time applicants, it is required that you submit your application in person at a passport acceptance facility, which includes many local post offices.

However, for individuals who need a passport for foreign travel taking place within 2 weeks or for an application for a foreign visa within 4 weeks, it is possible to make an appointment to handle the process in person at a local Passport Agency. The mechanics for scheduling an appointment for expedited processing under these circumstances are covered on the State Department website travel.state.gov. Click the Passports link and select "Where to Apply."

The forms, required evidence, and all other details concerning passport applications are found on the US State Department website as well. In addition to the usual fees totaling \$145 for a new adult passport, expedited processing requires a fee of \$60 plus the costs of an overnight delivery service.

Foreign citizens without valid passports who urgently need to travel to the US or to leave the US and return should consult the website of their country's department of foreign affairs or its embassy or consulate in the US. There, they will find the information they need on emergency passport issuance. For Irish citizens, the local Irish Consulate can be contacted at 617-267-9330 or consulategeneralofirelandboston.org.

For a free, confidential consultation on any aspect of immigration law, visit one of our legal clinics advertised in the *Boston Irish Reporter*.

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

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J-1 intern Sophie Kinsella is designing a bright future for herself in animation



While attending college at the Institute of Art and Design in Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, Sophie Kinsella was intrigued by the J-1 Irish Work and Travel visa program after hearing about the opportunities that it offered from her peers. "Having studied animation," she said, "America was always somewhere that I knew I would like to work since so much of the animation industry is based there. New York was always the most appealing to me because it offered such a wide range of opportunities

from small-independent studios to much larger commercial and network-based ones."

After completing her academics, Sophie hoped to gain insight into the professional animation project process, and came to the US with the dream of having her name credited on projects. She knew that an internship would provide her with this knowledge, and would also give her first-hand experience with what working on animation in America is like. She wanted to see how it would compare to the field at home in Ireland.

Luckily, she didn't have to wait long for an opportunity. She received her first internship shortly after arriving in the US, and is now working as an animator on a short production with Cuest Films.



At left: Sophie working on her animated short film. Above, She and boyfriend Owen enjoy all that NYC has to offer.

On her position, Sophie says, "the short film I'm working on has a strong and powerful message behind it and our team feels that it will resound well with audience members... We hope that it will be screened at many festivals... and possibly win some awards, too!" She emphasized that all of her work adds to her "demo reel" and resume, and that her animation skills have improved. She added that her co-workers are helpful and supportive, and she's thrilled to "to make a career out of something that I genuinely enjoy doing."

Sophie has packed her time in New York with museum visits, film screen-

ings, and lots of travel, including Washington, Miami, Nantucket, with more trips planned. She indicated that a "ranch holiday" might be in her future. "I've always been fascinated with the idea of a such a holiday in somewhere like Texas. I remember seeing the film "City Slickers" years ago and always thought that a cattle drive would be great fun to do."

Sophie says that the J-1 visa program has given her "a once-in-a-lifetime experience!" We are so inspired by the incredible work she is doing in New York City and wish her the best of luck as she finishes her year in the US.



IRISH INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRANT CENTER
LEARNING EXCHANGE PROGRAM

FREE CAFE FOR IRISH J-1 STUDENTS!



The Irish International Immigrant Center will be staffing our Cyber Café for the summer!

We are proud to help J-1 summer students by providing access to computers in our internet-equipped Cyber Café, where students can research accommodations, social activities, extra employment opportunities, Skype home, and more!

The Learning Exchange Programs staff will help these students become accustomed to life in Boston, and can assist with locating housing, providing general information about Boston and beyond, and answering any questions J-1 students may have.

Be sure to stop by!

WHAT:
Free working space and resources for J-1 students

WHERE:
Irish International Immigrant Center
1 State Street, 11th Floor
Boston, MA 02109

WHEN:
May hours:

Monday, Wednesday, Friday
1:30pm - 4:00pm


Tuesday, Thursday
2:30pm - 4:00pm

CONTACT:
J-1 Summer Staff
Kate Norton
j1summer@iiicenter.org

COST: Free



LEARNING EXCHANGE PROGRAM



IRISH INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRANT CENTER IMMIGRATION LEGAL ASSISTANCE

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

Upcoming Clinic Schedule

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

Downtown Boston
IIIC, One State Street, 8th Floor, Boston MA 02109
Tuesdays, June 5th and 19th at 4:00pm

Brighton
The Green Briar Pub, 304 Washington Street, Brighton, MA 02135
Monday, June 11th at 6:30pm

South Boston
Labouré Center, 275 West Broadway, South Boston, 02127
Tuesday, June 26th at 6:00pm

Citizenship Clinics
IIIC, One State Street, 8th Floor, Boston MA 02109
From 10am-1pm
Walk-ins are welcome!

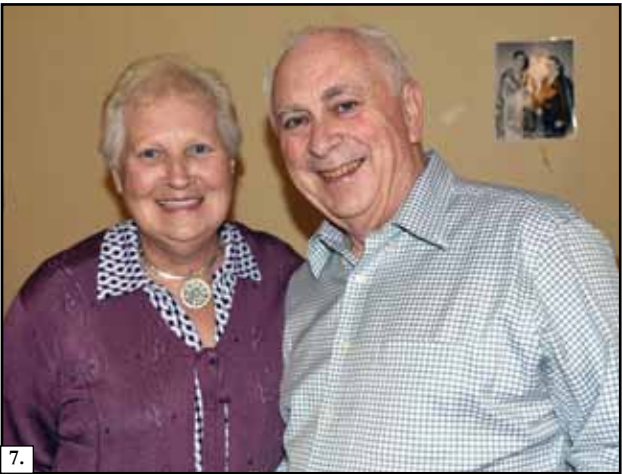
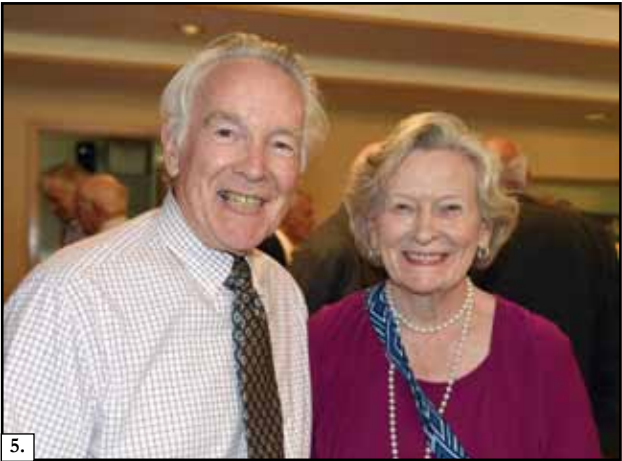
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BRETT'S BOSTON

By Harry Brett
Exclusive photos of Boston Irish people & events

The County Mayo Association held its annual memorial Mass for deceased members and friends on Sun., May 27 at the Irish Cultural Centre in Canton. Mass celebrant was Rev. Peter Nolan, of the Holy Ghost Fathers, and a light lunch and refreshments were served after the mass.

1.) Rev. Peter Nolan, Holy Ghost Fathers; 2.) Joe Heneghan, Needham served on the altar with Fr. Nolan; 3.) Mike Newell & Eileen Newell, Dedham; 4.) Peter Kelly, New York, Tom Gallagher, Westwood; 5.) Tom Murphy & Anne Murphy, Belmont; 6.) Musicians Gerry and Maureen McNally, Rockland, Pat Clifford, Weymouth; 7.) Mary Heneghan, Needham, Pat Cifford, Weymouth; 8.) Patrick Shearns, West Roxbury; 9.) Ellen Lavelle & Pat Lavelle, Arlington; Eileen Haldron, Waltham; 10.) Vinnie, Barbara & Susan McDonough, Dorchester; 11.) Fred Tarpey, Milton, Kathy Hughes Coleman, Brookline, David Hughes, Westwood; 12.) Tom Grady & Bridget Grady, Westwood, John McGuire, Roslindale; 13.) Mike Walsh Milton, Nora Walsh, Canton, Gerry Sweeney, Arlington.



Lindsay Crouse is ‘Dancing at Lughnasa’

BY R. J. DONOVAN
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Lindsay Crouse comes from theatrical royalty. The Oscar-nominated actress and educator is the daughter of Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Russel Crouse.

From 1935 to 1962, Mr. Crouse and his writing partner, Howard Lindsay, collaborated on such classic Broadway comedies and musicals as “Life With Father,” “The Sound of Music,” “State of the Union” and “Anything Goes.” Her name is a tribute to that iconic partnership.

Ms. Crouse’s equally impressive credits include performances in “Places in the Heart,” “All The President’s Men,” “The Verdict,” “House of Games,” and more.

For the past 12 summers, she has been a member of Gloucester Stage Company, where from June 8 to July 8 she will be appearing in Brian Friel’s “Dancing at Lughnasa.”

What her fans may not know is that she’s been living in Gloucester for most of her life.

Just before Lindsay was born, the Crouses were enticed into visiting the area by family friends. Her Mom, Anna, loved old houses and found one in dire need of a little love. For \$15,000, the Crouses purchased a 17-room Victorian residence with 30 acres of land.

Now in her own vintage home, Crouse says she adores the picturesque town and calls Gloucester her “soul home.”

In New York, the Crouses lived in a whirl of famous names and faces, among them Irving Berlin, Ethel Merman, and Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein.

“To grow up in a house of a writer is very different than growing up in the house of a celebrity actor,” she said during a recent interview. “We had the most extraordinary people in and out of our house, but my father was a very humble and a very real guy. There was no fuss made if Frederick March came through the door. There



was no fuss made if Mary Martin sang at the piano.”

She added, “They were working craftsmen, all of them. Hard working! They didn’t make a fuss over themselves. I grew up in the atmosphere of that hard-working creativity... I think that stood me in good stead.”

Crouse’s connection with Gloucester Stage began more than a dozen years ago when the artistic director asked if there was a play she’d be interested in doing. Her children were still in school at the time and her summers were a time for rest, so she declined.

However, when Eric C. Engle became the director, he asked again. With her kids “sprung,” Crouse considered the offer more seriously. “I had loved ‘The Belle of Amherst’ ever since I had seen Julie Harris do it on Broadway,” she said, “and out of my mouth came, ‘I’d like to do The Belle of Amherst.’”

With a laugh, she continued: “I remember when he left I thought, ‘Oh my God!’ This is a 91-page play and you’re the only one on stage. How the hell are you going to do this?”

Such was the beginning of a beautiful relationship with Gloucester Stage. “I’ve been very fortunate,” said Crouse. “It’s been wonderful.”

“Dancing at Lughnasa” is a memory play, set in 1936 Donegal and focused on five unmarried sisters who live under the weight of poverty and financial insecurity. Their repetitive lives exist

within a restrictive patriarchal system. But when a radio suddenly comes into their home, their world changes.

“Lughnasa” debuted at Dublin’s Abbey Theater in 1990. Productions followed in London and on Broadway, where it won the Tony for Best Play.

“It’s an extraordinary piece,” said Crouse. “You rarely find a play with this many rich and interesting female parts... They call Brian Friel the Irish Chekhov and in a way that’s quite apt, I think, in that he really knows how to celebrate a life lived on a very small scale, in a very limited area. But these women are huge souls and the play is poetic and magnificent. Just so moving. Very, very rich.”

Crouse plays Kate, the oldest sister and breadwinner. “Kate ‘represents the struggle of formal Catholicism versus the wonderful pagan traditions of Ireland,’” she said, “the Lughnasa festival itself – the ceremony of the first harvest.”

During the festival, tradition dictates that the father of each family cut the first sheaf of wheat and proceed through a series of rituals. Then the wheat is ground to make cakes.

“Bonfires would be lit all night long,” said Crouse. “People would dance, they would drink, they would contract marriages and worse. It was a riotous evening at the height of summer.”

She has done a lot of historical research to get a sense of what the sisters would have been experiencing in 1936. “The famine was [ongoing] in 1845 so their grandparents would have felt the effects of it big time. The word famine doesn’t really describe it; it was a holocaust... The house they live in is more like a glorified hut. They’re dividing between them a couple of tomatoes and a couple of eggs for dinner... They’re very much living on the edge.”

Friel’s own mother and aunts inspired the story. And if audiences fear “Lughnasa” will be a depressing experience, Crouse points out, “It’s a play that has a lot of sadness in it, but it also has a lot of beauty and it’s very



Lindsay Crouse, Gloucester lover.

funny, actually. Their longings are really universal. Here is a family in the midst of very difficult times and their spirit is so extraordinary. The lyricism of this play really lifts them above it.”

Crouse recalls “a great playwright, I can’t remember who it was, saying the theater is a safe place to do the unsafe things that need to be done. I feel that way about this play. To talk about... the really tough aspects of life... They’re a beautiful family, and there is a gorgeous female energy over the play that’s lovely... I’m thrilled to be a part of it.”

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

“Dancing At Lughnasa,” June 8-July 8, Gloucester Stage Company, 267 East Main Street, Gloucester, MA. Info: 978-231-4433 or gloucesterstage.com.

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Did you once tuck away some punts?

A bonus in euros is awaiting your call

(Continued from page 1) the country converted to the euro. Today, it is calculated that some \$400 million in pre-euro punts remain in private hands, and although they're no longer legal tender, the punts can be exchanged for euros – real cash! – at the Central Bank in Dublin.

Last year, the bank redeemed only \$1.8 mil-

lion of the old currencies– about a half million in coin and \$1.4 million in banknotes.

“Some Irish pounds have been found in skips, in gardens when they are being dug for house extensions, under mattresses, behind wallpaper, and in items of clothing donated to charity,” *The Irish Times* reported. “By law, however, the Central

Bank has to make provision for the possibility, however remote, that all \$400 million will be returned for exchange. The bank will continue indefinitely to redeem the old money for its face value equivalent in euro.”

In its annual report released last month, the bank said the set-aside money for changing the old banknotes remains


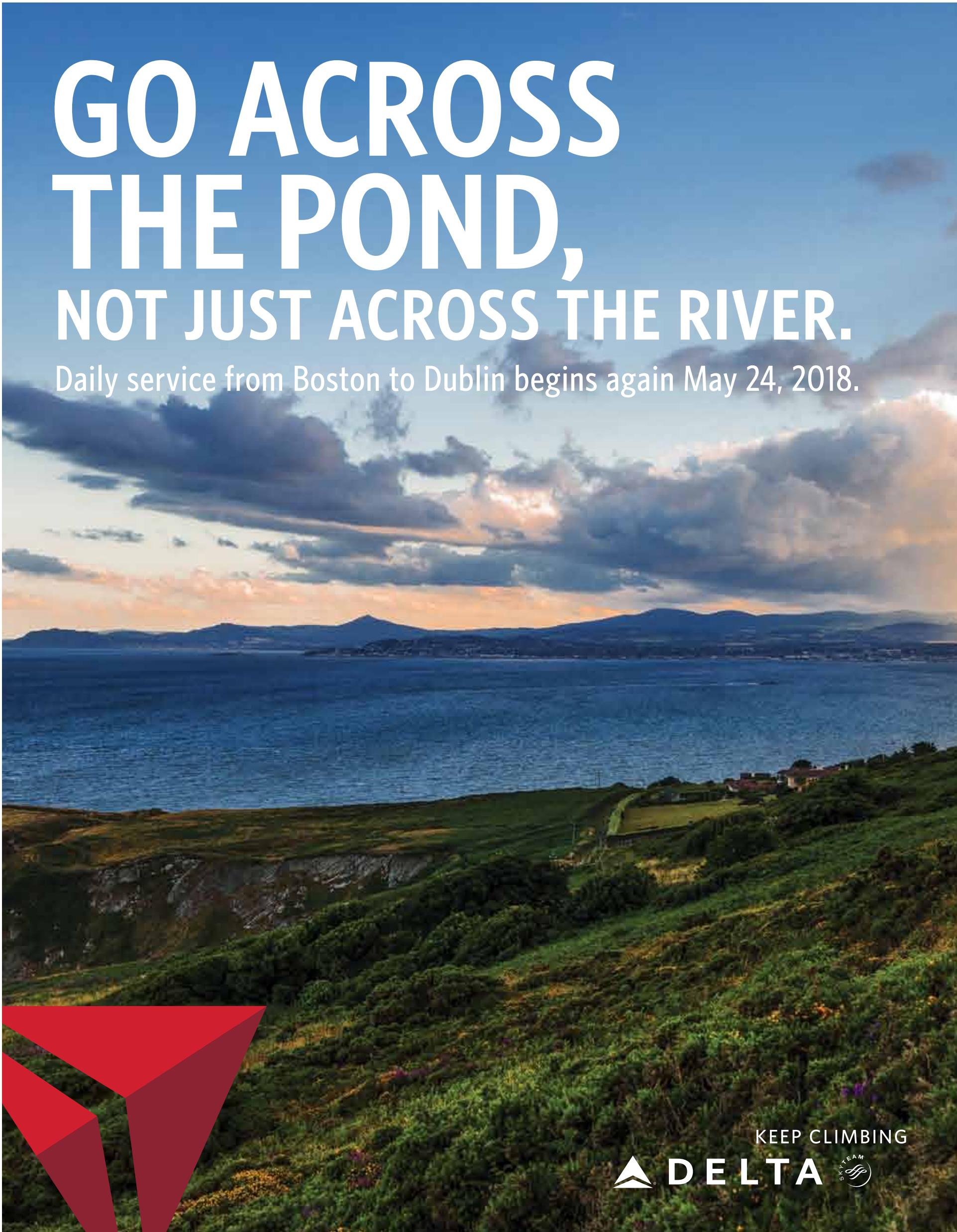
available, and the pool of funds will be replenished if and when more of the old currency emerges.

Information about the exchange of all Irish pound banknotes or coins, issued for circulation by the Central Bank of Ireland for euro is available online. Claim forms can be accessed at tinyurl.com/ya635myk.



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CD Reviews

By SEAN SMITH

Lúnasa, “Cas” • They could have just released seven of the 12 tracks on this album and thoroughly delighted most, if not all, of the Lúnasa fan base. But as befits a band that for more than 20 years has continually moved ahead instead of resting on its laurels – their last recording had them playing with the RTE Orchestra, after all – Lúnasa has taken yet another step forward. In addition to presenting their layered, harmonically sophisticated, exquisitely arranged brand of Irish instrumental music, on “Cas” they blend their sound with five different guest vocalists. Not that the guys haven’t collaborated with singers before – a select couple of hundred Boston-area fans might recall the band’s impromptu gig with Karan Casey at the “Sanctuary Session” benefit in Somerville in March of last year – but a recording project like this represents a significant commitment of time and energy, not to mention creativity.



Lúnasa, incidentally, has a full roster assembled here: Kevin Crawford (flutes, whistles), Cillian Vallely (uilleann pipes, low whistle), Trevor Hutchinson (double bass, bouzouki, lap steel guitar), Sean Smyth (fiddle) and Ed Boyd (guitar), as well as Colin Farrell (fiddle, whistles) and Patrick Doocey (guitar), who typically sub in for Smyth and Boyd on the band’s North American tours.

The team-ups with the guest vocalists are glorious,

and typically Lúnasan, since neither singers nor songs fit neatly into one category. On the Irish-trad side, alt-rocker-turned-folkie Natalie Merchant lends her gravitas to the Napoleonic lament “The Bonny Light Horseman,” while Dublin’s Daorí Farrell gives an invigorating, powerful take on the emigration song “Paddy’s Green Shamrock Shore.” Tim O’Brien brings his Americana chops, and deft mandolin-playing, to “The Water Is Wise” – co-written with fellow Grammy winner Sarah Jarosz – and blues guitarist Eric Bibb tenderly offers up the spiritual “My Lord What a Morning.” Superb as all the songs are, it’s hard not to single out Mary Chapin Carpenter’s rendition of “The Irish Girl” – a vivid portrait of regret for youthful impulse by unjustly neglected English songwriter Peter Bond – as the highlight. Chapin Carpenter’s lower-end alto anchors the song in a perfect equilibrium of sadness and dignity.

A hallmark of these five tracks lies in the fact that you don’t have a sense of anyone – band or soloist – reining themselves in or being boxed out. There’s plenty of space for the vocals, but Lúnasa also is able to assert its presence: Crawford, Vallely, Farrell and Smyth all drop in for a cameo at various times during “Water Is Wise,” before joining together at the very end (Crawford with a zesty high harmony at one point); fiddles, flute and pipes dovetail with the mournfulness in Merchant’s voice, and the resolve in Farrell’s; Crawford and Vallely’s trademark harmonized whistles herald the soothing devotional quality in Bibb, while the delicacy of Boyd’s guitar and Hennessey’s bass buoy Chapin Carpenter.

Oh, and as for the aforementioned seven instrumental tracks, these display the full range of the band’s technical ability and inventiveness. They are also an opportunity to truly appreciate the virtues of Boyd and Doocey’s fine accompaniment, as well as that of Hennessey, whose stellar work on double bass sometimes is overlooked – listen to his contributions in particular on the latter part of the opening “Tinker’s Frolics”

medley, which has the classic Lúnasa shifts of tempo, time signature, and mood (not to mention one of those time-honored flute/pipes pairings we’ve known and loved for so long), or at the outset of the jig set “Sinead Máire” – a reprise from Vallely’s 2016 album “Raven’s Rock” featuring two of his originals wrapped around another by his brother Niall.

A selection of Breton music, “Pontivity,” is surely one of their best concoctions, with yet another rapturous Crawford-Vallely duet on the first tune, Boyd’s guitar gently ushering in the transition to the second, and the fiddles building momentum on the third. “Within a Mile” is the quintessential climax, complete with a brief bass-and-guitars break in the middle and an overlay of repeating phrases from the lead instruments as the medley ends. There’s also a bit of homage to legendary Boston musician Larry Reynolds with “Tribute to Larry,” which contains the affectionate reel of the same name penned by Maurice Lennon.

“Cas” is often translated from Irish Gaelic as “to turn” or “a change of direction,” which in Lúnasa’s case doesn’t mean that they’ll continue heading the same way – but that, if form holds true, they’ll definitely keep moving. [lunasa.ie]

The Fretless, “Live from the Art Farm” • This Canadian quartet is one of the more high-profile exponents of what’s often called “chambergrass,” which mixes Celtic, old-timey, bluegrass and other folk/traditional styles with chamber music instrumentation and dynamics. There’s a pretty strong Boston connection to this band, and arguably to the chambergrass genre itself: Former Berklee College of Music students Trent Freeman (violin, viola) and Eric Wright (cello) originally co-founded The Fretless with fellow Berklee acquaintance Ivonne Hernandez – who had earlier been part of another local chambergrass ensemble, the Folk Arts Quartet – and Karnel Sawitsky (violin, viola); Hernandez left after their third release, “Bird’s Nest,” to be replaced by Ben Plotnick (violin, viola).

“Live from the Art Farm,” the band’s fourth album, is a departure of sorts. Where their previous recordings had a lot of original or contemporary tunes – composed by the band members as well as musicians like Liz Carroll, Adam Sutherland, and Gordon Duncan – this one is heavy on the Irish tradition, with stalwarts such as “Jenny’s Welcome to Charlie,” “Sally Gardens,” “The Pipe on the Hob” and “The Star of Munster.” In that sense, it’s of a piece with the trend toward Irish-Americana fusion we’ve seen in recent years, a la We Banjo 3 or Altan’s “Widening Gyre” album.

But with The Fretless and its chamber/classical influence, there’s a particularly fascinating interplay of sounds: a fiddle taking the lead, with intermittent plucks, flourishes, harmonies or drones from the other instruments – or sometimes counter-rhythms underneath – and then Wright’s cello or Freeman’s viola, for example, stepping up with a bluegrass-like improvisation before the quartet returns to the original melody.

Sometimes, such as on “The Killavil Fancy,” the feel is leisurely, even whimsical. And then there’s the intensity of “Jenny’s Welcome,” driven by urgent rhythmic chops from the viola that are taken up by the cello, culminating in a masterful transition to “Bear Island.” The arrangements can be so dense and intricate, you may find yourself revisiting a track – such as “Miss Thornton’s Reel” or “Pipe on the Hob” – just to listen to what’s going on behind the melody. (It bears mentioning that not all of “Live at the Art Farm” is high-octane: In addition to the aforementioned “Killavil Fancy,” for instance, is a lovely rendition of the air “Dawning of the Day.”)

For the hard-core purist, chambergrass might raise questions: Is this a case of traditional music not so much being interpreted but simply used as a vehicle for experimentation, thus diluting its essence? Well, there’s nothing diluted in how The Fretless conveys the power and immediacy – not to mention the grace and beauty – of the tradition. Freeman, Wright, Plotnick and Sawitsky mine those qualities in refreshing and exciting ways. [thefretless.com]



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In the end, ‘it is all about the songs,’ says Keith Murphy of ‘Land of Fish and Seals’ album

BY SEAN SMITH
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Boston will be seeing quite a bit of Brattleboro-based traditional singer and musician Keith Murphy this month, and in three different contexts.

On June 1, he'll be accompanying American-Scottish fiddler Hanneke Casel and her cellist husband Mike Block in Club Passim, and two days later will be backing Sligo-style fiddler Brian Conway at the Burren Backroom series [see BIR Calendar in this issue for details on these shows]. And on June 13, Murphy will be in the spotlight when he returns to the Backroom for a concert formally marking the release of his third solo album, "Land of Fish and Seals," which reaffirms his love of the folk song tradition even while pushing beyond it.

The last several years have been something of a revelation for Murphy, a familiar figure in the Boston/New England folk music scene whose rhythmically savvy and engaging guitar style has been a part of the annual "St. Patrick's Celtic Sojourn" show and performances by fiddle ensemble Childsplay, among his many other collaborations (including Irish performers like fiddler Liz Carroll and vocalist Karan Casey).

A major change for Murphy came in 2011 with the retirement of Nightingale – the pioneering trio he founded with his fiddle-playing wife, Becky Tracy, and accordionist/pianist Jeremiah McLane – after almost two decades. As fulfilling as his time with Nightingale was, Murphy has found a new life as a solo performer even while continuing his work with other musicians. He has revamped his guitar-playing, exploring finger-picking style and alternate tunings, and most of all, rediscovered his appreciation for singing, and for songs.

"When I was with Nightingale, I was so deeply into the world of ensemble playing that I thought solo work was a crazy idea," explains Murphy, a native of Newfoundland, whose Irish, Scottish, English, and French musical influences are reflected in Murphy's repertoire. "Everything revolved around multiple instruments, and although we did songs as well as sets of tunes, I tended to see the songs as a vehicle for the ensemble. But in these past few years, I've been able to focus more intently on songs, to dig deeply into what I like about them and bring that out."

At his June 13 Passim concert, Murphy will be joined by Tracy and guitarist-vocalist Yann Falquett, both of whom appear on "Land of Fish and Seals." Other guests on the album are Casel and Block, Rani Arbo on harmony vocals, banjo player Mark Roberts, and Pascal Gemme (foot percussion, harmony vocals), who along with Falquett constitute two-thirds of the Quebecois trio Genticorum.

Murphy's solo albums are a showcase for his unaffected, resonant singing – in English and French – which has long been as widely admired as his ability on guitar, mandolin and keyboards, and his talent as an arranger. While his second CD, "Suffer No Loss" (2014), was literally a solo effort, "Land of Fish and Seals" is, as he puts it, "a swing of the pendulum" back towards his first release, "Bound for Canaan" (2009).

"A central concept of 'Bound for Canaan' was having a band sound; it was at least as important as the song choices," says Murphy of that album, on which he was joined by Tracy, Roberts (on flute and whistle as well as banjo), Arbo and guitarist Mark Simos. "The second album was completely the opposite, where it was guitar and voice only, and the focus was completely on the songs. So for this one, I wanted a bit of a fuller sound, but with minimal musical dressing, and keep the emphasis on the songs and texts."

On "Land of Fish and Seals," Murphy extends his usual repertoire from the Canadian/British Isles/Irish folk tradition, with songs by two eminent singer-songwriters: Bob Dylan's "Girl from the North Country" and Richard Thompson's love-doomed-from-the-start reminiscence "Beeswing." A further departure from form is represented in two other songs, both settings of poetry: the title track, written in the 19th century

by Margaret Peace, a Scottish immigrant to Newfoundland and adapted by Murphy; and Alfred Lord Tennyson's elegiac "Crossing the Bar," set to music by Arbo, who also sings on the track.

Of course, it's not as if Murphy is covering Beyoncé or John Legend here. "Girl from the North Country" is essentially Dylan's channeling of the venerable traditional song "Scarborough Fair," while "Land of Fish and Seals" and "Crossing the Bar" each in their own way suggest the relationship between literary and folk traditions. "Beeswing" is more of an outlier, with phrases like "They called it the Summer of Love" and "The hawks against the doves" clearly delineating its contemporary setting. Yet there's something timeless and universal in how Thompson evokes the bittersweet futility of desiring what you know you can't have ("She said as long as there's no price on love I'll stay/and you wouldn't want me any other way").

"I tend to work in an evolutionary way when it comes to choosing songs," says Murphy. "It's usually a slow process, where I try songs and leave them alone for a while and then, perhaps, come back to them. I liken it to being an instrument maker going out to look for wood – you try to find something that will resonate."

"So there wasn't exactly a plan at the outset for which songs I was going to record; it's how everything unfolded. But I think those four songs are pivotal in how the album evolved. They speak to this period of personal expansion I've been in, where I'm open to songs that are several degrees outside the traditional domain. That was the case with 'Land of Fish and Seals': The language is a little formal for what we think of as a 'folk song,' yet I really liked the way Peace describes the Newfoundland character."

While Murphy has often found songs and tunes by combing through books and other publications, inspiration by ear is at least as important to him as by eye. The way "Girl from the North Country" came together, he says, illustrates the different variables that can go into making a song one's own. The version he'd been most familiar with was the one recorded by Johnny Cash, not the Dylan original. Yet he had first been moved to learn the song many years ago when he heard it performed by Tony Barrand, an English-born traditional singer now living in Brattleboro.

"It's not often I experience a song so emotionally as when I listened to Tony sing it," he says. "That can be a double-edged sword: On the one hand, when you hear a great version of a song you're keen to learn it, but on the other you think, 'What can I possibly add to it?' So I kind of set it aside for a long time, and then came back to it, and the song ended up being one of the last I pulled together – I found a tuning I liked, experimented with a particular picking pattern, and altered the rhythm. So, melodically and harmonically, it's more connected to the Dylan and Cash versions, but I associate it most of all with Tony."

Another important component of "Land of Fish and Seals" is its three French-Canadian songs, which Murphy says represent his reconnection to a music tradition he's long cherished. "I've always loved the rhythmic and lyrical quality of the songs. It's not as if I've neglected the French-Canadian aspect of my repertoire, but I really liked being able to devote as much of the album to it as I did."

The remaining three tracks on the album are not to be overlooked. "Thistle and Rose" – a bit of benign Irish-derived boosterism – and "Go From My Window," a night-visiting song, are from Newfoundland; "Jackie Munro," from Barrand and his longtime collaborator John Roberts, is in the woman-disguised-as-soldier narrative line – and even contains a gay marriage debate, albeit in an absurdist vein ("Classic English ballad," quips Murphy).

Murphy describes the approach to arrangements on "Land of Fish and Seals" as "an organic one," in which he sought middle ground between the different atmospheres of the two previous albums. Three of the tracks – "Girl from the North Country," "Beeswing"



Keith Murphy – who will present a CD launch concert at The Burren Backroom on June 13 – likens his process of choosing songs “to being an instrument maker going out to look for wood – you try to find something that will resonate.”

and "Jackie Munro" – are Murphy on his own (he double-tracked a mandola on "Jackie Munro"). Tracy appears on four songs, and on three of them she plays octave fiddle, which Murphy notes enables her to simulate viola and cello accompaniment and add greater depth to the sound.

"In two cases, most of the arrangements were already set: I've played 'Crossing the Bar' in my performances with Hanneke and Mike, and I'd worked out 'Isabeau S'y Promene' with Pacal and Yann when we did Revels together

a couple of years back.

"Though I liked being able to add some textures here and there, I didn't want to overdo things too much. For me, the main concern was how to best support the lyrics and the stories they tell. 'It's all about the songs' is one of those banal, obvious platitudes, but I've come to grasp this in a way I didn't before."

For tickets and other details on Keith Murphy's June 13 concert at Club Passim, go to passim.org. More information on Murphy and his music is available at blackislemusic.com.



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BIR'S JUNE CALENDAR OF IRISH/CELTIC EVENTS

The arrival of warm weather is a time for festivals and other outdoor performances – such as the Irish Cultural Centre of New England's Boston Irish Festival [see separate story] – that feature Irish/Celtic music. Here is a look at some events in greater Boston, and a little beyond, for June:

• The town of Milton is notably proud of its Irish heritage – the percentage of Milton residents claiming Irish ancestry is the fifth highest in the state among communities of 10,000 or more, according to US Census figures – and is devoting a whole day to it as part of its “We Are Milton” festival. “Celtic Sunday,” which takes place June 24, will include an afternoon concert with **Jinty McGrath, The Fenian Sons, Erin's Melody, Curragh's Fancy, Sean Brennan and The Skiffs**, and a collaboration of **Pauline Wells** and the band **Devri**. There will also be a traditional Irish session led by Armagh native **Anto Crossy**. For full details, go to wearemilton.org.

• Somewhat farther afield is the eighth annual Blackstone River Theatre Summer Solstice Festival on June 16 at Diamond Hill Park in Cumberland, RI. The lineup includes **Atwater-Donnelly Trio, Mari Black Celtic Band, Daymark, The Gothard Sisters, Emerald Rae, Jenna Moynihan** and

Owen Marshall, Tir Na Nog Irish Dance, Eastern Medicine Singers, La Crois e D'Antan, the trio of **Sheila Falls, Torrin Ryan and Kyle Forshoff**, and the **Kevin Doyle Dance Showcase**. More information at riverfolk.org/birtssf.

• In recent years, Club Passim in Harvard Square has launched a weekly series of free outdoor concerts at three different locations. Among the acts appearing this month will be **Matt and Shannon Heaton** (Harvard Common Spaces, June 29, noon), whose flute/whistle-guitar/bouzouki instrumentals and richly harmonized songs are grounded in Irish tradition but also draw on other sources, including their own material.

As for its indoor events, Club Passim will host the **Hanneke Cassel Trio** on June 1 at 7 p.m. Cassel is a former US National Scottish Fiddle Champion whose innovative fiddling and tune composition exemplifies the ancient-modern dynamic in Scottish music. She is joined by husband **Mike Block** (cello, vocals) and **Keith Murphy** (guitar, vocals). Performers from the **Miles of Music Island Camp** in New Hampshire will hold their “After-Party” at Passim on June 15 at 8 p.m. The camp is a weeklong retreat exploring traditional folk music – including Celtic



Celtic/Americana singer-songwriter Ashley Davis appears at The Burren on June 27.

styles and traditions – and modern songwriting, and the connections between the two.

For information on these and other Club Passim events, see passim.org

• Highlighting the Burren Backroom series this month will be two appearances by New England guitarist/vocalist **Keith Murphy**, including his CD release concert on June 13 [see separate story]. On June 3 at 4 p.m., Murphy – who in addition to his solo work has been a part of many collaborations and special events, notably the “St. Patrick's Day Celtic Sojourn” show – will team up with fiddler **Brian Conway**. A New York City native, Conway learned the distinctive Sligo fiddle style from masters like Martin Wynne and Andy McGann, and won junior and senior All-Ireland titles. His recordings include the widely acclaimed “Consider the Source” – which earned him the *Irish Echo* “Top Trad Artist” honor for 2008 – and group ventures as part of The Pride of New York (with Joanie Madden, Billy McComiskey and Brendan Dolan) and Gailfean (with John Whelan, M  rt  n de C  g  in and Don Penzien).

Ken Perlman, an innovative five-string banjo player, will be at the Backroom at 4 p.m. on June 17. The Boston resident pioneered the melodic clawhammer banjo style, which he has used to adapt fiddle tunes from the Scottish, Irish, Appalachian and American South, and

Cape Breton music traditions; he also collected tunes and oral histories from fiddlers on Canada's Prince Edward Island. An accomplished finger-style guitarist as well, Perlman has taught numerous workshops and classes and published highly respected banjo and guitar instruction books. He will be accompanied by **Janine Randall**, one of the most sought-after pianists in the unique Cape Breton style. She has often been at the keyboard for concerts, ceilidhs, and sessions held in Watertown's Canadian American Club.

Voices will be the instrument of choice when the quartet **Windborne** comes to the Backroom on June 20 at 7:30 p.m. New England natives Jeremy Carter-Gordon, Lynn Mahoney Rowan, Will Thomas Rowan, and Lauren Breunig use stirring four-part harmony (for the most part *a cappella*) and a winning, welcoming stage presence in singing a repertoire that extends from the British Isles and American folk traditions to Corsica, the Republic of Georgia, Quebec, Bulgaria, the Basque region of Spain, and other parts of the world. Much of their material is imbued in the social activism long connected with the folk tradition, championing labor and civil rights, the poor, the working class, and the disenfranchised.

The Backroom will present an unusual but intriguing collaboration on June 23 at 7 p.m., with **Celtic Blue**, which brings together **The New England Irish Harp Orchestra (NEIHO)** and **The Sandy Ridge Boys**. NEIHO is a multi-generational group of harpists who play, in various combinations as well as a full ensemble, Irish traditional tunes, slow airs and songs, and snippets from other music



Performers at the “We Are Milton” festival's “Celtic Sunday” later this month include singer-guitarist Jinty McGrath.

genres as well. Boston's Sandy Ridge Boys are a tried-and-true bluegrass band, using the familiar line-up of banjo, dobro, fiddle, guitar, mandolin, and bass to pay homage to giants like Flatt and Scruggs, Jimmy Martin, and the Stanley Brother, while also referencing contemporary bluegrass performers.

Ashley Davis brings her brand of pastoral, dreamy Celtic/Americana original music to the Backroom on June 27 at 7:30 p.m. Davis's songs plumb myths and folklore, and elements of the natural world, to make for an often otherworldly presentation of stories and set pieces. Her 2014 album “Night Travels” included guest appearances from guitarist John Doyle (with whom she partnered for a Christmas music album), fiddler Eileen Ivers, and vocalist Sara Watkins, formerly of Nickel Creek. She has also performed with the band L  nasa, two of whose members, fiddler **Colin Farrell** and guitarist **Patrick Doocey**, will accompany her.

For Burren Backroom series information and reservations, see burren.com/EventsCalendar.html.

• A foundational band of the modern Scottish folk music revival, the **Tannahill Weavers**, is marking its 50th anniversary year with a stop in the Boston area, performing at the Belmont-Watertown United Methodist Church (421 Common Street, Belmont) on June 8 at 8 p.m., a concert sponsored through the Folk Song Society of Boston. The “Tannies” was the first professional Scottish band to incorporate full-sized Highland bagpipes in performance, and over the course of the 1970s they built a following not only in the UK but also in Europe and the US.

Co-founders Roy Gullane (vocals, guitar) and Phil Smillie (flute, whistles, bodhr  n, vocals) continue to hold forth, with John Martin (fiddle, viola, cello, vocals) and Lorne MacDougall (Highland bagpipes, small pipes, whistle). For tickets, see brownpapertickets.com/event/3237449.

• Young up-and-coming Irish songwriter **David Keenan** will play at Berklee College of Music's Red Room at Caf   939 (939 Boylston Street, Boston) on June 14 at 8 p.m. Keenan's music takes inspiration from a diverse range of influences and impressions – listeners can detect the likes of Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen, Van Morrison, Luke Kelly and Brendan Behan, The Beatles, and Tim Buckley. The Dundalk native – who first attracted notice when a video of him playing in a taxi went viral – has played with luminaries such as Mick Flannery, Hothouse Flowers, Damien Dempsey, and Glen Hansard.

Go to berklee.edu/cafe939.

• There will be a launch event for the “**Live at The Druid**” CD on June 3 at 4:30 p.m. in The Lilypad, the pub's Inman Square neighbor. The 19-track album, which comprises recordings made at The Druid's weekly gatherings, features many Boston-area musicians, plus a few special guests, and captures the joie-de-vivre of a typical Druid session. [Read more about the CD in the January 2018 edition of *Boston Irish Reporter*.]

Sales of the album at the June 3 launch will benefit the Boys and Girls Clubs of Medford and Somerville, Rosabel's Rooms (which offers comfort and support for families experiencing the loss of a child or sudden infant death) and Project Bread, a Massachusetts organization providing sustainable and reliable access to healthy food for all.

Organizers note that, at the conclusion of the CD launch, the participating musicians will head next door to The Druid “for one hell of a session.”

Directions and other information about The Lilypad available at lilypadinman.com.

– SEAN SMITH

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A big ‘yes’ by the Irish on repeal of abortion ban

(Continued from page 1) people have spoken, the people have said that we want a modern constitution for a modern country, that we trust women and we respect them to make the right decision and the right choices about their health care.”

In churches across the country on the Sunday after the vote there was only regret at the outcome.

The cardinal-archbishop of Dublin, Diarmuid Martin, told parishioners that the church had to “renew its commitment to support life. Many will see the results of the referendum as an indication that the Catholic Church in Ireland is regarded today by many with indifference and as having a marginal role in the formation of Irish culture,” Martin said in a homily published by the archdiocese of Dublin.

In Limerick, Bishop Brendan Leahy said the result is “deeply regrettable and chilling for those of us who voted ‘No’.” He asked those attending Mass to pray for healing in Irish society.

Campaigners who have fought for more than three decades to remove the Eighth Amendment abortion ban from Ireland’s Constitution hailed the vote as a major breakthrough for the largely Catholic nation.

“This is a monumental



Reuters photo

day for women in Ireland,” said Orla O’Connor, co-director of the Together for Yes group. “This is about women taking their rightful place in Irish society, finally.”

The vote is a “rejection of an Ireland that treated women as second-class citizens,” she said, adding: “This is about women’s equality and this day brings massive change, monumental change for women in Ireland, and there is no going back.”

Varadkar said the large margin of victory will give his government a greater mandate when drafting abortion legislation that will be submitted for parliamentary approval in a matter of months.

Voters were asked whether they wanted to keep or repeal the Eighth Amendment to Ireland’s Constitution, which requires authorities to treat

a fetus and its mother as equals under the law from the moment of conception. It outlawed all abortions until 2014, when the procedure started being allowed in rare cases when a woman’s life was in danger.

The referendum will likely end the need for thousands of Irish women to travel abroad — mostly to neighboring Britain — for abortions they can’t get at home.

There were cheers when the vote tally was announced at Dublin Castle on the day after the referendum vote. More than 1,000 people gathered outside the castle, singing, chanting, and toasting one another with champagne as they waited for the official announcement.

Opponents of the repeal movement had conceded defeat earlier. John McGuirk, spokesman for the

Save the 8th group, told Irish television on Saturday that many Irish citizens will not recognize the country they are waking up in. The group said on its website that Irish voters have created a “tragedy of historic proportions,” but McGuirk said the vote must be respected.

“You can still passionately believe that the decision of the people is wrong, as I happen to do, and accept it,” he said.

The broadcaster RTE reported on a poll indicating that about 72 percent of women had voted “yes” along with about 66 percent of men. The strongest backing came from younger voters, with exit polling showing that the only age group in which a majority voted “no” were voters who are 65 or older.

Katherine Zappone, the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, said she is confident that new abortion legislation can be approved by parliament and put in place before the end of the year.

“I feel very emotional,” she said. “I’m especially grateful to the women of Ireland who came forward to provide their personal testimony about the hard times that they endured, and the stress and the trauma that they experienced because of the eighth amendment.”



Gaelic Storm is ready to roll at the Boston Irish Festival on June 2-3.

All roads lead to Canton for Irish Festival

(Continued from page 1) their two albums, has brought them acclaim well beyond Ireland.

BackWest features P.J. McDonald (guitar, vocals, whistle), who has worked with luminaries such as Arty McGlynn, Cathal Hayden, and Seamie O’Dowd; the Brownesiblings, Maureen (fiddle) — formerly with Arcady and the Alan Kelly Gang — and Brendan (accordion), whose resume includes a stint with “Riverdance” and as a trio with Maureen and famed bodhran player Johnny “Ringo” McDonagh; and Peter Vickers (bodhran, step dance), with vast experience in major stage productions including “Lord of the Dance.” Their repertoire includes many instrumentals and songs — “The Flower of Sweet Strabane,” “Nancy Whis-

key” — from the heart of Irish tradition.

Other special festival guests will be Christian McNeill, a Derry-born singer-songwriter whose psychedelic folk-tinged alternative rock and soul has earned him two “Male Vocalist of the Year” Boston Music Awards; and Michigan-based progressive Celtic sextet The Founding, which integrates contemporary folk-rock and original material into its expression of traditional Irish and Scottish music.

Among the local performers will be multi-genre Devri and Boston’s Hanafin-Cooley-Reynolds branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, which will hold a ceili mor open to all late Sunday morning. The O’Riley School of Irish Dance will present “In Harmony,” a perfor-

mance of traditional Irish music and dance, while Erin’s Melody will host a “Ballroom of Romance.” ICCNE’s Friday night “regulars” will lead an open Irish music session on Saturday afternoon.

The ICCNE’s authentic Irish thatched cottage will be the setting for “An American Wake,” a recreation of life and times in Ireland of the early 1900s that evokes a fond farewell — with songs, dance, and music — to young emigrants seeking a new life across the sea. The cottage also will be a setting for demonstrations of old crafts and everyday tasks like baking Irish bread, thatching, making hay, tending farm animals, and burning turf. And, of course, there is conversation in Irish Gaelic, including at a “pop-up

pub” that will be located next to the cottage.

Children can enjoy a petting zoo, face-painting, a visit with fairies TinkerBell and Zania in the Enchanted Forest, an Irish singalong and Irish dance workshop, arts and crafts, and even a Viking ship ride (for older kids). Festival admission is free for children under 12.

In addition, festival-goers can get a look at popular Irish sports, as the Boston Gaelic Athletic Association hold hurling and Gaelic football matches on the expansive ICCNE campus.

Rounding out the festival attractions will be a food court and various vendors and exhibitors.

Further details and updates are available through the ICCNE website, bostonirishfestivalicc.com.

Money and Children: Teaching by Age Groups

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

According to the Council for Economic Education (CEE), which promotes economic and financial education in the classroom, students who have taken a class in personal finance are more likely to engage in financially responsible behaviors such as saving, budgeting and investing.¹

Parents can insulate their kids from some of the biggest money management mistakes and build their financial literacy by talking openly about the value of money and the benefits of good financial decision making.

To yield the biggest impact on kids’ money habits, however, the lessons imparted must be age-appropriate.

Elementary School: Saving by Example



Younger kids, for example, may not be ready for a lesson on compounded savings growth, but they can benefit greatly by watching their parents model good financial behavior.

At this age, it’s important, too, to demonstrate the value of money and sound money management.

That’s best done by giving them a dollar to purchase something at the mall, a yard sale, or at the movies. Let them see what they can get for a buck.

Elementary school kids can also begin to set financial goals.

When they receive birthday money from Grandma, or an allowance, encourage them to save the cash for something bigger they really want.

Show them how to compare prices at the grocery store and explain how different brands cost more for the same product.

Middle School and Money Management

As your children mature, you can start letting them experiment with the money they earn through babysitting, shoveling snow or an allowance.

Help them set up three accounts — one for their savings, one for spending money, and one (if you choose) for charity. And explain how interest works.

These are the years to help children establish good saving and spending habits, and help them manage impulse-buying control.

To help close the knowledge gap, continue to build financial literacy, and reinforce the lessons learned at home, look for activities or public events than help build money awareness.

High School Kids: Debt Awareness

High school and college-age kids are ready for more sophisticated lessons in money management.

That includes debt. Many of the best and brightest graduates get themselves in financial hot water by spending money they don’t have and burying themselves in high interest credit card debt.

You can save your kids from a similar fate by explaining how interest rates work, and how those \$300 designer sneakers cost much more if you pay with credit and make only the minimum monthly payments.

By paying \$30 per month on a credit card that charges 18 percent interest, for example, that \$300 would take 11 months to pay off and cost an additional \$27 in interest.

Now is also the time to impress upon young adults the benefits of good financial choices — and the cost of poor decision making.

Banks and other lenders rely on credit scores, a number that reflects your debt-to-income ratio and repayment history, to determine whether to issue borrowers a credit card or loans for a car or home mortgage. They also use it to determine what interest rate they should charge.

By making payments on time and keeping your debt to a minimum, consumers are far more likely to qualify for the most favorable, lowest interest loans.

Finally, there’s nothing like a lesson in compounded growth to motivate your adult children to save for their future.

Teaching kids to save is merely aimed at giving them the tools to become smart consumers, use debt wisely and put money away for their future.

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Lawrence O'Donnell cited as 'Childrens' Champion' for his relief work in Malawi

By BILL FORRY
EDITOR
Dorchester native Lawrence O'Donnell's philanthropic efforts to supply desks and chairs to young students in the African nation of Malawi earned him UNICEF USA's Children's Champion Award last month during the organization's annual Boston gala.

The May 23 event, held

at the Cyclorama at the Boston Center for the Arts, raised more than \$1 million to support UNICEF's work around the globe. In accepting the award, O'Donnell, host of MSNBC's The Last Word with Lawrence O'Donnell, saluted his own family and the Sisters of St. Joseph, who "taught me how to read and write" at St. Brendan's school

in Dorchester. O'Donnell was joined at the celebration by his brothers Kevin and Michael and several other friends and family. Among his personal guests was Meg Campbell, his classmate at Harvard College and the founder of Dorchester's Codman Academy. O'Donnell credits her with inspiring his first trip to Malawi, since she had visited the country first and recounted



(L-R) Meg Campbell, Lawrence O'Donnell, recipient of the 2018 UNICEF Children's Champion Award, and RoAnn Costin at the UNICEF Gala Boston 2018 in Boston.



(L-R) Caryl M. Stern, CEO & president of UNICEF USA, and Joyce Chisale present the 2018 UNICEF Children's Champion Award to Lawrence O'Donnell.

the great need that exists among the schoolchildren there.

"At every school, she asked teachers what they needed, and every time they said the same thing: they said 'chairs.' They just wanted to get those kids out of the mud, off the cement."

Within weeks, O'Donnell went to Malawi to figure out how to begin meeting that need. Out of that trip was born his non-profit K.I.N.D (Kids in Need of Desks) Fund. Aided greatly by support drawn from O'Donnell's viewers on MSNBC, the fund has raised more than \$17 million that has provided more than 500,000

students with desks and supporting scholarships for more than 3,000 young women.

O'Donnell partners with UNICEF to assist with logistics in the African country.

"UNICEF has its own infrastructure in Malawi that is unlike any other presence in that country, and trying to do anything in Malawi without UNICEF's help is really trying to do it the hard way," he said in his remarks. "Doing it with UNICEF's help, with your help, with what you do for UNICEF, makes it possible. It wouldn't even be possible without UNICEF."

O'Donnell also recount-

ed that the fund was inspired in part by Karen Russell, the daughter of Celtics great Bill Russell, who encouraged him to use his media platform to serve a greater good.

"Now that you have this forum, what are you going to do with it?" she asked him. "And she meant it in that deep Russell way," said O'Donnell.

Joyce Chisale, a young woman from Malawi who is a beneficiary of the K.I.N.D. Fund, spoke to the crowd and shared how education has impacted her life, before presenting Lawrence with his award.

The gala featured vibrant performances by JAG African Drum Ensemble and Zili Misik with Masary Studios. The Cyclorama was transformed by the design of Rafanelli Events that immersed guests in the "Rhythm of Community."

Auctioneer Kate Chertavian led the live auction that offered alluring experiences, including a New York Fashion Week trip to see the Oscar de la Renta and Jason Wu runway shows; a deluxe trip to Portugal; a stay at private Tuscan style villa on Martha's Vineyard; a New York City insider experience with backstage passes to The Last Word with Lawrence O'Donnell and house seats for Dear Evan Hansen; and a Fenway Park summer package with Billy Joel tickets and premium tickets for a Red Sox-Yankees home game.

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at 7:00 pm

SUNDAYS 7-10 pm with \$10 admission
except where otherwise noted.
All events listed are open to the public

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

JUNE 2018

June 1

Rose's Bounty
West Roxbury Food Pantry
Benefit, 7:30 - 11:30 p.m.
\$30/Tables of 10 - \$200

June 3

Denis Curtin

June 8

SMA Fathers Dedham/Dance
7-11 p.m. \$15 donation. Raffles:
Two Round-Trip air tickets to
Ireland, Flat-screen TV, Cape Cod
Irish Village 2-night stay. Door
Prize: 1 yr. Family Membership to
Atlantis Sports Club/Dedham.

June 10

Erin's Melody
with Margaret Dalton

June 17

DEREK RYAN,
Irish Country Music Star!
7-11:30 p.m. Tickets \$30
Opening at 7 p.m. with Jive Lessons
with Tom Collis. Dancing/Music by
Erin's Melody with Margaret Dalton,
8-9:15 p.m. Purchase at the Irish
Social Club or call P.J. Broderick,
617-893-1137.
Or: <http://derekryanusatour.com>

June 24

Erin's Melody
with Margaret Dalton



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Traveling People

Viewmount House in Longford has it all, and then some

By JUDY ENRIGHT
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Have you ever had itchy feet? Nearly 30 years ago, James Kearney, an accountant, did and the result is a boon to those who visit Viewmount House in Co. Longford.

In 1989, Kearney, who was tired of working with numbers and ready to move on, took his wife Beryl to see a derelict 17th Century manor house that was soon to go on the auction block. Beryl said she looked at him and asked, “Are you serious?”

It turns out that he definitely was! Without any restaurant or hotel experience under their belts, the couple went to the auction, bought Viewmount House, and the rest is history.

The Kearneys spent nearly 10 years gutting, renovating, and furnishing the structure and, in 1998, with two bedrooms ready, they welcomed their first guests.

“James was always a good cook – he understood food,” Beryl said, “and he had always wanted to open a restaurant.” Finally, in 2008, he got his ultimate wish and the VM Restaurant opened in the charming and, of course, completely renovated former stable that is attached to the hotel.

SUCCESS

We visited the multi-award winning Viewmount House this spring and came to appreciate the Kearneys’ work and their commitment. Every minute and euro (or Irish pound before the euro came in) spent on the property was well worth it. The sprawling country house is beautifully appointed and filled with antique furniture and oriental rugs bought at auction over the years. It exudes an air of quiet, comfort, and relaxation.

Each of the 12 bedrooms has its own color scheme and décor. Bathrooms are modern with superb water pressure to suit the needs of their traveling guests and the four acres of gardens – a Japanese garden with tea house, a white garden, and rock and vegetable gardens – are beautiful and meticulously groomed.

The night a friend and I were there offered a testament to the VM Restaurant’s success: 30 diners enjoying the food and the atmosphere, with only six of them staying in the hotel. Residents of Longford and local businesses are very supportive of the restaurant and Viewmount House, Beryl said, and that was easy to understand after we had dinner there.

I thoroughly enjoyed a starter of beetroot cured salmon and a main course of pan fried cod, but might have opted for pan fried quail, rose veal, pigeon, or monkfish, among other gourmet menu options offered by the gifted head chef, Robert Groot Koerkamp, whose family owns a bakery in Holland. A side of vegetables and mashed potato accompanies each main course and Koerkamp has introduced to the menu such treats as brioche.

As we’ve written before, Irish food has come a very long way in the past 30 years and nowhere is that more evident than with an outstanding meal such as we had at the VM Restaurant. My friend had a grilled scallop starter and rose veal with roast leek, sweetbreads, and pickled walnut as a main course.

BLUE BOOK

Viewmount House is a proud member of Ireland’s Blue Book, an association of some 50 exceptional hotels, private rental properties, and restaurants in Northern Ireland and the Republic – including six Michelin star winners. All members are selected on a strict criteria basis. The association, founded in 1974, boasts a unique selection of country houses, castles, several former coaching inns, a lighthouse, an ice house, a former convent, historic hotels, and restaurants representing, in the organization’s own words, “the finest of Ireland’s hospitality, accommodation and cuisine.” The Blue Book is the only Irish organization with membership in the prestigious Historic Hotels of Europe.

While there is not much you can guarantee in the world, you can guarantee that a Blue Book property will exceed your expectations for quality and graciousness. New to the 2018 edition are Castle Grove Country House in Donegal; Glenlo Abbey Hotel in Galway; Virginia



Sitting room at Viewmount House, Co. Longford.



VM Restaurant at Viewmount House in Co. Longford.



Bedroom at Viewmount House in Co. Longford.

Photos courtesy of Ireland’s Blue Book

Park Lodge in Cavan, and Killadangan House in Mayo.

ACTIVITIES

Other than sleeping and eating, is there anything else to do around Co. Longford, which lies in the heart of the Midlands? You bet there is! There’s an 18-hole parkland golf course, one of the oldest in Ireland, behind the house and there’s Abbeyshrule Airfield nearby for sightseeing flights and flying lessons. If you’d rather go karting and try paint balling, there’s a lighted 20-acre tract at Edgeworthstown. The Royal Canal runs from Longford Town to Clondra for the walkers, and Strokestown House, gardens and famine museum is nearby for history buffs as is St. Mel’s Cathedral, destroyed by fire in 2009, restored and reopened in 2014. St. Mel’s was the largest restoration project in Western Europe at the time.

There’s a purpose-built theatre and arts center in Longford Town and

Casey’s Bogwood Studios in nearby Newtowncashel where Kevin Casey creates works of art from ancient pieces of wood from Midland bogs (see bogoak.ie for more.) Another interesting attraction is the Corlea Trackway Visitor Center near Kenagh, an interpretive center for an Iron Age bog road built in 148 BC across bog lands near the River Shannon (ctrackwayvisitorcentre@opw.ie). In Mullingar (about 45 minutes from Viewmount), you can visit Belvedere House and Gardens (belvedere-house.ie) and within an hour is Clonmacnoise monastic site. Arigna Mining Experience is also nearby (arignaminingexperience.ie).

Another treat for walkers is a guided hour and a half walk from St. Mary’s to St. John’s and Beyond, Edgeworth Heritage and Literary Trail in Edgeworthstown, Co. Longford. Be sure to prebook (edgeworthsociety@eircome.net) to follow along in the footsteps of

Maria Edgeworth, Sir Walter Scott, William Wordsworth, Oscar Wilde, Oliver Goldsmith, Charlotte Brook and many other 18th and 19th Century historical figures.

Of course there are many, many outdoor activities along Ireland’s Blueways, a series of multi-activity trails on the Shannon and Shannon-Erne, offering boat hire, golf, tennis, angling and numerous walking trails. A series of Blueways Guides outlines options including arts and crafts, outdoor activities, food and culture and heritage. (See bluewaysireland.org.)

Be sure to contact Longford Tourism (Longfordtourism.com) for more information on this lovely part of the world.

JUNE EVENTS

There is so much to do in Ireland in June and actually all during the summer months.

Dog lovers will want to join the Greyhound Rescue Association of Ireland (grai.ie) at a Walk for Greyhounds 2018 on June 10 at 2 p.m. at Farmleigh in Phoenix Park, Dublin. The walk promotes greyhounds as pets, and because I have several friends who have these dogs as pets, I can verify that they make absolutely wonderful, gentle, and loving pets. A similar walk will be held in Galway City that same day. Both are part of the Great Global Greyhound Walk and are family friendly.

While in Mayo, be sure to stop in at the Old Irish Goat Visitors’ Centre on Newport Road in Mulranny, which is open from the beginning of June to mid-September, 1 to 5 p.m. daily. The Old Irish Goat has been granted rare breed designation and the Centre offers information on the history as well as a gift shop.

There are many excellent art, craft and gift shops in Mayo, including O’Reilly & Turpin and The Quay Gallery, both in Westport; The Beehive in Keel on Achill Island; and Solas on Bridge Street, Louisburgh.

If your name is O’Malley, you are probably related to the pirate queen (Grace O’Malley) and the clan wants you! From June 22-24, the 64th Annual O’Malley Clan Rally will be held in Westport, Co. Mayo, with events including a walking tour, reception and talk, castles and abbey tour, and more. For details, go online to westporttheatre.com or email info@westporttheatre.com.

And, if you’re in Westport and around the area, do look for jewelry made by Carolyn Claire Mitchell who calls her work Clew Bay Creations. We have seen her earrings at several shops and they’re very nice. If you won’t be in Ireland, you can still enjoy her work at her website, clewbaycreations.com, or email info@clewbaycreations.com.

While Ireland’s coffee has improved considerably since the days when the only Cappuccino I could find was in an airport vending machine, probably the best I’ve had this year was at Vaughan’s Bar and Restaurant in the Roundstone House Hotel in Connemara. If you’re in the area, do try it. The ladies room there was also spotless and even sported a vase of fresh tulips.

For a different kind of adventure, how about taking a Connemara Pub Tour? You’ll visit five unique establishments on the tour, get five food and drink vouchers, and enjoy magnificent scenery and Connemara characters. See connemarapubtours.ie or email info@connemarapubtours.ie.

If you’re traveling the Wild Atlantic Way and are looking for local art, stop by the Western Light Art Gallery in Keel on Achill Island where works by artists Padraig McCaul, Peter Hall, Charles Perpoil, Malcolm Bennett, Sean Cannon, and Alex McKenna are featured among others.

Looking for a hiking and/or stargazing tour of Ireland? A number of tours are offered by Terra Firma Ireland including a Magic Myth and Moonlight tour, walk on the wild side and dark sky safari. For information, visit TerraFirmaireland.com or email info@terrafirmairreland.com.

Enjoy your trip to Ireland whenever you go and whatever you do. Summer is certainly a lovely time to visit with long, warm days and every attraction open and buzzing after a cold and too-lengthy winter.

The two-day schedule for Boston Irish Festival 2018

Our long tradition of bringing people to celebrate Irish culture and heritage continues this weekend at the Irish Cultural Centre in Canton. Our scheduling is different this year. Saturday will feature a pre-concert festival from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. Sunday will be a full festival day with kid's activities, events at the cottage, sports and two stages of music. This is a time where Irish music, art, song, food, language, sport, dance come together for a Celtic fusion for all ages to enjoy. There are many aspects to the festival:

MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT

The festibval will showcase some of Ireland's leading new bands, including many genres. Our Irish-American performers bring us the best of Irish music cultivated here in the states. Bands traveling from Ireland for the festival include:

- Backwest, a traditional Irish music group out of Galway City holding a five star review from *Irish Music Magazine*. The

troupe has been aptly classified as 'innovative' and 'thrilling'.

- JigJam is a multi-award winning quartet from the heart of the Irish Midlands that blends the best of traditional Irish music with Bluegrass and American in a new genre that has been branded as 'I-Grass' or "CeltGrass." Described by Irish American News as "The Best Irish Group in Bluegrass so far."

June 3 Headliners

- Gaelic Storm is back in Canton where once again they will no doubt deliver a foot-stomping, eclectic mix of tunes that has established the band as one of world music's premier live acts. With their energetic mix of Irish and Scottish traditional fare, drinking songs, and playful original material, this group will certainly present a blazing Celtic-inspired rock 'n roll show, and one not to be missed.

- The Founding is a progressive Celtic band from Michigan. Writes Local Spins: "This sextet has been expeditiously carving out a name for itself since form-

ing in early 2015 and has already played its way up bills at top-tier Irish music festivals around the region."

- Christian McNeil, born and raised in Derry, Ireland, is a mighty force of psychedelic folk-tinged alternative rock and soul. A New Englander of the past 21 years, he is a multi-Boston Music Award winner, taking home "Male Vocalist of the Year," two years running in 2011 and 2012.

Also featured will be Devri, Erin's Melody, Ceoltas Ceoltoiri Eireann, and an array of local Irish trad musicians all week-end long.

CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Sunday, noon to 5 p.m.

Take a stroll back in time to the West of Ireland and to the Irish country lifestyle from the late 1800s to early 1900s. Join us as we dress as if we were in this time period and become a part of the experience as we remember the traditions and folklore of that era. From the sight of cut turf, to the smell of fresh hay to the sound of farm animals, to

old Irish crafts on display, take a trip with us to Ireland of old.

11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

All day tours inside the Irish cottage with demonstrations of bread making, knitting & crochet, butterballs, craft making (including a harvest knot & St. Brigid's cross). Learn the traditions, history, and folklore associated with a typical Irish cottage. Let the kids take turns kneading bread. Information provided courtesy of the Museum of Country Life, Castlebar Co. Mayo.

Around the cottage: Learn about the sugan, watch as one of our "farmers" (and maybe the kids!) rakes the hay into a cock of hay. Touch some turf, sit into a currach (old Irish fishing boat). Learn a little about the history of Irish farming life courtesy of information provided courtesy of the Castlebar Museum.

Athatching demonstration: Collin McGhee, thatcher extraordinaire who actually thatched our Irish cottage, will be on hand with a display of his thatching

instruments, materials and miniature thatched cottage. Kids and adults can try their hand working on the weave. See thatching.com.

1:30 – 3:30

An American Wake. Thirty minute reenactments will take place during this period. Stop by and wish the young emigrants farewell as they get ready to leave for America (and usually never return). Have a drink, have a chat, dance a set outside the old cottage. Become part of the show, don your britches and scally caps, or your hair fastener or favorite shawl and come dance the siege of Ennis with our actors. Featuring Irish dancers from the Harney Academy of Irish dance.

KIDS' ACTIVITIES

Tent is open from 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

All day events include: Arts & Crafts. Face painting. Balloon twisting. Free dance.

Art competition – three age categories / \$50 first prize / \$25 second prize.

Noon to 2 p.m. – STEM with Sheila Hume

4 p.m. – Sing-along with Michael Maloney

5:15 p.m. – Irish dance performance followed by an Irish dance workshop

- Outside the tent
- Photo op and visit with "Blades" from the Bruins; photo op and visit with "Wally" from the Red Sox.

- A petting zoo.
- Touch a truck.

1:30 – 3:30

Visit our enchanted forest and meet "Tinker Bell & Her Fairy Friend" (actors). They will sing songs and tell stories. A train ride around the premises. Rides on a Viking ship and a fire engine.

Ship Ride & kids Fire engine carousel

FOR ALL AGES

Tug O'War – make a team on the day.

Viking Irish – Some 30 Vikings dressed in costume will camp out on one of our fields and re-enact a battle

Pop Up Irish pub – Features an Irish-speaking bartender and musicians. There'll be signs to help you say a "cupla focal."

Archery

Fine Arts: Six Boston Irish dancing schools will strut their stuff upon the stage.

Genealogy – Free mini-consults.

Tea House: If you haven't tasted one of Mary Walsh's scones or Bridie's brown bread, you are in for a delightful treat.

SPORTS

Boston GAA will have five gaelic games on during the day on Sunday. Ladies and men's games. Football and hurling

ADMISSION

Early bird: Saturday \$10 / Sunday \$15. Children under 12 free. bostonirishfestivalicc.com

THE MUSIC SCHEDULE

Saturday

Pre-festival concert in the ICC Marquee Tent & Patio.

3 p. m. – 4:15 p.m.: Open session with our Friday night musicians

4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.: Dance drama by the O'Reilly School of Dance

6 p.m. – 8 p.m.: The Founding

8:30 p.m. –10:30 p.m.: Back-west from Galway City

Sunday
At the ICC Marquee Tent & Patio

10 a.m.: Mass followed by am Irish breakfast in the first-floor function room

11:30: Ceili Mor with Ceoltas Ceoltoiri Eireann

2:30: Devri.

4:45: Ballroom of Romance with Erin's Melody

On the Main Stage

1 p.m.: Backwest

3:15: JigJam

5:15: Christian McNeil

6:30: Gaelic Storm.



Boston Irish Festival

June 2nd & 3rd, 2018

LIVE MUSIC ON TWO STAGES

GAELIC STORM

BackWest from Galway

JigJam from Offaly

CCE / Devri Much more

OLD RURAL IRELAND – A SCENE FROM THE EARLY 1900'S AT THE ICC COTTAGE

An American Wake with songs/dance/ music

Farm Animals / Thatched Cottage tour

Demonstration of old crafts

Display of antique farm & cottage artifacts

Making Hay / Bringing home the turf

Teach Tabhairne - Irish speaking pub

Curragh display

FULL DAY'S SCHEDULE OF GAA GAMES

KIDS ACTIVITIES

Face painting

Viking Ship & fire engine ride

Touch a truck / Petting Zoo

Enchanted Forest w/ TINKERBELL

Art Competition – 4 different age groups

Train ride / Arts & Crafts

Irish dance workshop / Sing-along with Mike

And much more. Full schedule will be posted on April 25th. www.irishculture.org

