

BOSTON IRISH

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BostonIrish.com

Jack Connors, civic activist and philanthropist, is honored with statue outside Hancock Tower

A bronze statue honoring the late Boston businessman and philanthropist Jack Connors was unveiled on June 9 outside 200 Clarendon Street, placing a permanent tribute to one of the city's most influential civic figures at the base of the tower where he worked for decades.

Connors, who died in July 2024 at age 82 of cancer, was a co-founder of the advertising firm Hill Holliday and later led the Connors Family Office from the former John Hancock Tower. Over a career that spanned business, politics, health care, education, and philanthropy, he became widely known as one of Boston's most effective behind-the-scenes powerbrokers.

The statue depicts Connors seated on a bench, his arm extended in a welcoming pose. Supporters said the design reflects his reputation as a connector and mentor who was known for bringing people together to address civic problems.

Joe Nolan, CEO of Eversource Energy and a longtime friend of Connors, was the driving force behind the memorial. Nolan privately commissioned the statue and helped raise \$2 million for the project. Bryan Koop, an executive with BXP, the landlord of the property, helped make the privately owned courtyard along Clarendon Street available, and BXP donated the space.

Pablo Eduardo, the Gloucester-based sculptor, created the bronze image statue.

Connors's impact was felt across many of Boston's major institutions, but one of his most visible legacies was Camp Harbor View, the free summer program he founded in 2007 on Long Island in



Cardinal O'Malley reaches out to Jack Connors widow Eileen, who with her family attended the installation of the statue honoring her late husband Jack (at her right) at 200 Clarendon Street. Photo courtesy the City of Boston Mayor's office

Boston Harbor. The program has served thousands of Boston's young people and their families, combining summer activities with year-round leadership development, family support, and college and career guidance.

At the time of his death, city leaders, business executives, clergy, educators, and nonprofit leaders credited Connors with using his influence to raise money and attention for causes that reached well beyond downtown boardrooms.

His philanthropy supported hospitals, Catholic schools, youth programs, neighborhood organizations, and civic initiatives throughout the region.

-REPORTER STAFF

Boston firefighter Bobby "BK" Kilduff, known in the BFD as a 'Jake's Jake,' died as the result of a fall last month as he and his team were battling to contain a fire in a close-knit Dorchester neighborhood. Mayor Wu noted that the "Kilduff family has given everything in service to this country and this city."

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Over the last 61 years, Tom Mulvoy, a Dorchester native, has worked for two newspapers - The Boston Globe and The Dorchester Reporter - and led a journalism seminar for a while at Boston College. Chris Lovett profiles a journalist who has centered the coverage of community affairs over his career.

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Patrick Radden Keefe's books investigate the Snakehead gang in New York City, explore The Troubles in Northern Ireland, and expose the underworld in London. But his own story, which he delights in, began right here in Dorchester. He chats with Boston Irish Reporter Cassidy McNeeley.

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Recalling the Irishness of our fight for independence

By MAUREEN FORRY-SORRELL
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

What a summer to be in Boston.

The World Cup is here. Two hundred and fifty years of American independence is being celebrated right in our backyard. And Ireland, well, Ireland



didn't make it to the tournament, but honestly, when has that ever stopped

us from having a good time?

The Boys in Green fell to Czechia in the play-offs this spring, and their absence will sting for a lot of us. But Gillette Stadium, rechristened "Boston Stadium" for the Cup tournament, is hosting seven matches, starting on June 13 and finishing on July 9, with France, England, Scotland, Norway, Morocco, and Ghana all coming through.

With England on the schedule, need we say more? The pubs will be full, the craic will be good, and Boston's Irish community will do what it has always done: Find a reason to gather.

And there is plenty of reason to do that this summer.

Boston is at the heart of America's 250th birthday celebration as the

birthplace of the Revolution, the city that sparked it all. Reenactments, Tall Ships in the harbor in mid-July, the Boston Pops on the Fourth with some extra fireworks, will mark the occasion.

What tends to get lost in the celebrating, though, is how Irish the whole thing was to begin with.

Irish Americans sided with the patriots in overwhelming numbers, showing up at Lexington and Concord, at Bunker Hill, at every significant fight over eight years of war. They were generals, colonels, enlisted men by the thousands, even spies. By the time Gen. Washington limped into Valley Forge, Irish soldiers made up two-fifths of his army.

John Barry ran the Navy. Henry Knox, a kid from Boston who sold books for a living, was Washington's artillery commander and, later, his Secretary of War. Charles Thomson kept the

Continental Congress running. All Irish. A French general summed it up best: "Congress owed its existence, and America possibly her preservation to the firmness and fidelity of the Irish."

They weren't fighting for a country that had been good to them. They were fighting for an idea: self-determination, dignity, the right to govern themselves. They knew that fight. They'd been living it under the boot of an empire run by an erratic, self-interested king who believed the rules simply did not apply to him.

Some things, it seems, have a way of coming back around.

So this summer, when all of Boston raises a glass to 250 years of independence, we'll be raising ours, too, and remembering who showed up. They were our people. They're why we're here.

Happy summer, Boston.

For Boston's Irish: A call to come home

Ireland is calling. And this summer, the call is louder than ever.

Tourism Ireland launched a global campaign this year with a simple but powerful message: "Ireland Goes Beyond." The core insight is that while most holidays leave visitors feeling like a tourist on the periphery, Ireland truly invites you in. It's not just a place you visit, but somewhere you're made to feel truly part of, from the place to the people to the culture.

In a competitive global tourism landscape where every destination is fighting for attention with famous landmarks, white sand beaches, or guaranteed warm weather, Ireland chose a different path. Rather than lead with scenery or spectacle, Tourism Ireland asked a more fundamental question: What's the one thing you can get in Ireland that you can't get anywhere else? The answer they landed on wasn't a postcard view. It was the people. It was the instinct, deeply Irish, seemingly hard-wired, to go out of your way for someone you've never met.

The campaign's centerpiece film tells the story of Paul, a local man determined to return a lost hat to some visitors. That small act of kindness escalates into an unex-

pected pursuit across the island's landscapes and culture and becomes a portrait of something that can't be manufactured or marketed. It can only be lived.

For the Irish diaspora here in Greater Boston, that portrait will look familiar. Because the Ireland being described - generous, unhurried, genuinely glad you came - is the Ireland that traveled. It crossed the Atlantic and put down roots in Dorchester and South Boston and Jamaica Plain, in Quincy and Braintree and Weymouth. It shows up in the way someone from here moves through the world: steady, loyal, more likely to ask how you're doing than to talk about themselves.

Tourism Ireland's 2026 strategy aims to deepen and defend tourism from

the United States, and the Irish American community is very much part of that conversation. Ireland wants you to come home, or come for the first time, or bring your kids so they understand what all the fuss is about. The "Ireland Goes Beyond" campaign is designed to highlight the emotional and personal connections visitors find within the island's culture and landscapes, and for anyone with Irish roots, those connections run deeper than a trip itinerary.

This summer, whether you're planning a visit or simply feeling the pull of something you can't quite name, let Ireland's invitation land. The door is open - it always has been.

-BOSTON IRISH STAFF



Save the Date

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2026 | 11:30 AM

John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum
Dorchester, Massachusetts

Please plan to join us at this inspiring event, as we recognize and celebrate exemplary individuals who share our culture and traditions, as we tell the stories of their special achievements.

This 16th Annual Luncheon benefits the Edward W. Forry & Mary Casey Forry Foundation for Community Journalism, a 501(c)(3) foundation dedicated to preserving and strengthening the tradition of independent, community-focused local news reporting.

Sponsorship and individual ticket details available soon at BostonIrishHonors.org

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BostonIrish.com and Boston Irish Magazine are the region's leading chronicler of all things Irish-American. This family-owned and operated media publication is a unique and independent source for news and information reporting on the Irish people and events here in Boston as well as stories focused on the Irish diaspora.

Celebrating and preserving the heritage of Boston's Irish people and their families.

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A Dot Day salute for a community stalwart

Welcome, World Cup fans, to Boston's greatest neighborhood

BILL FORRY
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Welcome, World Cup soccer fans!

If you're reading this, chances are you've found an apartment to rent for a few days — or weeks — as you support your national team on the fields of "Boston Stadium." We all call it Gillette Stadium, home of the New England Patriots and the New England Revolution soccer club. But never mind the semantics.

You're all invited to this corner of Boston. We're thrilled you've ignored the menacing Reddit threads and decided to venture out of the city center to explore the neighborhoods where the bulk of Bostonians actually live, eat and play. Downtown Boston is great, too, of course, but Boston is a city of neighborhoods and this is the biggest and best of them.

If you were lucky enough to arrive a few days early, perhaps you already got a taste for what this place is like this time of year. Last weekend's Dorchester Day event — the music festival Dorchesterfest and Sunday's parade — are very much representative of the diversity and depth of this place. We have people from all over the world living here already, so you're in good company.

But if you missed all that — and are just getting your bearings — here are a few key things it's good to know:

- Dorchester is Boston's biggest neighborhood, by far, in terms of size and population. With some 150,000 residents, we make up about one-fifth of the whole city.

- Dorchester is home to some of the city's most visited attractions, including the John F. Kennedy Library and Museum, the Franklin Park Zoo, Boston's largest public space (Franklin Park), and the region's top public university, UMass Boston.

The Dorchester Reporter's co-founder and publisher emeritus Ed Forry, at left, was front-and-center for Sunday's Dorchester Day Parade. Ed, 81, was honored this year with the Dorchester Day Parade Committee's Legacy Award, recognizing his decades of work in community journalism and neighborhood civic life.

Ed, who grew up on Vera Street on Codman Hill and has lived on Richmond Street since 1975, started The Reporter in 1983 with his late wife, Mary Casey Forry, who passed away in 2004. He remains a vital part of The Reporter's newsroom and business operations and has



recently helped to launch a new foundation named for him and Mary to support community journalism and other causes, including a new scholarship program to train young reporters from Boston's neighborhoods. Ed has a long history covering the parade and was at times part of the committees that organized the annual celebrations.

Here, Ed is pictured outside of his alma mater, the former St. Gregory Grammar School before the start of Sunday's parade, which he watched from the sidewalk with family, friends, and colleagues.

Photo courtesy Brianne Gore

- Dorchester is home to the city's most diverse collection of people and restaurants with a heavy influence from the waves of immigrants who've made this city their home over the last 250 years.

- Dorchester has some of the top Irish pubs — including the Eire Pub, the Banshee, and McGonagles — all great places to watch what you call "football." (We know Team Ireland didn't qualify, but that makes it easier for many of us to root for the Haitians and Cape Verdeans.)

Dorchester is home to the city's biggest Cape Verdean population and you'll see tons of blue and red flags around here for the tournament. Dorchester's Town Field (its Red Line stop is Fields Corner) will host a big outdoor watch party for the Cabo Verde team's first game against Spain next Monday (June 15). There'll also be a big outdoor watch party for the Cabo Verde match against Uruguay on June 21 at "Dorchester Watchfest," located at 1160 Dorchester Ave.

The Haitian team also has a huge and enthusiastic fan base here in this part of Boston, so if you're a member of the Tartan Army, be forewarned: You are *not* the sentimental favorite in Boston, although you will still be very welcome throughout your abbreviated stay. (Go check out The Dubliner in downtown Boston, they've heard you're coming.)

Most of all, know this about your temporary home: Dorchester is a community that has long embraced newcomers from all walks of life. Founded one month before Boston, this section of the city was an independent town until 1870 and still has a deeply unique sense of history, a strong feeling of pride in our roots, and a ready embrace of new people.

Please enjoy your stay here and be sure to frequent our diverse offerings of food, drink, outdoor recreation, and people. And be sure to check out DotNews.com and this newspaper for the latest updates on what's going on.



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SENATOR NICK COLLINS



Wishing You A Safe & Happy Summer!

All Irish travelers are ambassadors

I have been conducting an informal experiment in Paris.

My French is serviceable but accented in a way that is difficult for the French to attribute to any specific non-French-speaking country: Polish?, German? Ukrainian? So new acquaintances ask the innocent enough question: "Where are you from?"

When I answer "I'm from the United States," the response can be jarring. The scrunched face. The Gallic lips lifted up and somehow simultaneously downturned. A French shrug can express pity as well as disdain, frequently both at once. To their credit, French people instinctively distrust their own political leaders (even the ones they voted for) so they accept that being an American does not necessarily mean one is in agreement with whatever is currently going on. They make allowances. But it is not exactly a warm welcome.

So, just for fun, I tried something else. When the question came: "Are you from England? Poland? Germany? I hear an accent." — I answered with the truth, if not the whole truth: "We just arrived from Dublin."

Oh, my. What a difference.

It was like Christmas morning. "We love the Irish! We love Ireland! My sister is studying there. I once visited Connemara, why would you ever leave?" The transformation was complete and instantaneous. Literally night and day.

Boston Irish readers will not be entirely surprised by this. We know the emigration story as our own. We grew up with it. But we also know, at least intellectually, that the Irish went everywhere and that everywhere they went, they left their mark. We think of Charlestown, Dorchester, Southie (or Eastie in my family), of the Kennedys and the famine ships. But when a stranger in a Paris café lights up at the word "Dublin," it puts a finer point on something: the Irish diaspora is the largest in the world. (The Lebanese are second.) The French woman who visited Connemara once is part of this Irish story, too.

The Irish diaspora did not confine its contributions to Boston, New York or Chicago. Admiral William Brown, born in a cottage in Foxford, County Mayo, founded the Argentine Navy. Stephen Moylan, a Cork man serving as aide-de-camp to George Washington, was the first person to write down the words "the United States of America" — six months before they appeared in the Declaration of Independence. The Irish didn't just help build America, they named it. From the founding of nations to the winning of wars, the Irish have been present and consequential on nearly every stage in the world, usually without sufficient credit.

It must also be said, to avoid hagiography, that not every contribution has been for the good. Senator Joe McCarthy comes to mind as do certain prominent Fox News personalities who have weaponized a performance of Irish-American identity while doing



When a stranger in a Paris café lights up at the word "Dublin," it puts a finer point on something: the Irish diaspora is the largest in the world. (The Lebanese are second.) The French woman who visited Connemara once is part of this Irish story, too.

things that would make their ancestors weep. But on balance, the Irish diaspora has done its homeland extraordinary credit, integrating into every society it entered while maintaining, against long odds, its own sense of Irishness.

The French stranger who has never set foot in Ireland but feels warmly toward the Irish has absorbed something real, something that the Irish, in their travels, their music, their literature, and their relentless conviviality, have transmitted to the world over generations.

It is worth noting that the warmth the Irish enjoy today was not always there. It was not given. It was earned.

The Irish who arrived in Boston in the holds of coffin ships were met not with open arms but with signs reading "No Irish Need Apply." In England, they were caricatured in the press as subhuman — simian figures in Punch cartoons, dirty, violent, irredeemably foreign. Their Catholicism was treated as a papal conspiracy against Protestant civilization. In America, the Know-Nothing movement made opposition to Irish immigration a political platform. The Irish were, in the language of every era's nativism, the wrong kind of people.

They changed that perception by demonstrating character. In the mines and on the railroads, in the firehouses and police precincts of Boston, on the battlefields of the Civil War, in the parishes and schools and union halls of a hundred cities, the Irish wore down the suspicion and replaced it with admiration. The French café owner who today embraces a Dubliner with genuine warmth is the beneficiary of that long, patient work. The reputation was built. It was not inherited.

We know this story well. It is, in many ways, our story, which is why that transformed face in the Paris café feels like something more than a personal anecdote more like a report from the front.

The Irish who first came to Europe in large numbers went to England. They



were laborers, navvies, the men and women who built the roads and railways of a country that had done catastrophic damage to their own. They sent money home and kept their heads down.

Then came the European Economic Community, and a new generation arrived with different intentions: students, restaurant workers, young people hungry for adventure, for a life not defined by the old shame of emigration. They came to Paris, Amsterdam, Rome, Berlin — not fleeing, but choosing.

Now comes a third wave: executives, entrepreneurs, actors, people operating at the highest levels of global business and culture. The Collison brothers left County Tipperary not because Ireland had nothing to offer them but because Silicon Valley had the venture capital to build something at planetary scale. The result is Stripe, one of the dominant payment processing companies on earth. These are not men who came to dig a ditch. They came to reshape how the world moves money.

Paris has always held a particular place in this story. Long before the EEC generation arrived with their Eurail passes, Irish writers and artists had claimed the city as their own. Oscar Wilde died here, a broken man but still writing witticisms. James Joyce wrote much of "Ulysses," his great monument to the Dublin he had left behind, in a series of rented rooms on the Left Bank. Samuel Beckett lived here for decades, wrote some of the most important works in the history of the theatre in French, and when he won the Nobel Prize, stayed in Paris sending a friend to collect it in Stockholm. Brendan Behan thought of himself as a house painter until his Breton innkeeper in Paris said "Non, Brendan, you are an author!" It changed Behan's self perception forever. Shakespeare and Company, the beloved English-language bookshop on the banks of the Seine, has for generations been a gathering place for Irish writers and readers, a small embassy of the

literary imagination and the original publisher of Ulysses. The current manager, Niamh, is from Crossmaglen, County Armagh.

It is into this tradition that Glen Hansard steps every time he plays Paris.

I saw Hansard perform in Paris recently at the opening concert of his new tour. He is in some ways the perfect emblem of the new Irish diaspora: a man who began as a busker on Grafton Street, who has slept rough, who knows in his bones what it means to have nothing between you and the street. He brought all of that with him to fame, to "Once," to the Oscar, to the stages of the world. As a former busker, he long ago internalized the fragility of life. You can be performing with Bruce Springsteen and Ed Sheeran one minute and penniless again in the blink of an eye.

Hansard also brought his gift for assembly. His annual fundraising concerts for the homeless in Dublin have gathered some of Ireland's most gifted singers and musicians: Sinéad O'Connor, Hozier, Bono, Dermot Kennedy, Imelda May, Paddy Reilly. Irish music is a gravitational force, pulling the great ones in and continuing the tradition of the session, of music as a communal act of generosity.

Near the end of the night, Hansard sang a Pete Seeger song called "Passing Through." Boston Irish readers of a certain vintage will know it:

"Sometimes happy, sometimes blue, glad that I ran into you. Tell the people that you saw me passing through."

It was magic.

We saw two other Irish performers in Paris whose work has stayed with me for reasons that run deeper than entertainment.

Andrew Bennett gave a performance built around Claire Keegan's "Small Things Like These" — reading the novel aloud, live in the chapel of the Irish Cultural Centre. The book (also now a film with Cillian Murphy) is the spare and devastating story of a man in a small Irish town who discovers, in the weeks before Christmas, what is happening behind the walls of the local convent. The Magdalene laundries, the mother and baby homes, the women hidden away, the children taken. Bennett's performance was poignant and funny in the way that only the Irish can manage, finding the light precisely because they are not afraid to sit in the dark.

Dara O'Briain is one of Ireland's best-loved comedians, internationally famous and consistently brilliant. O'Briain is also, as it happens, adopted. His show "re creation" wove the story of his search for his birth mother in his fifties. A child of Ireland's own system of managed shame, O'Briain stood on a Paris stage and made people laugh until their bellies hurt.

These evenings, taken together, said something about the Irish diaspora that no celebration of Stripe or Springsteen can quite reach. The wounds of the forced adoptions and the mother and baby homes have not yet healed. They

(Continued next page)

Gaillimh Ogbu! and other thoughts on Irish by-elections; Maine, Texas US Senate races; the years keep flying past

By-elections for seats in Dáil Éireann (lower house of Irish parliament) were held on May 22 in the Dublin Central constituency and in what is possibly the Irish territory readers of this publication are most familiar with, Galway West. As voting day approached, it became apparent that Councillor Daniel Ennis of the centre-left Social Democrats would win in the capital and that it would be a battle between Senator Seán Kyne and Councillor Noel Thomas on the Atlantic coast.

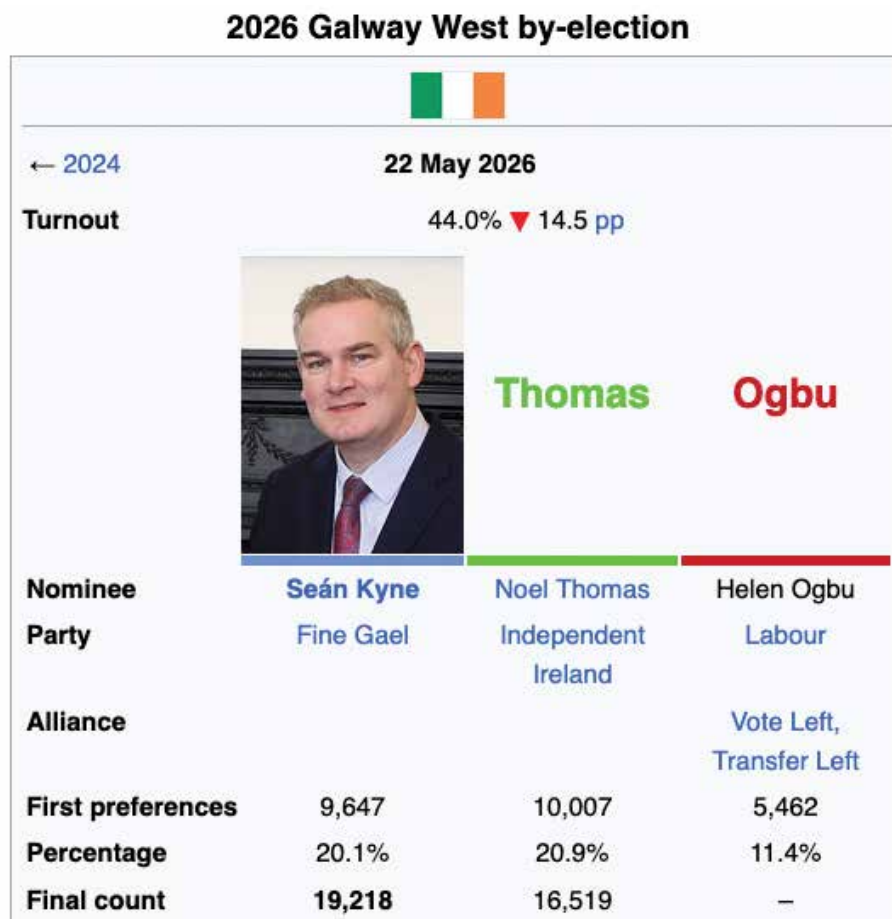
And that's how it panned out in the end. Ennis prevailed comfortably and Kyne outlasted Thomas when it came to the transfers of first and lower preference votes under the proportional representation system utilised here.

Kyne, whose party has been in government for many years now, pulled off a rare feat in that by-elections are typically cruel to politicians whose parties are in power.

Although it is a mistake to extrapolate excessively from what are known as special elections in the United States, there are a few things worth noting. First, it was an undeniably bad day for the main opposition party, Sinn Féin. That status would suggest that they should have triumphed in at least one contest. It is clear that they have simultaneously lost a lot of their working class, nationalist core, who have gravitated rightward, and younger leftists, dismayed by Sinn Féin's subtle nods in a more conservative direction on issues such as immigration and the environment, who have defected primarily to the Social Democrats. There is even internal grumbling within the former political wing of the IRA about their leader, Mary Lou McDonald.

Second, it was worse for Fianna Fáil, whose candidate in Dublin garnered merely 4 percent in the area that used to be dominated by its stalwart, former taoiseach Bertie Ahern, who actually attracted more notice than the councillor who was running in the wake of unfortunate comments on immigration for which he has offered a partial apology. And in another heartland across the country, their youthful aspirant, Councillor Cillian Keane, failed to reach double digits.

Third, signs that the right may finally be rising were in evidence. Ireland has, to date, largely rejected the messaging of candidates who, explicitly or implicitly, seek to capitalise on anti-immigrant feelings. But in Galway West, Thomas, who once asserted that "the inn is full," came



Wikipedia image

close to a victory and is well-positioned to make it to Leinster House in the next general election.

And in Dublin Central, the combined tally of alleged crime boss Gerard "The Monk" Hutch and Councillor Malachy Steenson indicates that one of them could easily be elected if they stand again when there will be more than one seat available in the locality. Hutch called for "illegals" to be interned at the Curragh military camp in Co. Kildare until their situation is resolved. For some time, Steenson has been a virulent campaigner on the subject.

Lastly, on quite a different note, the Nigerian-born Galway City Councillor, Helen Ogbu, surprised nearly everyone with a solid third place showing. Ogbu got an excellent vote from her friends and neighbours in the City of the Tribes and fared respectably beyond its boundaries. If she runs, as seems guaranteed, in the general election when it is called, she could very well become the first person of colour in Ireland's parliament. Her backers have a genius slogan building on the Gaillimh Abú (Up Galway!) cry heard when the county's footballers and hurlers are on the pitch: Gaillimh Ogbu!

She is one to watch.

Stateside, with the midterms looming, most observers believe that the Democrats will gain control of the US House of Representatives. There are questions about the upper chamber; it is a big hill for them to climb, but the GOP could be in trouble. The dynamics of two races that could tell the tale - in Maine and in Texas - are fascinating.

The Democratic contenders are hailed by their adherents as brightly shining lights in a new generation of progressives, more than capable successors to a, frankly, elderly cadre, a number of whom have hung on longer than they should have. Indeed, Graham Platner and James Talarico have positive attributes and are very popular with a good-sized segment of Americans.

That said, each has significant political weaknesses that his opponent will endeavour to exploit. The Marine Corps veteran Platner's Nazi-themed tattoo and repeated, repulsively misogynistic comments from the not entirely distant past didn't harm him as he battled Maine Governor Janet Mills to be the nominee. Yet the adroit incumbent, Susan Collins,

has survived strong challenges previously and will make hay of the skeletons in Platner's closet.

In Texas, Talarico's chances have definitely been boosted following President Donald Trump's endorsement of the, to put it euphemistically, ethically challenged state attorney general, Ken Paxton, over sitting Senator John Cornyn. Paxton, who was already ahead, defeated him handily, aided by Trump's imprimatur.

Talarico frequently cites his deep Christian faith in order to maximise his appeal beyond the Democratic Party faithful. A just released attack ad highlights his vulnerabilities, however. It reveals, in Talarico's own words, his views that God is non-binary, that there are six biological sexes, that there should be a giant welcome mat on the southern border and the fact that he has had to reckon with his whiteness and masculinity. These sentiments are anathema to many Texans, a healthy chunk from the vital demographic of Latinos among them. Yes, Talarico could manage an upset, but against that, Texas is still Texas.

...

I have lamented the swift passage of time here before, but it is hitting me hard of late. This May marked three decades since my graduation from Holy Cross. It is 27 years since I completed my law degree and sat the bar exam. I have been in Ireland for the guts of a quarter century.

Larry Óg is a happy teen and is growing like a weed. My stepson is 27. My pals' children are starting to graduate from college. I will be 52 in November, an age I once deemed ancient.

Of course, aging beats the alternative. Yet life really should have a pause button that can be pushed intermittently. All we can do, I guess, is enjoy it and continually give thanks for what we have. And at the moment, that is the beautiful, blue sky conditions this country has been graced with for a few days after months of unsettled, often lousy weather.

I hope readers have a great summer. For some of you who are lucky, that may include a trip back "home" to Ireland. I'd love to promise that the sun will shine on you, but I can't!

Larry Donnelly is a Boston born and educated attorney, a Law Lecturer at the University of Galway and a regular media commentator on politics, current affairs and law in Ireland and the US. Twitter/X: @LarryPDonnelly

are still being processed and turned - with extraordinary courage - into art. Dara O'Briain made Paris laugh. Andrew Bennett made Paris feel. They were here. They passed through.

There is a reason why Irish soccer fans are remembered, wherever they travel, for singing lullabies to children in town squares - while the fans of certain other nations are remembered for something considerably less charming. There is a reason that the French woman's face lights up at the word "Dublin." There

is a reason that from Boston to Buenos Aires, from Montmartre to Montserrat, Irish place names and family names are woven into the fabric of the world, not as relics of empire, but as the living legacies of people who showed up, worked hard, kept their warmth, and never forgot where they came from.

We are all ambassadors. Every Irish person abroad carries, without particular effort, something of what that stranger in the Paris café responded to: a particular quality of welcome, of wit,

of sorrow worn lightly. Glen Hansard, standing on the Olympia stage in Paris, understood this, his voice filling the room with Pete Seeger's plain and devastating words.

Sometimes happy, sometimes blue, glad that I ran into you. Tell the people that you saw me passing through.

The famine Irish were passing through. The Magdalene mothers were passing through (though Ireland tried for decades to pretend otherwise). Joyce, Beckett, and Wilde were passing

through. The Collison brothers are passing through. O'Briain, Bennett and Hansard are passing through. You and I, readers of Boston Irish, with our own Irish thread in our American story, are passing through.

But we make sure people know we were here.

Timothy Kirk writes Letter from Dublin for Boston Irish. He was, on this occasion, writing from Paris.

About Tom Mulvoy, a newspaperman

By CHRIS LOVETT

REPORTER CORRESPONDENT

Even before he read the story, Tom Mulvoy got the news.

After a drive with his mother to a bakery in Quincy, the 15-year-old son heard over the counter that the business might be losing customers because of the new highway going up back across the Neponset River.

Knowing that much, Mulvoy wanted to know more. He walked from his home in Dorchester to the branch library on Adams Street and asked for information about the project in print. A staff member promised to round up a selection of news clippings and told him to come back the next day, early enough to get through all the reading.

As a reader, Mulvoy learned more about how a project endorsed by so many elected officials had also been opposed by local residents and businesses. From a local perspective, the gains from getting somewhere else more quickly were outweighed by the loss for the people left behind, in places like Dorchester.

"From that time on," Mulvoy recalled in an essay for *The Dorchester Reporter*. "I was sure that I was meant to be a newspaperman on a team with a mission to tell stories about my city and my neighborhood that readers would day after day find useful and informative."

Across some seven decades as a journalist, Mulvoy would go on to work almost entirely for two publications, both headquartered within three miles of his childhood home in St. Mark's Parish. His path to *The Boston Globe* led through Boston College High and Boston College and, before that, the Wollaston Golf Club in Milton and North Quincy, where his caddying helped him win a scholarship. But the allure of storytelling, like the craving for news, began earlier and closer to home, where it would always be grounded.

Mulvoy was one of five children (of an original six) raised by Thomas F. and Julia (Harrington) Mulvoy, who married in 1940 and lived until 1975 as renters in a two-family house on Lonsdale Street. An immigrant from Galway, Mulvoy's father worked for the US Postal Service, while serving St. Mark's parish as an usher at Sunday services and as a leader of its Holy Name Society. He was also a sportswriter for a weekly paper sent to parishioners serving in the military during wartime.

Mulvoy's parents met when they were both working at Sears and Roebuck in Cambridge. After their children were all in school full-time, Julia landed a job as a bank teller and went on to become the assistant treasurer of the Granite Cooperative Bank in North Quincy.

As Mulvoy would later recount in *The Globe*, St. Mark's was "an insular world of black and white, and precious little gray, and proud of it." Within three blocks on the other side of Dorchester Avenue, the world was dominated by a Catholic church, a parish school, and a "centerpiece of life for St. Mark's kids" locally known at the time as Wainwright Park.



In the Dorchester Reporter newsroom in 2024, from left: Founder Ed Forry, co-Publishers Linda Dorcena Forry and Bill Forry, and Associate Editor Tom Mulvoy. Below, in the same room a few years earlier: Mulvoy, Production Editor Barbie Langis, and News Editor Jennifer Smith.

Top photo by Lee Pellegrini, courtesy Boston College Magazine; Reporter file photo



Thomas F. Mulvoy, Thomas F. Mulvoy Jr., lap-sitter, and Mark (Skippy) Mulvoy, circa 1944



As a journalist looking back, Mulvoy would associate the park with two adult figures. One was Margaret MacQuarrie, the mother of a large family who was often outside her house, right across the street, "checking in with neighbors." The other was Charlie Paget, a local man who survived childhood polio and became the park's tireless caretaker.

Both figures qualified as "eyes on the street," but Paget did more than look after the grounds and the kids who suffered cuts or scrapes. When Mulvoy was a teenager, he was among the "regulars" who would hang out on the steps of a park building at the end of a summer day and listen to Charlie Paget, the village explainer.

"He was full of information about the neighborhood and its people going back to his childhood days when he was a schoolmate of my mother's at the Emily Fifield School in Codman

Square," Mulvoy reminisced in an article for the *Dorchester Reporter*. "He had detailed stories, and opinions, about the politicians who had helped govern the neighborhood since the high-gloss times of James Michael Curley and Honey Fitz." As Mulvoy put it, the "maestro" of Wainwright Park "was the perfect mentor for a boy who told him early on that he wanted to become a newspaperman."

Mulvoy also followed the lead of his older brother, Mark, the guide and protector of the younger "acolyte," glove-carrier, and batboy at Wainwright Park. After being groomed at a caddie camp on Cape Cod, Mark went to carry golfers' bags at Wollaston, blazing a trail for his three younger brothers. Tom was next in line, hitting the links in 1958, at age 15.

"It was there that I learned about hard work and following the rules of golf

while abiding the cultural etiquette that went along with the golf while I was on the private club's property," Mulvoy wrote in an email.

Eventually, the caddie from Dorchester and student at Boston College High School was toiling for two golfers on a four-hour round through 18 holes, with a bag of clubs slung on each shoulder. On a Saturday or Sunday, there could even be two rounds. Among the clients were people he was unlikely to encounter in St. Mark's parish: doctors, lawyers, executives, and politicians, including Boston's mayor at the time, John B. Hynes.

"The best of these members were on a first-name basis with their regular caddies and talked to us as partners in the success of their golf games," Mulvoy wrote. "It was an uplifting experience when they showed interest in what we were up to in school and at home."

His takeaway: "Hard work, done by

spending a great deal of time outside in spring, summer, and fall not only with my caddie peers but also with successful club members, raised my emotional expectations beyond Lonsdale Street as to what life had to offer into the mid-1960s, just before Vietnam and social tumult changed so much."

Another boost came in 1960, when Mulvoy was one of the winners of a scholarship established by the Massachusetts Golf Association for caddies and other teens working at courses. The scholarship was named in honor of Francis Ouimet, whose 1913 US Golf Association triumph helped spark a surge of enthusiasm for golf. What had previously been viewed mainly as an elite pastime in other countries was becoming more like a competitive sport and an American path to higher circles.

In a spread that took up more than half of *The Globe's* front page above the fold, Ouimet's victory at The Country Club in Brookline over a pair of top-ranked amateurs from the UK was dramatized as a trans-Atlantic blockbuster. The story also had deep local roots, since the twenty-year-old champion had grown up across the street from the 17th hole, as the son of immigrants from Canada and Ireland. Mulvoy would meet the golfing legend in person at a scholarship event and handicap him 66 years later as "just a real gentleman, a young kid who had no money, caddied at the Country Club for that set, and made a life of golf himself."

Also following the lead of an older brother, Ouimet went from caddie to student of the game and scavenger for golf balls. In accounts of the rain-soaked 1913 playoff round, Ouimet was acclaimed for consistently placing his drives in a better position for the next shot, in a course described at the time as "a perfect network of traps and hazards." More than a century later, Mulvoy concurred that Ouimet won mainly because he was the best player on the course.

"In order to play his best he had to hit every shot to a point on the course that would give him the best route to the green or the pin with his next shot," Mulvoy concluded. "That was his advantage. He knew the answer from daily experience. And he probably kept notes along the way for the next day if he saw something new on the playing ground, like swampy grass where it shouldn't be wet."

In his own account, Ouimet gave the most credit to his caddie, Eddie Lowery, a ten-year-old son of Irish immigrants. In a legendary group photo taken right after the competition, Ouimet stands at the apex, beaming over a huddle of supporters. But the visual centerpiece is the noticeably shorter caddie, with his right hand splayed over the hooded clubs in the bag hanging from his left shoulder. His neck is still draped with a towel, his eyes still poised for the reaches of a fairway. He wears a jacket with a patriotic ribbon, a dislocated tie, and a soggy bucket hat.

Between \$500 a year from the Ouimet scholarship and another \$500 from seasonal caddying and occasional off-season jobs in the clubhouse, Mulvoy had more than enough to cover the annual tuition at BC. As a student, he focused mostly on history and political science, though the Jesuit curriculum also required courses in theology and



Night Editor Tom Mulvoy worked with the editors, artists, and editorial assistants who sat for the picture above in 1977. Below, two of the roughly 5,500 *Boston Globe* front pages that he supervised during some 35 years working at the paper.

philosophy, including epistemology. Students were schooled in the power of faith, the limits of knowledge, as well as the imperative for accuracy and clarity.

In the decades to follow, Mulvoy said, he would apply the same principles: "Just before you get going, before you get too deep into anything, define what it is you're dealing with and talking about and what's your intent and thought. And if I take one lesson out of all my eight years with the Jesuits, it's that. And I still think that way."

Mulvoy graduated from BC in 1964, in the same class with Mark, a feat that scored a "graph" in *The Globe's* commencement coverage. With experience covering BC sports and working part-time for *The Globe*, it took only one month for Mark to join the paper's sports staff. Five months later, he was recruited by *Sports Illustrated*, where he would eventually become the managing editor and publisher until his retirement in 1996.

The younger classmate tried to follow suit, but he made it to *The Globe* only after a series of surgeries two months after graduation to repair internal damage from perforated ulcer and four months of convalescence followed by 20 months as the news director for the Plymouth radio station WPLM. The first story he covered was about a water leak that would spill out in finger-pointing at a "combative" public safety meeting.

The radio job required learning how to write copy suitable for reading on-air. There were also the occasional office encounters with visitors, including the state's first-term US Senator, Ted Kennedy, who nodded to Mulvoy simply as "Plymouth."

"We weren't friends or anything," Mulvoy explained. "But he recognized me, and occasionally, I would say less than ten times if more than five, I called his office just to get a bit of information to help me - not working on a deadline story, but just to get some information. And I'd get it just from that."

For Mulvoy, Kennedy was one more contact to be stockpiled by a reporter, even in addition to quotable sources. But the combination of public figure and celebrity status also tested a reporter's need for distancing.

"It was simply part of doing business,"



Mulvoy reflected, "and how you get to the point where you're comfortable with that is a challenge, I think, because there are all sorts of examples of people being enraptured by the presence of a luminary and your ability to call them and let them know who you are and they know your name and all of that. But it's part of the process to navigate that."

After joining *The Globe* in 1966 as a copy editor, Mulvoy shifted to the sports desk and after seven years of working the midnight shift, he became the assistant sports editor, which included designing the section's front page. In 1976, he became the morning *Globe's* night editor and, two years later, an assistant managing editor. In 1982, he would take a year off for a National Endowment Fellowship at Stanford University in California.

A former colleague of both Mulvoys, at *The Globe* and *Sports Illustrated*, was the writer, columnist, and author Leigh Montville, who started at the paper in 1968. In an email summing up his experience with Tom Mulvoy, Montville wrote, "He was helping to run the sports department, a young guy, serious, with a solid head on his shoulders, accompa-



nied by a nice sense of humor. We talked about a billion things those days, I'm sure, but the one quote that sticks in my mind is he said something like, 'I don't care about making a lot of money, I'd just like to make enough to buy a hardcover book without feeling guilty.'"

Along with vetting copy, Mulvoy learned about other components, such as typography, headlines, captions, page layout, and graphics. He also learned about the construction of a story and when not to fuss with a reporter's style.

During this time, *The Globe's* editor was Tom Winship, a third-generation journalist and Harvard graduate who raised the paper's national profile and greatly boosted circulation between 1965 and 1984. Working a news desk shift from 2 p.m. to 1 a.m., Mulvoy sometimes found himself raising time-sensitive concerns about a crucial story with the paper's national editor or Winship himself.

"And I found out that I had a voice," said Mulvoy, "that people listened, and didn't always agree, and I didn't expect that. But at least when I came and asked the question, I got an answer."

In Mulvoy's time, Boston had as many
(Continued on page 8)

About Tom Mulvoy, a newspaperman

as seven daily papers. TV news was still gaining ground as a trend-setter, while the dailies were still crammed with an abundance of local material, from crime and politics to school sports, weddings, obituaries, movie listings, classified ads, and racing results.

"Newspapers were huge," Montville recalled. "Everybody got the paper. Most everybody. You'd go to the suburbs and there would be those little Boston Globe breadboxes on a pole at every driveway. You'd go into convenience stores and there would be high stacks of newspapers, twice as high on Sunday. Everybody was a reader instead of an iPhone clicker. The stories were an important part of daily life...and Tom was an important part of this important part."

Though Winship expanded The Globe's function as a portal to national and world news, he insisted on a clear stamp of local origin - understood by Mulvoy as "commandment number one."

"One of the things he said to me early on when we were putting the paper together at night," Mulvoy recalled, "was we kind of go out dressed like a TV show, a TV news show. He said, 'We always remember it's Boston, and we're going out undressed if we don't have a significant Boston story on the front page.'"

On his return from Stanford in 1983, Mulvoy became The Globe's deputy managing editor, helping the managing editor, Matthew V. Storin, in day-to-day direction of news operations. One part of the job was recruiting a team to work on special coverage of the 40th anniversary of World War II. Among the recruits was a Columbus, Ohio, native who came to The Globe from the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Wil Haygood.

"From that began a decades-long alliance of reporter and editor," Haygood related by email. "Tom became the big city editor who turned me loose across the nation. He mentored me. He edited my stories with calmness and precision. Every story became better. And I actually learned something from every story he edited."

Haygood would go on to write eleven books, including one dedicated to Mulvoy, about the pastor and former Congressman from Harlem, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Another book, "The Butler," was about Eugene Allen, a Black man from Virginia who worked for 34 years at the White House, serving under eight presidents. Starting when Black employees at the White House were almost entirely restricted to the role of domestics, Allen went from "pantry man" to maître d' and would live to vote for the country's first Black president.

The first version of Haygood's story appeared as a Washington Post profile in 2008, shortly after Obama's election and the death of Allen's wife, one day earlier, before she could cast a historic vote. It was a national story, suitable for any metro daily. For the Post, it was also a story about a local resident and a local workplace.

In 1991, Mulvoy became the "manag-



The above photograph, taken by the photographer Bill Brett at the Reporter's Local News Initiative launch on May 28, shows a number of Mulvoy family members: From left, Donald Lofty, Ryan Mulvoy, Lauren Mulvoy, Robert Mulvoy Jr., Mary (Mulvoy) Lofty, the honoree, Jennifer Watson, Nicholas Mulvoy, Robert Mulvoy Sr., and Benjamin, Kevin, and Stephen Mulvoy. Below, Tom and Mark Mulvoy returned to the steps of their boyhood home, 22 Lonsdale St., Dorchester, where Bill Brett found them a number of years ago.

ing editor for news operations," with his oversight expanded to include photography, design, copy desk operations, sports, and newsroom technology. As The Globe announced, he would also have "primary responsibility for Page One."

By this time, Mulvoy had already developed working relations with staff photographers, including Stan Grossfeld, who became The Globe's chief photographer in 1983 and a two-time Pulitzer Prize winner

He covered sports, famine in Ethiopia, and immigrants crossing the Mexican border. Though he had an undergraduate degree in photography - eventually followed by a master's from Boston University, Grossfeld would often accompany his images with writing that went beyond the range of captions. That began with his first assignment, capturing the aftermath of a violent crime, but it would continue, with support from Mulvoy.

"In those days, you know, photographers were thought of a lot of times as second-class citizens," said Grossfeld in a remote interview. "And Tom never treated me like that. He always encouraged me on the writing side."

Grossfeld's 1984 front-page photo of immigrants wading precariously across the Rio Grande resurfaced in May on The Globe's website. Pictured are five mostly invisible men, up to their chins in muddled water. To be more precise: faces, hats, arms, hands, even a single wary eye looking askance, seemingly within inches of a lens that's all but submerged. The photographer, when asked 42 years later, confirmed by placement of his forearm that he, too, was in the water - up to his chest. It's literally in-depth reporting, and it affirms the dictum of the legendary photojournalist, Robert Capa: "If your pictures aren't good enough, you aren't close enough."

The photo doesn't editorialize, but a difference in range and perspective can allow a polarized topic to be viewed differently, almost eye-to-eye. In the dislocating jolt of the moment, there's a suspension of bias that, even short of egalitarian sympathy, alters perception by shifting focus.

"Tom realized that we don't want to be the same as every other, we don't want to be clichés," Grossfeld reflected. "We don't want check-cashing pictures - pre-



sentation pictures - because they don't really do anything except feed the egos of the people in the pictures. And that's not going to change society or mankind.

"I think Tom is an everyman," he went on to say. "He knew what the people were like who were living under the bridge by the Neponset River, at the circle there. He could get along with them, and he could get along with Prince Charles at the same time."

According to Grossfeld, Mulvoy was a hoard of knowledge, territorial and historical, and a cool head under deadline or amid the city's turmoil fifty years ago. "But Mulvoy, to his credit," Grossfeld emphasized, "he always would hit 'em down the middle of the fairway."

Mulvoy acknowledged that, as early as 1979, he explored using his storytelling skills by taking a weekly assignment as a reporter. But the idea faced resistance from important colleagues, though in a way that affirmed his pivotal role as the "last pencil" on editions that went beyond corrections and an ear for local idiom to being a steward of perspective.

"And you have to start by bringing in perspective yourself, and see if they accept it," Mulvoy said. "And I think the main thing that you find over years, at least in my little corner of the world, that that perspective plays out when you don't do it that way, when all of a sudden the readers are jerked about - this isn't how the Globe does things, what's this story doing here?"

Over the years, Mulvoy's name appeared in a Globe byline only intermittently. But, aside from the paper's staff listings, it appeared frequently in

the published ruminations dissecting internal decisions about coverage that were posted by the Globe's designated "ombudsman." Mulvoy was often cited as the authority on why unsettling details had to be included in a violent crime story, when there was a need for restraint in an obituary, or when it was time to stop calling a police vehicle a "paddy wagon."

In the extended coverage of the racially fraught "Stuart Case" of 1989, it was Mulvoy who noted to the ombudsman The Globe's policy against mentioning the race of a crime suspect on the loose when other characteristics were lacking. That policy didn't come into play in this instance: It was the wounded murderer Stuart who said from his hospital bed that a black man in a track suit had shot into his car, setting off a police chase that victimized the area's Black residents.

Mulvoy's first Globe byline dates from 1971, over an article about the theft of more than 25 "Hummels" from his family's home. The folksy figurines, gifts to his mother, became popular after World War II, when many of them were brought back to the US by GIs who had served in Germany. Excused as irresistible kitsch, or prized as vintage collectibles, Hummels were often amassed over time, becoming a staple of décor in many of Boston's Catholic households.

As Mulvoy detailed, each figure came with a personal story of its acquisition, even how one piece was meant to fit with the others, turning an inventory of objects into a chain of reminiscences. Though his piece adopted the tone of a routine police report, the first sentence makes it clear

that what counted in the property crime was 30 years' worth of memory loss and an aftertaste of bitterness.

He wrote about the same house again in 1980, four years after the last of his family had moved to Boston's suburbs. Their departure took place after the death of the woman who had owned the house for most of the past century. Mulvoy recalled her care for the house and its grounds, along with kind words for her tenants. He also described how, by 1980, her lawn had been converted by a new owner into a driveway for a "wretched old car."

What happened to the property on Lonsdale Street was hardly the most jarring example of neighborhood change, but it was an indicator of how the texture of the city was changing. Downturns in population and household size came with a growing number of cars, many of them awkwardly crowding Dorchester's pre-automotive street grid. Once again, Mulvoy registered the "local," not as a nostalgic fixation, but as something that could change and hit home as a loss.

In 2001, when St. Mark's Parish was faced with possible consolidation, Mulvoy assessed the possible loss as declining numbers of worshipers and students, but also a diminished social fabric. The reporter's inventory was local, yet it reflected similar changes in other parishes, even among other religious denominations.

Mulvoy had written earlier about other losses. In 1973, it was Rev. Walter F. Donahue, a priest who served St. Mark's "unobtrusively" for 22 years. In 1974, it was Charlie Paget. Mulvoy had kept in touch with him, even treating him to a trip to Martha's Vineyard and, for their last excursion, to a field of dreams that the "maestro" cherished even more than Fenway Park — the Arnold Arboretum.

In 2002, the sense of loss hit much closer to home when Mulvoy wrote about the fade-out of memory and personality when his mother was diagnosed with "dementia of the Alzheimer type." The article described her struggle with illness, but also the frustration of family members trying to keep in touch with her through the slow progression of mental, then physical, decline.

Lying outside his central responsibilities at the time, Mulvoy's bylined work usually appeared as "op-ed" commentary or, elsewhere, as the odd splash of local color. What made it less formulaic was that it addressed the public more squarely than either the generic detachment of a reporter or the angular persona of a columnist. Mulvoy said the "op-ed" about his mother got "quite a bit of reaction," and there was a similar response to the writing about Charlie Paget and the worsening signs of neglect at Wainwright Park.

"I got notes from all sorts of people



Wollaston Golf Club circa 1969: Tom Mulvoy, in cart, and Dr. Arthur Trott follow the flight of a ball struck by Joe Mulligan at right.

who didn't know Charlie," he said, "but they knew a person who did that sort of thing, out of Framingham or Cohasset. I said, 'Boy, you put it in The Globe and people read it.'"

Another op-ed that stirred readers was about the approaching death of Mulvoy's 82-year-old father, in 1991. The piece begins with Mulvoy kneeling to help his two-year-old son put on his pants, while the boy is propped up by his right hand on his father's left shoulder. Just hours later, Mulvoy's on his knees again, helping his father get dressed, the same shoulder touched, this time, by a hand that's shaking.

Mulvoy immediately registers the touch of resemblance and shares the connection with his father, who responds with a show of stoicism for himself and empathy for his middle-aged son. The father's dispensation allows Mulvoy, in the middle of life's road, to confess that "it is painful to ponder my little boy's future and my father's death in the same mind-frame."

The dispensation is paid forward to Mulvoy's readers. "The mind doesn't need scruples at times like this; deep down," he admits, "you think only about how a loved one's death is affecting you. There'll be time to consider everyone else later."

Mulvoy met his wife, Anastasia Coulianos in 1983, soon after he returned from his fellowship. At the time, Mulvoy was 40 years old, and Coulianos was a 23-year-old Northeastern University co-op student. Starting with nightside work on The Globe, she became an busy research assistant for The Globe's Spotlight Team.

After their engagement, Coulianos moved from the newsroom to the paper's front office, in the promotion department, finally leaving The Globe after marriage. "She hated leaving the newsroom," Mulvoy added, "and felt awkward in the promotion position."

The couple had four sons, born be-

tween 1986 and 1999. Two of them were diagnosed with autism: the oldest, Stephen, who works as a paraprofessional in special education for the Holliston Public Schools, and the youngest, Ben, as a medical delivery courier. Michael, the second oldest, is a staff sergeant/ medic serving in the US Army. The next oldest, Nicholas, works with technology for a company specializing in payroll systems.

Anastasia passed at age 46 in 2006, after a long struggle with liver disease caused by the hepatitis C virus, which Mulvoy believes may have been contracted through a blood transfusion related to a pregnancy. Just a few months earlier, before her condition seriously deteriorated, she had been scheduled to undergo a transplant, with her 19-year-old son Stephen as the donor. According to The Globe's obituary, she devoted time and effort to her children even during her illness, which included acting as a "fierce advocate" for her youngest son's needs in special education.

The boys, Mulvoy related, "watched their mother die in slow stages until the last six months when things seemed to rush to a conclusion delivered in late 1999 - namely that she would live for only another five years. "That was devastating to all of us," he wrote.

At that stage of his wife's illness, Mulvoy and The Globe, which had already been acquired by the New York Times Co., had agreed to a buyout plan that allowed him to spend more time with his family. He retired at age 58, when his youngest child was 19 months old.

Mulvoy's name would still appear sometimes in the paper, including a stint of a few years writing and editing Globe Santa stories as fund-raising appeals. He also continued as a journalist for another locally based outlet, the Dorchester Reporter. Starting in 2002, he was back to shepherding copy and crafting the front page, recycling his skills in news page design and a flair for headlines and captions.

"The Globe's 'loss' was the Reporter's immeasurable gain. He taught us, among many things, that 'there's always room on page one for a page-one story,'" wrote the Reporter's publisher, Bill Forry.

"Tom has a quiet, sometimes reserved manner at the copy and production desk," said Forry. "He's meticulous in his scrutiny of every detail of the Reporter's news flow, from the simplest caption in the People section to the most complicated deep-dive investigative story. At 83, he's blessed with a steel-trap mind and a lightning-quick recall of Boston's modern history, much of which he's witnessed and chronicled. He's added immeasurably to the depth and caliber of the Reporter's coverage for the last two decades."

From one news cycle to the next, things change. Ouimet and Lowery remain lifetime friends, and the caddie becomes a multimillionaire auto dealer in San Francisco. St. Mark's merges administratively with a neighboring parish, then reverts to earlier status, with masses in English and Spanish. In 2011, The Globe begins online subscriptions. In 2017, after its sale to the current publisher, John W. Henry, the organization departs from Morrissey Boulevard in Dorchester, with print operations relocated to Taunton and the editorial component to Boston's Financial District.

In 2026, Mulvoy still plays golf three days a week. For fifty years, he's been a member of the Thorny Lea Golf Club in Brockton, which he joined as "a working man's private golf club," and "where there's always a game to be had."

Looking back over more the decades, he wrote, "I operate today with the same personal drive I had as a nine-year-old boy in a very busy household: I needed to look over the newspaper every day so I would know what was going on beyond my street. As I grew up, I was certain that I belonged in a newsroom, to be with the people who reported and presented the news every day, whose predecessors educated me by telling me stories away from the classroom. And I'm just as certain today that with The Dorchester Reporter, I'm where I belong."

In a move last year to support local journalism in the decades ahead, The Reporter established the Edward W. Forry and Mary Casey Forry Foundation for Community Journalism. The first fundraiser for the initiative took place last week at Southline Boston, the former site of The Globe on Morrissey Blvd. The event was also the launch for an effort to support aspiring journalists from Boston's neighborhoods, through the Thomas F. Mulvoy Jr. Scholarship: a tribute to a caddie who became a straight-shooting master of local news.

Transatlantic travel takes off from Shannon for Summer 2026

Transatlantic travel from Shannon Airport strengthened last month with the news that across the year 2026, passengers travelling between Shannon and the United States will have a choice of 2,300 flights and over 420,000 seats.

The seasonal services re-launching involved Aer Lingus' and United Airlines'

year round routes to Boston and New York. Aer Lingus will also increase capacity on its Boston service, with additional frequencies operating from May 20 to July 13, expanding from 7 to 10 flights per week and providing almost 9,000 additional seats.

There was also the return of two key seasonal routes,

significantly boosting capacity to the US for Summer 2026. Shannon will be offering 40 routes this year to the UK, Europe and the US - its largest schedule in 17 years.

On Fri., May 22, United Airlines' resumed its non-stop service to Chicago O'Hare, followed the next day by the resumption of Delta's service

to New York-JFK. Both routes will operate daily, reinforcing Shannon's position as a leading gateway between Ireland and North America.

Delta's JFK service offers over 51,000 seats for the summer, while United's Chicago route adds a further 44,000 seats. These services bring total transatlantic seat capacity via

Shannon Airport to 340,000 for the summer season, representing a 5% increase on the same period last year.

Passengers can find full details of the 2026 schedule, parking options, US Pre-clearance, accessibility supports and travel services at shannonairport.ie.

The Declaration of Independence arrived in Boston in July 1776 with an Irish ‘twist’

Meet the Irish printer who spread the word across the 13 colonies

By PETER F. STEVENS

BOSTON IRISH CONTRIBUTOR

July 18, 2026, will mark the 250th anniversary of one of the most memorable events in Boston’s annals, a milestone that unfolded with a pronounced connection to Co. Tyrone immigrant John Dunlap.

On that sultry summer day in 1776, a massive throng gathered on King Street outside the Old State House despite a smallpox outbreak that was swirling throughout the region. Onlookers’ collective eyes peered at the balcony of the stately red-brick building, all in the crowd awaiting the appearance on that balcony of an ardent patriot, Colonel Thomas Crafts.

Word that a courier from Philadelphia had arrived with the Thirteen Colonies’ Declaration of Independence and that Crafts would read every inspiring word to the assemblage had created a festive atmosphere. Bostonians were about to hear the byproduct of the Continental Congress’s debates, clashes, and compromises captured in large part by Thomas Jefferson’s quill.

As Crafts stepped onto the balcony, a sea of women and girls in bonnets, gentlemen and tradesman in tri-cornered hats, dockworkers in all manner of headgear, and people from the wealthiest to the poorest of the city greeted him.

What few in the crowd realized was that the document in Crafts’s hands



AT BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS.

testified to the printing skills of an Irish immigrant named John Dunlap whom Continental Congress President John Hancock had personally selected to spread the Declaration throughout the Colonies.

Dunlap’s course to prominence and prosperity unfolded as an 18th-century Horatio Alger saga. He was born in Strabane, Co. Tyrone, in 1746 or 1747 and in 1757, at the age of ten, was shipped off to Philadelphia to serve as an apprentice to his uncle, William Dunlap, a printer and bookseller.

In his youth, he learned every part of the printer’s trade, displaying a genuine

talent for typesetting. When his uncle decided to become an Anglican minister, he sold off his stock of books and turned over the day-to-day operation of the printing press to his ambitious nephew in 1766.

Within two years, William Dunlap sold his shop and press to John with the proviso that the young man pay his uncle in installments.

The nephew’s relentless work ethic guided him through a difficult period as the shop’s owner. His friend, the famed physician Dr. Benjamin Rush, noted that “John was so poor he lived in his shop, sleeping in the floor under his counter.” (“John Dunlap,” *American National Biography*. Mark Carnes and John Garraty, ed. Vol. 7. New York: Oxford UP, 1999.)

Dunlap not only paid off his debt but also became one of colonies’ most successful printers, accruing a fortune far beyond any he could have imagined in Strabane.

His success allowed him to marry Elizabeth Hayes Ellison in 1774. By that time, he had wholeheartedly thrown himself into the cause of freedom from Great Britain. His popular weekly newspaper attracted the attention of John Hancock and earned Dunlap a contract as the official printer for the Continental Congress.

On July 4, 1776, Hancock ordered Dunlap to print copies of the Declaration of Independence for distribution throughout the colonies. He churned out some 200 of them and express riders carrying copies of the first printing of the Declaration to Boston clattered into the city on July 15, 1776.

The following day, the *American Gazette*, a Salem, Massachusetts, newspaper, got its hands on a copy and reprinted it. Word spread, though, that the big event—the Boston public address—would be held on July 18.

When Colonel Crafts addressed the gathering on King Street by reading the full text of the Declaration, courtesy of an Irish immigrant’s printing press,



County Tyrone native John Dunlap, a Boston printer in 1776, was selected by Continental Congress President John Hancock to make copies of the Declaration of Independence and spread them throughout the Colonies.

Abigail Adams was standing in the throng and in her July 21, 1776, letter to her husband, John Adams, a member of the Continental Congress, she wrote that “great attention was given to every word,” and pealing above the cobblestones were shouts of “God save our American states!”

Church bells rang across Boston, and cannons’ roars followed the address. Celebrations of the newborn nation continued throughout the day and into the night.

Henry Alline, Jr., another Bostonian witnessing the celebrations but more concerned with the smallpox threat, rendered a laconic take in a letter to his brother and sister:

“The Declaration for Independency was Published out of the Balcony of the Town House.”

The Irishman responsible for the printed “Declaration” went on to serve bravely in war and to amass a fortune as a publisher, politician, and investor. He found less success in other ways, as his friend Dr. Rush noted:

“In his family he was less amiable and respectable than in society. Towards the close of his life he became intemperate so as to fall in the street.” On Nov. 27, 1812, John Dunlap died of apoplexy.

Today, only 26 known copies of the Broadides exist. Ireland’s postal service, *An Post*, last February issued a stamp honoring Dunlap to mark the 250th anniversary of the Declaration. Unlike the original parchment Declaration of Independence, Dunlap’s broadsides were printed on “rag paper” fashioned from linen and flax.

On July 4 each year, the first reading of the Declaration of Independence is recalled at the Old State House in Boston with a repetition from the same balcony where Colonel Thomas Crafts stood 250 years ago—spreading the words of a historic revolutionary document hot off the printing press of the Irishman John Dunlap.

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Irish Pastoral Centre
Boston

LATEST NEWS FROM THE IRISH PASTORAL CENTRE

As we come to the close of another fiscal year, we take a moment to reflect with gratitude on the strength, resilience, and generosity of our community. We are proud to share a snapshot of the work accomplished together over the past year and thankful to everyone who continues support the mission of the Irish Pastoral Centre.

 100 Calls and Emails per day	 100,000 Social Media Reach Monthly	 350+ Weekly Foot Traffic	 150 J1 inquires in 2026	 4,500 IPC Newsletters Reaching Readers Monthly	 10,000 + Cups of Barry's Tea Made Annually
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Irish Pastoral Center - June 6, 2026
2:00-4:00 PM

With additional shows at:
The Irish Social Club of Boston - June 12, 2026
The Collaiste with The Charitable Irish Society
Boston Center for the Arts - June 16, 2026 (BLOOMSDAY)

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CONSIDERING RETURNING TO IRELAND?

The IPC welcomes back Karen McLaughlin, Chief Executive Officer of Safe Home Ireland who will be available for individual confidential appointments focusing on Moving Home to Ireland, Retirement, Irish Passport, PPS numbers and Housing.

Safe Home Ireland is a national charity that provides key services and supports to Irish abroad, particularly those most in need, who are considering returning to live in Ireland (many in crisis, vulnerable or challenging situations).

Each appointment is tailored to your individual needs and personal queries, with complete confidentiality assured. Please call (617) 265-5300 or email info@safehome.com

MON. JUNE 15TH 9AM - 3PM
TUES. JUNE 16TH 9AM - 3PM
WED. JUNE 17TH 9AM - 3PM

At The Irish Pastoral Centre, 540 Gallivan Blvd, Dorchester, MA 02124

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JUNE 21ST
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The Irish Pastoral Center, 540 Gallivan Blvd, Rear, Dorchester, MA 02124

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‘Tunes on the Charles’: Scenes from a Festival

BY SEAN SMITH

BOSTON IRISH CONTRIBUTOR

Residents in the vicinity of Davis Square, Porter Square, and Inman Square may not have realized it, but their neighborhoods played a key role in the debut of Greater Boston’s newest Irish music festival.

“Tunes on the Charles” [crirish.org], which took place April 30-May 3, featured performances, workshops, presentations, and – most especially – music sessions, drawing listeners and onlookers, and musicians and dancers of all levels of experience. Organized by local musicians Colin Kadis and Sean Clohessy and dance performer/teacher Jackie O’Riley, the festival was modeled after those in Ireland that encompass local neighborhoods and towns and offer a panoply of events and activities, emphasizing camaraderie as well as culture.

Among the key pillars of support for “Tunes on the Charles” was the Dublin-based Irish Traditional Music Archive (ITMA), whose acclaimed “Drawing from the Well” series – spotlighting traditional Irish singers, musicians and dancers – made its US debut with two sold-out evening shows on April 30 and May 1 at the 900-seat Somerville Theater.

For the remaining two days, the festival proliferated into smaller venues – The Burren (Davis Square); The Druid, An Sibin, and The Lilypad (Inman Square); and McCarthy’s/Toad and the Cambridge Masonic Hall (Porter Square) – with a schedule running from mid-morning into the evening.

Some tidbits:

- The “Drawing from the Well” concerts were simultaneously a triumphant event in and of themselves and a perfect stage-setter for the festival.

Its theme boiled down to this: The Irish music tradition should be preserved, but not inside an impenetrable glass case like some historical exhibit. The tradition influences and, in turn, is influenced; that’s been the case since the tradition was young.

“Traditional music at its best connects us with our past, present, and future,” ITMA Chief Executive Liam O’Connor, who played fiddle in the concert, wrote in its program guide. “Each generation leaves its mark on this shared cultural inheritance.”

A thorough review would easily run a thousand or more words (thus further prolonging this already protracted retrospective), but a glance at some of the performers alone reveals the breadth and depth of musical ability and creativity: Matt Molloy and Noel Hill, who have been wowing us for decades; next-generation talent like Doireann Ní Ghlácaín (daughter of Paddy Glackin), Hannah O’Brien (daughter of Mick), and Cormac Begley (son of Brendan); dancers Edwina Guckian, Caitlín Nic Gabhann (not so incidentally a marvelous concertina player as well), and Aidan Vaughan, for whom the adjective “ageless” is obvious but inevitable.

There were also local connections: the aforementioned O’Brien; the quintet of



Uilleann pipers got in some tunes at McCarthy’s Upstairs.



The Druid session in full swing.

Tommy McCarthy, Louise Costello, Rose McCarthy, and Harry and Peadar Giles; Joey Abarta; and the duo of Andrew Caden, a habitue of area sessions as a Boston College undergraduate, and Diarmuid Ó Meachair, whom Boston can claim as its own while he’s teaching at the College of the Holy Cross.

Singer-songwriter Aoife O’Donovan was a key element: a Boston-area native whose father Brian did so much for Irish/Celtic music, and whose creative influences include the sights, sounds, landscape, and memories of Ireland – as she demonstrated in presenting her original “In the Quiet Hour” and the traditional Irish-American ballad “Lakes of Pontchartrain.”

“Drawing from the Well” functioned not only as a metaphor but also as a message of encouragement for the festival, performers and, audiences alike: Now that you’ve taken your sustenance and inspiration, go forth and put on a show yourselves.

- One of “Tunes on the Charles” salient features was its “Session Trail”: Musicians could theoretically spend Saturday and/or Sunday shuttling between An Sibin, The Druid, McCarthy’s, and The Burren, participating in regularly scheduled or specially arranged sessions, most lasting three hours.

Of course, finding parking in Cambridge and Somerville, especially on a typical Saturday, added a considerable degree of difficulty to doing the full Session Trail. So, unless you were really in shape for a lot of walking, you had to rely on bus or subway, or shell out for a taxi, Lyft, or Uber. Then again, once settled into a session sweet spot, it’s hard to summon up a good reason to leave – unless you’re determined to experience more than one.

On Saturday afternoon as rain clouds began moving in, the An Sibin session got underway, anchored by Cara Frankowicz (fiddle), Evangelos Stowell (concertina), and the Heatons (Matt on

guitar, Shannon on flute). The four sat by a picture window looking out onto Cambridge Street, a few customers lingering nearby, and a little after 1 p.m. launched into a jig set beginning with “I Buried My Wife and Danced on Top of Her.” As they played, other musicians moved into the small space, waiting for a pause and assessing the seating arrangements.

When the quartet had finished the set, there were greetings and introductions for the arrivals, as well as brief discussions on such topics as the pleasures and challenges of commuting by bicycle: a perfect illustration of the craic, that much-desired characteristic of good sessions everywhere.

Some musicians came a fair distance – far more than from, say, Worcester or the Cape. One was Seattle fiddler and uilleann piper Lennart Jansson, a friend of numerous Boston-based musicians, including the Heatons and festival co-organizer Colin Kadis (“He told me about the festival back in November, and I immediately put it on my calendar”). He was impressed by both the number and caliber of musicians from Ireland featured at “Drawing from the Well” and elsewhere during the weekend and looked forward to attending a workshop in uilleann piping by Sean McKeon and recitals showcasing concertina and accordion as well as fiddle.

“Really just starting out here,” he said. “I’m curious what it will feel like after the sessions.”

Concertina player Jeni Hopkins had a somewhat shorter trip to “Tunes on the Charles,” coming from New York’s Finger Lakes region. “I’m always so happy to come to Boston and play with or listen to all the great musicians that are around,” she said, adding with a laugh that she would be spending considerable time “staring at the festival schedule.”

Barely five minutes’ walk away, the Druid session was pretty much at capacity, led by Christine Hedden (fiddle), Oisín McAuley (fiddle, guitar), John Morrow (tenor banjo), and Kelly Geraghty (concertina), with several other musicians filling out the allotted space – and a couple of others lingering nearby, either waiting for an opportunity to squeeze in or just enjoying some conversation.

A couple asked some of the musicians on the outer fringe if anyone could sing “The Foggy Dew,” the Fr. Charles O’Neill song about the Easter Uprising. Their request was relayed to others in the circle, but there was no immediate indication whether it would be fulfilled. So it goes. They seemed content enough to listen anyway.

By mid-afternoon, McCarthy’s was hosting a small session downstairs – led by owners/spouses Tommy McCarthy and Louise Costello – and a bigger one upstairs, featuring mainly elementary- and middle school-age musicians under the tutelage of fiddler/teacher Clíodhna Field. The latter gave way at 4 p.m. to an even more populous gathering organized by Boston’s Reynolds-Hanafin-Cooley Branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí

Éireann; the leaders were fiddler Aoife Griffin and Co. Tyrone brothers James and Ciaran McKenna (concertina and piano, respectively), part of a seven-sibling band that is the fourth generation of the family's music legacy.

Participants began placing chairs in a circle that, when complete, took up about a third of the space. They gradually settled into place, tuning up their instruments (those that could be tuned) and, of course, chatting. Among them was Jamaica Plain fiddler Holly Crow, who had thoroughly enjoyed the Friday night "Drawing from the Well" concert and a workshop earlier in the day with Donegal-born fiddler Ciarán Ó Maonaigh.

"This kind of experience gets me very excited," said Crow, a classically trained violinist who classified herself as an intermediate-level fiddler. "I'm really motivated to practice now."

A few yards away was Kevin Killeen, who had journeyed from New York's Rockland County, a trip he had made many times.

"I used to come up here very often to play with Larry Reynolds," he said, referring to the celebrated fiddler, a towering figure in Boston's Irish music community for decades. "Now there's a whole new generation of musicians, and it's very exciting to be around them."

As the session got rolling, a succession of dancers took turns entering inside the circle, stepping through a couple of repetitions of the tune being played, then clearing the way for someone else. Musician, dancer, onlooker, and occasional commentator – everybody played their part, and it felt like it could go on forever.

[Nota bene on the lack of reportage from The Burren: No slight at all intended – I just didn't have the time or stamina to go the full route. Next time, I promise.]

• "Tunes on the Charles" organizers – Jackie O'Riley in particular – made a point of ensuring that dance was in the mainstream of the festival, rather than at the margins.

"Dance can't exist without music, and while music can exist without dance, when we bring them together it's fascinating to see how they interact – and what dance can add to music," said O'Riley in an interview with Boston Irish earlier this year.

The events featured workshops in the sean-nos and Clare battering styles, the "St. Brigid's Day" percussive dance, as well as set dancing; there was also a ceili with a live band to underline the dance-music partnership.

One woman enthusiastically related to an acquaintance her recent interest in sean-nos dancing; when she attended the workshop led by Edwina Guckian, she was surprised and pleased to find about 20 other people had signed up as well. "It was wonderful to see the interest, and you can get why sean-nos has become so popular: You don't have to be really athletic, and there's just a very special vibe to it," she said, adding that she was impressed with Guckian's teaching: "She would tell us, 'Just feel it. Just feel it.'"

Another dance highlight was "This Is Not a Competition," a come-all-ye gathering in the cozy confines of The Lilypad spearheaded by Guckian. The premise was straightforward: You wrote



A rapt audience enjoyed "This Is Not a Competition" in The Lilypad.



From left, Shannon Heaton, Cara Frankowicz, Evangelos Stowell, Matt Heaton and Nathan Weston kicked off the session at An Sibin. Sean Smith photos

your name on a piece of paper, put it in a hat, and when it was selected, you did any kind of Irish dance; then you put your name back into the hat, and if you were chosen again, you were the winner of a cash prize, based on donations.

The event was all in good fun, but as Guckian explained to the crowd at the beginning, there was a serious undercurrent. Dancers can get so caught up in the competitive environment of a feis, she said, they forget to enjoy themselves – even audiences can be skittish about being too enthusiastic about performances because they're afraid to create a distraction.

"We want dancers to just be themselves," said Guckian.

For the next hour or more, dancers each took a turn showing their stuff in a space roughly the size of a basketball court center circle. They represented all ages – there were more females than males – and performed just about every iteration of Irish dance: hard shoe, soft shoe, sean-nos, Clare battering, feis, set, ceili; there were soloists, duos, trios and more. Most were dressed casually (one sported a blue David Ortiz Red Sox shirt), but a few wore skirts or dresses.

Every routine elicited hearty cheers, but there were some that really upped the volume meter, notably those of "Drawing from the Well" performer Aidan Vaughan – especially when he exhibited his signature rapid whirl-around move – and Samantha Jones, who was dancing for two, being almost nine months pregnant.

Maine-based duo of uilleann piper Will Woodson and fiddler Caitlin Finley, and Bostonian singer-songwriter/multi-instrumentalist Jimmy Kelly's debut recording. Quincy native and accordionist David Healy also held the official Boston launch of his album "Down South" at McCarthy's Upstairs.

Local accordionist Colm Gannon, meanwhile, used the occasion to make a live album, joined by Sean Gavin, Caoimhin Ó Feaerghail, and Pádraig Ó Dubhgaill for two two-hour recording sessions, one at The Lilypad and the other at the Toad portion of McCarthy's/Toad.

"This is not a concert with a set playlist," read the event description. "It's a recording session – meaning you'll hear the music being made, tune by tune, take by take. Expect the informal energy of a session, the focus of a studio, and the warmth of a room full of people who love this music."

All went quite well, Gannon reported afterwards; there'll be some mixing and other production, and then a release date will be announced.

• There were also events that involved talking about music-making, singing, and dancing, including a lecture by Liam O'Connor about the ITMA and its work and an overview of the Boston College Irish Music Archives by BC Associate University Librarian for Scholarly Resources Christian Dupont.

The Boston Uilleann Pipers Club hosted a presentation in McCarthy's Upstairs about the Coyne set of pipes that were played by the iconic Seamus Ennis, and after it was over – well, of course, those present took out their own pipes for a session. Following the requisite adjustments, six pipers began playing "Maid of Mt. Kisco" in unison as the bright afternoon sun ducked behind a cloud, the room swathed in a dim, filtered light.

• Co-organizer Sean Clohessy was, to put it mildly, quite pleased with "Tunes on the Charles" No. 1. "Seeing our music and dance community come together was really special and it felt quite significant to see them as integrated as they were. One of the Irish artists remarked to me that it was just like being at the Willie Clancy Summer School in Miltown Malbay – the energy, the music, the people, the storytelling, the craic. It was such high praise. Another mentioned several times to me that it was by far the best traditional music festival they had attended in the US.

"I think it really speaks to the authenticity of how music and dance is lived here in Boston and it was a real endorsement of the celebration of community that we hoped to create. We have received so much positive feedback from everyone involved, both from our own local community as well as the artists that traveled from Ireland."

Of course, there's the whole matter of putting together "Tunes on the Charles" No. 2, and Clohessy says he and the rest of the team are more than willing.

"We really hope to be able to deliver something just as good, but it will be difficult to top this effort. We're taking some time to enjoy a little peace and quite right now but hopefully we'll be getting together soon again to think about the logistics of doing this all again next year."

The O’Riley-McGowan production, “When the Music Starts, I’ll Know,” explores what it means to be a dancer

BY SEAN SMITH

BOSTON IRISH CONTRIBUTOR

For years, Boston-area Irish dance performers and teachers Jackie O’Riley and Rebecca McGowan have thought long and hard about what they do, how they do it, and what it all means – and have turned that musing into artistic expression.

In 2019, they released “From the Floor,” a compendium of six separate but associated videos that served as a visual album of Irish music and dance. Filmed in the Victorian house owned by McGowan’s grandmother, “From the Floor” depicted the holistic event of dance – not just the act, but the anticipation of it, the effect and influence of setting, and the chemistry between dancers and musicians (in this case, accordionist Chris Stevens and fiddler Nathan Gourley).

Last month, the pair debuted their new endeavor, “When the Music Starts, I’ll Know,” at The Loov in Somerville. A live performance event as well as an oral history project, “When the Music Starts” explores in depth the impact and influence of dance on one’s life – in this case as a calling. It is based on interviews McGowan and O’Riley conducted with 13 women ranging in age from their 30s to 70s who have long performed and taught dance, including Irish and Cape Breton traditions but also genres like jazz, contemporary and disco. [The project website is fromthefloor.com/when-the-music-starts]

“When we began this project, we wanted to know about the paths dancers forge to sustain a lifelong practice,” O’Riley and McGowan write in their introduction to “When the Music Starts.” “How do artists who are community builders also nurture their creative work? What does it mean to rely on your body as your mode of expression? How is identity tied to artistic practice over the course of a lifetime?”

“These interviews, at times funny, poignant, and thoughtful, are full of the sustaining power of a creative calling. It was a real pleasure to simply spend time in conversation. We found ourselves drawn to the stories and anecdotes that underscored how dance is intrinsically woven into identity and belonging. Between the lines, we heard echoes of quiet moments of sacrifice, and the gift of finding sanctuary. There is a geography of dance in each person’s life and a sense that movement and music are essential in their experiences.”

The live events featured performances by four of the interviewees: Cait Bracken, longtime set dancing instructor at the Irish Cultural Centre of Greater Boston; Maureen Doyle, who performed as a step dancer as a child and young woman, then resumed decades later in partnership with her brother Kevin, a well-known dancer himself; Alanna Callendrello, an active member and teacher in the New England and Irish ceili scenes; and Aubrey Atwater, a musician and singer as well as a dancer in Celtic and American traditions who



Teachers Jackie O’Riley and Rebecca McGowan debuted their new endeavor, “When the Music Starts, I’ll Know,” last month at The Loov in Somerville.

also performs with her husband Elwood Donnelly.

Providing music were pianist Neil Pearlman and fiddler Laura Fedderson. Pearlman – also the project’s music director – has been part of numerous collaborations that feature his unique amalgam of Canadian Maritime, New England, and Scottish styles, along with elements of jazz, classical and other genres. Fedderson has been a mainstay of Boston’s Irish music scene for more than a decade, but she also has a strong background in American traditional music; she has played in a duo with fiddler Nathan Gourley and as part of the bands Ship in the Clouds and Wooden Nickels.

The show also featured “audio collages” with snippets from interviews with the dancers, Pearlman providing live piano accompaniment.

The “When the Music Starts” project was created in part through a Live Arts Boston grant from the Boston Foundation and a grant from Cambridge Arts, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

The questions that served as the basis for “When the Music Starts” are to some extent universal, pertaining to most any life endeavor: How does one sustain a lifelong practice? What changes over decades, and what remains essential? How does identity evolve alongside creative work and community involvement?

But dance has its own distinctive demands and challenges – certainly the

physical part, which is always a consideration for those who devote significant time to it. Finding or creating a space in which to practice or teach, or perhaps to work on performance ideas, is another. But just as importantly, dancers seek connection with other artists.

“These are questions that Rebecca and I have been thinking and talking about for years,” says O’Riley. “We wanted to get to the heart of what it means to be a dancer, to be part of a community, and how sustainable this career is. How can you help to build and maintain that community and have the time and space to nourish your creative side?”

The interviewees don’t share the same exact experiences or circumstances, notes McGowan. While some have devoted themselves full-time to dance, for example, others have had to make room for it alongside careers or raising families, or both. So the question “How does your identity as a dancer change as you age?” made for some fascinating, and poignant, answers.

“It was interesting to hear from the older generations, who were less likely to have pursued dance professionally,” says O’Riley. “They might not have said it directly, but there was a hint of paths not taken and missed opportunities, even though they were certainly glad to have been involved in dance. For them, their identity as a dancer perhaps means something different than for other generations.”

Folk dance traditions – such as those of Ireland and Cape Breton – not only

serve a social function but they also have a special relevance as a link to the history and culture of their respective communities, especially those that have taken root in other countries, say McGowan and O’Riley. Those who teach and lead these dances at gatherings, besides contributing to the fun, feel they are fulfilling an important task by helping others affirm their shared bonds.

“There’s a sense of dance being part of one’s identity and, simultaneously, being tied into that larger community – a feeling of belonging,” says McGowan.

“Many communities rooted in tradition are shaped by strong social and intergenerational ties,” adds O’Riley. “This relates to another theme that we heard in our interviews: sanctuary. For some, dance has been a lifeline through hard times, a means to reorient and center themselves.”

Then there is the simple joy that comes from realizing dance was what you were supposed to do all along, as was the case with Colleen O’Connor Tomas. She didn’t start until adulthood in the early 1970s but found herself enjoying disco so much she made it her vocation, enough to become a teacher, then a New England Patriots cheerleader, and now a fitness professional.

“You can tell Colleen is a dancer by the way she carries herself,” says O’Riley. “She was always reaching, always striving, and dance became a central part of who she is.”

What's Happening Onstage This Summer

BY R. J. DONOVAN
SPECIAL TO BOSTON IRISH



"The Mystery of Irma Vep"
Through Jun 21,
Central Square Theatre

Two actors play all the insane characters in this madcap comedy spoof set in an eerie English estate where the former mistress recently passed. Or did she? Split second costume changes will keep you guessing. centralsquaretheater.org



"Bad Books"
Through June 27,
Gloucester Stage

What does it mean to care for your child? And who decides what's proper? Tempers rage when a mother finds her son with what she considers to be an inappropriate book. The library becomes a battleground, and the entire town becomes involved. gloucesterstage.com



"Annie"
Through June 28,
Greater Boston Stage

The sun'll come out when everyone's favorite orphan sticks out her chin and escapes from her orphanage. She leaves behind the hard-knock life (and the clutches of evil mistress Miss Hannigan) in search of her long-lost parents. With her faithful canine, Sandy, by her side, she winds up meeting billionaire Olive Warbucks. Turns out, happiness was only a day away. greaterbostonstage.com

"Black Swan: A New Dance Thriller"
Through July 5, American Rep

The Academy Award-nominated psychological thriller comes to the stage in a bold adaptation. Pressure builds and reality begins to slip for



Nina as she strives to rise from the ballet corps to the lead role in "Swan Lake." This haunting exploration of ambition and power questions the irrefutable price of perfection. americanrepertorytheater.org



"Les Miserables"
Through June 28,
Citizens Opera House

Inspired by Victor Hugo's epic novel, this acclaimed phenomenon celebrates the strength and survival of the human spirit. The sweeping story of Jean Valjean's journey across the years is set in 19th century France and includes such beloved songs as "I Dreamed a Dream," "On My Own," "Bring Him Home," "One Day More," and more. boston.broadway.com



"Frankie & Johnny in the Clair de Lune"
Through June 28,
Boston Center for the Arts

Frankie, a guarded waitress, and Johnny, a short-order cook, spend a single night together to work past the personal challenges that have blocked them from love and connection. A funny and tender exploration from Terrence McNally. thepsychdramacompany.com



"Honey Honey Moon Moon"
June 27 - 28,
Huntington Theatre

Marking Pride Month, the comedy band and married

duo Couplet bring their award-winning Edinburgh Fringe musical comedy show to Boston. They tell the story of a queer Jewish wedding that faces bed bugs, fire and one very judgy couples' therapist on its way to a happy honeymoon. huntingtontheatre.org



Town Hall Series
July 5 - August 30,
Provincetown Town Hall

Visiting the Cape? Mark Cortale's summer concert series is back with, among others: Megan Hilty ("Smash," "Death Becomes Her") on July 5; Cheyenne Jackson ("American Horror Story," "Oh, Mary!") on August 2; Tony-nominated Melissa Errico on August 23; and cabaret legend Marilyn Maye on August 30. ptowntownhall.com



"The Great Gatsby"
July 7 - 19,
Citizens Opera House

F. Scott Fitzgerald's dazzling tale of love, wealth and tragedy in the glorious Roaring Twenties comes to the stage in a new musical adaptation. The story of excess and extravagance has a jazz- and pop-influenced original score. Don't miss it, Old Sport! boston.broadway.com



"Betrayal"
July 9 - August 1,
Gloucester Stage

The pen of Nobel Prize-winning playwright Harold Pinter delivers an excruciating tale of secrets and deception told against the flames of a torrid love triangle. The story of Emma, Jerry and Jerry's best friend Robert is told in reverse order, unfolding over nine years to reveal questions of

infidelity, power and a cruel chess game involving more than one betrayal. gloucesterstage.com



"Paranormal Activity"
July 11 - 30,
Emerson Colonial Theatre

Inspired by the chilling film series, this is a new tale written for the stage. James and Lou move from Chicago to London to escape their past, but they soon discover that places aren't haunted... people are. Following this strictly limited Boston run, the production moves on to the August Wilson Theatre on Broadway. What do you see when you close your eyes? emersoncolonial.com

"Buyer & Cellar"
July 18 - August 1, Club Café

Alex Moore is a struggling actor. He winds up with the role of a lifetime, running the private "shopping mall" in Barbra Streisand's Malibu basement (...yup, she actually has one). This one-man comedy takes a razor-sharp look at the unexpected price of fame and celebrity. hubtheatrebooston.org



Derek Hough: Symphony of Dance
July 24, Wang Theatre

"The Dancing with The Stars," Emmy Award-winning pro is live on stage with a new production brimming with high-energy choreography, stunning stage design, and Derek's signature touch to create a brilliant fusion of dance and music, from ballroom and tap to salsa and hip-hop. bochcenter.org

"Moulin Rouge"
July 28 - August 9,
Citizens Opera House

"Moulin Rouge" made its World Premiere right here in Boston in 2018. Now, the



winner of 10 Tony Awards (including Best Musical) is back with its opulent world of splendor and romance, Bohemians and aristocrats. It's a Spectacular-Spectacular theatrical celebration of Truth, Beauty, Freedom, and, above all, Love! boston.broadway.com



"Rock of Ages"
August 12 - 23,
North Shore Music Theatre

Drew's a boy from South Detroit. Sherrie's a small-town girl chasing dreams of stardom. Their paths collide on Sunset Trip in 1987 at the legendary Bourbon Room. Tragedy looms when developers want to destroy the club. Will the music be silenced? The high energy score featuring the hits of Bon Jovi, Journey, Foreigner, Poison, and others. It's all about heart, humor and white-hot rock 'n' roll passion. nsmt.org



Brandon & James: "Summer Nights on Broadway"
August 30, Spire Center

Brandon & James present an innovative afternoon of hits from "West Side Story" to "Wicked," "Mary Poppins," "Waitress," "Dear Evan Hansen," "Lion King," and more. Critics say the cello and vocal duo "have become a brand name in the classical crossover music world alongside the likes of Josh Groban, The Piano Guys and Jackie Evancho." With charm and wit, they've toured the world. spirecenter.org

•Scottish band Cantrip (the name derives from old Scots dialect meaning a charm, magic spell or bit of mischief), renowned for stellar musicianship, imagination and considerable wit, comes to the Sudbury Meetinghouse on June 21. The current line-up of Jon Bews (fiddle, vocals), Dan Houghton (pipes, whistles, flutes, guitar, bouzouki, vocals), and Boston-area native Eric McDonald (guitar, mandolin, bouzouki, vocals) – they also sometimes perform as a quartet with fiddler Alasdair White – builds on a legacy that goes back to an Edinburgh session in the early 2000s, and includes five studio albums that showcase Cantrip’s inventive mix of traditional Scottish music with funk, metal, bluegrass, swing and klezmer. Tickets, information available at viewcy.com/event/cantrip a magical fo.

On June 27, the Irish Cultural Centre of Greater Boston will host “The Voices of Ireland,” featuring an accomplished trio of Irish singer-songwriters, Don Stiffe, Ger O’Donnell and Trevor Sexton. Stiffe, who lived in Boston during the 1990s, is known for compositions like “Missing Galway” and “Grosse Isle” – and particularly “You’ll Always Be My Mother,” inspired by his search for his birth mother – and interpretations of other contemporary songs. He has toured and recorded with Cherish the Ladies (his cover of Dermot Henry’s “Shadow of a Singer and His Song” appears on the band’s “Heart of the Home” album).

O’Donnell and Sexton have often appeared as a duo, playing traditional and original material with compelling vocals and multi-instrumental accompaniment: Their album, “The Alchemist’s Stone,” includes their own compositions and a cover of “Bright Blue Rose” by Cork’s Jimmy MacCarthy (author of “Ride On,” “Missing You” and “No Frontiers”) along with renditions of traditional songs like “Dainty Davey,” “Black Is the Colour,” and “The Parting Glass.” Sexton counts Bob Dylan, Bob Marley, and Pete Seeger among his influences, and leans on a storyteller’s

MAKING THE ROUNDS

Upcoming Irish/Celtic-related music events in Greater Boston (and beyond)



style in creating his songs.

A music educator, arranger, and composer, O’Donnell started out on classical flute and fife before finding his calling as a crafter of songs – his singles “Turquoise Ink” and “Talk About Heroes” both reached No. 1 in the Irish charts. Sexton and O’Donnell were featured by TG4 in its broadcast of the 2023 Fleadh Cheoil and also have appeared in concert with Cherish the Ladies. For ICC events, go to irishculture.org/events.

•If you wondered whether there could possibly be a Celtic music-World Cup convergence, The Haven – which has proclaimed itself as “the official Scottish Fan Zone” – in Jamaica Plain will be presenting the duo MacDouble through June 20. Iain MacGillivray (Highland bagpipes, whistle, accordion, guitar, vocals) and Megan MacKay (fiddle,

vocals) perform authentic Highland tunes, traditional Gaelic singing, and “high-energy” arrangements. The Haven’s website is thehavenjp.com.

•A cappella close-harmony quartet Windborne will give not one but two concerts at Club Passim this month, on June 19 and 24. Long active in the New England folk and traditional music community, Lynn Mahoney Rowan, Will Thomas Rowan, Lauren Breunig, and Jeremy Carter-Gordon are as much folklorists as folk singers: conversant in the origins of the songs and the cultures from which these emerged. They’re also rooted in the activism and support for movements that uphold the oppressed, the poor, and the disenfranchised. Windborne has become known for its viral videos, notably at Mont Saint Michel in France and cathedrals around the world.

The four have appeared regionally in “A Christmas Celtic Sojourn,” and at the Blackstone River Theatre, Caffe Lena, and the Folk Song Society of Greater Boston. Their most recent recording, released last fall, is “To Warm the Winter Hearth,” a book and album of music for midwinter. See passim.org/live-music/events/windborne.

•Somerville’s Luthier Collective, which is among a growing number of “small-hall” venues for folk and traditional music in Greater Boston, will host “Within Sight of Summer” on June 18 – a double bill of fiddler/vocalist Gwen Johnston with guitarist Helen Kuhar and the duo Mrs. Wilberforce. Johnston weaves together tunes and songs from the Celtic, old-time, bluegrass, English, and contemporary folk genres, and has performed in Ireland, England, and New England at venues such as The Cobblestone, The Cornish Bank, and WBUR CitySpace.

Her debut album, “Onwards,” recorded in New Bedford and Falmouth (UK), is slated for release this summer. Kuhar specializes in traditional Irish, English, Québécois and New England styles, appearing regularly at area Celtic music sessions and on the contra dance scene. Among Kuhar’s collaborations are the contra dance bands Good Company and Nobody’s Business, and vocal quartet Forsyth.

Mrs. Wilberforce (Kyra Davies, fiddle, viola, vocals; Sean Smith, guitar, bouzouki, tenor banjo, vocals) has appeared in various settings, including BCMFest, the Passim Summer Series, Boston City Winery, New Bedford Roots and Branches Festival, Gore Place Carriage House Series and the Cherry Street Music Series. Rooted in tradition, they readily, and happily, draw upon influences from the classical and contemporary folk/folk-rock domains, bringing out the distinctive qualities of each tune or song for the enjoyment of their audiences.

For tickets and other details, go to evabroadwaystrings.com/events/2026/6/18/sean-kyra-helen-gwen.

–SEAN SMITH



Bill Brett’s seventh book salutes Boston’s veterans

Longtime Boston photojournalist Bill Brett signed copies of his latest book, “Boston Veterans Appreciation,” on Flag Day (Sun., June 14) at Blasi’s Fat Belly Deli in Adams Corner, Dorchester.

The book is now on sale locally at College Hype in Adams Village and online at MyCityGear.com.

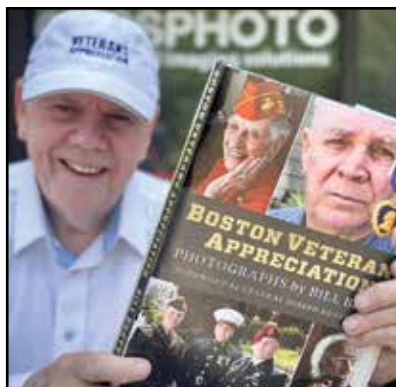
The book, Brett’s seventh, features nearly 190 portraits of veterans, active-duty military members, and supporters of service members from across the region. Brett and his team spent months meeting with veterans, relatives, and friends to help honor those who have served the country and the people who continue to support them.

The book, edited by Brett’s longtime collaborator, Carol Beggy, with research assistance from Paul Doyle, includes a foreword

by General Joseph Dunford, Jr., and a dedication written by Brett’s granddaughter, Morgan Clare Hurley. The book is dedicated to Bill’s late wife, Ginnie, who died earlier this year.

Its subjects include many men and women from Dorchester and the neighborhoods of Boston, including Dorchester native Millie Cox, who is featured on the cover. Cox, who was raised on Minot Street, was one of the first women to serve in the US Marine Corps during World War II. Also featured on the cover is Marvin E. Gilmore, Jr., a D-Day veteran who served in an all-Black anti-aircraft artillery battalion and received the Legion of Honor from France.

The Murray brothers of Dorchester – John, Michael, and Patrick – are also featured on the cover. The



Bill Brett holds a copy of his latest book, “Boston Veterans Appreciation.”

Photo courtesy Bill Brett Photography siblings all participated in ROTC at Harvard. Michael served as a lieutenant in the Marine Corps while Patrick and John serve as lieutenants in the US Army.

Brett’s previous books include “Boston, All One Family”; “Boston: An Extended Family”; “Boston: A Year in the Life”; “Boston: Inspirational Women”; and “Boston: Irish.”

–BILL FORRY

Milton Music Fest, and Celtic Sunday are set for weekend of June 20-21

The annual Milton Music Fest and Celtic Sunday will take place on June 20 and 21, 2026, on Hutchinson Field on Adams Street. Both days offer a family-friendly evening of music, activities, and food starting at 4 p.m., concluding with fireworks at 9:45. The organizers extended a special thank you to the Copeland Family Foundation, our Signature Sponsor since 2013, for their continued support of this community event.

Saturday: 4 p.m.: Activities, food, and beverage

vendors open; 4:30 – 5:15; Wayne Potash (Children’s Entertainer) 5:15 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.; USO Tribute Show; 6:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.; Divas With A Twist - 8:15 p.m. – 9:45 p.m.; The Fat City Band; Fireworks. at 9:45.

Celtic Sunday: 3:30 p.m.: DJs Bobby Brooks and John Costello; 4 p.m.: Activities, food, and beverage vendors open; Dooley Brothers; 4:50 p.m.: Erin’s Melody; 6:45 p.m.: Danny Gill and the Old Brigade; 8 p.m.: The Fenian Sons; 9:45 p.m.: Fireworks

For Patrick Radden Keefe, a one-time Dorchester boy, story-writing is ‘really cool’

BY CASSIDY MCNEELEY
REPORTER STAFF

Patrick Radden Keefe’s books investigate the Snakehead gang in New York City, explore The Troubles in Northern Ireland, and expose the criminal underworld in London. But his own story began right here in Dorchester.

In a visit in April, the 49-year-old Keefe returned to an unfamiliar space on familiar Dot Ave. in Fields Corner to sign copies of his recently released book, “London Falling: A Mysterious Death in a Gilded City and a Family’s Search for the Truth.” Sitting in Just Book-ish with a sharpie in hand and a stack of books to his side, he discussed his upbringing in Ashmont in an interview with The Reporter.

“It was amazing, I loved it,” he said. “We moved there in 1979 to Beaumont Street, and I grew up in a big old, falling-apart Victorian house with my parents, brother, and sister. I had a whole bunch of cousins and family; my father’s brother lived over on Ashmont Hill, and one of his sisters also lived in the neighborhood. There was a lot of family all the time; it was great.”

He added: “I was here from the age of three; it was a great place to grow up. I grew up taking the T, eating Vietnamese food in this neighborhood; it was really a pretty wonderful childhood.”

Living in Dorchester was pretty sweet, and not just because of frequent trips to the Ice Cream Smith.

“I still go back and get it. I take my kids now, it’s great,” said Keefe. “I get a hot fudge sundae with hot marshmallow, which nobody does anymore, sweet cream ice cream with Reese’s cups mixed in.”

When he wasn’t indulging in desserts, he enjoyed singing in the choir at The Parish of All Saints in Ashmont and stopping for meals on Dot Ave. Pho Hoa is a favorite.

But while he called Dorchester home, much of his time early on was spent just south of the city.

“I lived in Dorchester, but I went to Milton Academy, so I went to this fancy private school ten minutes away, but it felt like a world away,” he said between signatures. “The contrast between the world of Milton and the world of Dorchester and the fact that they were so close but so different, I think, informed my approach to my work and the world now.”

“I am often noticing those kinds of contrasts, and I’m trying to sort of, when I do a story, plunge into these different places and see them and understand them.”

Keefe’s deep dives into different places began between the shelves of magazines, journals, and newspapers at Cox Library.

“I used to wait for my mother to pick me up from school. There was a periodicals room at Milton, and I would read the *New Yorker*. I didn’t know if I wanted to be a novelist or a journalist or what have you, but I knew I liked writing, I was good at writing, and it was sort of the only thing I could see

myself doing.”

After graduating from Milton, he left Boston for New York, where he studied history at Columbia University. He then spent time in England, where he earned a master of philosophy in international relations degree from Cambridge University and a master of science in new media and economic information systems diploma from the London School of Economics.

“I started pitching stories in college, and I just got all these rejection letters for years,” Keefe said. “It took me eight years of pitching to the *New Yorker* to have them finally accept a freelance article, and then I freelanced for another six years before they gave me a full-time job.”

While all that was going on, he found the time to earn his Juris Doctor degree from Yale Law School in 2005.

“By the time I got a full-time job at the *New Yorker*, I had two kids,” he said. “It takes a while, and I think the thing about being a reporter that is great is even now most of my week is calling people who don’t want to talk to me, hang up on me, don’t get back to me. Being a good reporter keeps you humble. The job is rejection, and it’s all about having thick skin.”

Keefe’s identity as a dogged reporter is backed by the fact that while reporting for and writing his best-selling “Say Nothing: A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland,” he traveled to Ireland, where he has family ties to Donegal, multiple times to interview more than 100 people.

“It started as a story in the *New Yorker*,” he said about the book. “I read an obituary in the *New York Times* of a woman named Dolours Price who was the first woman to join the IRA as a front-line soldier. I read her obituary, and I thought her life sounded fascinating. I always thought of The Troubles as a very male story, so it was interesting learning about this woman out there on the front lines. That was what pulled me into it.”

He noted that the book, which was released in 2018, didn’t take off right away. “It took a while,” he said. “I think that the stories about The Troubles that I grew up with were pretty two dimensional a lot of the time. There wasn’t a lot of nuance; everyone was a hero or a villain. What I learned when I got into it and started to talk to people who took part in The Troubles was that it was a much more complicated story. I honestly didn’t know whether Irish Americans were ready for a more complicated version of the story.”

He added, “At the beginning, they thought, ‘We know this history, why would we need an American to come in and tell us about this?’ It took a while, but I ended up going back and doing the Belfast book festival. The interesting thing was that it was mostly young people in their 20s and 30s who, when they came to get their books signed afterwards, said, ‘My parents lived through this, and they never talked about this.’”



The author and his books at Just-Book-ish.



Patrick Radden Keefe (center) with JustBook-ish co-founders Porsha Olayiwola, (left), and Bing Broderick. Cassidy McNeeley photos

The book’s popularity resulted in an adaptation – a miniseries of the same name on FX on Hulu.

In 2023, while the series was in production in London, Keefe learned about the mysterious death of 19-year-old Zac Brettler, who reportedly jumped from the fifth floor of a luxury apartment into the Thames River, where his body was later discovered.

“London Falling” explores what happened before and after the young man’s violent end.

“The book is about these parents kind of becoming detectives after their kid dies, trying to get to the bottom of what happened to him, but also trying to understand their adolescent son in a way that they hadn’t been able to when he was alive,” Keefe said.

“After he died, his parents made this shocking discovery. As a teenager, he had been living a secret double life. He had an alter ego that they didn’t know about, and he had been moving around London pretending he was the son of a Russian oligarch. He got mixed up with some pretty dicey people, and he ended up dead.”

Since its release just a few weeks ago, the book has reached number one on the *New York Times* Best Seller List and the Sunday Times (London) Best Seller List as well as in Ireland and Canada.

“I don’t really know how to wrap my

mind around it,” Keefe said. “That’s more than I could have hoped for, but it’s thrilling. It’s exciting that people are reading the book and responding to it.”

“I went out on a tour that was ten cities in ten days. On the third or fourth night, there were all these people who showed up who had already finished reading the book, and it had come out just a few days before. I don’t know that the magic of that is ever going to wear off.”

Between book tour stops in New York and Seattle, Keefe returned to his boyhood stomping grounds. His brother, who still lives in the neighborhood, told him about Just Book-ish, and Keefe told The Reporter that it was the perfect spot to leave behind some signed copies.

“I love to see a new bookstore open up anywhere, but particularly here in Dorchester,” he said. “There wasn’t a place like this when I was growing up, so it’s great that it’s here. I wanted to just come and check it out and support it anyway I can.”

His next stops on the tour included: Seattle, Portland, Cleveland, then Ireland, England, New Zealand, Australia, and Canada.

“It’s a very solitary thing, to write a book,” Keefe said. “Then you ... put it out in the world, and to be able to go out on the road and meet people who have read the work and engaged with it, it’s really cool. That never gets old.”

Exhibition lays out the 1926 Irish Census, visitors explore the presentation at Boston College's John J. Burns Library



Visitors explore the exhibit in Boston College's John J. Burns Library.

From left, Director of the National Archives Orlaith McBride; Boston College Provost David Quigley; Minister of Culture, Communications and Sport Patrick O'Donovan, TD; Consul General for New England Sighle FitzGerald. *Christian Uva photo*

BY CHRISTIAN UVA
SPECIAL TO BOSTON IRISH
The National Archives of Ireland unveiled an exhibition at Boston College on May 12 celebrating the 100th anniversary of the 1926 Irish census. The exhibition, called "The Story Of Us: Census 1926," shines a light on Irish life in the years following independence. "It gives us that rare glimpse into the lives of almost 3 million people living in Ireland at that time. And of course, it is first and foremost the story of us, of our ancestors, of our forebearers," said Director of the National Archives, Orlaith McBride, in a speech.

Dozens of attendees listened to speeches from Irish dignitaries during an opening ceremony held in Gasson Hall. They also heard from multiple Irish centenarians during a video where they reflected on their lives over the past century. The exhibition is part of a large public program put on by the National Archives commemorating the census. The program includes exhibitions in three countries, a stage play, and an RTÉ documentary. The National Archives released over 700,000 census documents from 1926 on April 18. The website, which is free to

access for everyone, has received over 20 million hits worldwide, according to Consul General for New England Sighle FitzGerald. Many users are descendants of Irish immigrants to the United States or other countries learning about their ancestors. More than a million Americans used the site in the first week after it was published. "I know how meaningful that is for our diaspora, for the many immigrants who came here. To see a family name written down in 1926 really means a lot on so many levels," said FitzGerald.

Boston is one of three cities hosting the exhibition, along with Dublin and London. McBride said that Boston was chosen over New York City because of the strong connection between Boston and Ireland during the 1920s. Boston College has its own strong connection to Ireland. The university has had a mission to educate the Irish living in Boston since its founding in 1863. Boston College has maintained a decades-long relationship with the nation's government, and operates a campus in Dublin. "They chose us. They

wanted to be here in Boston and at Boston College, and we're honored to have them here," said Christian Dupont, the John J. Burns Librarian. The Burns Library, where the exhibit is located, already houses a large archive of Irish literature and historical documents. However, Dupont said he appreciates the personal aspect and intimacy that the census documents and exhibition provide. Dupont has already seen the census bring people closer to their heritage. One Burns Library staff member told him that they used it to research their grandmother's family history.

Communications and Sport Patrick O'Donovan told the attendees how important it was to learn from what came before. He spoke about how the abuses toward women and children in the decades following independence were evident in the census records. "The scars of it are still around because, in many cases, the children of these women were sent here to the United States. Many of them don't even know where they're from," he said.

He spoke about how he wants to use his political office to right those wrong. He said he hoped that a century from now, when his great grandchildren look back at the Ireland of 2026, they would think he had tried to make it a better place.

Boston College Provost David Quigley, who is half-Irish, did the same once the documents were published online in April.

At the end of the event, McBride presented Quigley with a copy of his family's records from the census. He shed a few tears after seeing the records and said it was "incredibly powerful to see in physical form."

McBride said she thought that everybody in the room had checked the census records at least once. Some went to learn about their heritage. Others were there out of pure curiosity, doing their own research.

All were there to explore the past. Minister of Culture,

"Certainly, that's the greatest learning I think any of us can derive from the census of 1926: that we do better, and we try to do better, than those who went before us," O'Donovan said.

The Burns Library at Boston College will host the Census 1926 exhibition through Sept. 6. It will be open on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., and Wednesday between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m. Entry is free, and no advanced booking is required. See the exhibition's website for more details.

Online at BostonIrish.com

Summer 2026

Boston Irish

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Gormley

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Photo by Isabel Leon/Mayor's Office

Funeral rites said for a 'Jake's Jake'

Robert T. "Bobby" Kilduff Jr., the Boston firefighter who was killed in the line of duty at a three-alarm fire in Dorchester on May 23, was laid to rest on Monday after a funeral Mass at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Boston's South End.

The service drew thousands of firefighters, EMTs, public officials, family members, and friends for a procession from

West Roxbury to the church.

A veteran of the US Marine Corps and of BFD's Rescue Company 2, firefighter Kilduff fell from a third-floor porch while fighting the May 23 blaze at 18 Treadway Rd., a side street off Savin Hill Avenue and later was pronounced dead from his injuries at Boston Medical Center.

Officials on scene in Dorches-

ter said that firefighters had kept the fire from spreading and all residents had escaped safely.

At the funeral, Mayor Michelle Wu, Fire Commissioner Rodney Marshall, union leaders, Rescue 2 colleagues, and Kilduff family members offered remembrances.

His children, Hanna Jane and Mason, and longtime partner Jess Spruell spoke at

the Mass about his devotion as a father and friend, while fellow firefighters remembered "BK" as a "Jake's Jake" — the firefighter other firefighters counted on.

A third-generation firefighter, Robert T. Kilduff Jr. was buried at Fairview Cemetery in Hyde Park.

—REPORTER STAFF



The ceremonial last steel beam was lifted into place for the "topping off" on the Fieldhouse+ project on Mt. Vernon Street on Monday (May 18).

'Topping-off' time for the Fieldhouse+

On Mon., May 18, a crew from Ironworkers Local 7 hoisted a steel beam in place that topped off the in-construction Fieldhouse+ on Mount Vernon Street on Columbia Point. The \$70 million, 75,000-square-

foot complex will include sports fields, basketball courts, cooking facilities, and ample space for young people and children to participate in programming. Its opening is projected for next spring.



Dorchester's Bill, Denise, Jane, and Henry Richard celebrated the topping off of their dream project, the Fieldhouse+. Seth Daniel photos



Poulnabrone Dolmen, County Clare. Access to the Poulnabrone Dolmen is open all year and admission is free. Visitors can access the dolmen via a short walk from the free car park. A site warden is usually present and provides information to visitors.

Ireland Goes Beyond: Why This Is the Year to Go Back

Tourism Ireland's new global campaign carries a simple, confident message: Ireland Goes Beyond. Beyond your expectations of a holiday. Beyond the postcard version of the Emerald Isle. Beyond what you think you already know about a place you may feel, somehow, that you already belong to.

For the Irish diaspora in Greater Boston, that last part isn't marketing. It's just true. And 2026 is as good a reason as any to act on it.

Summer: Long days, full calendars, open doors

Summer in Ireland means evenings that stretch past all reason, pubs that spill onto the footpath, and the particular Irish gift for making you feel like you've been expected. The Wild Atlantic Way, all 2,500km of it from Donegal to Cork, is at its most dramatic from June through September, when the light does things to the cliffs and the headlands that no photograph quite captures.

And with sunrise around 5 a.m. and sunset close to 10 p.m., you have more day to work with than you will almost anywhere else on earth. Use it your way.

June: Festivals, islands, and open water

June is when Ireland hits its stride. The literary crowd heads to County Kerry for Listowel Writers' Week, Ireland's oldest literary festival, while Dublin's Bloomsday brings James Joyce devotees out in full force to celebrate Ulysses and the city that inspired it. If music is more your thing, the West Cork Chamber Music Festival draws serious audiences to beautiful Bantry, and Ireland BikeFest in Killarney turns the Ring of Kerry into a three-day motorcycle and rock music extravaganza. June is also Pride month, with celebrations running from Dublin and Belfast to Galway, Mayo, and Derry, covering everything from high-energy parades to sea swims.

For those who want to get properly off the beaten track, Ireland's islands deliver. Achill Island in Mayo and Inis Mór off the Galway coast both earned a new wave of admirers after starring in "The Banshees of Inisherin," and they more than live up to the hype. The Skellig Islands in Kerry, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one-time "Star Wars" filming location, are as dramatic as anything you'll see in Europe. And Rathlin Island off the Antrim coast is a birdwatcher's dream, home to vast puffin colonies and, improbably, Ireland's only upside-down lighthouse.

Ireland is also, and this surprises people, a serious surfing destination. The stretch from Bundoran in Donegal down to Streedagh Strand in Sligo is one of Europe's premier big-wave spots. For beginners, Lahinch Surf School in Clare and Brittas Bay in Wicklow both offer lessons, and the broader menu of water sports, kayaking, wild swimming, diving, is enough to fill a week on its own.

Golf: Ireland is a major player on the world scene

If you play golf, or love someone who does, the next two years on the island of Ireland are not to be missed. This year has the Irish Open at Trump International Golf Links in Doonbeg, the Walker Cup at Lahinch, and the Women's Irish Open at the K Club in Kildare. And that's just a warm-up. In September 2027, the Ryder Cup comes to Adare Manor in County Limerick, where golf's greatest team event celebrates its 100th anniversary on Irish soil. That competition puts a global spotlight on what the Irish have always known. With more than 400 courses on the island, including a third of the world's natural links, Ireland has always been one of the finest golf destinations on earth. Ballybunion, Ballyliffin, Royal County Down, and Royal Portrush.

July and August: The festival calendar keeps going

The Galway International Arts Festival runs July 13-26, filling the city with theatre, music, and visual art. And in Belfast, Aug. 2-9 brings the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann to the north for the first time ever – the world's largest celebration of Irish music and culture, in one city, for one week. If you have any Irish music in you at all, you'll want to be there.

Autumn: Ireland's best-kept secret

The crowds thin. The light goes golden and low. The pubs get quieter and more comfortable. Ireland, which is always beautiful, becomes something else entirely in September and October. Come in the fall if you want to see the real thing: shorter queues, easier bookings, and a pace that lets you actually breathe.

Walk the Cliffs of Moher in October with a sea wind at your back and almost no one else around, and you will understand exactly what Tourism Ireland means when they say Ireland goes beyond.

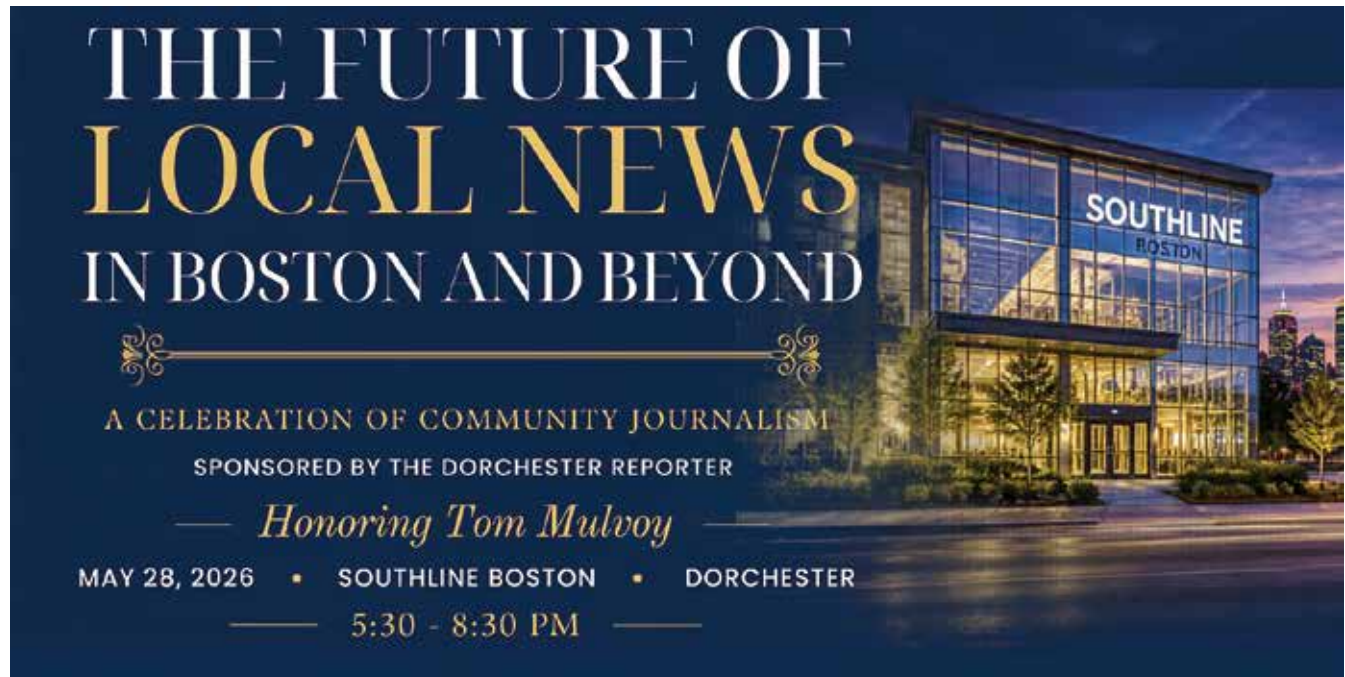
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Sponsored content in partnership with Tourism Ireland, the organisation responsible for promoting the island of Ireland overseas as a leading holiday destination. In 2025, overseas tourism delivered over €6.4 billion to the island of Ireland.

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The Dorchester Reporter is grateful to the sponsors and donors of our Future of Local News event on May 28, 2026. This event will celebrate and support community journalism and help to fund the inaugural Thomas F. Mulvoy, Jr. Scholarship and Fellowship program for young journalists from Boston.

Thank you!!



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