

# Boston Irish

Vol. 2, Issue 4

Winter 2021

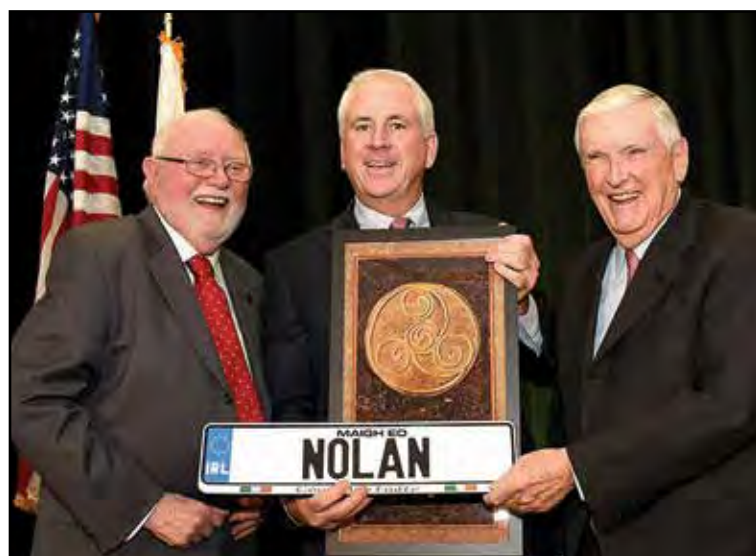
BostonIrish.com

## Ireland Gets Ready for Christmas



A traditional Christmas tree in front of Dublin's Four Courts.

*Tourism Ireland file photo*



### Boston Irish Honorees, 2021

Some 300 guests gathered for a luncheon at the Boston Seaport Hotel on Oct. 29 to help honor this year's Boston Irish Honorees, Joseph Nolan, the CEO of Eversource, pictured at left between Boston Irish Publisher Ed Forry, left, and the entrepreneur Jack Connors, and Mary Sugrue, the CEO of the Irish American Partnership, at right with IAP board members Bill Reilly, at left, and Dave Greaney.

Full coverage of the event begins on Page 22.



## Beat Deductible Depression With Oops Proof Auto Loan

GREAT  
RATES AS  
LOW AS

**1.88%**  
APR\*  
FOR UP TO  
72 MONTHS

Save up to  
\$1,000  
on your  
deductible



CITYOFBOSTONCU.COM

\*A.P.R. = Annual Percentage Rate. Rate determination is based on member's current credit rating and down payment. All loans subject to credit approval. Other rates and terms available. Monthly Cost per \$1000 is based upon the maximum loan amount shown. A.P.R.s are accurate as of the date of printing and subject to change without notice. Must be eligible for City of Boston Credit Union membership to apply.  
\*City of Boston Credit Union will provide you the complimentary Auto Advantage Plan, from AssurancePlus. The Auto Advantage Plan includes an Auto Deductible Reimbursement (ADR) benefit, Personal ID Restoration Consulting service and Warranty Vault™ storage service. The ADR benefit Pays up to five hundred dollars (\$500) per Loss (limit of two losses per year) when a Loss is filed and paid by your Auto Insurance Company for the Covered Auto the Member owns AND insures under an Auto Insurance Policy designating the Member as the Named Insured. Covered Auto refers to the Specific Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) for which the Member was provided the Auto Advantage Plan. Coverage is effective upon date of enrollment and will continue for one (1) year. Full details at cityofbostoncu.com.



# About taking on 'Ulysses' with an ambassador as tutor

Daniel Mulhall became Ireland's 18th Ambassador to the US in August 2017. A native of Co. Waterford, he holds degrees in modern Irish history from University College Cork. He is a 43-year veteran of Ireland's Dept of Foreign Affairs, and has served in New Delhi, Vienna, Edinburgh, Malaysia, and Germany. Before coming to Washington, he was Ireland's Ambassador in London, and a regular speaker on political, literary, and historical topics at Universities all over the UK.

Mulhall has written an "exciting and accessible guide to Joyce's masterpiece, 'Ulysses'," according to advance publicity from the publisher New Ireland Books, which notes that it will be launched next month.

"Mulhall will carefully navigate the general reader through Ireland's most famous work of fiction. ... Dan Mulhall untangles 'Ulysses' from its infamous reputation of impenetrability. This is a guide for the lay person, an initiation into the pleasures and wonders of Joyce's writing and of the world that inspired it."

The ambassador spoke with Boston Irish publisher Ed Forry on Nov. 8 at Greenhills Irish Bakery in Dorchester.



On "Ulysses": "This is a book you can read and understand and can benefit from reading."

**Q.** What was your motivation in writing this book?

**A.** Well, I decided a few years ago, having seen in American universities and libraries, so many copies of James Joyce's "Ulysses" (the original was published in 1922), I thought it would be a good idea for the centenary of the novel in February of 2022 to do a blog. I blogged on each episode of the novel, and, of course, I thought I wouldn't finish this blog for probably for years. But then the pandemic came and I had a little more time in the evenings and I wasn't doing anything socially. I finished the blog late last year, decided I'd turn it into a book, and New Ireland Books agreed to publish it.

**Q.** How did you structure the blog?

**A.** It was a series- there were 18 episodes to "Ulysses" and I have one blog on each episode. Now, when I was preparing the book for publication, I rewrote all the blogs. So the blogs are

there, but they don't bear much of a resemblance to the final product because I doubled the size of each chapter. I did a lot of extra work to get the blog ready for publication as a book. So it's a very different book from what's in the blog.

**Q.** Does your interest in Irish literature goes beyond Joyce?

**A.** I am honorary president of the Yeats Society at the moment. Look, the background to this is that early in my career, I discovered that our literature is a real asset for Ireland, in that people all over the world know about Ireland. Even if they have no ancestral connection with our country, even if they've never been there, they often know about it because of our literature, in particular, W.B. Yeats, James Joyce, Sean O'Casey, Samuel Beckett, Seamus Heaney in more recent times, and many other writers as well.

So I decided early on that I should use our literature as a way of telling Ireland's story. And I've done that for 40 years now, all over the world. I tend to use Yeats more than Joyce, because Yeats is more accessible. His poetry is more readily relatable to; Joyce's work is a little more complicated, a little more forbidding in many ways.

**Q.** How do you view James Joyce's work?

**A.** "Ulysses" has a reputation for being forbidding, for being impenetrable. And I decided after long years of talking about Joyce around the world, that that wasn't quite true. And I decided to use my book to prove that it actually isn't true, that this is a book you can read and understand and can benefit from reading.

**Q.** What techniques did you apply in discussing "Ulysses"?

**A.** I've done things in my book that academics won't approve of but I do. For example, in a number of places, I say if you find this chapter difficult, skip it, don't get bogged down in it. For most people who start the book, the first episode is very easy to understand. So is the second episode. And the third one kills them because it all takes place within the mind of Stephen Dedalus, Joyce's alter ego, walking down a beach in Sandymount, and it's difficult.

Now, you can enjoy it, and I say to people read through it, but don't be put off by it. If you find it difficult, just move through, just skip off, go to the next chapter because chapter four is a very good read. So is chapter five. So is chapter six. Chapter seven is difficult, I think, and then it gets easier again. And then the last five chapters are very difficult.

**Q.** Did you come to your interest in Irish literature with a background as an English major?

**A.** More of the history, I mean as an English and history major. But in fact, if I had to describe my approach to 'Ulysses,' it would be 'Ulysses' as part of Irish history, because I focus very heavily on the history that is embedded in the novel.

Most people don't recognize the fact that Joyce himself was actually fascinated with the minutiae of Irish politics at the beginning of the 20th century. His father was a great supporter of Charles Stuart Parnell. He, too, was an admirer of Parnell. He was also an admirer of Arthur Griffith, who was the founder of the original Sinn Féin party, very different from the party that came into being after the rising of 1916, and very different from today's party.

But nonetheless, Joyce was intensely

interested in the history of Ireland and that history comes out throughout the novel; there are constant references to things that were happening in Ireland at that time and to the history of Ireland. For me at least, Irish history is a good avenue from which to approach the complexities of 'Ulysses.' And that's what my book tries to do, bring out the historical elements of it. It's the hundredth anniversary of the publication in 1922 on the 2nd of next of February, and it was published on Joyce's 40th birthday. He was superstitious. So, he wanted the book to be published on his birthday. And, indeed, the first copies of the book came off the printing press and he acquired a copy of it on his 40th birthday.

So, I'm hoping my book will be helpful to people; I've tried to make it an easy read. So even if you don't read 'Ulysses,' I feel that reading my book will give people a fairly good idea of what the novel is all about.

**Q.** Do you plan to give some lectures in this upcoming 100th anniversary year?

**A.** I've always done this anyway. I've always been willing to give lectures on Yeats and Joyce, and I'll continue to do that. I will do a few book events over the next number of months, once the book comes out, and I'm hoping that it will attract a readership, both in Ireland, but also in America where I think a lot of people will be interested in at least dipping into 'Ulysses.'

They may not read the whole book and I don't criticize people if you skip through it. I say to people, if you don't feel like reading the whole thing, read the 1st chapter, read the 12th chapter and read the 18th chapter. ... The first chapter introduces you to Stephen Dedalus, one of the three main characters. The 12th chapter introduces and features Leopold Bloom, and many other characters as well. And it's a very lively chapter, really well written and beautifully done, and very interesting and very good dialogue and so on. And then the 18th chapter gives you Molly Bloom. I would say maybe I would go for that sequence.

**Q.** English majors across the world are going to be very indebted to you.

**A.** Well, I would say I think my book is accessible. I don't think anybody will read it and be put off by it, because there is no reference to any literary theory, for example, none at all.

I do quote some academics when I found it helpful, but most of the academic work I've read on 'Ulysses' is actually not helpful to the general reader, because it tends to make things more complicated rather than simplified.

What I tried to do is to quote some of what I regard as the choice passages from the book. So that if you read my book, you'll probably get a whole bunch of quotations, which will give you a good idea of the flavor of 'Ulysses.'

## BOSTON IRISH

is published quarterly by:

Boston Neighborhood News, Inc.,  
150 Mt. Vernon St., Suite 120, Dorchester, MA 02125

newsroom@bostonirish.com www.bostonirish.com

Mary C. Forry, President (1983-2004)

Edward W. Forry, Publisher

Thomas F. Mulvoy Jr., Managing Editor

William P. Forry, Editor

Peter F. Stevens, Contributing Editor

News Room: (617) 436-1222

Ads: (617) 436-1222

Fax: (617) 825-5516 news@bostonirish.com

Every day at BostonIrish.com

Date of Next Edition: Spring/St. Patrick's, 2022

Deadline for Next Issue: Friday, Feb. 18, 2022 at noon

The Boston Irish is not liable for errors appearing in advertisements beyond the cost of the space occupied by the error. The right is reserved by the publisher to edit, reject, or cut any copy without notice.

Wishing all of our friends

# Nollaig Shona Daoibh and a Happy New Year



Aer Lingus 



# Irish envoy to US: We'll be welcoming you back soon

## A chat at Greenhills with Daniel Mulhall

By Ed Forry

Boston Irish Publisher

After 20 months of severe restrictions due to Covid-19, the island of Ireland is almost ready to welcome tourists and other visitors back, Ireland's top diplomat to America said this week.

In a wide-ranging exclusive interview with the *Reporter* last month at Dorchester's Greenhills Bakery in Adams Corner, Ambassador Daniel Mulhall, who had just visited the nearby Irish Pastoral Centre offices, said he hoped that near normal tourism activity will resume soon. "I predict that by the summer of next year, we'll be back to somewhere close to what we had in 2019," he said over a 'cuppa tea' in the busy Irish bakery.

Told that Delta Airlines has announced that it will soon begin Boston flights to and from Dublin on weekdays, and that Aer Lingus expected to restore flights to Shannon as early as next spring, the envoy said, "I don't know the details because each airline would make up its own mind. You know, they have things to think about, the

loads and so on. But what I'm hearing from travel agents and people in the tourism business is that the demand for Ireland next year is very high. And if the demand is high, supply will develop.

"A lot of these airlines have spare aircraft after all, because they haven't really used them for a year and a half. So I don't think there's any shortage of aircraft, which means that I think as soon as there's a market for these flights, the flights will resume.

"I encourage people who haven't been there for two years to go next year, because I think the welcome for Americans will be even warmer than it has been in the past." Looking ahead to the new year, Mulhall was enthusiastic: "It's going to be a bumper year," he said. "And I think it would be great to be there because it's the centenary of Irish independence, which is the big thing. I think we should also celebrate the contributions that Americans have made to the independence of Ireland." The ambassador has served in his current post in Washington

DC for four years, after a forty-year career that includes a post as ambassador in London. "My biggest takeaway is how important the Irish continue to be in this country as part of America, but also as a support for Ireland. I am privileged to have had the opportunity over the last four years to travel all over this great country, especially here in Boston, and to meet so many people who have a deep affinity with Ireland. Even though they may be descended from people who came here generations ago, they still have Ireland in their hearts. And that is vastly important to Ireland."

Mulhall sounded a cautionary note about the continuing dispute with UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, saying he would rely on Ireland's close ties with America.

"We do not underestimate the value of Irish American support for Ireland, including today, when there are issues surrounding the border on the island of Ireland, when sadly the British government seems to be, or at least is toying with the idea of, walking away from



Ambassador Daniel Mulhall and Boston Irish Publisher Ed Forry after tea at Greenhills Bakery.

an agreement they made last year to keep the borders on the island of Ireland open.

"If they do that, it will create a genuine crisis. And we will be looking to Irish America to support us, to prevail upon their government and their Congress to make it clear that that open border on the island of Ireland is an absolute must to be retained.

"Congressman Richie Neal [D-Springfield] is the most important Irish American for me over the four years I've

been here because he has been stalwart in his support for Ireland. And also because his knowledge of Northern Ireland is unbeatable. We are deeply indebted to Richie Neal and the other members of the Friends of Ireland in Congress for having stood behind Ireland, and for having made it very clear that they will not be happy if the British government walks away from the agreement they made last year to keep that open border."

## Aer Lingus Boston flights to Shannon to resume

### Flights planned for March 27; new aircraft to be added

By Ed Forry

Boston Irish Publisher

The Boston to Ireland's Shannon Airport flights, popular with New Englanders with family ties in the west of Ireland, will resume in the spring, Aer Lingus has announced. Following 18 months of restrictions on travel between Ireland and the United States, the airline says it is expecting strong demand for transatlantic tickets as

people look to reconnect with family and friends

"Starting in March, Aer Lingus will fly from Shannon Airport (SNN) to Boston Logan International Airport (BOS)," the airline said in a recent statement. "The daily flights will be operated using one of the Irish carrier's new single-aisle Airbus A321neo aircraft." The return of the Shannon flights will be in addition to the airline's

daily service to Dublin, which has been maintained while most airlines had curtailed their schedules during the height of the pandemic. Aer Lingus flight EI 134 will depart Boston Logan Airport at 8:10 pm and arrive at Shannon Airport at 6:00 am the next morning. Aer Lingus flight EI 135 will depart Shannon Airport at 1:40 pm, arriving in Boston at 4:00 pm. The new Shannon schedule is planned to begin on March 27. "Aer Lingus looks forward to welcoming back flights from the USA to Shannon from March 27, 2022," a spokesper-



son said. "The airline will operate 14 flights a week from New York (JFK) and Boston. Aer Lingus has an ambitious schedule for Summer 2022

which includes 16 transatlantic routes as the airline seeks to reconnect Ireland and the US, reuniting families, friends and colleagues."

## Delta to resume Boston-Dublin service in March

### 5 days a week to begin; daily starting on May 26

By Ed Forry

Boston Irish Publisher

Delta Airlines will resume five-days-a-week service from BOS-DUB next March, and then expand to daily Dublin flights on May 26, Delta's NE Sales Manager Charlie Schewe told *Boston Irish* in a recent interview.

The expanded schedule will continue through next October,

with overnight flights to Dublin from Logan Airport at 9:10 p.m. EDT, arriving in Dublin at 8:15 a.m. Return flights to Boston leave Dublin at 1 p.m., arriving at 3:05 p.m.

Delta will add a new seating option, Delta Premium Select, Schewe said. "The elevated experience in Delta Premium Select includes more space to relax and stretch out with

a wider seat, deeper recline, and an adjustable footrest and leg rest. Customers will enjoy Delta's best-in-class seatback entertainment with larger screens while powering up their own devices with in-seat power and USB ports. They'll also receive an amenity kit, noise-cancelling headsets, and a blanket and pillow to help them arrive rested and refreshed.

"We're focused on bringing back the routes and destinations our customers love, so



they enjoy easy, convenient access to a comprehensive, far-reaching network throughout Europe and its neighboring regions," Schewe said. "With the lifting of restrictions to the US and abroad, plus growing

vaccination rates and tremendous pent-up demand, travel to Europe is expected to surge next summer - and Delta customers are assured to enjoy every moment from curb to claim."



# If you're in Ireland on Dec. 26, you'll hear about 'the Wren'

By JUDY ENRIGHT  
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

Ireland, that magical land of myth and legend, celebrates Christmas like the rest of the Christian world, but saves the day after for a particularly Irish tradition.

December 26 is St. Stephen's Day and, in some places - especially Co. Kerry - it's known as "the Wren." Wren boys (or girls) dress in old clothes, paint their faces, and wear straw hats. They go from house to house singing, dancing, playing music, and often collecting for charity. This is a long-standing Irish tradition and, in lovely Dingle, Co. Kerry, for instance, there is a parade through the town every year to honor the Wren.

The history of "the Wren," which predates Christmas, is from Irish mythology. Birds were believed to link this world to the next. The wren is blamed for betraying Irish soldiers who were fighting Norsemen by flapping its wings against their shields. The little bird is also blamed for betraying St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr. That is probably why a wren was once hunted down on Dec. 26 and nailed to a pole that was carried at the head of the wren parade.

In Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, Dec. 26 is called Boxing Day, because, according to tradition, servants and tradesmen were given gifts in boxes from their masters and clients that day.

Many Irish hotels offer Christmas accommodation specials. So, if you plan to be there over the holidays, be sure to check your favorites.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Some people say that carefully choosing just the right accommodation in Ireland isn't all that important because, after all, you just sleep in those places. And for a lot of travelers, that seems to be all too true. They just move from one place to another without experiencing the history or flavor of the places they have visited.

But, fortunately, there are a number of Irish organizations that have set out to change all that. They include: Ireland's Blue Book and Manor House Hotels, The Great Fishing Houses of Ireland, Green Book Hotels, and many more. Some of the recommended properties appear in more than one book.

## HIDDEN IRELAND

I have stayed in Hidden Ireland properties on more than one occasion and have thoroughly enjoyed them. Hidden Ireland offers, as the literature says, "a road less traveled." There is not one huge, faceless hotel in the lot. The houses are privately-owned and are places where, as the brochure says, "your hosts are not employees... these houses are their homes where they still live with their families, just as they have always done."

In the past, I have stayed at the elegant Delphi Lodge, in Co. Galway near Killary Harbor, which is Ireland's only fjord. There are many activities to enjoy around Killary Harbor ranging from the Sheep and Wool Museum in Leenane to a cruise on the harbor itself.

And, driving through the Sheeffry Hills in that area is a breathtaking pho-



Lough Inagh Lodge Hotel in Recess, Connemara, is the ideal place to stay when visiting that beautiful part of the country.

Judy Enright photo

tographic adventure that shouldn't be missed.

Delphi Lodge's 12 rooms are all ensuite, and we were told that Americans love this lodge for "the Irish staff, the valley, the scenery and the antiquity of the house." Delphi is very comfortable and accommodating for those who are traveling alone, especially middle-aged travelers.

A Hidden Ireland spokesman commented that visitors love the antiquity of Delphi, "but they also love the blend of that antiquity with all the modern conveniences." He said Hidden Ireland properties are not "commercial entities as such. They're private houses where hospitality is offered. A majority are family-operated and in 90 percent of the homes, a member of the family does the cooking, and it's genuine country house cooking." The Hidden Ireland houses are also large and guests are not shoulder-to-shoulder. "It's more relaxed and more pleasant," the spokesman said.

Evening dinner at the properties is an experience rather than just a meal. "We recommend that visitors not use Hidden Ireland as just a B&B experience. The whole idea is to sample life in a house like Delphi and the other houses and dinner is central to the experience. Staying two nights is also essential," the spokesman said.

Most of the houses in Hidden Ireland have only a few bedrooms and many offer a single-seating dinner with guests, often from many different countries, gathered around a large table and sharing their backgrounds and interests.

In addition to Delphi, I have visited the 14-room Quay House in Clifden, which is a wonderful place to stay and close enough to town so you can walk to a great dinner - especially at Mitchell's Seafood, one of my longtime favorites

- or to a night in the pubs.

I've also stayed at Ashley Park House in Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, which was a real blast from the past, as they say, and most enjoyable.

The Hidden Ireland spokesman said members actually own the organization and meet twice a year, while an executive committee - selected from the membership - meets monthly. Membership in Hidden Ireland is not automatic, however. In order to become a member, "the house, the person and the setting have to be right," the spokesman said.

The houses in Hidden Ireland are located all over the Irish map from Northern Ireland (Drenagh in Limavady, Co. Derry) all the way south to Co. Cork (Ballyvolane in Fermoy.) Visit [hiddenireland.com](http://hiddenireland.com) for more information and an entire listing of the properties.

## THE BLUE BOOK

Another accommodation group is Ireland's Blue Book of country houses, historic hotels and restaurants.

We stayed at one of the Blue Book properties - the Park Hotel in Kenmare - several years ago and it was exceptional. The rooms were elegant and meals were perfectly prepared and delicious. The hotel operates a deluxe destination spa for those who want to unwind. For more information, go to the Blue Book website ([irelandsbluebook.com](http://irelandsbluebook.com)) and find more details.

We've also stayed at Aherne's in Youghal, Co. Cork; Bushmills Inn in Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland; Cashel House Hotel in Co. Galway; The Merrion Hotel in Dublin; Echo Lodge in Ballingarry, Co. Limerick, and have eaten at Ballymaloe House in Shanagarry, Middleton, Co. Cork; The Wineport Lodge, in Athlone, Co. Westmeath, and at The Ice House in Ballina, Co. Mayo. All are highly recommended.

We love to try different places and experience different lifestyles and, although many of these accommodations are expensive, they have all proved to be worth the price and most interesting.

## MANOR HOUSE HOTELS

My favorite hotel - Lough Inagh Lodge Hotel in Recess, Connemara - is listed in Manor House Hotels and also in Ireland's Great Fishing Houses.

Going back to Lough Inagh, as I do every spring, is like going home. Everyone there is so welcoming and accommodating, the food is excellent, the rooms are large and well maintained and you couldn't ask for a more beautiful bit of scenery than the Inagh Valley and Connemara in general.

Lough Inagh will close on Dec. 19 and reopen on March 11, 2022.

We've also stayed at Manor House's Sandhouse Hotel on the most perfect stretch of beach in Co. Donegal.

In addition to all the hotels and manor houses mentioned, you can find other wonderful accommodation all over Ireland. There are many excellent B&Bs everywhere on the island. We especially like Cahergal Farm in Newmarket-on-Fergus, near Shannon Airport.

Aer Lingus recently restored the non-stop Boston-Shannon flights, much to the delight of businesses in the West of Ireland.

## TRAVEL PLANS

Enjoy your trip to Ireland whenever and wherever you go and don't forget to check the internet for the latest flight and travel deals.

When you're in Ireland, be sure to stop by the Fáilte Ireland tourist board offices (marked with a big green shamrock) for details about festivals and other activities, to secure accommodations, and to learn about the area where you'll be traveling.



# Bottom Line on COP26 in Glasgow: A step forward despite some angst

COP26 in Glasgow was a disappointment to environmental activists but history will record it as a key step in combating climate collapse. Joe Biden, Micheal Martin, and Boris Johnson were among hundreds of world leaders, thousands of government negotiators, and tens of thousands of protestors who made the pilgrimage to Scotland to grapple with the nitty gritty details like “phasing coal out, or phasing coal down” and to make their voices heard.

My travel to the UK, the first since the onset of Covid and Brexit, was more complicated than previous trips. The UK requires fully vaccinated travelers to present proof of having scheduled and paid for a ‘Day 2 lateral flow PCR test’ (a new covid-era phrase like ‘flattening the curve’ that I hope to forget) before check in. This unique UK requirement has resulted in entirely new tests, kits, processes, procedures and infrastructure.

I scheduled the test online from Dublin and it was mailed to my Airbnb address in Glasgow. When I received it, I used the camera in my laptop to verify my identity, self-administered the test, put the barcoded tube in an addressed cardboard box and dropped it into a neighborhood Royal Mail red mailbox. The negative results were emailed back to me from the lab that had received the parcel, all within hours. It is nothing short of amazing that the test, the procedure, the kits, the technology, and the processes were all developed in the last few months and that it all worked. Human beings are even more inventive and resourceful when focused on a project of existential importance. Imagine if we put that same focus on eradicating homelessness or, more to the point of this trip: combating climate breakdown.

There is no more important existential project for our world but as Rhode Island Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse has pointed out, the only entities that are behaving like climate collapse is existential are the fossil fuel companies. They know that if they lose this argument they will cease to exist. Therefore, they have done everything they can to survive but the sense of the conference is that the jig is up on fossil fuels. Most of the rest of the world knows that human-caused climate collapse is real but have had other priorities like putting food on the table. The disparity of urgency between the fossil fuel companies fighting for their lives and the rest of the world not viewing the debate as directly affecting them in the present has extended the use of fossil fuels for decades. The urgency gap is narrowing as the effects of climate change are felt here and now.

## Glas-gow

The ancient Celts had names for colors that are no longer part of our lexicon. One example is the word ‘Glas’ sometimes spelled ‘Glass.’ The Bretons, the Irish, Scottish, Welsh, Cornish, and Manx all use this word to describe a very



The protesters came from all over the world promoting messages ranging from grief and rage all the way to hope and optimism. Legions of the very young inspired by teenaged Greta Thunberg marched through the city’s elegant center.

specific color: ‘Blue-Green-Grey.’ In the lands inhabited by the Celts, where the sea meets the sky, it is easy to see why they developed a specific word for this. Ireland is known for being the land of ‘a thousand shades of green’ but there is a similar number of shades of grey. The color ‘Glas’ is everywhere, especially at dawn or at dusk in the City of Glasgow which derives its name from the color.

Glasgow was once home to 25 major shipyards. In the early 1900’s 20 percent of all ships afloat had been built in Glasgow and launched into the deep River Clyde. Proximity to steel and coal as well as the skill of shipbuilding, honed over centuries, and access to both capital and cheap labor in the form of local Scots and Irish immigrants made Glasgow the most important shipbuilding city in the world.

Over 300,000 Irish, fleeing the great famine, came to Glasgow. Tens of thousands of them worked in the shipyards. The Irish founded the Celtic Football club in 1887 and still proudly and defiantly display their green jerseys and shamrocks against the dreaded rivals, The Rangers (founded in 1872, who are draped with red, white, and blue. Irish labor was welcomed by the shipbuilders and capitalists who stoked sectarian divides between the Catholic and Protestant workers to keep wages

low. Divisions remain. Orange Order marches through Catholic neighborhoods still occur in Glasgow and when Celtic plays against the Rangers, the fans must enter the stadium on entirely separated sides with zero mixing between the fan groups. High fences and columns of uniformed police keep the sides apart. Side note: my airbnb wifi password was: ‘Rangers1’ Ugh!

In a grim acknowledgment of Glasgow’s strategic importance, the German Luftwaffe bombed Glasgow intensely in 1941. The city recovered and the naval vessels built in the yards were essential to winning the war. In the years after the war, the bitter compensation to Glasgow for their role in defeating fascism was the steep decline and the disappearance of most of the manufacturing jobs in the shipyards as manufacturers chased even lower wages to Asia.

## COP26

The COP26 conference was separated into two campuses or ‘zones’ on either side of the Clyde river on acres that were once shipyards: Blue and Green. (‘Glas’ colors again!). The Blue Zone was devoted to the negotiators, bureaucrats, and experts from countries around the world. The Green zone was reserved for NGOs, tribes, think tanks, business

consortia, private companies, and the public. Protesters tended to congregate nearest to the policy makers in the Blue zone but the larger scale protests were organized in the city’s center. The protesters came from all over the world promoting messages ranging from grief and rage all the way to hope and optimism. Protesters were sometimes organized in drum circles of greying hippies, kilt clad musicians playing Irish or Scottish jigs and reels or leading sing-a-longs. Legions of the very young inspired by teenaged Greta Thunberg marched through the city’s elegant center.

Glasgow became wealthy and even opulent for the privileged few during the expansion of maritime trade when Britannia ruled the waves as the world’s first global economic superpower. It does not take a great deal of research to discover that much of the foundational wealth was derived from the slave trade. In speaking with a 50-year-old Glaswegian named Sue who has lived here all her life, she described her shock and embarrassment to have learned only recently that the massive profits from slavery underwrote Glasgow’s prominence.

I attended a COP26 event at Merchants House, a guild founded in the 1600s as a meeting place for leading Glasgow businessmen and as a charity to help the widows and orphans of sailors lost at sea. It still operates as a respected philanthropic organization. The stately building on George Square was rebuilt in the 19th century during Glasgow’s golden age. Plaques on the walls of the club honor the generous benefactors that built the club, endowed its charity, and gave Glasgow its grandeur. But since the Black Lives Matter movement began, Glasgow has been studying its own history in the era of George Floyd. To their credit, Merchants House added a new plaque just six months ago:

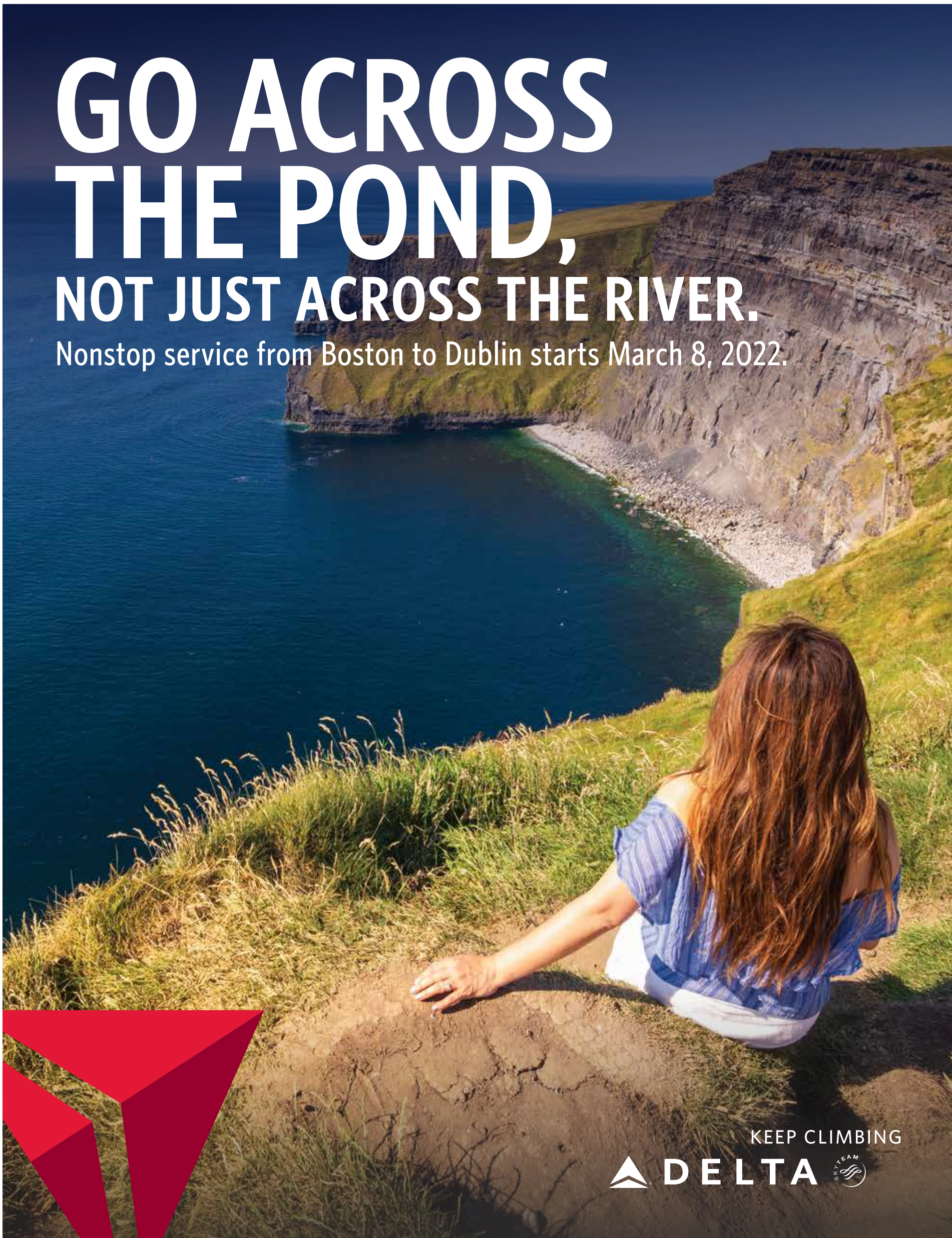
Cities and towns in Europe and America that became vastly wealthy during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries are linked by the euphemistically named ‘Atlantic trade.’ I commiserated with Sue that I had only recently learned of the depth of my beloved Boston’s ties to slavery that were hiding in plain view. The first American slave ship Desire was built in Marblehead. The fortune of Ward Nicholas Boylston, whom I’d understood to be a philanthropist and benefactor to Harvard University, was built on the slave trade. Brown University’s University Hall was physically built by slaves with money also derived from the slave trade. The list could, and should, go on. Many of the endowments of educational, cultural, artistic and philanthropic organizations in Glasgow and in Boston come from slavery. Acknowledging that slavery created foundational wealth is essential to attempting to correct those historic wrongs.

(Continued on page 9)



# GO ACROSS THE POND, NOT JUST ACROSS THE RIVER.

Nonstop service from Boston to Dublin starts March 8, 2022.



KEEP CLIMBING  
 DELTA 



# BOSTON IRISH Letter from Wicklow/Larry Donnelly

## Covid-19 and housing vex Ireland; across the sea, it's political intrigue

WICKLOW, Ireland – Like many others, I naively believed that, with statistics revealing that 90 percent of the Irish people over age 12 have received their second jab and are, hence, “fully vaccinated” against coronavirus, we could at last put it behind us and resume our lives as normal. Eventually, we would look back on eighteen months of lockdowns and disruptions as a strange period, when there was a climate of fear, yet equally, when we collectively realised what was most important as we huddled close with our nearest and dearest.

I was apparently wrong, however. In November, there were thousands of new cases of Covid-19 being diagnosed daily and hospitalisations have shot up. Tragically, a 14 year old child has passed away after recently testing positive.

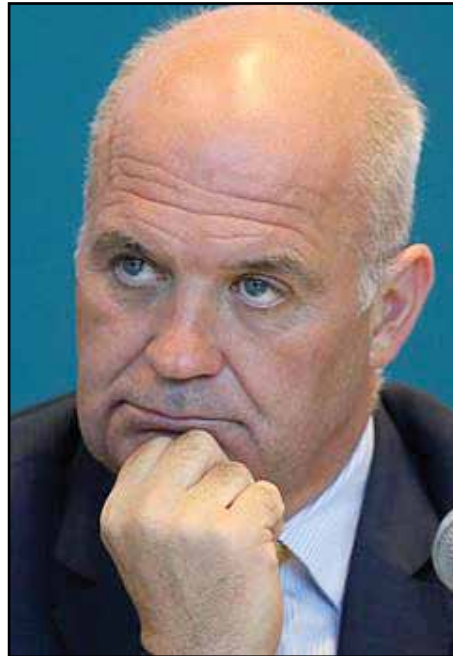
The National Public Health Emergency Team has requested that the Government “consider reinstating previous advice to work from home where possible.” Anecdotal, based on my conversations with publicans and restaurant owners, they are deeply concerned at the possibility of both of restrictions being re-imposed on them and of scheduled Christmas parties being cancelled as Ireland's Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Tony Holohan, cautions the citizenry to limit socialising.

Now, there is every chance that some of what we are hearing in the media is overly pessimistic – that we are indeed past the worst of it and that things will improve as those initially hesitant to be vaccinated come forward, as older and vulnerable women and men receive their boosters, and as young children are administered their shots – but it is frightening nonetheless. All of us have had more than enough of this wretched plague. Please God, it will soon leave us.

...

I watched the Nov. 2 Boston mayoral final from afar with keen interest. While the result was not a surprise given what multiple polls had shown, I was still taken aback by Michelle Wu's margin of victory. Particularly striking were Annissa Essaibi George's narrow victories in some precincts in her native Dorchester and Wu's win in Ward 20 (West Roxbury and a slice of Roslindale), widely considered one of the city's most conservative pockets with a significant constituency of long-time residents. It's been said before, yet it bears repeating: the city has changed altogether very rapidly and bears little resemblance, politically speaking at least, to the Boston I once knew. One fascinating aspect of the metamorphoses is that gentrification has arguably had a more profound political impact than the “white flight” that followed hot on the heels of forced busing in the 1970s.

By way of tangible example, here are the surnames of the 13 Boston City Councillors in 1997, 23 years after Judge W. Arthur Garrity's court order: Roache, Davis-Mullen, O'Neil, (Stephen) Mur-



**Publicans and restaurant owners are deeply concerned at the possibility of restrictions being re-imposed on them and of scheduled Christmas parties being cancelled as Ireland's Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Tony Holohan, above, cautions the citizenry to limit socializing.**

phy, Scappichio, Kelly, Feeney, Yancey, Conley, Hennigan, Saunders, Keane, and Honan. It remained dominated by Irish Americans and quite “old school” in its outlook. In late 2021, roughly two decades after gentrification began in earnest in the city, the city council members are Flaherty, Mejia, Louijeune, (Erin) Murphy, Edwards, Flynn, Baker, Worrell, Arroyo, Hicks, Anderson, Bok, and Breadon. There is now a majority of people of colour and it is a very progressive entity. In short, Boston's legislative body has been transformed utterly by gentrification in a way that it was not by busing.

Michelle Wu is an exceptionally capable person who, with any luck, will prove a great mayor. She has plenty of challenges on her plate, which has led some of her foes – who claim she has overpromised and cannot possibly deliver on the reforms she touted during the campaign – to assert that election night will be the high water mark for her over the next four years. Let's hope they are wrong.

...

One of the biggest problems Mayor Wu must tackle is the exorbitant cost of housing in the city of my birth. On this side of the Atlantic, it remains the defining issue in 2021. A Daft.ie report indicates that the already sky-high price of homes in Dublin has gone up by a further 10 percent in the last year. And even more chillingly, homes in rural counties like Longford, Wexford, Waterford, Kerry, and Roscommon are 20 percent dearer than they were in 2020. Rents, too, are exploding, with massive increases being felt nationally. The average monthly rent in late 2016 was €986. Five years on, it is €1,516. There is also a dearth of supply; currently,

a mere 1,460 properties are available to rent in Ireland. This is the lowest number since Daft.ie began tracking the figures in 2006. By way of stark example, a search on that website shows that there are only nine rental properties on the market in the city of Limerick.

Naturally, the pressure is on the government to do something to ameliorate what is unquestionably a crisis of epic proportions. The Fianna Fáil/Fine Gael/Green Party government has developed a “Housing for All” plan that will pour billions into improving the housing system and delivering different types of homes for people with a broad range of needs. Scepticism about the initiative abounds, though, and this is borne out in the polls. Sinn Féin, which has taken ownership of housing to its political advantage, is now the top choice of 37 percent of the electorate, not far off the 41 percent combined total for Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael. The big “but” for the former political wing of the IRA in this context is that voters – young people, especially – will expect them to solve the conundrum if and when they get into government. That ain't going to be easy.

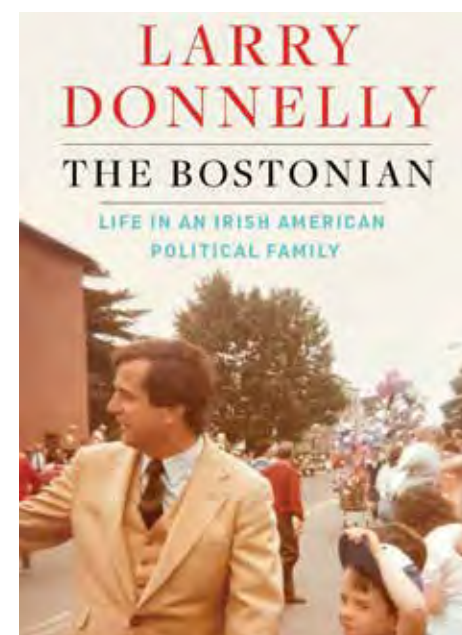
...

It is seldom that I am shocked by a political announcement, but I sincerely was by the news that New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu, of the Granite State's Republican political dynasty, has decided not to take on the Democratic incumbent, US Sen. Maggie Hassan. Hassan won her seat by a little more than 1,000 votes of the approximately 700,000 that were cast. Sununu, meanwhile, was re-elected in 2020 by 32 percentage points as Donald Trump went down by 7 percent. Early opinion surveys had him in front of Hassan.

Leading Republicans lobbied the 47-year-old Sununu aggressively to get in the race. Why did he forego a very good chance to win a US Senate seat and instantly become a national political figure? “I'd rather push myself 120 miles an hour delivering wins for New Hampshire than to slow down, and end up in Capitol Hill debating partisan politics without results... If we are just sitting around having meeting after meeting, waiting for votes to maybe happen. Man, I like moving, I like getting stuff done... I think I would be like a lion in a cage waiting to get something and affect real change. It wasn't for me.”

Frankly, in light of what we have witnessed unfold in recent years, it's hard to blame Sununu. But isn't it a profound shame that this is what has become of the country's upper house? Its clubby members are fond of saying that it is “the greatest deliberative body in the world.” Get real.

Larry Donnelly is a Boston attorney, a Law Lecturer at NUI Galway and a regular media contributor on politics, current affairs and law in Ireland and the US. Follow him on Twitter at @LarryPDonnelly.



## A view of politics from the ground floor

*Following is an excerpt from “The Bostonian: Life in an Irish American Political Family” by Larry Donnelly, a Boston Irish columnist and media contributor on politics, current affairs, and law in Ireland and the US. It will be launched locally on Fri., Jan. 7, 7:30 pm at the Irish Cultural Centre of New England in Canton.*

...

“Welcome to the family business, kid!”

My father bellowed out these words from our front door and they rang in my ears as I strolled somewhat apprehensively down the street I grew up on, armed with a clipboard, two pens and several sheets of officially headed paper from the town clerk's office.

I was on a mission to obtain a mere 25 signatures from neighbours in order to get my name on the ballot for the lowliest of elected positions in Massachusetts local government: representative town meeting member.

I was just 22 years old, having completed an undergraduate degree and moved back to my family home while pursuing a Law degree in Boston. Politics had long been my passion, euphemistically, and my obsession, in reality, from an unusually young age. And this was the first actual foray ‘in the arena’ for me.

It was something I had long been encouraged to do and had expressed a serious interest in, but the idea of it had always been far more romantic than the drudgery – setting out to knock on familiar and unfamiliar doors, looking to obtain the assistance of those who answered on that Saturday in the winter of 1997.

Although Dad never sugar-coated what any political candidacy entailed, I had shrugged it off as no big deal beforehand. Like many children, sons in particular, I should have listened more carefully to my father. Dad had more experience than almost anyone in this regard. His mother's side of the family had been involved in electoral politics in the city of Boston and the state of Massachusetts since emigrating from the west of Ireland around the start of the 20th century.

My father's great-uncles, Frank and Johnny Kelly, were legendary graduates

(Continued next page)



# COP26 Bottom Line: It was a step forward

(Continued from page 6)

## Slavery, Fascism, and Climate

Like abolishing slavery or defeating fascism, reversing climate breakdown is a moral obligation. Climate collapse will disproportionately damage people in countries that have done little to create the problem. Everyone on earth will be hurt by climate breakdown, as fires in California or flooded subway stations in Manhattan show, but it is the global south that will be hurt most catastrophically.



The pessimist might say that there is still forced servitude in the world, so we never truly eradicated slavery, or that there are still strongman leaders like Victor Orban, Vladimir Putin, Jair Bolsonaro (and, sadly, even the former occupant of the White House), so we never entirely defeated fascism. The lament could continue that perhaps we have already warmed the planet too much to make a difference and that an accelerating increase in temperature is inevitable. But in 2021 human beings from all fields of endeavor are finally laser focused on this issue and one should never bet against human beings' genius or resilience.

On the banks of the river Clyde stands a monument to the fallen Glaswegians who were volunteer members of the International Brigade that fought against fascism in Spain from 1936-1939. Volunteers from Scotland, Ireland, the USA,

England, and elsewhere went to Spain to try to stem the rise of fascism. The fact that the fascists won and that it took a world war to defeat Hitler and Mussolini, does not diminish their sacrifice. The true value of the International Brigade is the example they give to other movements like the campaign for climate justice.

The inscription reads:

Better to die on your feet than live forever on your knees.

A twelve-day meeting cannot reverse the damage to our environment overnight, but history will eventually view COP26 in Glasgow as neither a disappointment nor a turning point, but as a step forward in unleashing human genius and cooperation to address the defining challenge of our age.

On the banks of the river Clyde stands a monument, at right, to the fallen Glaswegians who were volunteer members of the International Brigade that fought against fascism in Spain from 1936-1939. The fact that the fascists won and that it took a world war to defeat Hitler and Mussolini, does not diminish their sacrifice.



Boston Irish

## An Introduction to Politics on the Ground Floor

of the old school. As a unit, they were once described as rather unsavoury characters, who the then ruling Boston Brahmin WASPish class 'feared would get control of [what had always been their] city and run it into the ground'. The Boston Brahmins were the descendants of mainly British landowners who were among the first people to come to the 'new world' and who retained a stranglehold on wealth and power in the city. They were often sceptical of new immigrants, the Irish in particular.

Frank Kelly was, in his era, the youngest-ever Boston City Councillor elected. He later served as the Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General of Massachusetts. Johnny was also a Boston City Councillor and was eventually chosen by his peers to be president of that body.

In the next generation, Dad's younger brother, Brian Donnelly, my godfather, spent three terms in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, seven terms in the United States House of Representatives and subsequently worked closely with Ambassador Madeleine Albright at the United Nations, prior to being appointed United States Ambassador

to Trinidad and Tobago by President Bill Clinton.

In short, politics really was the family business and, since I was young, I had – with no small amount of ambition or ego – envisaged myself as the one destined to carry on a proud tradition. One thing Dad constantly stressed was the respect he had for politicians who started at the bottom and worked their way up. As such, he wouldn't have me trying to parlay what was a strong name brand into skipping entry-level politics. In truth, however, there was another, far bigger obstacle to my going to the front of the queue. It was one of my own making. And it's one that may shock those who have heard me talk or read what I've written about American politics over the past two decades.

I was a fully signed-up, card-carrying member of the Republican Party.

Strangely, it was my father's oft-expressed disgust with the Democratic Party that at least partly led me to willfully abandon a central institution in our lives and in the lives of so many others in the Boston Irish community. Above all, it was the huge distance that had sprung up between the party and

the other main institution for most Boston Irish, the Roman Catholic Church, which gave rise to the discontent. My father was far from alone in finding himself isolated from national and local Democrats who embraced the socially liberal agenda that rapidly gained currency from the 1960s on.

Our family may have been Americans, and proud of our Irish heritage and close familial ties there, but above all, we were Catholics. As such, it was very hard for us collectively to stomach the divergence between what leading Democrats, including Senator Edward Kennedy, said about abortion (to name one topic) and what our Church teaches us. As a young, practising Catholic, it enraged me. And upon discovering what Republicans – Pat Buchanan was one whose speeches during his insurgent 1992 primary challenge to President George HW Bush and regular media contributions I found compelling – had to say, I gravitated to the GOP and joined the party shortly after my 18th birthday. This was my version of teenage rebellion. Sad but true.

...

The US launch of his new book –



LARRY DONNELLY:  
Recalling Politics 101

"The Bostonian: Life in an Irish American Political Family" – will be held at the Irish Cultural Centre of New England in Canton on Fri., Jan. 7, at 7:30 p.m. He will be in conversation with Boston Globe columnist Kevin Cullen and books will be available for purchase that evening. All are welcome.





## Christmas Gift Card Drive

The Centre is collecting Gift cards for distribution to people in need. Cards can be dropped at the Centre or mailed to Irish Pastoral Centre, 512 Gallivan Blvd, Dorchester Ma 02124. We appreciate your support!



## Fr. John Returns



It was great to see our former chaplain Fr John McCarthy at our Annual Mass for deceased community members and Thanksgiving feast at the Irish Social Club in West Roxbury. Special thanks to the Social Club and the Greenhill's Bakery for a wonderful event.

Fr John is pictured here with Irish Pastoral Centre great friend and supporter Margaret Dalton McCarron

The Irish Pastoral Centre is delighted to announce that beginning in December, we will offer Social Work Services on Monday evenings.



## IPC welcomes Danielle Owen

Wicklow native Danielle Owen LADC-I, LCSW, a licensed Clinical Social Worker will be available for appointments Monday evenings, 6 - 8 pm.

Since 2004 she has worked offering culturally sensitive counseling & mental health support services to the Irish Immigrant/ Irish American Community. Perhaps most well known for her work at Rian Immigrant Center, she has served immigrants of all nations with counseling, case management, free health screenings, skill building workshops and employment networking for Home Health Aides, Carers, Child Care workers and other immigrants in caring roles.



**Danielle Owen**

With a background in supporting troubled youth and traumatized adults, addressing mental health, families affected by addiction, domestic violence and health access & literacy issues, her recent work has found her increasingly addressing the suicide prevention needs of all age groups in the Irish immigrant community as well as other immigrant communities, through community gatekeeper trainings like QPR.

This is a great step forward in developing our Health and Wellness team. Danielle joins retired nurse Patsy Dinneen and Peggy Conneely, formerly of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Elder Affairs Commission. For confidential appointments please call 617-265-5300 and ask for Peggy or Patsy.



## A WELCOME VISIT

The Irish Pastoral Centre was honored to welcome Irelands Ambassador to the United States, Dan Mulhall and Boston's Consul General of Ireland Laoise Moore. The visit acknowledged the impressive efforts of the staff and volunteers for their work during the pandemic. The Centre is a recipient of the Department of Foreign Affairs Emigrant Support Programme which expresses the Government's support of, commitment to, and interest in the global Irish community.



**512 Gallivan Blvd #1  
Boston, MA 02124**

**(617) 265-5300**

**“ANSEO LE CHEILE” - HERE TOGETHER**



## Ireland gets ready for a cracking Christmas and New Year

2021's Christmas and New Year festivities across the island of Ireland will be a return to the sparkle and communal joy so much missed in 2020.

Ireland is gearing up for a Christmas season bursting with fairy lights, festivals and fun. With the relaxing of travel restrictions and the reopening of venues across the island, preparations are underway to celebrate the season in the highest of spirits.

In Northern Ireland, Belfast is looking forward to the return of the Christmas market, which will take over the grounds of the City Hall for four weeks from 20 November. Crammed with stalls selling continental fare from hot Glühwein and paella, to Belgian chocolates and baklava, as well as wonderful hand-crafted gifts, the market is a highlight of the city's Christmas season.

Meanwhile, at Hillsborough Castle, Northern Ireland's royal residence, a new after-dark illuminated Christmas trail will weave its way through the gorgeous gardens, bringing them to life in a dazzling display of colour and light.

At the other end of the island Cork is planning the return of Glow, which will light up the city with a series of fun events and activities including a fun fair, markets, themed shop window displays and live entertainment across the city.

The Viking city of Waterford stages one of Ireland's biggest Christmas festivals and 2021 will be an excuse to pull out all the stops. Winterval Waterford



Galway City knows how to make Christmas a place of lights and welcome with its traditional outdoor Christmas Festival.

*Tourism Ireland file photo*

will turn the historic city in Ireland's Ancient East into a winter wonderland bursting with festive fun.

And in the west, Galway and Limerick are also getting ready to join the Christmas fun with markets, music and theatrical events infusing the cities with seasonal cheer.

Dublin is a brilliant place to visit at Christmas with its bustling, music-filled streets, marvellous markets – including one at the Guinness Storehouse – and cosy pubs.

And if you can stretch your visit over New Year you'll be rewarded with one of the best parties around. New Year's Festival Dublin (31 December and 1 January) will bring together some of Ireland's best talents, offering a host of ticketed, free and family-friendly activities guaranteed to entertain and enthrall.

This two-day celebration encapsulates the exciting and vibrant atmosphere to be found at New Year in Dublin.

In Belfast there will also be lots of New Year's entertainment indoors and

on the streets. See in the New Year with great food and music at the city's historic Crumlin Road Gaol or wander through the animated Cathedral Quarter packed with bars and restaurants where revellers will be dancing in the streets as midnight chimes.

Please check for updates on Ireland's Christmas and New Year festivities and confirm details of events before planning your trip.

[www.ireland.com](http://www.ireland.com)

### An Original **Vincent Crotty**

**is the perfect Christmas Gift**

**There's much to see here.**

**Come in, or visit us on the web, So, take your time,  
look around, and view a large variety of  
Vincent Crotty recent work.**

**We hope you enjoy our site and you can order  
by phone: 781-749-0555  
or e-mail: [info@aislinggallery.com](mailto:info@aislinggallery.com)**

**Hours: Tuesday - Saturday  
9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.**

**For questions or orders from the website call us at  
781.749.0555  
or email to [info@aislinggallery.com](mailto:info@aislinggallery.com)**



"Sunrise over Connemara" by Vincent Crotty  
measures 19"x15" and sells for \$895.

**Aisling Gallery & Framing**  
**229 Lincoln St. (Rte. 3A), Hingham, MA**



# ‘A Christmas Celtic Sojourn’ goes live but limited



Above, the finale of the 2019 “A Christmas Celtic Sojourn.” Although last year’s virtual show was successful, “Christmas Celtic Sojourn” creator and host Brian O’Donovan is glad for the return of in-person performances: “Live music,” he says, “is clearly where it’s at.”  
Vic Dvorak photo

## In person at Rockport and Boston, then later online

By SEAN SMITH  
BOSTON IRISH CONTRIBUTOR

However many years “A Christmas Celtic Sojourn” lasts – and it’s about to hit 19 – there’s little doubt that the 2020 and 2021 editions will loom large in the collective memories of those involved in the music-song-dance-and-storytelling production, perhaps none more so than the show’s creator and guiding spirit, Brian O’Donovan.

In 2020, with Covid-19 an overwhelming concern, “Christmas Celtic Sojourn” went to an all-virtual format for the first time. A year later, the show is back live and in-person – albeit on a limited basis, on Dec. 14 at Rockport’s Shalin Liu Performance Center (sold out) and from Dec. 17 to Dec. 19 at the Cutler Majestic Theatre in Boston. It also will once again be available online from Dec. 18 to Dec. 26.

In both instances, the decision as to what course to follow was a tough one – but, O’Donovan believes, the right one.

“Last year, we felt it was our responsibility to shut down the live, in-theater presentation of the show, so as to help keep everybody healthy,” he explains. “Now, as many aspects of life are cau-

tiously, carefully coming back, we feel it’s our responsibility to stage it in the safest way possible. That means a limited number of performances in only two venues, which is unfortunate, given the enthusiasm we’ve seen at the other places where the show has run – but again, a precaution we believe is necessary.

“Frankly, it would be easier to *not* do ‘Christmas Celtic Sojourn’ – that was certainly the case last year. This year, presenting the show in reduced fashion, we’re dipping our toe in the water. But we’re confident we can make this happen, and we feel strongly that we should try, to remind us all of our shared humanity as we celebrate this season.”

Heading up the roster of artists for 2021 are the multi-instrumentalist Seamus Egan and the harpist-pianist Maeve Gilchrist, who by now are thoroughly ensconced in their additional roles as, respectively, music director and assistant music director. Moira Smiley returns as the featured singer, and the a cappella harmony quartet Windborne will be back again as well. For the fiddle-piano duo of Katie McNally and Neil Pearlman, this is its “Christmas Celtic Sojourn” debut, while Jenna Moynihan

once again adds her fiddling skills. Other returnees include Owen Marshall (guitar, bouzouki, harmonium), Yann Falquet (guitar, accordion, jaw harp) and mainstay Chico Huff (bass). Ashley Smith-Wallace, the featured dancer in 2019, will serve as dance director this go-round. And the show wouldn’t be complete without Lindsay O’Donovan (O’Donovan’s wife) supplying piano, vocals and ambient good cheer.

O’Donovan and his cohorts don’t think of “Christmas Celtic Sojourn” so much in terms of a show and its audience, but rather of one community built around a love of fellowship and tradition. Over the years, he has heard from numerous attendees – many of them listeners to his “Celtic Sojourn” radio show on WGBH – who have made the production a part of their holiday activities. But the community’s support for “Christmas Celtic” was never so evident as in 2020.

“Last year was a huge leap of faith: We told the artists and staff, ‘Let’s go the virtual route and see what happens,’ but we had no way of knowing whether we’d be able to pay anyone,” recalls O’Donovan. “So, everybody – from

the performers to the video and audio crew to the production staff – worked incredibly hard to make it the highest quality possible. And what happened? Some 7,000 households watched the show online, many of them in real time. And many people donated money on top of that.

“That told us that our community knows what we do, they feel it has value – and they own it.”

A closer look at this year’s line-up:  
•Seamus Egan, a co-founder of Irish American supergroup Solas, is known not only for his prowess on banjo, guitar, mandolin and whistle but also for his talent in composing and arranging tunes, as demonstrated on his 2020 album “Early Bright.” His current ventures include the Seamus Egan Project, gathering friends and musical guests for various events and tours – among them fellow 2021 “Christmas Celtic Sojourn” musicians Jenna Moynihan and Owen Marshall.

•Maeve Gilchrist is one of the more innovative Celtic harpists around, demonstrating a skillful technique as well as a genius in merging traditional harp with world music, jazz, and other

(Continued next page)



# The Murphy Beds, “Easy Way Down”

**The Murphy Beds, “Easy Way Down”** • It has been almost 10 years since Jefferson Hamer and Eamon O’Leary made their debut recording as The Murphy Beds, but the hiatus is understandable, given how busy the New York City-based pair have been elsewhere – adding in the pandemic factor, too. Dublin native O’Leary is part of The Alt (along with Nuala Kennedy and John Doyle) and has released several recordings of his own material, including this year’s “The Silver Sun”; Hamer, who grew up in Massachusetts, is a singer-songwriter himself whose collaborations include Boston’s own Session Americana and the enchanting “Child Ballads” album with Anaïs Mitchell. (Despite other commitments, Hamer and O’Leary have given a few Murphy Beds performances in the Boston area, including at the centenary commemoration of the 1916 Easter Rising held at Boston College.)

The appeal of The Murphy Beds lies in an often intricate, intense yet engaging interplay between their respective instruments – O’Leary on bouzouki and nylon string guitar, Hamer on acoustic guitar and mandolin – that weaves riffs and motifs behind exquisitely matched close harmony vocals. Though much of their repertoire draws on Irish, American, Scottish, and English folk traditions, O’Leary and Hamer have shown a proclivity for branching out into more contemporary material, and that holds true on this album, which includes the title track – written by Jay Ungar – “Falling in Love” by American country songwriter Bob McDill (also covered by Juice Newton, among others), and an O’Leary original, “Lie Easy.”

Highlighting the traditional songs are “The Holland Handkerchief,” a ghostly love story that Hamer and O’Leary invest with a patient, palpable build-up of suspense and anticipation; the well-traveled, sweet yet sad “Blackwater Side” (long associated with traditional singer Paddy Tunney); and the tragic “Annachie Gordon,” one of legendary English singer Nic Jones’ much-admired discoveries, played here on duet guitars in a winsome 3/4 time and capped off by an unnamed tune that underscores the story’s poignancy.

There are a couple of other instances on “Easy Way Down” where O’Leary and Hamer focus solely on the instrumental: a robust medley of the Irish jig “Scattery Island” and the march “Bonnie Prince Charlie” – Hamer’s guitar switching between rhythm and harmony, to great effect, behind O’Leary’s bouzouki; and the hop jig “Cucanandy” after a moving rendition of Ewan MacColl’s “Thirty Foot Trailer.”

Speaking of eloquent but economic songwriting, don’t overlook O’Leary’s “Lie Easy,” full of troubled remembrance and resolve:

I left a note wrote on the mirror  
I looked my old life in the eye  
I live by words that soared away  
Like birds into the morning sky  
There are times we fix our eyes on glory  
There are days we turn away in shame  
Still we ride, still we sing at night  
And rise up with the day

There is a consistently unhurried, patient quality to the Murphy Beds’ music, as well as a complexity and depth that rewards you for listening to it. [murphybedsmusic.com]

**Grosse Isle, “Le Bonhomme Sept Heures/The Bonesetter”** • The name “Grosse Isle” is a reference to one of the innumerable stories woven into the Irish Diaspora. Located in the St. Lawrence River in Quebec, Grosse Isle was a way station – and all too often a final resting place – for Irish fleeing the Great Famine. In fact, it’s the largest burial ground outside of Ireland for famine refugees, and there is a national historic memorial site on the island.

But despite the tragic association, Grosse Isle is also suggestive of the ties between Irish and Quebecois culture, particularly as regards music. That’s the *raison d’être* of this trio, which comprises Connemara native Fiachra O’Regan (uilleann pipes, banjo, whistle) and Quebec musicians Sophie Lavoie (fiddle, piano, vocals) and André Marchand (guitar, foot percussion, vocals). A quick bit of history: O’Regan and Lavoie began performing as a duo 13 years ago, becoming a trio named Fásta with guitarist Michael McCague (a past member of Téada), who was succeeded by Marchand; the O’Regan-Lavoie-Marchand combo released one album as Fásta and another without a band name, before choosing Grosse Isle as its *nom d’groupe*.

In any event, “Le Bonhomme Sept Heures” is arguably the trio’s finest effort in integrating Irish and Quebecois music, which have modest but hardly insignificant differences, such as in ornamentation (more rolls and cuts for Irish, more triplets for Quebecois) and the tendency in Quebecois toward “crooked” tunes, with beats added or removed from the natural phrases of 16 beats. Suffice it to say, Grosse Isle captures both the drive of Irish and the gallop (and *joie de vivre*) of Quebecois. Wisely, they don’t try to graft the music traditions together excessively or unnecessarily, but instead look for, and craft, opportunities for them to complement one another.

A particularly well-put-together set of reels begins with pipes and fiddle having a go at “Jack Caughlan’s,” then switching to pipes and guitar for “Miss Langford,” before Lavoie strikes up “Jack the Lad” – which happens to be the Quebecois version

of the Irish “Five Mile Chase.” O’Regan takes up the tune on pipes, and with Marchand’s outstanding foot percussion – a delightfully infectious hallmark of Quebecois music – plus a guest appearance on bones by Jacques Landry, the effect is marvelous. One of the album’s best tracks, and best Irish-Quebec fusions, is the song “Les Tailleurs de Pierre,” with guest singer Michel Faubert (once with the mighty Quebecois ensemble La Bottine Souriante) alongside O’Regan’s pipes and Lavoie’s fiddle: Intermittently, the pair play the melody – reminiscent of “Sweet Betsy from Pike” – as a jig before shifting back to the song’s 3/4 time signature.

All three deserve attention, and praise, for their musicianship, but it’s hard not to single out Lavoie. In many ways, she’s the linchpin here, since she plays both Irish- and Quebecois-style fiddle. She’s also versatile on piano: Listen to her flat-out gorgeous mix of accompaniment and lead on that quintessential Irish air, “Ned of the Hill (Éamonn an Chnoic),” with O’Regan’s equally exquisite pipes. The very next track, she shifts to steady, dependable oom-chuck rhythm on a pair of reels, “Johnny Laughran’s/McKenna’s,” and on Quebecois fiddler Claude Methé’s “Calamine” – which follows “Patsy Campbell’s Reel” – she matches O’Regan note for note and throws in some nifty bass runs as well. Her singing voice is mellow and relaxed, but quite capable of tackling the up-tempo numbers, such as “Je Veux M’y Marier” and the cautionary tale “Dedans Paris,” the latter of which includes a fine vocals-pipes duet with O’Regan (who might be the originator of a Quebecois uilleann pipes style).

Please, however, don’t overlook Marchand, a mainstay of Quebec music for decades, as co-founder of the aforementioned La Bottine Souriante as well as the groundbreaking a cappella quintet Les Charbonniers de l’Enfer (Faubert also is a member), among many other achievements. His warm, folksy voice takes center stage on “Dans Paris à L’Orient” and harmonizes with Lavoie on the chorus of “Le Bonhomme et la Bonne Femme.” Most of all, his justly praised guitar accompaniment – highly influential in Quebecois trad circles – is at the core of Grosse Isle’s sound, and not just the quick-paced instrumentals, as his spare, sensitive backing on “À Grosse Isle” demonstrates.

By now, we’re used to explorations of Irish music’s commonalities with that of, say, Appalachia or Scotland – not to mention France (Brittany) or Spain (Galicia) – so the idea of its ties with our Francophone neighbors to the north may be an unfamiliar one. If so, Grosse Isle will be a very happy revelation. [grosse-isle.com]

## In person at Rockport and Boston, then later online

(Continued from page 12)

contemporary styles and sounds.

- Moira Smiley is a self-described “vocal polyglot” whose work as a soloist and with the band VOCO embraces Irish and Appalachian music as well as Eastern European traditions.

- Katie McNally’s exuberant, passionate fiddling and Neil Pearlman’s dynamic piano-playing – mixing elements of jazz, Latin, and other musical forms – make for a fascinating modern outlook on Scottish and Cape Breton music while maintaining a healthy respect for those traditions.

- Jenna Moynihan, her fiddle playing rooted in both Scottish and Appalachian old-time traditions, has in recent years come to the fore as a fine singer of traditional and contemporary songs.

- Performing songs from numerous folk traditions around the world, Windborne’s members – Lynn Mahoney Rowan, Will Thomas Rowan, Lauren Breunig, and Jeremy Carter-Gordon – grew up in the tight-knit, far-reaching New England folk and traditional music scene, participating in such events and activities like Revels, contra and morris dance, Village Harmony, and the Country Dance and Song Society.

- Owen Marshall is a member of Maine-based quartet The Press Gang and has frequently appeared in many Boston-area musical collaborations.

- Yann Falquet is an active, creative acoustic guitar player on the Québécois scene who has drawn inspiration from the playing of the accompanists of different cultures (Brittany, Scandinavia, Ireland, North America).

- One of the longest serving “Christmas Celtic Sojourn” regulars, Chico Huff has played bass with innumerable prominent artists across the spectrum, from folk to rock to jazz.

- The daughter of two Irish dance teachers, and one of the youngest American females to win the World Irish Step Dancing Championship, Ashley Smith-Wallace went on to become well rounded in dance, including ballet, hip-hop, jazz, and musical theater.

Even with the return to in-person performances, O’Donovan says, “A Christmas Celtic Sojourn” is remerging in an arts and entertainment landscape that has changed irrevocably since 2019. “Virtual/livestream was a great value last year, and now it’s a supplement instead of an alternative, but there’s no question it will be part of what we do

going forward. Many artists, organizers and venues experimented with the virtual/livestream format during the lockdown, and its possibilities are still being explored, so it will most certainly have a presence.

“All that said, live music is clearly where it’s at, especially as regards folk and traditional music, where the ability, and the need, to connect with others is so vital. Perhaps we might’ve taken for granted how important it is to us: I know when I went out to my first performance, I actually started to cry; it was, and is, a very emotional experience, and a reminder of what we share as a community.”

All information about “A Christmas Celtic Sojourn” is available at [christmasceltic.com](http://christmasceltic.com).



# Holiday specials: Reunited Lúnasa at The Burren; ‘An Irish Christmas’ at the ICC; Club Passim concerts

BY SEAN SMITH

BOSTON IRISH CONTRIBUTOR

Yes, it’s a cliché, but one that Kevin Crawford is quite happy to proclaim: “We’re getting the band back together!”

The band in question is Lúnasa, one of the more venerated and accomplished Irish groups of the past quarter-century, noted for its layered, harmonically sophisticated, exquisitely arranged sound. Crawford and his fellow Lúnasans will be fully reunited for a brief US tour that will bring them to The Burren Backroom in Somerville on Dec. 15, with shows at 6 and 8:30 p.m.

The upcoming road trip (which will also see the band play at the Spire Center for the Performing Arts in Plymouth on December 16) will mark the first time in almost two years that a full complement of Lúnasa has played together in person: Crawford (flute, whistle), Cillian Vallely (pipes, whistle), Colin Farrell (fiddle, whistle), Patrick Doocey (guitar) – who all live in the US – and, coming over from Ireland, Trevor Hutchinson (double bass). (Guitarist Ed Boyd and fiddler Sean Smyth, who reside in Ireland, are with the band for Irish or other overseas gigs.) Also joining them at The Burren will be the Galway singer, multi-instrumentalist, and dancer Dave Curley, now living in Ohio.

This will be eighth time in the last nine years that Lúnasa has presented its version of a holiday special at The Burren, with Karan Casey and then Ashley Davis serving as their guest vocalists. That alone is cause for enthusiasm as far as Crawford is concerned, but he’s also hoping the December concerts augur a return to an active, and in-person, schedule for 2022.

“I really wondered how we would function in the pandemic,” he says. “I was afraid of losing out on that in-the-moment vibe, which you really can’t capture through Zoom or other digital means; there’s just no feeling of ‘when the magic happens.’

“We’re very fortunate we had the tools and opportunities to connect with one another during the lockdown and travel restrictions, but it just wasn’t the same.”

In recent months, as live music engagements have returned, Crawford and Vallely have been able to do some gigs with Farrell and/or Doocey (as well as Boston-area guitarist Alan Murray). These have been certainly been satisfying, but also necessary in restoring some semblance of normalcy, as far as Crawford is concerned.

“From what I could see, there were a number of ways musicians responded to the pandemic. Some got very creative and flourished, found some project to do, made recordings or videos, and so on. But I know of other musicians who just haven’t been able to pick up their instruments at all. How do you recover from that?

“I was lucky in that I started teaching after the lockdown began. The feeling back then was, ‘Ah, it’ll be over in six weeks,’ but of course it wasn’t. Yet



Except for this online concert back in March – along with another last year – Lúnasa hasn’t played together as a band in about two years. Fortunately, that will change come December, when they embark on a brief tour that will include a stop at The Burren.

everyone stayed with me. I wasn’t sure I could keep up with teaching for several hours every day, but I loved it. I needed a purpose, a routine, a discipline to my life, and teaching definitely helped with that.”

Still, Crawford acknowledges having had some anxiety about whether “there would still be an audience for us” whenever live-and-in-person performances resumed. The positive response the band received to its two online concerts – one of which included a guest appearance by Curley – was reassuring, however.

“Those concerts were hard work – compiling them, getting them up to an acceptable standard,” he says. “We just felt very strongly that we should give back to a loyal fan base. And the feedback we got encouraged us that people have hunger for our music.

“I do see the virtual or livestream performance as a new route we’ll all have to follow. If you can take advantage of this technology, you can bring your music where you might not be able to otherwise, maybe expand your audience. But with the live performances we’ve done so far, you can see why people still come out: They like the spontaneity, the fun, the connection that’s formed in the room. And that’s what we like, too.”

Crawford also likes the chance to collaborate with vocalists, something that Lúnasa – whose repertoire is primarily instrumental – has done with greater frequency in the past several years: Their 2018 album “CAS,” for instance, featured tracks with Tim O’Brien, Daorí Farrell, Natalie Merchant, Mary Chapin Carpenter, and Eric Bibb. Now comes Curley, whose diverse résumé includes RUNA, the Brock Maguire Band, fiddler Manus Maguire, and Moya Brennan of Clannad; among his more recent projects

has been the transatlantic contemporary folk trio One for the Foxes.

“It’s a real coup to have Dave play with us – just an outstanding singer and musician,” says Crawford. “Working with vocalists has been a great experience for us as a band. We’ve really enjoyed learning how songs are crafted, which is a different discipline than instrumentals. You have to be able to rein it in, to be conscious of leaving space for the song and basically just working in the moment.”

Another enjoyable aspect of these holiday shows, says Crawford, is that they often entail coming up with “60 to 70 percent new material.” Depending on who their guest singer has been, the set list might include not only draw from the Irish/British Isles tradition, but American/Appalachian, even Breton and Galician.

“You just have to see how it goes,” he laughs. “Being spontaneous around the holidays is part of what makes them fun.”

For updates on ticket availability and other information, go to [burren.com/music](http://burren.com/music).

...

There are some other Irish/Celtic-flavored holiday events in Greater Boston, including two at the Irish Cultural Centre of New England in Canton. On Dec. 5, the ICC will host “An Irish Christmas” with Andy Cooney, a Long Island native who has sung professionally for more than three decades, has toured around the world, and been featured on CD, DVD, and broadcast television. Cooney’s repertoire ranges from classic Irish ballads to more contemporary sounds. Also on hand will be Scituate resident Erin Henry-Verina, who has worked in professional theater for almost 15 years as performer and choreographer,

and the Haley School of Irish Dance. Shows are at 3 and 5:30 p.m.

A week later (Dec. 12), “Irish Christmas in America” comes to the ICC for shows at 1 and 4:30 p.m. Produced by Sligo fiddler Oisín Mac Diarmada of the band Téada, the show features Irish music, song and dance, with such eminent performers as Gráinne Hambly, Seán Gavin, and Alan Murray as well as a photographic display that evokes the traditions and spirit of Ireland.

For tickets and other information on both events, go to [irishculture.org](http://irishculture.org).

Two Boston-area Celtic performers will be presenting season-related concerts at Club Passim in Harvard Square this month. Fresh from her recent New England tour, Hanneke Cassel, a virtuoso Scottish and Cape Breton-style fiddler who has cultivated her own distinctive take on the tradition, will celebrate the release of her Christmas album, “O Come Emmanuel,” on Dec. 14 at 8 p.m. Promising a night of “carols, new tunes and more,” Cassel will be joined by several guests, including her cellist husband Mike Block, long-time accompanists Keith Murphy and Christopher Lewis, fiddler Maura Shawn Scanlin (of the duo Rakish), and singer-songwriter Jennifer Kimball, one-half of legendary contemporary folk duo The Story.

On Dec. 23 at 7 p.m., Irish harpist and singer Áine Minogue makes her annual visit to Passim to celebrate the winter solstice and holiday season. The Tipperary native is known for her serene, meditative sound, blending elements of new age and world music with those of Irish and other Celtic traditions, and an abiding interest in the spirituality and mythology found in the ancient Celtic world and its traditions and rituals.

Tickets and details at [passim.org](http://passim.org).





# Celtic Woman

## POSTCARDS FROM IRELAND

<b>MARCH 24<sup>TH</sup></b> <b>CHEVALIER THEATRE</b> <b>BOSTON, MA</b>	<b>MARCH 29<sup>TH</sup></b> <b>MERILL AUDITORIUM</b> <b>PORTLAND, ME</b>	<b>MARCH 30<sup>TH</sup></b> <b>FLYN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS</b> <b>BURLINGTON, VT</b>	<b>MARCH 31<sup>TH</sup></b> <b>CAPITOL CENTER FOR THE ARTS</b> <b>CONCORD, NH</b>
---	---	---	--

GET TICKETS AT [CELTICWOMAN.COM](http://CELTICWOMAN.COM)

## Winter at the Irish Cultural Centre



THE IRISH CULTURAL CENTRE OF NEW ENGLAND PRESENTS

### Celtic Christmas

December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**Ticket Prices:**  
 Members - \$37  
 Non Members - \$40  
 VIP Meet & Greet - \$60

VIP Meet & Greet - 7PM  
 General Admission - 7:45PM  
 Show Starts - 8PM

200, New Boston Dr., Canton, MA  
[www.irishculture.org](http://www.irishculture.org) 781-821-8291



### IRISH CHRISTMAS IN AMERICA

at The Shore

Live at the ICC

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12 | 2 SHOWS 1PM & 4:30PM**

Advance tickets: \$36 | ICC members \$32 or \$40 on the night

200 New Boston Drive, Canton MA 781-821-8291 [www.irishculture.org](http://www.irishculture.org)



### ICC GRAND ANNUAL DRAW

Presents

## A 50/50 Raffle

December 11<sup>th</sup> at 9pm

### 50/50 Raffle

Total Prize Pool: 50 % of all tickets sold

Multiple chances to win cash prizes!  
 Grand Prize: 50% (less 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> prizes) Second Prize: \$5,000  
 Third Prize: 3 chances to win \$1,000

An opportunity to win BIG! The more tickets we sell the more you WIN

Tickets: \$100 *only 2000 tickets sold*

Buy online at [www.irishculture.org](http://www.irishculture.org) Call 781-821-8291

200 New Boston Drive, Canton, MA 02021

More details available on our website

**Irish Cultural Centre**  
**200 New Boston Drive., Canton, MA**  
**781-821-8291** [www.irishculture.org](http://www.irishculture.org)







# Live and Virtual A CHRISTMAS CELTIC SOJOURN

with Brian O'Donovan



## BRINGING YOU COMFORT AND JOY THIS DECEMBER

*A Christmas Celtic Sojourn* will be both live on-stage and virtual in December but with a limited run of shows. Our goal is to be there for you again this holiday as we re-emerge. We will sing together our familiar songs, and as always, introduce new material. In our virtual edition, and encouraged by our success last year, we will visit with musicians around the world in their own homes sharing their holiday traditions.

Go to [www.christmasceltic.com](http://www.christmasceltic.com) for more information and access to tickets. As always, we thank you for your support and look forward to having you with us.

## LIVE

### SHALIN LIU PERFORMANCE CENTER

December 14, 7:30PM & 8PM



### CUTLER MAJESTIC THEATRE

December 17, 8PM

December 18, 3PM & 8PM

December 19, 1PM & 5PM

## VIRTUAL

December 18, 7:30PM

December 19, 3PM & 7:30PM

December 21, 7:30PM

December 22, 7:30PM

December 23, 7:30PM

December 24, 7:30PM

December 25, 3PM & 7:30PM

December 26, 3PM & 7:30PM

GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY:

PHOTO CREDIT: TIM RICE PHOTO





# Holiday Happenings at the Irish Cultural Centre

The Irish Cultural Centre of New England proudly presents

## An Irish Christmas

starring **Andy Cooney**

**Sunday December 5, 2021**  
**3:00PM & 5:30PM**

with special guest **Erin Henry Verina**

The Irish Cultural Centre  
200 New Boston Dr.  
Canton, MA 02021

Call: (781) 821-8291

\$37.50 (Non Members) \$33 (Members)

Purchase Tickets Online:  
[www.irishculture.org](http://www.irishculture.org)



The Irish Cultural Centre of New England



## Christmas Family Brunch

In Conjunction with our Visit to Santa's Cottage

**Saturday 4th of December 2021**

From 9:30am to Noon

Enjoy Chocolate Chip Pancakes, Home Baked Goods, Hot Drinks & More!

Festive Arts & Crafts, Music & Fun!

Cost \$12 Adults \$7 Children

FOR BOOKINGS EMAIL: [ICCPUB@IRISHCULTURE.ORG](mailto:ICCPUB@IRISHCULTURE.ORG)

200 NEW BOSTON DR., CANTON, MA. (781) 821-8291 [WWW.IRISHCULTURE.ORG](http://WWW.IRISHCULTURE.ORG)



THE IRISH CULTURAL CENTRE'S ANNUAL

# VISIT WITH SANTA

IN OUR WINTER WONDERLAND COTTAGE!

A unique and special visit with Santa by the fireside to tell him your special Christmas wishes! One Family at a Time allows for special family photos with Santa!

**9:30AM START TIME**  
**SATURDAY 4TH**  
**OF DECEMBER**

TICKETS ONLY \$8 PER CHILD

Includes a Gift from Santa

**BOOKING ESSENTIAL**  
200 NEW BOSTON DR., CANTON, MA.  
(781) 821-8291



Tickets available online via  
[WWW.IRISHCULTURE.ORG](http://WWW.IRISHCULTURE.ORG)

THE IRISH CULTURAL CENTRE OF NEW ENGLAND

Invite you to attend our

## Annual Christmas Tree Lighting

**Friday, December 3rd ~ 7PM**

Mulled Wine & Mince Pies Served

Cash Mince Fiddle & Beanachtais na Nollag Rinnat

781-821-8291  
[www.irishculture.org](http://www.irishculture.org)  
200, NEW BOSTON DR., CANTON, MA



**Irish Cultural Centre**  
**200 New Boston Drive., Canton, MA**  
**781-821-8291** [www.irishculture.org](http://www.irishculture.org)



# ‘Belfast’ offers an unforgettable look at The Troubles through the eyes of a child

**Branagh’s memories of Summer 1969 infuse a moving and memorable Film**

By Peter F. Stevens  
Boston Irish Staff

In a word, “Belfast” is ambitious. The oft-wistful, oft-rueful film by the famed actor and director Kenneth Branagh succeeds admirably, melding heart, humor, family, violence, and grit in the neighborhood of his youth. Set in the summer of 1969 against the onrushing backdrop of The Troubles, the film unfolds in Branagh’s mixed Protestant and Catholic, working-class neighborhood; through the eyes of nine-year-old “Buddy,” moviegoers view a city and a country about to explode.

Buddy, played by Jude Hill in a performance that is sweet, touching, and skillful far beyond his age, stands in as the young Branagh. From the film’s opening scene, omnipresent violence takes hold – neighbors converse and Buddy and his friends are at play when a rampaging mob of Protestants storms into the neighborhood, trashes only the residences of Catholics, and drives a terrified, bewildered Buddy and neighbors into their homes.

Buddy, his parents, his brother, and his grandparents, as well as their friends and neighbors, face changes and choices that threaten to change not only their lives, but also their very identities. Buddy and his family are Protestants, but have long mixed with their Catholic neighbors. The live-and-let-live, don’t judge-anyone-simply-by-religion credo that Buddy’s family has practiced comes face to face with the with-us or against-us dictate infecting their neighborhood and all of divided Belfast.

W.B. Yeats’s immortal lines about the Easter Rising



A scene from the movie “Belfast.”

could aptly resonate about the tragedy erupting in Northern Ireland during that summer: “All changed, changed utterly.” The events to come in Belfast that year and beyond, however, did not provide the “the terrible beauty” of Yeats’s “Easter, 1916.”

Opting for black and white except for scenes of the movies Buddy and his family watch and for color shots of Belfast today, Branagh has crafted a celluloid memoir that for all its turmoil is at its heart a family saga. Jamie Dornan plays Buddy’s father, proving yet again that his acting talent eclipses his leading-man looks. Charismatic and decent, his words reflect a man who knows that all is changing even as he utters, “There is no our side and their side in this neighborhood.”

As Buddy’s mother, Catriona Balfe delivers, in this reviewer’s opinion, an Oscar-worthy performance.

Strong, fiercely devoted to her two boys, deeply in love with her husband and her neighborhood, her range of emotion is pitch perfect. Whenever she’s on screen, the cliché that you can’t take your eyes off her holds true. The cinematic chemistry between her and Dornan serves as one of the film’s cornerstones.

The same holds true for Buddy’s grandparents, played by two of the finest actors around – Dame Judi Dench and Ciaran Hinds. There is no overstating how nuanced and affecting their performances ring. One of their most moving and heartwarming scenes occurs when, amid playful teasing shaded in a lifelong bond, Hinds pulls her from a chair and dances with her in a tight embrace. The years seemingly drift away as the viewer realizes that despite their age, the grandparents still look at each other and see the young man and young woman who first fell in love.

Love – of family and of place – is another cornerstone of “Belfast,” and as the pressure on Buddy’s father to join Protestants hellbent on forcing Catholics from the city mounts, he urges his wife to move with him to England, where he has steady work, or even to such “exotic” locales as Vancouver or Sydney. Belfast born and bred, she is having none of it. Then, when he is drawn into a tense showdown with a former classmate and virulent anti-Catholic “gangster,” the family’s hand is forced. (In hopes that readers will take in “Belfast,” I won’t reveal the outcome.)

The looming conflict notwithstanding, Buddy strives to remain a kid. In one hilarious misadventure after another, he and his family’s humanity and normality endure. His attempts to win the heart of the “smartest girl in class” – a Catholic! – will have anyone with a heart rooting for him.

Branagh’s film has evoked favorable comparisons to John Boorman’s masterful “Hope and Glory” (1987), which evoked the London Blitz through the eyes of a young boy. While violence permeates both

(Continued next page)

## DOLPHIN SONG

### AN IRISH ROMANTIC FANTASY NOVEL

TO ORDER: [WWW.TOMRICHARDS.IE](http://WWW.TOMRICHARDS.IE)

When she lost her family, the pain went on and on..... and then a miracle occurred

Following the death at sea of her Irish husband, Michael, Dawn McCarthy must focus on Jason, their only child. Having seen his father die, the five-year-old has retreated into a world of silence. Yet, when they encounter a wild Dolphin, the boy takes his first tentative steps toward healing. As Dawn witnesses a powerful bond grow between Jason and the dolphin, she suspects the mammal is much more than she had at first supposed.

**A Five Star Amazon Best Seller**

TOM RICHARDS  
"Is it possible to love someone so completely they never die?"

DOLPHIN SONG

**A powerful story. Today's world needs such a tale**

## THE RED ROOSTER

### BAR & GRILL

WRENTHAM MASSACHUSETTS

**Traditional Irish Session**

**First Sunday Afternoon of Every Month!**



# SPREADING THE WORD

## Reconciliation of conflict is the focus of the John and Pat Hume Foundation

By Peter F. Stevens  
Boston Irish Staff

The legacy of the late Nobel Peace Prize Laureate John Hume and his late wife Patricia lives on in the eponymous foundation dedicated to peaceful reconciliation of seemingly intractable conflicts. With Pat an equal partner at his side every step of the way, John Hume was the “indispensable man” relentlessly bucking extremism on all sides of The Troubles on the long path from Bloody Sunday to the 1998 Good Friday Peace Agreement. The Humes proved that reconciliation could work in Northern Ireland and beyond.

John Hume’s globally powerful voice for peace resonates in his status as the only person to garner the Nobel Peace Prize, the Gandhi Peace Prize, and the Martin Luther King Award. Through the John and Pat Hume Foundation, the mission to further the work of the Humes continues.

Former SDLP Stormont minister Dr. Sean Farren, Foundation chairman and renowned



Former SDLP Stormont minister Dr. Sean Farren, chairman of the John and Pat Hume Foundation, with the late Pat Hume, a true partner in her husband’s work for peace.  
*Belfast Telegraph photo*

author and academic, recently visited Boston to promote the foundation’s work and took time to speak with *Boston Irish Magazine*.

Launched following John Hume’s death, in 2020, and with his wife playing a pivotal role in the organization’s birth, the Hume Foundation’s avowed purpose is, in Dr. Farren’s words, “to carry on the Humes’ legacy of activism for peace through reconciliation.” He adds, “Their lives were devoted to change through peaceful

means.”

With the onslaught of illness and the passing of John in 2020, Pat was determined that his work would go forward. She worked toward that goal until her passing last September.

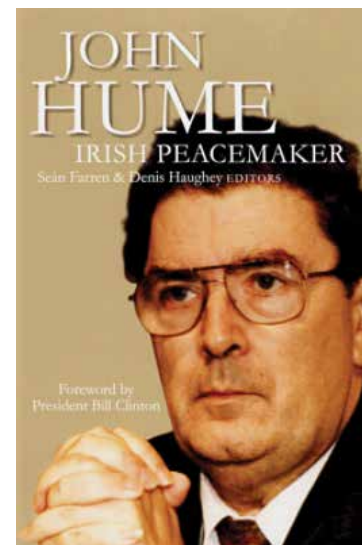
“It was so important and fitting that we acknowledged Pat’s contributions to the Foundation,” Dr. Farren notes, adding that she “urged reconciliation at the heart of the Foundation’s work and programs. Peace building was as important to her as it was to

John. They were truly a team.”

The importance of Pat Hume in ensuring that her husband’s prodigious work for reconciliation in Northern Ireland would continue there and other turbulent locales around the world is expressed on the Foundation’s website:

“His wife and partner, Pat, ran his constituency office from the early days of the Civil Rights Movement, right through the darkest days of The Troubles, and the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 — of which John was a chief architect — until John retired in 2005. Pat was his backbone and his trusted advisor, as well as being the point of contact on the ground to whom many of the families of Derry went for help and support on a wide range of issues.”

In response to a question about whether he and his Foundation colleagues worry that Brexit and other present tensions in Northern Ireland pose a threat to the Good Friday Agreement, Dr. Farren replied, “I’m certainly concerned, especially about any return



to a closed border [between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland]. I remain optimistic, however, that John’s strategy of reconciliation, which has in large part brought peace to the North, is firmly planted. One of the ways we are working to teach the lessons of reconciliation is through creating relationships and curriculums with universities and through workshops.”

Through the John and Pat Hume Foundation, the legacy of its namesakes’ campaign of reconciliation, an integral linchpin of the Good Friday Agreement, continues. As Dr. Farren points out, the work is as important today as it ever was.

For more information about the John and Pat Hume Foundation, see [humefoundation.org](http://humefoundation.org).

## ‘Belfast’

works, it is subtler and even more understated in “Belfast,” where the threat feels more claustrophobic and insular. Branagh’s “Troubles” are on a narrow patch of turf — a neighborhood. Everything happens on Buddy’s streets. In “Hope and Glory,” the threat and violence occur largely from above as the Luftwaffe pounds London day and night. For the boys in both films, the terror is palpable. In “Belfast,” the British troops and armor, as well as the police, make appearances — but sparingly. The true tension is that of neighbor against neighbor. For both boys, resilient and pragmatic families are what carry them through the turmoil.

Like Boorman, Branagh has tapped deeply into his own childhood memories to remind us that behind the corrosive violence and fear are good people trying to make the best of things for their families and friends. The film is alternately sentimental and unsparing in its impact. Fittingly, Belfast native Van Morrison provides most of the soundtrack. The movie should garner Academy Awards nods.

The final scene in “Belfast” perfectly captures the gut-wrenching choices that Buddy’s family is forced to make, and the weary, but love-filled visage of Judi Dench mirrors the words of the film’s closing credits:

*For the ones who stayed. For the ones who left. And for all the ones who were lost.*



**Dr. Sarah Kimball, MD;** Director of Boston Medical Center’s Immigrant and Refugee Health Center (IRHC)  
Rian Immigrant Center will present its Solas Award to Dr. Kimball for her steadfast dedication to refugee and immigrant rights, social justice, and the holistic health of immigrant and refugee families.

**José Nieto**  
The Rian Immigrant Center will present its Solas Courage Award to José Nieto for his incredible resilience, despite daunting personal, legal and systemic obstacles, in reuniting his family in the United States and his tireless pursuit of providing them a safe, stable life full of opportunity.



**Enes Kanter**  
Honored for his human rights activism, commitment to social justice, and philosophy of mutual respect





# Kieran Jordan launches documentary on Dan Furey, fiddler, dance master

By SEAN SMITH  
BOSTON IRISH CONTRIBUTOR

Last month, Boston-area Irish dance performer, teacher, and choreographer Kieran Jordan presented an in-person premiere of her recent project: a documentary about a stalwart group of individuals who have shared a love for Irish dance across time and distance — and in spite of the Covid-19 pandemic.

On Nov. 18, the Boston College Gaelic Roots series hosted Jordan for a screening and discussion of “The Dan Furey Group and a Circle of Squares” on BC’s Brighton Campus.

Produced, directed, and narrated by Jordan, the film honors the legacy of Dan Furey, a County Clare fiddler celebrated for his knowledge and teaching of Irish set dancing and old-style step dancing.

After Furey’s death in 1993, a group of his dance students resolved to keep his memory alive by gathering regularly to share and reminisce about what he had taught them, and passing it along to others. Over time, their numbers grew and expanded well beyond Ireland to the United States — including Boston — Canada, many parts of Europe, and even Japan and Taiwan.

The documentary comprises excerpts from the Zoom session as well as various photos, videos, and film clips, including one of Furey — then about 80 — dancing. In addition to providing narration, Jordan interviews some of Furey’s friends and others who were inspired by him — among them Michael Tubridy (a founding member of Ireland’s world-renowned band The Chieftains), who, along with his late wife Céline, became a key figure in preserving the dances championed by Furey, as did Furey’s close friend and neighbor, James Keane, who died in 2000 but led the group for several years after Furey’s death. “The Dan Furey Group and a Circle of Squares” had its official



Kieran Jordan

debut earlier this year in virtual format through the Leitrim Dance Festival, which commissioned Jordan to put the film together.

The “Circle of Squares” refers to a vital, if improbable, means by which the Dan Furey Group has kept its link intact during the pandemic. When the pandemic shut down international travel and most in-person gatherings in 2020, more than 70 dancers turned to the Zoom platform one day in June to communicate, and to keep dancing. Instead of dancing to pre-recorded music, the Furey Group dancers were accompanied in real time by accordionist Dan Accardi, a Boston-based musician.

“When we’re together in one place, we form a circle to go through the specific steps Dan Furey taught,” explains Jordan, who organized and hosted the meeting. “Since we couldn’t do that, we connected over the Internet, and tried to recreate the group experience as best as possible; instead of a physical circle, we were a ‘circle’ of Zoom squares. It wasn’t easy: Some people weren’t experienced in using Zoom at all, let

alone for dancing. But we managed to make it work enough so we could keep the tradition alive and enjoy ourselves.”

For Jordan — who demonstrated some of the dance steps at the launch event, with Accardi providing music — the endurance of the Dan Furey Group illustrates not only the worldwide attention traditional Irish dance has garnered over the last three decades, but also how strong a bond it has proved to be, especially at a time when so many felt isolated and cut off from their communities and the things that bring joy to life.

“It’s a personal, compelling story about Irish step dancing — not as a performance art or competition, but rather as a social activity that has united dancers internationally, even during the pandemic,” says Jordan. “I think there is something comforting in the idea that, for all the changes in the Irish dance world, and in the world itself, you have a group of several dozen people from different generations and backgrounds that has found joy in a very traditional style of dance.”

For many, the words “Irish dance” summons up images of high-octane, athletic displays of stepping punctuated by grand leaps and leg kicks. But Furey taught an older, “low to the ground” style of dance, subtle by contrast but certainly intricate and invigorating. There is a tighter connection between dancer and musician, with a focus on rhythmic footwork that aligns with the music; dances can be done solo, with a partner, or in a group. Although the “sean-nos” old style typically features improvisation, the dances associated with Furey have specific choreographed steps.

Furey began teaching dance at the Willie Clancy Summer School, or “Willie Week” — a hugely popular annual event in Miltown Malbay, Co. Clare — in the late

1980s, and attracted an initially small but loyal following, who became known as “the Dan Furey Dance Group.” Michael and Céline Tubridy were among those intrigued by the dances, and sought him out for private lessons, as Michael recounts in the film (he recalls how at first he was content to let Céline work alone with Furey, until Furey urged him to participate: “You’re going to be bored out of your mind watching us. Why don’t you get up and try it as well?”). The Tubridys went on to continue the Dan Furey dance legacy at Willie Week after James Keane’s death, and when Jordan invited Michael to give a special performance/teaching workshop at her studio in 2011, there was an enthusiastic response; the Dan Furey Group now had a Boston/Massachusetts/New England chapter.

As it expanded, Dan Furey Group members often got together outside of Willie Week, sometimes to travel to festivals or other events, or simply to enjoy one another’s company and the shared repertoire of Furey dances.

“One of the fascinating aspects about the old-style dances such as those taught by Dan Furey is that they have not changed or been influenced by modern trends,” says Jordan. “These particular dances are just as Dan did them. Some of them are unique, with quirky little steps or different tune types than what modern dancers use.

“But that’s also the beauty of the dances. When we get together, we’re not bringing in individual variations, but sharing solo steps as part of a group. It’s really a special language that we share.”

Jordan adds that some of the dances aren’t especially difficult, and don’t require prior experience in or knowledge of Irish dance to learn.

“I hope those who come to BC for the screening will give the dances a try,” she said in an interview before the event. “You may not ‘get it’ at first, but the thing is, there is a whole group of people literally around the world who are happy to help you find your way.”

For more about Kieran Jordan, go to [kieranjordan.com](http://kieranjordan.com).

**MILTON  
MONUMENT  
COMPANY INC.**

BRONZE MARKERS • CEMETERY LETTERING

*“Serving Greater Boston since 1971”*

1060 N. MAIN ST., RANDOLPH, MA 02368  
phone: **781-963-3660**  
fax: **781-986-8004**  
[www.miltonmonument.com](http://www.miltonmonument.com)  
email: [miltonmonument@gmail.com](mailto:miltonmonument@gmail.com)

**Gormley  
Funeral Home**

**2055 Centre Street  
West Roxbury, MA**

**617-323-8600**

**Burials in Massachusetts  
or Ireland**

[www.GormleyFuneral.com](http://www.GormleyFuneral.com)



# When funeral services are there, and I'm here, I'm left to mourn with a deep pall on my mood

By MARTIN MCGOVERN  
SPECIAL TO BOSTON IRISH

Since moving from Dublin to Massachusetts in 1979, I have missed practically every funeral on the McGovern and Flynn sides of my family – no final, in person farewells to my wonderful grandparents, favorite aunts and uncles, or good neighbors and friends.

Of course, missing funerals at home is a reality of immigrant life. Between work obligations, limited vacations, immigration concerns, and the financial costs of heading over at the last minute, traveling for funerals is often not feasible for immigrants.

For me, emigration was more of a choice than a necessity. I understood that my decision came with inevitable trade-offs, so, no complaints. Yet, even with that rational mindset, on the funeral days themselves, the 3,000-mile gap between here and there has always cast a pall on my mood.

## But I buried Mom and Dad in person, in Dun Laoghaire

Physically, I'd go about my normal work-life American business, but simultaneously my mind was tracking and envisioning what was unfolding at home. Inevitably, the experience left me with a dejected sense of having been caught offside emotionally.

As an aside, livestreamed funerals, which are growing in acceptance, can help to bridge the gap. For me, however, they are pure agony, akin to a thirsty person staring at a cool glass of water.

When my parents died – Mom in 2013 and Dad in 2017 – I found myself in a fortunate position, or stage in life. I could afford to cross the Atlantic at short notice, had the understanding of a compassionate employer, and the support of my American family. With

hindsight, I can only imagine how difficult it would have been to miss these funerals.

With my father's passing, I was extra fortunate because four weeks after his funeral in late April 2017, I was able to return to Ireland for a Month's Mind Mass in his memory.

With roots in medieval England, the Month's Mind Mass, and the meal that follows it, remains a widespread practice in Ireland even as the country becomes less Catholic and more secular.

On a bright evening in May, we gathered at Holy Family Church in my hometown, Dun Laoghaire, where my parents were parishioners. Compared to the formality of the funeral mass, the Month's Mind proved to be more

relaxed. People dressed more casually and the interactions were less somber. Plus, the seasonally good weather added to the lighter mood.

Afterwards, most of those in attendance broke bread and enjoyed a drink at a low-keyed gathering in the bar of the Rochestown Lodge hotel where my father had a standing meeting with some of his brothers and friends every Thursday night.

Having known the sadness of missing so many funerals of loved ones over the years, I was grateful to have been present for, and part of, both my parents' funerals.

More than that, at the Month's Mind Mass and reception, we were marking the end of an era, saying farewell to both my mother and father. To have been there, at that time and in the embrace of family, meant the world to me.

## BOSTON IRISH Musings/Dick Flavin

# The power of prayer – or the lack of it

God does not take sides in baseball; nor does He or She pick favorites in football, basketball, hockey, tennis, or tiddlywinks. The good Lord, in fact, remains carefully neutral in all competitive games.

That does not stop us from praying for His or Her intercession during moments of high anxiety in big games. The higher the stakes, the more fervent the prayers. Yet we all – or most of us, anyway – understand that those prayers stand a much better chance of being heard if the guy we're praying for can hit a curveball.

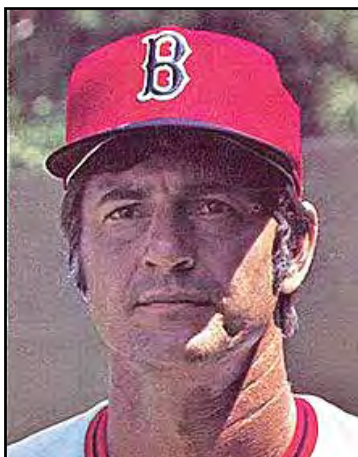
For every convent in Boston's Back Bay and environs that is filled with nuns praying devoutly for Red Sox, there is one in the Bronx in which the residents are praying just as hard for the Evil Empire.

"Please, God, let him get a hit," we might implore, while knowing that somewhere else there is someone praying for him to strike out.

What's a Savior to do?

Stay out of it and let the games play out seems to be the answer.

When we watch a big game on TV, the cameras often pan across the faces of fans in attendance praying with all their hearts for opposite things to happen – and it's not just the spectators who are calling on the Lord for help. It's the participants themselves who are praying. We see any number of signs of the cross, pointing



**Carl Yastrzemski**  
A student of life with Grandpa

toward the heavens, and other demonstrations of faith being acted out by the players. That does not even take into account those acts which remain private between the players and the Almighty.

Carl Yastrzemski, who did not wear his emotions on his sleeve, revealed in a memoir written with Al Hirshberg after the Impossible Dream season of 1967 that just before the first pitch of every game he quietly said a Hail Mary, praying that things would go well for him and his team and that he would perform to the best of his ability in the game ahead. Who among us knew that, while we were just settling into our seats after the playing of the National Anthem, the guy out in left field was praying the Hail Mary?

Grandpa Skonieczny played an important role, too. Yaz had

an exceedingly close relationship with his grandfather on his mother's side of the family. When he was a little boy, he was left in the charge of Grandpa Skonieczny when his parents went to work. He especially loved when he would hoist him up on his tractor and the two of them would ride side by side as they performed chores on the potato farm. Every day, is grandfather would take young Carl to the Candy Kitchen for an ice cream. The two of them formed an inseparable bond in those days. His grandfather had passed away a decade earlier, during Yaz's freshman year at Notre Dame, but on the final day of the '67 season, filled with anxiety while waiting to bat and the Red Sox trailing, 2-0, his thoughts drifted back to those golden days sitting next to Grandpa on the tractor, and suddenly the anxiety of the moment was gone. Yaz calmly laced a two-run single to right center to tie the score and ignite a five-run game-winning rally. To this day, more than half a century later, he credits Grandpa Skonieczny for that hit.

All of us remember our school days when a big exam was held, how we'd pray for divine guidance beforehand, but that our chances of those prayers being heard were decidedly better if we had taken the time to study. Carl Yastrzemski had spent thousands of hours honing his skills, making himself the

best player he could be so that when his moment came, he'd be ready. His prayers were a big help, clearing his mind for the task ahead. But in addition to that, he needed good fortune. He had that, too, and because all those elements were combined in 1967, baseball in Boston had a resurgence that continues to this very day.

The prayers worked like a charm down the home stretch of '67 when, time after time, Yaz came through with a clutch hit to carry the Red Sox to the unlikely pennant in their history and Yaz himself to the Triple Crown and superstardom.

The result was somewhat different eleven years later when he came up to hit with two outs in the ninth inning and the tying run on third base in the '78 playoff game against the Yankees. He was the same guy as in '67; it was the same prayer; the same deity. But this time he popped out to third base. "Well," we said to one another, "That's baseball." And so it was – and is.

It won't stop us from praying the next time the game is on the line, nor the game after that. I well remember our parish's junior CYO basketball team during my growing up years. The parish suffered from a decided lack of basketball talent in my age group. It couldn't have been anything in the water, because the kids in the age group just ahead

of mine, who had moved up to the intermediate level, had won the league championship as juniors. For whatever reason, probably having something to do with the absence of natural ability, we now stunk. We lost every game that year, usually by a lot.

My particular role was that of sixth man. That'll give you an idea of how lousy I was. I couldn't even crack the starting lineup of the worst team in the league. None of that, however, stopped us from praying. Before every game Father Murray, our parish priest, led us in prayer. Our heads may have been bowed, but our hopes were high. Then the game started and reality set in.

Some of us began to notice that often Father Murray, after leading us in prayer, would slip out a side door of the gymnasium rather than bear witness to the slaughter about to take place. Who could blame him?

To this day, 70 years later, I still pray before and during games of importance, but as often as not it's The Serenity Prayer: "God grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the Courage to change the things I can, and the Wisdom to know the difference."

Amen.

Dick Flavin is widely known as the poet laureate of the Boston Red Sox.



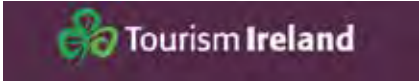


# We gratefully acknowledge the support of the sponsors of Boston Irish Honors 2021

**EVERSOURCE**



**Bob Sheridan  
and Family**



**The Keefe  
Family**



**Thomas S. Durant MD**  
Fellowship for Refugee Medicine MGH

**Badger Daylighting, Inc.**  
North America's Leading Provider of  
Risk Mitigating Excavation Services



**Technical Construction Services, Inc.**

## *Friends*

Boston College High School, Curry College, Irish Cultural Centre of New England, Irish Networking Boston, Delta Airlines, JLL, Kirk & Associates, Inc., Lloyd-O'Sullivan Wealth Management, National Grid, Synergy Investments.



# The 2021 Boston Irish Honorees







# Joe Nolan: A man of family and faith ... and an on-the-go CEO at Eversource Energy



It was all smiles for Team Nolan of Belmont when Claudia graduated from Newton Country Day School. From left, Olivia, a delighted Mom Therese, Claudia, a proud Dad Joe, Hannah, and Isabelle.  
*All photos in this segment are courtesy of the Nolan family*

By TOM MULVOY

Come June 1985, Joseph R. Nolan Jr., his bachelor's in communications from Boston College in hand, was ready and eager to take on the world, or at least part of it, the private sector in the United States. "All I wanted to do was public relations," he noted thirty-six years later in an interview. "I thought I'd be good at that. I had three offers to look at after graduation: A position with Gallo Wine selling for them in California; I had an opportunity to join Lever Brothers and peddle detergent for them in southeastern Massachusetts; and I had an interview scheduled with Boston Edison for a slot in customer service at their Boston headquarters. I asked them about a public relations position, but I couldn't get in to see the guy in that office."

As things turned out, Joe's namesake father, then a justice on the state's Supreme Judicial Court, was a law school pal of an Edison executive, a relationship that helped young Joe get the interview and then a job that he wasn't specifically looking for with one of the region's dominant utilities.

As to his PR dreams, Joe Nolan, Jr. doesn't quit easily. From accepting checks with small amounts and discussing billing issues with Edison customers in 1985, he rose to senior roles, often via positions keyed to public relations, as Boston Edison became NStar and, in 2012, merged with Northeast Utilities and associated companies to become Eversource Energy.

Last April, he was named the CEO of Eversource, a \$30 billion corporation with 9,300 employees that services 4.3 million customers with electricity, gas,

and water utilities in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire. Last year, the company posted operating revenues of \$8.9 billion.

After the announcement, the 58-year-old Nolan said he was excited about continuing his CEO predecessor Jim Judge's long-term vision for a carbon-neutral future, with a focus on renewable sources of electricity, energy efficiency, and smarter grid systems, a future that might also include a shift to hydrogen from the natural gas fuel currently used to heat homes.

"Everyone thinks this business is

a sleepy business," Nolan said in an interview. "It's not. The innovation that's taking place in this business is going at warp speed."

## The Nolans of Belmont

Joseph R. Nolan Sr. (1925-2017) grew up in Mattapan with an older brother. His father was a school custodian, his mother a house cleaner. Going back a generation, the family's ties to the 'old country' centered in part on Rassaraun in Co. Mayo, where McNamara and Flynn ancestors tilled the land in the late 1880s.

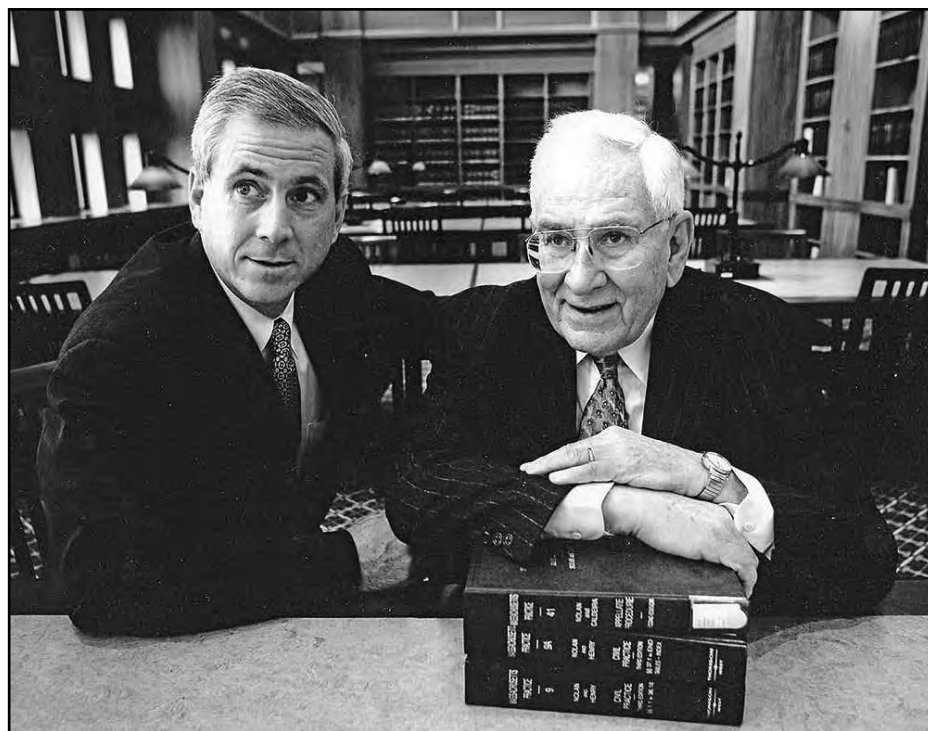
A "Triple Eagle" in local parlance – graduation from Boston College High School (1942), Boston College (1950), and Boston College Law School (1954) – Joe Senior served as a pharmacist's mate in the US Navy in the Pacific during World War II. After passing the bar a decade or so later, he spent his adult lifetime in the practice of law, as an assistant district attorney, as a private lawyer, and as a judge in Massachusetts – Brighton District Court, Suffolk Superior Court, the State Appeals Court, and, from 1981 to 1995, the Supreme Judicial Court.

While all that was going on, he found the time to court (via trolley lines out of Mattapan) and marry Margaret (Peggy) Kelly of Brighton, where the newlyweds set up house and got right to work producing their family, a grouping of seven that their father called his "jewels" – Leonard, now a wealth manager; Barbara, a real estate broker in the family tradition; Maura Brown, an entrepreneur; Martina, a CPA; Jacqueline Nolan-Haley, a professor of law at Fordham University; Janice Henry, a teacher; and Joseph the CEO.

Asking the youngest gem about family life in Nolan household when the judge and Peggy the mom were on the domestic bench is to guarantee an extended riff from Joe the younger that is rich with energy and appreciation in the telling:

"My father and my mother were always working, he until close to his death four years ago, and she well into her eighties with her real estate business. He was forever on the move in working mode so that, for one thing,

(Continued next page)



Joseph R. Nolan, Jr., and his dad, Joseph R. Nolan, Sr., an eminent jurist who sat for many years on the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, share a quiet moment in one of the justice's favored places, a law library.





# The Boston Irish Honors 2021

we wouldn't have to take out college loans. He paid for everything and to do that he for a long time worked three jobs while getting up at four o'clock every morning. He'd sit on the bench in the morning, then head over to Suffolk Law School later in the day to teach. He also made time to write regularly for West Publishing and also to go out to Worcester where he conducted the Nolan Bar Review for aspiring lawyers.

"I recall his work updating Black's Law Dictionary as being family time on the side. One of the fun activities we used to do was gather around the dining room table with him and collate and put into binders the parts of books and reports and publications that he was going to use in teaching his students.

"As to the activities that we would do, we always moved as a family. My parents would never go off on vacation by themselves. We all went together. As the youngest, I got the odd jobs. When my Mom was showing real estate, I would from an early age get in the car with her as she drove to the properties for sale, run up the stairs, and open up all the shades and turn on all the lights to make the rooms look bigger.

"I have to tell you one other story. Paul Sutliff was a blind man who used to run the coffee shop at the State House. He and his wife Regina and their children lived four doors away from us and Paul and Regina were my parents' close friends. When they died and as their kids were cleaning out the estate before the closing, which my father had worked on, they got the bill from him for his services - for two hot-fudge sundaes at the Brigham's in Brighton center. That was so much like him."

Beyond modeling the value of work as a virtue on its own, the judge and Peggy engendered in their seven children a clear sense that their Catholicism should always be an animating factor in their lives. Some fifty and sixty years ago, many Catholics in Boston and elsewhere included a nod to their faith in their everyday lives by going to early Mass and taking communion before heading to work, to school, or back home. Beginning with their mother and father, this was a daily reality for the Nolan family wherever they lived, a reality that their children continue to embrace in 2021, the youngest sibling reports.

Joe talks with pride and affection about how he and his siblings have kept their father's faith in the need to keep the family close. "I have five sisters and one brother. Three of them are what you might call intellectual types and the other three operate on the entrepreneurial side of things. All of them are very skilled at what they do. So, I'm very fortunate to have such a nice balance with them. We are extremely close. My sisters and their families all go down to Scituate for the summer while my brother and I go to the Cape. A good number of us lived in Belmont until recently, so it was easy, and it still is so, to get together.

## Joe and Therese Team Up

Joe attended Our Lady of the Presenta-

tion Grammar School in Brighton before his father, having taken a seat on the Brighton District Court bench, moved the family to what Joe impishly calls the "hardscrabble streets of Belmont," where he attended high school as did a young woman named Therese DiGiovanni,, who was a year behind him.

"I tried to get her attention beginning in 1978, but she wouldn't agree to go out with me," said Joe. "Life went on, and in 1987, when I was working for the Edison store in downtown Framingham and she was at Framingham State, I reached out to her beloved father Charlie and got her phone number and address and paid her a visit in my Edison Chevy Chevette. Must have made quite an impression with that whip! Still, I finally wore her down, and after a chase of 13 years, we were married in 1991.

"For the real hard work, Therese raised our children - Olivia, who is 29 and is working in real estate in New York and running a big portfolio down there; Hannah, our second is, at 27, working as a physician's assistant at Brigham and Women's; Isabelle, now 24 and working on her master's in school counseling at BC; and Claudia 19, who's in college at the Jesuits' Fordham University in the Bronx."

"She has earned some rest and relaxation, and we are enjoying sharing time - we got out to golf at Woodland the other afternoon. She is very outgoing and loves outdoor sports - she still holds the record in the 50-yard dash at Belmont High. She golfs, takes walks, and does some kickboxing; yes, she likes kickboxing. She is great, and just what I need to keep myself tethered."

For his continuing work, Joe carries on with the many outside interests that CEOs are expected to take on, often on boards that tend to involve non-profit organizations. There is Camp Harbor View, an initiative of the late Boston Mayor Tom Menino and businessman Jack Connors that, in its own words, works to expose the city's underserved youth to the possibilities of a future they may have never envisioned. The centerpiece of what is now a year-round program is summertime activities while camping on Long Island in Boston Harbor.

Joe also serves on the Chairman's Council at Boston Children's Hospital, and on the boards of the New England Council, the Sancta Maria Skilled Nursing Facility, and the Francis Ouimet (nee Caddie) Scholarship Fund, among others.

## About Final Things

On the day last April when he was to be named the CEO at Eversource, Joe got up a bit earlier than usual and drove from Belmont to Dorchester and St. Gregory's Church, where his friend, the Rev. Jack Ahern, said the 6:45 Mass as a sort of spiritual boost for him on that special day.

"That was touching, and appreciated," said Joe, who wears his Catholicism fully with a deep confidence that the faith that his parents bequeathed to him and his siblings has meaning in everything



The family that prays together, stays together, they say. In this instance, it was Joseph Nolan Sr, his wife, Peggy, and their children in the town of Lourdes in southwestern France where the Virgin Mary was said to have appeared to a local woman in 1858. Back row: Peggy, Janice, Leonard, Barbara, Jacqueline, and Father Joe. Middle: Maura, and Martina. In front: Joe Jr. Below, the youngest Nolan, stepped out on his own and grimaced for the camera.



they do, publicly and privately. Given that, he has taken their lead in planning for the time when he will be facing his final days.

"I will tell you," he said to his interviewer, "what I always tell my

kids: 'Listen, when I am dying, I won't be caring about having doctors and big shots coming in to see me; just send in the priests; that's all I want. I have a Rolodex full of their names, and that should help you.'





### THROUGH THE YEARS WITH THE BUDDING CEO

Joe Nolan the younger was no shrinking violet, family members and friends have been heard to say. Whether it was sitting in repose in a law office setting, or playing a ragtime tune on the piano, or pretending to drive a golf car, he was always on the move as a youngster. Still, later in life he has always treasured family time without rushing the relaxation, as in this photo of a Cape Cod moment with Therese, Claudia, Olivia, Hannah, and Isabelle.



## Joe Nolan In Profile – As Others See Him

I have known Joe Nolan for over 30 years. While I am proud to have grown up in Dorchester, Joe always like to tell me that he was raised on the “rugged streets” of Belmont! Joe is really one of a kind and I know a lot of folks would say... Thank God! He has the rare ability to engage people, such that each one feels that they are his best friend or closest confidant. It happens because he puts in the time, reaching out regularly to sustain those many friendships.

“Joe Nolan is a man with passion! Passion for his faith, as a daily communicant. Passion for his family as a loving husband, father, and brother. And passion for customer service, which is so critical in his new role as CEO of Eversource.

**Jim Judge**  
Executive Chairman,  
Eversource Energy

Joe Nolan has long been a champion of the vulnerable and helping those in need. For more than 25 years, he has been an unheralded and tireless supporter of Whittier Street Health Center’s mission to achieve health equity and social justice, and to address the economic well-being of our diverse and at-risk patient population. “Joe is loyal, kind, dependable, and charitable, and he brings the same level of compassionate generosity and empathy to all his interactions. He is guided by his faith and love for humanity, going above and beyond the call of duty to help those who would otherwise be considered the least, lost, and last! I am thankful for all he does for our community and I am proud to call him my friend.

**Frederica M. Williams**  
President & CEO  
Whittier Street Health Center

Joe’s first job after graduating from Boston College was at my agency, Hill Holliday. It became clear very quickly that he was destined for greatness and after a year at Hill Holliday he realized that becoming the CEO there would not fulfill his definition of greatness, so he moved on to a wonderful opportunity at the Boston Edison. “Just like the old Sara Lee slogan.. “Nobody doesn’t like Sara Lee,” nobody doesn’t like Joe Nolan. He was often underestimated, but to the surprise of no one who knows him well, he was named the successor to Jim Judge as the CEO of the largest utility in the Northeast. You can’t be the CEO of such an organization and not be curious about new sources of energy. Joe has become knowledgeable about each of them and, as a result, nobody knows more about wind and a number of others than Joe.

**Jack Connors**  
Civic Activist, Philanthropist,  
Retired CEO, Hill Holliday

“A number of years ago, I was dealing with a darkened vacant property in the inner city of Boston. It was a hotspot of criminal activity affecting the safety and well-being of concerned neighbors. It was then that Jim Brett told me the go-to guy in Boston was Joe Nolan. I called Joe, lighting was restored, our neighborhood was safer and the neighbors most grateful.

**Rev. Jack Ahern**  
Pastor, St. Gregory Parish  
Dorchester

Obviously, Joe is a highly competent business executive, but what sets him apart are his senses of humanity and humor. He cares about other people deeply and he’s genuinely funny. He sees the best in the world.

There’s so much about Joe that’s pure Irish. He’s a terrific storyteller; he’s got a wicked sense of humor and a quick wit; and he has a deep sense of community and understands his obligation to give back.

**Mike Sheehan**  
Former CEO of  
Hill Holliday and  
President, the Boston Globe

Not only is Joe Nolan an exceptional executive, but he also dedicates and volunteers his time and talent with so many organizations and causes. There are too many to name, but a common thread runs throughout all his efforts... the importance of serving others. I believe his drive to service is a result of his education with the Jesuits, who teach young students to be “Men for Others.” I have met hundreds of CEOs, but Joe Nolan is one in a million.

**James T. Brett**  
President and CEO  
The New England Council

Those of us who have the pleasure of calling Joe Nolan a colleague and friend understand why he is so richly deserving of this honor.

The qualities that make him the person we love and admire— his wit and wisdom, faith and loyalty, and keen, clear-eyed judgment— all have roots in his Irish heritage and he’s proud of that — as he should be. But I think Joe’s even prouder still of the people from all walks of life to whom he’s become a mentor, role model, and confidant. Everyone in this room has a story of how Joe helped them or someone they know. We are lucky to have him!

**Linda Dorcena Forry**  
Former State Legislator,  
Suffolk Construction Executive

*Frederica M. Williams and Linda Dorcena Forry are members of the Board of Directors at Eversource Energy.*





## The Boston Irish Honors 2021 for Community Service and Philanthropy

# Cahersiveen's gift to a changing Ireland

## Mary Sugrue champions the Irish American Partnership's mission

By CHRIS LOVETT

A search for Mary Sugrue on a web platform for networking conjures up a picture of her in front of a background image of the Skellig Islands jutting like saw teeth through the waters of the Atlantic to the west of County Kerry. Settled by monks in the sixth century CE, the Skelligs are a seat of learning and tradition, a sanctuary for seabirds, and a magnet for tourists.

Less than eight miles from Kerry's Iveragh Peninsula, the site marks a frontier between the local and the inaccessible, or a portal between worlds. As displayed on *LinkedIn*, it's also the centerpiece of a calling card for Mary Sugrue and her role as CEO of the Irish American Partnership in Boston.

The second oldest of six children, Mary was born in one of the peninsula's westernmost towns, Cahersiveen. From the start, the family straddled a frontier between tradition and economic change. Her parents, Paddy and Tess, moved back to Ireland in the 1960s from Chicago, where her father had a job maintaining city buildings. As the oldest son of aging parents, with no siblings in Ireland, it was up to him to extend the family's foothold. "It was poor, yet it was their land" Mary explained. "And so that was important to them."

In a departure from tradition, the farmhouse also functioned as a bed and breakfast, one of the first to serve increasing numbers of tourists flocking to the Ring of Kerry. For Mary and her siblings, home life doubled as seasonal work in the hospitality sector. That meant helping with meals, making beds, and greeting the guests, even crossing the line between accommodations and atmosphere.

"One of the other things we had to do was actually perform Irish dancing and sing a song for the tourists," she recalled. "And we gave my mother such heartache because, you know, we'd say, 'Do we have to do that?'"

In exchange for providing a taste of the "Irish experience," she received something in return: the value of meeting people, learning their stories, and about the connections that brought them to Ireland. It was a job skill she would later use in her work for the Irish American Partnership (IAP).

Even while she was growing up, Sugrue and her parents were looking beyond the local tourist economy. Though she said they were not formally educated, she described them as avid readers who influenced her decision to become a teacher. Other influencers were a "nurturing" fourth grade teacher and a high school geography teacher who Sugrue said "really opened up the world."

"I wanted to see it all, you know, so that's why I ended up traveling after," she said. "But he definitely made it seem



### On the Road for the Partnership

Above, Mary Sugrue tells the story of the IAP's mission at an Irish Invitational Golf Tournament in Killarney. Below, she joined students and staff at the Cliftonville Integrated Primary School in Belfast while on a leadership mission in 2018.

All photos in this segment are courtesy of the Sugrue family and the IAP



there was such a big world outside of our little lovely town."

In 1979, after high school and a visit to the youth mass celebrated in Galway by Pope John Paul II, Sugrue headed to Dublin for training as a primary school teacher at Carysfort College. Even then, she knew there was no turning back. "At the time I just knew that once I left school, I was going to college, and who knows where I would end up," she said. "But I was certainly never considering that I would end up in Kerry. If I did, I'd be a small minority from my class."

Sugrue's time in college overlapped

with pivotal years of the conflict in Northern Ireland. The period was marked by extremist hostilities, but also by exponents of non-violence and economic uplift, most notably Nobel Laureates John Hume and Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan Maguire, leaders of the "Peace People." There were more initiatives in the United States, including a committee to spur investment in Northern Ireland, as well as a trade partnership between Boston and Derry, forged by Hume and former Boston Mayor Ray Flynn. Even more important were the Congressional

Friends or Ireland, brought together in 1981 by Speaker Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, and Senators Ted Kennedy and Daniel Moynihan. In paving the way toward the advance for the peace process in the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, the engagement of US leaders would be critical.

A similar mission applies to the 35-year-old Irish American Partnership and its focus on education and community development projects in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. Under its first president and CEO, Joseph F. Leary, Jr., the IAP opened an office in Boston in 1988.

It was personal connection that helped Mary land a job with the Partnership. Teaching for three years at an inner-city school in Dublin had opened her eyes to what she called "a different world." Still influenced by "wanting to see more," she explained, she took a career break, which also coincided with the larger "brain drain" of educated people faced with a shortage of opportunities in Ireland.

Her travels included a year in Australia and stops at multiple American cities, including Boston. When she came back to the Boston area, she looked up a friend from college, Mary Conroy Henderson. Currently a realtor in communities southwest of Boston, Henderson has long had ties to the Partnership, appearing at its functions to sing the national anthems of Ireland and the United States for more than thirty years. When Leary offered her an administrative job, Henderson declined but put in a word for her friend Mary, who got the job.

When Sugrue went to work as an executive secretary with the Partnership in 1989, one of her first tasks was to get a desk and typewriter for its new office in Faneuil Hall. She also had to deliver a letter to the mayor's office that invited Ray Flynn to the Partnership's opening ceremony. She eventually became the Partnership's main fundraiser, refining her bed-and-breakfast skills to become the consummate listener and the convenor who organized gatherings—from business breakfasts to roundtables and golf tournaments—on both sides of the Atlantic. During her years with the Partnership, the program has raised more than \$32 million.

"I was meeting the supporters, and that's what I loved," she said. "I loved hearing their stories and their family stories of their own ancestors. I loved hearing how much they loved and appreciated Ireland."

Currently the Partnership's President Emeritus, Leary notes that "supporters throughout the country respect Mary for her truthfulness and non-exaggeration of the Partnership's accomplishments. Mary Sugrue is truly an Irish Star in Boston."

(Continued on page 9)





## FAMILY PICTURES



Above, Mary's parents, Tess and Paddy Sugrue, in Cahersiveen on far west coast of Ireland. Middle, the family homestead in Cahersiveen on the Iveragh Peninsula in Co. Mayo. Below, young Mary with her grandmother, Johanna (Guerin) Sugrue.



## The Irish American Partnership: A key investor in Ireland's young

Mary Sugrue has long known of the challenges facing Ireland's youth because she experienced it firsthand. She came of age during one of Ireland's bleakest economic periods when many, especially those from rural communities like her own, Cahersiveen, in the far west of the island, felt they had no choice but to leave. The promise of opportunity and adventure did little to temper the heartbreak of saying goodbye to childhood homes, and the family and friends left behind.

Her association with the Irish American Partnership (IAP), now approaching 33 years in all, matches particularly well with her personal story as told on these pages by Chris Lovett for Boston Irish.

The Partnership connects Irish and Irish American communities directly with education and community programs in Ireland, North and South, honoring their heritage by investing in Ireland's youth. Thanks to its incredible network of support, the program has disbursed \$32 million in assistance to Ireland since 1986. The Partnership states its mission crisply:

- We connect Irish students, schools, and organizations with our passionate supporters who want to help.
- We empower the next generation by equipping teachers and community leaders with the resources they need to educate and inspire.
- We invest in the people, culture, and ideas that build a peaceful and prosperous Ireland, one that preserves the Irish way of life we cherish while also creating a more inclusive and equitable society for all.
- We strengthen the global Irish community by linking the diaspora back to Ireland, North and South.
- We value transparency and efficiency, showing where each dollar is spent and the impact they have

The IAP was founded in 1986 with Marine Corps Gen. P.X. Kelley, the 28th commandant of the Corps as founding chairman of the board and the legendary longtime speaker of the US House of Representatives Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill as its first spokesman and public advocate.

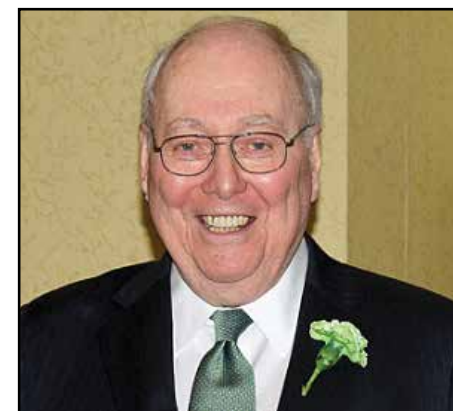
Seed-funded by a grant of 50,000 Irish pounds from the Irish government and support from philanthropist Charles "Chuck" Feeney, the Partnership has provided grants to more than 500 primary schools, higher educational institutions, and hundreds of community organizations across Ireland.

Mary Sugrue has recruited energetic board members, including a dynamic chairman, Michael T. Clune. At the same time, she met her goal to increase the percentage of women on the board and prioritized diversity across sectors. The result is a large, active board spanning across corporate and civic sectors in both the U.S. and Ireland.

No stranger to philanthropy from having served on the Board of many charitable organizations, Clune found



Mary Sugrue has recruited energetic board members, including a dynamic chairman, Michael T. Clune, above. Pictured below is Partnership founder and currently president emeritus of the IAP Joseph Leary, who hired Mary. He notes that "supporters throughout the country respect her for her truthfulness and non-exaggeration of the Partnership's accomplishments. Mary Sugrue is truly an Irish Star in Boston."



a way to honor the generations before him and invest in a bright future for a country he loves. In 2018, he made a particularly meaningful gift to the local school on the island of Inishbofin in honor of his grandfather, Michael A. Clune.

A small community faced with a dwindling livelihood from fishing, Inishbofin would recover some of the lost ground as a destination for visitors. Clune made a \$25,000 grant from the Partnership that was used for iPads, computers, a telescope, and a weather station, all things, Clune said, that could help prepare students for opportunities in the world outside—or make life on the island more sustainable.

One response to the country's changing times was a donation of \$1 million to the Peter McVerry Trust, a charity that helps people struggling with homelessness, substance abuse, and social disadvantage. The Partnership announced that the money would help provide education for teens removed from mainstream schools.

Recent projects supported by the Partnership in Ireland also show the most entrenched problems can overlap with modern developments. In Northern Ireland, that can mean trying to surmount the long divide between Protestant and Catholic communities while serving an influx of new immigrants.

BOSTON IRISH STAFF





## The Boston Irish Honors 2021

In 1993, Leary gave her a different assignment: Speaking for the younger people of Ireland at a Partnership event in New York City honoring the Irish Republic's first female president, Mary Robinson. The administrator and convenor had to step into the spotlight.

"It was my first time standing up at a podium," she recalled. "And I just spoke from the heart about what it was like to leave Ireland."

More turns at the podium would follow, but Sugrue admitted she still found the role challenging. "It's an honor—I mean that people would support and listen and engage," she said. "But, to me, I'd rather be down at the table having a cup of tea with them."

The Partnership's chairman, Michael T. Clune, met Sugrue after one of her turns at the podium, in Chicago. He was struck by what he called her passion, as well as her background in education. The same qualities also figured in her work as the Partnership's "rainmaker." "What doesn't make a good rainmaker," he added, "is when organizations hire people that are so-called super salespeople, and they come in and they have all the PowerPoints and the data and the backup, but they don't have the heart and passion in it."

In the years following Mary's joining the Partnership's staff, Ireland was going through significant changes. The slow economy and the focus on troubles in the North had given way to stories about opportunities created by membership in the European Union and the boom years, roughly 1994-2007, when the "Celtic Tiger" was touted as the "Silicon Valley of Europe." After boom, bust, and austerity, the more recent economic rebound a dozen years later in Ireland and in Europe as a whole has been hampered by the Covid 19 pandemic and a shortage of affordable housing.

After becoming the program's executive director in 2011, Sugrue crafted a plan for recovery that increased revenue by 86 percent—at a time of

slow recovery from the Great Recession in the US. Along with becoming the Partnership's CEO in 2016, she recruited senior leadership for a board of directors that, according to Clune, "needed new blood." The result was a larger board with more women, but he also noted the recruits were "outstanding" leaders from corporate and civic sectors.

The other reason for the change was that, as Clune put it, "the organization needed to change with the changing times in Ireland."

In addition to work for the Partnership, Sugrue has supported other philanthropic efforts beyond the Irish or Irish American communities. These include the Rian Immigrant Center and the Thomas S. Durant, MD, Golf Tournament that supports the Fellowship for Refugee Medicine.

That event's chair and Partnership board member Bill Reilly said, "For years, she volunteered to help us organize the Durant golf tournament, and they always went off without a hitch, thanks to her dedication. She is an amazing person."

Recent projects supported by the Partnership in Ireland also show the most entrenched problems can overlap with new challenges. In the north, that can mean trying to surmount the long divide between Protestants and Catholics in education while serving an influx of new immigrants, even from countries outside of Europe.

"There's a long road in understanding our shared history," said Sugrue. "The more we can bring young people together to do that, that's where we see our support."

Among those viewing results of that support was Mary Conroy Henderson, on a visit with a group from Boston. At the Cliftonville Integrated Primary School in Belfast, she saw signs that established frontiers within and between worlds were being reimagined.

"That was absolutely heartwarming," she recalled, "to see flags flying, the little flags—the hallway of all the nationalities



Mary Sugrue and her children, Liam McAleer, 22, who attends Massachusetts Maritime Academy, where he's studying international maritime business, and Eileen McAleer, 24, a Boston College graduate who currently works as a nurse at Boston Medical Center.

that are in the school, and to think this is okay: Education isn't just for somebody that can say my lineage is X, Y, or Z, but this is for the new person also, who's now been introduced into the country."

In the Greater Boston area, Sugrue raised two children of her own, mostly as a single parent. Her daughter, Eileen, 24, graduated from Boston College and currently works as a nurse at Boston Medical Center. Her son Liam, 22, attends Mass. Maritime Academy, where he's studying international maritime business. One time when Eileen was very young, Mary recalls, childcare fell through and she was left to change diapers in a country club locker room while overseeing one of the Partnership's golf tournaments.

To Mary Sugrue, experiences like that amplified for her the challenges of being a working mother and inspired her to bring *Nollaig na mBan* – "Women's Christmas" – to the United States through a series of Partnership events celebrating the global leadership of Irish and Irish American women. Currently in its tenth year, *Nollaig na mBan* has

honored the contributions of many Irish luminaries, including Irish presidents Mary Robinson and Mary McAleese, Ambassador Anne Anderson, Irish Senator Joan Freeman, USAID Administrator Samantha Power, and *Glamour* Editor-in-Chief Samantha Barry.

Defining her own mission for guiding her children, Sugrue said, "I could instill in them to be confident and follow their instinct, to trust their gut, and to work hard."

One thing Sugrue did not inherit directly from her parents was knowledge of the Irish language, which she regularly uses to open her public speaking appearances. She keeps up her connection to Irish culture through its writers and her love of traditional music. In addition, there's the hiking, primarily in Ireland, with multiple trips to the Skelligs.

"I've been going there since I was a child," she said. "It's just that idea of a world with history, and the most quiet and peaceful place in the world—the remoteness of it."



At left, Mary (second left) and her siblings Pat, Eileen, Linda, Jimmy, and Ann before the Kerry v. Dublin All-Ireland Football Final on Sept. 1, 2019. Above, Pat enjoys a moment alongside Irish President Mary Robinson in 1993.



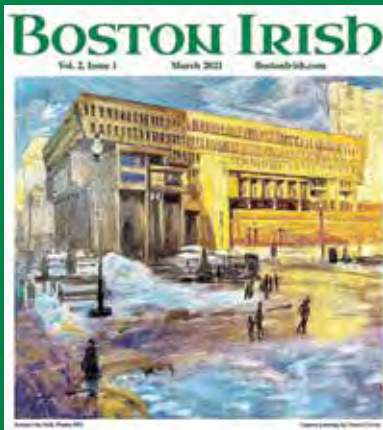
# Boston Irish Honors event attracts 300 guests



Photos by Margaret Brett Hastings



# Here's How Boston's Irish Stay Connected



## BOSTON IRISH

Vol. 1, Issue 4

Winter 2020

BostonIrish.com



Boston Common at Christmastime.

Original painting by Vincent Crotty

The well-loved news and feature content that was familiar in the Boston Irish Reporter is available in a streamlined quarterly magazine edition.

You can receive each issue delivered by US Postal mail. To order your own mail subscription, simply complete the order form, fax it (617-825-5516) or mail it to Boston Irish Magazine, 150 Mt. Vernon St, Suite 560, Dorchester MA 02125.

**MAKES A GREAT GIFT TOO!**

☐ YES - Mail me the next four issues of Boston Irish Magazine at a cost of \$35.00  
☐ Check Enclosed OR ☐ Credit Card: Visa ☐ MC ☐ Amex ☐  
 Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Expires \_\_\_\_\_ CVV Code# \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Subscriber \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_ Business \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Boston Irish, 150 Mt. Vernon Street, Suite 560, Dorchester, MA 02125  
 or Fax 617-825-5518





# IRELAND IS CALLING...

## Press the Green Button



Giant's Causeway, County Antrim

Because Ireland is waiting to welcome you home, to entertain you with its dramatic landscapes and vibrant cities, and thrill you with the kind of experiences you'll only find here on the island of Ireland.

Come home to a land famous for its warmth and wit, where you can join in the laughter in legendary pubs, enjoy the chatter of family and savor feasts shared with friends. This is a time to rediscover the things that make Ireland special – from the rugged coastlines and charming towns to the people you meet along the way.

It's time. Start planning.

Press the Green Button at

 **Ireland.com**