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December 2014

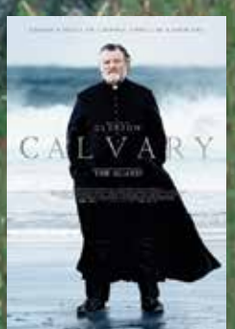
Galway Hookers Racing at Fournis Island, Ireland

photo by James Kingston

Goodbye Joe . . 9

Irish Blood . . 11

Brad Armacost, Christmas Carol . 13



On Calvary . .15

Tony Kenny Christmas . 20

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IRISH AMERICAN NEWS ADVERTISING RATES 2014

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Published 12 times yearly

All Ads at 200 dpi (100 Linescreen)

Content: The main focus is on local news of interest to those of Irish heritage; including current events, special events, radio, sports, book reviews, travel, entertainment, poetry, history, calendar of events, classifieds, Irish personalities in all fields, Gaelic Park and Irish American Heritage Center news. News from Ireland.

Classified Ads: $25 per column inch

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Rose of Tralee to Visit Chicago in December!

The 2014 Rose of Tralee, Maria Walsh will be visiting Chicago on December 13, 14 & 15th! Maria (27) is the first Philadelphia Rose to take the title during the five-day festival, two-night televised event in Tralee, Ireland. Born in Boston, Massachusetts, Maria moved to the south of Mayo village of Shrule in 1994. She studied Journalism and Visual Media in Griffith College Dublin and graduated in 2009 before venturing to the Big Apple in early 2010. She moved to Philadelphia in late 2011. She is a Pioneer and a member of the Glencorrib Center since she was twelve and she has volunteered for many years with the Pioneer Association and No Name Club, two organizations that focus on the development of our young people.

If you would like to meet Maria, you will find her at The Irish American Heritage Center – 4626 N. Knox, Chicago - on Saturday, December 13th in the Fifth Province Pub at 7:00 p.m. She will then be spending the day at Gaelic Park on Sunday, December 14th. Maria will be with the 2014 Chicago Rose, Colleen Nolan starting off with Mass at 10:00 a.m. with breakfast immediately following. After the breakfast the ladies will then attend Christmastime in Ireland at 3:00 p.m. starring Tony Kenny, George Casey, Trish O'Brien, Paul Noonan, Dublin Trinity Band and The Dublin City Dancers. Tickets are $25.00 each and you can reserve your tickets by calling Gaelic Park at 708-687-9323.

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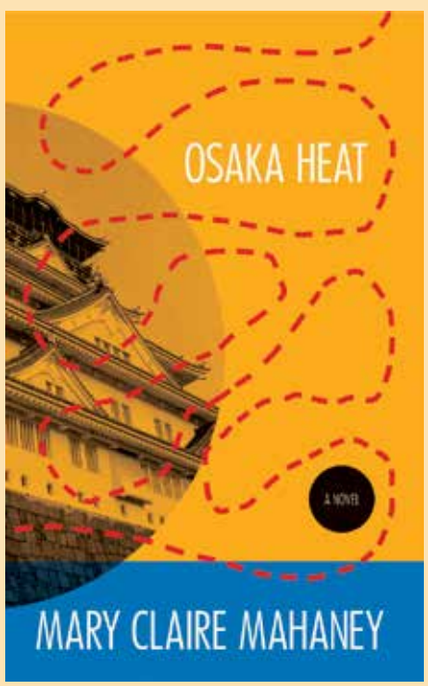

The printed version of Osaka Heat also won the **Silver Medal** in Independent Publisher's IPPY Award, **Multicultural Fiction category**. The IPPY Awards annually recognize the best independently published books across a variety of categories

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From the Motherland

By Sean Farrell

Paisley

"By their Fruits Ye shall know them;" Matthew 7.16

Now the Month's Mind is over, how should we regard him?

Park for a moment that late Damascus –like conversion to power sharing, that invoking of the Song of Solomon when he took over as Northern Ireland's First Minister.

He was never short of a pithy phrase:

"Blaspheming Roman Scum" -- Catholics.

"They breed like rabbits and multiply like vermin" --- Irish Catholics.

"This Romish man of sin is now in Hell" --- on the death of John XXIII.

"Bog People" --- the Ulster Irish dispossessed in the Seventeenth century.

My personal favourite was his frequent retort to Irish reporters asking a difficult question – "Let me smell your breath."

Time Magazine once described him as an Elmer Gantry style figure. Yet Paisley was much more than a glib shyster spouting the bible at ignorant US plebs. He was a towering figure in Twentieth Century Irish history, one who played a major part in what we still refer to as "The Troubles." And he had support - right to the end he was Northern Ireland's greatest vote getter.

He fused Religion and Politics in a way rarely seen in modern times. When he first emerged, we did not take him seriously. A Neanderthal using phrases and language not heard – or widely believed – since Cromwell. There's a moral here. Listen carefully to what people are saying – everyone from Hitler to Bin Laden – and ignore at your peril!

He came to attention initially in 1959 when he threw the Bible he professed to espouse at Donald Soper, a Methodist minister who doubted its literal truth. But it was Catholics at whom he directed his special ire. The Pope – any Pope – was the Whore of Babylon, or Antichrist, whatever that means. He picketed the Second Vatican Council. He picketed and disrupted ecumenical services in Britain. His shouting figure, surrounded – usually – by a posse of placard waving louts, some wearing clerical collars, became a familiar figure on our televisions in the 1960s.

He was superb at hurling biblical quotes at his opponents, drawing inspiration from the King James' Bible. The Jacobean scholars who crafted this literary masterpiece have much to answer for. Would – could – Paisley and legions of pulpit thumping bigots over the ages have achieved the same effect with the anaemic New English or Douai versions?

He was, of course, more than just a bible spouting bigot. He was a brilliant demagogue. While much material has been lost, look at his Drumcree speech in 1995 on You Tube, or the fragments that survive from the 60s. Oswald Mosley and Enoch Powell have been described as accomplished mob orators. They simply weren't in Paisley's class. Hitler's rants – from the newsreels - come closest. And Paisley shared with Hitler the ability to turn minds with his words, albeit – thankfully - on a much smaller stage.

He was a towering, intimidating, aggressive figure, burly and well over six foot at a time when most people were not. His bellow added to the charisma, for he was the shouter – downer par excellence. I never witnessed him bested, even when thrown out of meetings or events. Yet he could be personable and charming when he wanted, as he was when I encountered him a quarter of a century ago.

At some time in the fateful decade of the Sixties, while ranting at Catholicism, he focussed on politics – perhaps always his intention. His targets expanded to embrace Irish republicanism, whether in the imagined menace from the Republic or in the discriminated minority of Irish nationalists - Catholic to boot – within the North. He was on surer ground here.

For if most of his listeners deep down had scant regard for the hellfire in the afterlife he raged about, many were worried, and indeed fearful, of the country to the South, less prosperous, with its revanchist constitutional claim, and its Catholic Church-dominated society . They were equally apprehensive of the nationalist minority living among them and were conscious also of their own minority status on the island as a whole and the dubious political settlement that had gifted them their position.

"We will never forsake the blue skies of Ulster for the grey mists of an Irish Republic." Paisley tapped into these fears, exploited them, painting the issues as zero sum and opposing every concession or reasonable attempt at compromise. He told Bernadette Devlin in 1968 he would rather be Protestant than just. He spent four decades holding fast to that tenet. He provoked serious rioting in 1964 over the display of a tricolour during elections in Belfast. He opposed and picketed meetings between the political leaders on the island. When the Civil Rights movement got under way in 1968 he organised violent counter-demonstrations.

Even as people began to be murdered in large numbers he had a Teflon-like quality for evading direct responsibility. Yet few doubted where he stood. I recall the numerous crude graffiti in Belfast in those early days "UVF – Rev. Ian" and the more pointed one in a nationalist area that threatened vengeance. Yeats in a late poem pondered whether his play had sent "out certain men the English shot." Paisley, though never directly fingered for involvement, with his superb demagogy and his gift for harnessing and igniting quiescent fears, as many loyalist paramilitaries have testified, provided support and sustenance for their actions.

When political settlement seemed possible, wrecking became his forte. In 1969 he destroyed a decent Prime Minister, derailing a reform process that could have prevented the awful decades that followed. In 1974, when calm was needed, he was to the fore in wrecking the Sunningdale power-sharing agreement. Any Unionist politician advocating compromise was outflanked by Paisley, his career destroyed. He opposed the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement (" Never, Never, Never."). A decade later, when the ceasefires were in effect, he did his best to fan the flames yet again at Drumcree.

Then, the sea change. Paisley was the last man standing, every rival Unionist politician routed, his party, the DUP, the largest Unionist party. Suddenly, incredibly, he abandoned his previous stances and went into government with Sinn Fein in 2007, declaring that "Northern Ireland has come to a time of peace, when hate will no longer rule." He was by then 81. One perceptive commentator probably got it right by suggesting that mixed in with egotism was his final realisation that compromise was the least bad option. " Sunningdale for slow learners."

His tenure in government lasted only a year. Later he claimed to have been forced out by his own party and remained bitter to the end. But, his age apart, it is not hard to see why he was ousted. By going in with Sinn Fein, however he dressed it up, he lost the ability to wreck, to command a veto, becoming just another politician. By saying Yes he clearly helped set Northern Ireland on a new path. The tragedy is that this could have been achieved decades earlier, and so much bloodshed and bitterness avoided, had Paisley not rampaged through the middle ground of moderate unionism. We would think better of him had his conversion been more timely.

He won't be missed.

Tradition In Review

Bill Margeson

'Tis the season and all that. Here is the annual column on the perfect trad music gift for that certain someone on your list. We hasten to add that all these cd's are available, or can be gotten easily for you by Jack and Gail Baker at Rampant Lion in Villa Park, Il. I understand that Jack even writes a nice, little column for this paper. DO patronize his business, as it is the best of its type in America. If he ain't got it, you don't need it. Here is a list of everything we've reviewed this year. As usual, if it is here, it is recommended. Otherwise, it would not have been reviewed in the first place:

Croabh Rua-I'd Understand You If I Knew What You Meant-A contender for Vocal/Instrumental Album of the Year. A great album from a great group. Can't miss.

Stef Geremia- The Open Road- The flute player for The Alan Kelly Gang. Like Irish flute, played beautifully? You'll love this solo album , then.

Donal Clancy-Songs of a Roving Blade-Donal carries on a family tradition. Beautifully performed songs, beautifully accompanied. The Clancys live on!

Sean Tyrrell—Moonlight on Galway Bay-Songs Our Fathers Sang –The Master of Irish Song produces a stunner. Lots of classics here you probably grew up on, given a breathtakingly fresh and gorgeous take by this huge talent of a man. No album more highly recommended this year.

Morga-For the Sake of Auld Decency-A fun, if derivative, album from this talented instrumental group.

Loreena McKennitt-The Journey So Far-McKennit fans will LOVE this. New-age stuff on harp. Marginal vocals. But, it is interesting for fans of this type of fluff. It will probably sell the most of any of these albums, bless her little heart.

Louise Mulcahy-Tuning the Road-One of the world's best uilleann pipers, she is also an incredible flute player from a magical musical family. Probably Female Musician of the Year.

The O'Schraves-Family Day-Canadians and the best family act in the business. Never mind the publicity and dollar machines behind other recent and less-talented families. This is a GEM, and an act to be watched.

We Banjo 3-Gather the Good-Another stunner from the biggest vocal/instrumental group in trad right now. Still hot. Their stage shows are regrettably, yet understandably, resembling Gaelic Storm lately, but their musical skills are undiminished. Great stuff, altogether. Fab. Uberfab.

The Henry Girls- Louder than Words-This trio of talented Donegal sisters are just wonderful. Lovely voices, perfect harmonies and talented instrumentalists. Not a trad album, per se, but truly and deeply Irish music in the best sense of the word. Very highly recommended for the Irish music fan on your list who is so-so on trad, yet wants great music.

Goitse-Tall Tales and Misadventures-Oh, this is a great group. Young, full of energy and going places fast. A must-have for the trad fan on your list. VERY big in Europe and the rest of the world, as well! We LOVE them!

Runa-Current Affairs- This Canadian-American-Irish group is also on a mega trajectory. Wow! Stunning vocal/instrumental album from an award-winning group. Another must-have for your trad lover, or for you!! Masterful music!

RUNA

Brendan Hayes-A Visit to Ireland-Strangely, this mega-talent and former piano player for Reeltime released this highly entertaining and perfectly arranged vocal/instrumental collection of classics, but has done little, if anything, to promote it. Still worth hunting down! You'll love it after you find it!

Sinead Healey-Shuffle the Deck-Definitive shot at New Talent of the Year, this album is a perfectly played and produced tour de force on the piano accordion, playing the best in Irish music with superb accompaniment. Jimmy Keane! Be Careful! This All-Ireland 2007 Winner may be coming after your crown!

Neansai Ni Choisdealbha-Draiocht Na Feadoige—This means it is by Nancy Costello and entitled, Magic of the Flute. We are continually mystified by the Irish penchant for naming their albums and names in Irish and then trying to sell product in America, Canada and the UK. Oh, well. It IS a shame, because the title will make it virtually unfindable by the public, and it is a stunning bit of flute playing from a woman who is obviously

a fabulous, Galway musician. If you love Irish flute (who doesn't) make the extra effort. This is worth it.

Dan Possumato-Tunes Inside-This American button box player has a winner of an album on his hands. Great tunes, altogether and ably assisted by some really talented people. Good man, Dan!!

Aodan Coyne-If We Only Knew-The lead singer of Socks in the Frying Pan is out with a stunner of a solo effort. Lovely vocals and strong accompanists guarantee a lovely aural adventure. If We Only Knew. Well, we DO know, and it is great!

Merry Christmas—and have fun with this list!

We hope you are listening to Bill & Imelda every Sunday at noon, Chicago time, on LiveIreland.com. Now, apparently, certified as the world's most popular Irish music show!! (BTW, LiveIreland soon to be featured at Disneyland in California! More on this later.) And, join Imelda and me on House Party for Chicago's only bluegrass show, every Monday at 10:00 on WDCB, 90.9 fm and WDCB.org Ta!

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About the Cover

Jim Kingston took the cover photo in Ireland.

Jim is a retired insurance executive living in Park Ridge, IL. He started taking pictures 60 years ago while in high shool. He worked part-time in downtown Chicago camera store while attending DePaul University. His photography ranges from general to street, and travel.

Over the years he has traveled to Ireland on many occasions, especially Connemara in Galway.

Jim is fortunate to stay with his friend on Fournis Island, Connemara. The cover photo was taken there. This friendship has gained him access to the daily lives and culture of the people there.

An important part of the region is the history of the sailing craft of Galway. John owns a Galway Hooker sail boat, and sails it on weekends and races it in the Summer. Jim has photographed many of these races over the years and hopes to return to Connemara next year to continue his photography. Jim can be reached at 847-698-6115

Chicago Irish Film Festival Feb 28-Mar 7

Save the dates for the Chicago Irish Film Festival. www.chicagoirishfilmfestival.com

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Christmas Bingo: It's A Ho-Ho-Holy Night

Back this year with new Christmas trivia and new goofy prizes, this comedy from the author of the smash hit Late Nite Catechism comes brings together two of the best things about being Catholic: Christmas and Bingo.

In this interactive show, Christmas Bingo: It's a Ho-Ho-Holy Night, audience members actually play bingo, win holiday-themed prizes, AND learn funny stories about Jesus and Santa, and why we love this holiday season. You don't have to be Catholic to love this show, but it pays to love bingo.

Through January 4, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m., Royal George Theatre, 1641 N. Halsted, Chicago. $30, group discount available.

Tickets: 312-988-9000.

Vickie Quade at the podium.

Aran Cottage in Inishmore, Aran Islands, Co. Galway, Ireland. photo by Jim Kingston.

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Southside IRISH

All year-round, you know the sound. The soothing music that serves as a backdrop for a radio or television commercial as the soft voice of one Tim Allen plays up a scenario as to why any time of the year is a perfect time to visit Michigan.

By Tim Moran
Southside Editor

It may be time to add another version, though. One that showcases the Irish influence prevalent in many areas of the beautiful state.

My family and I had the chance in late October to experience a full week in the state, hitting up some of the spots we heard about being of particular interest in the fall.

The first night of our trip, we set to stay the night somewhere in Mount Pleasant so we could take a look at Central Michigan university the next morning. We aren't ones to make hotel plans ahead of time as plans always do change and it is a bit more fun to take things as they come and have a constant element of surprise while away from home. But that approach sometimes comes with its issues, and that was evident right away as every place of lodging in Mount Pleasant was full because CMU had a football game earlier that day.

Irish-owned, Hotel Doherty in the town of Clare, Michigan.

So we went off the find the next town to the north, a small town called Clare. As I looked up places on the fly, I couldn't help but notice a Hotel Doherty, an old-time Irish owned business right in the heart of the town's business district - which happens to include the famous "Cops and Doughnuts" bakery.

Hotel Doherty had a reasonable rate for us as we just needed a stopover prior to our final destination of Mackinac Island the next day. The Doherty is part of the haunted Michigan travel tour, mainly because of its ties to the prohibition era and use as a speakeasy - but also because of a gruesome murder that occurred there in 1938, 14 years after it opened. Vague accounts since have claimed the spirit of the murdered individual has been sensed at the bar downstairs.

The attendant at the front desk said I came at the right time of the year to get a good rate, as it is "really crazy" during March as the city of Clare is a hot spot during St. Patrick's Day.

All along our route, which concluded with a trip down US-31 on the Lake Michigan side, we saw Irish businesses and references to St. Patrick's Day even in October.

Our favorite overall destination was Traverse City, which offered amazing resort rates in October with beautiful views of the Grand Traverse Bay. Petoskey, the walk to the lighthouse in Ludington and taking the ferry from Mackinaw City to Mackinac Island were other fun experiences.

But the best part of road tripping is the unexpected thrills that come, the ones that aren't planned. And for this trip that was Clare and the historic Hotel Doherty.

From left: Andrea Ramirez-Justin VP Old Plank Trail Community Bank, Catherine O'Hara - owner, O'Hara and Friends Salon, Dr. Sylvia M. Jenkins President of Moraine Valley Community College, Albert Lewis Jr. Dean Corporate, Community and Continuing Education Moraine Valley Community College.

O'Hara Receives Women in Business/Leadership Award

Moraine Valley Community College's Corporate, Community and Continuing Education subdivision has selected a winner of its Women in Business/Leadership Award as part of its 2014 Business Champions Awards.

The awards represent the valuable contributions businesses and their advocates make to the economic development of Chicago's southwest suburbs.

Catherine O'Hara, owner of O'Hara and Friends Salon in Alsip and a 33-year veteran of the hair industry, received the award. Since she began in hair business, O'Hara has mentored six young stylists on how to make a living with their talent. She also lectures at local cosmetology schools about understanding the strategies about owning a business and keeping it successful while giving back to the community. Her nominator said she is "a source of inspiration."

The awards were presented at the 19th annual Business Champions Awards banquet at the Moraine Business and Conference Center on November 6.

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Piping It In

Jack Baker

Last column of the year and with it comes a review of what might very well be the best CD release of the year. Everybody is still talking about the impression Socks in the Frying Pan made on the festival circuit this year. I'm long sold out of their first CD and anxiously awaiting their next release which I understand they're working on as I type this. In the meantime, I just received my review copy of their lead singer's new solo CD, "if we only knew". Aodán Coyne is the young man's name, a singer of no small talent matched by his impressive work on guitar, mandolin and bouzouki.

Now I know Uncle Bill Margeson reviewed this very same CD last month, and an excellent job he did, as he always does but this one is so good that I want to talk about it too. Frankly, the quality of this recording is such that there is room for more of us to jump on the bandwagon in it's praise.

Aodán is joined on the recording with John Bridge on bass, Niall Preston on bodhran and Sean McCarthy on uileann pipes and low whistle. Together they put out some very nice music which forms the backdrop for the real star here, Aodán's voice and his song writing skill. He starts out with the best version of "Welcome Poor Paddy Home" that I've heard in awhile. I'm always preaching that music is more than words and notes and here's a singer who know what I'm talking about. The passion and love for the music is evident in the first cut of the album and stays at the same level through out the recording.

Two of the songs are Aodán's own compositions, the second cut "Time is Short But Free" and the 10th, "If You Only Knew". These sondgs clearly show that this young man can translate his passion and feelings into word and then perform that song in such a way that the feeling is clearly and touchingly communicated, not an easy task.

So we have seen some marvelous things from Socks in the Frying Pan so far, a stunning first CD, an impressive solo from Aodán Coyne and a summer full of wonderful live performances. What's next? The boys said they were going home to work on a second CD, which I can't wait to hear, and already they're booked for most of the festivals they played this year. Onward and upward.

Aodán Coyne

News has come to me that Wendy MacIsaac, the fiddling dynamo from Nova Scotia has released a new CD. Unfortunately I didn't get it in time to include a review in this column so look for it next month. Safe to say, Wendy MacIsaac has never released a recording that I didn't love so I expect great things.

Sad news from the Chicago piping community in the retirement of Carl Presto and Ed Cargill from the ranks of the Chicago Highlanders Pipe Band. These two guys were fixtures in the band for more years than either would like to admit and their presence will be missed. We wish them well in their well-deserved retirement.

As a small business owner I want to take the opportunity to encourage all of you to shop small this year for Christmas. Avoid the craziness of the malls and big box stores and come shop with the small stores where you'll find better service and grateful shopkeepers. There are plenty of store ads in the pages of the Irish American News so come on by and relive those days when shopping was fun.

Here's hoping everyone has a wonderful holiday, a happy & safe new year and a happy hogmaney! See ya at the store, 630-834-8108 or jack@rampantlion.com Slainté

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Be Ready for Administrative Reform!

President Obama has given millions of undocumented one of the best gifts – administrative reform! For that reason, it is important to be ready when the time comes.

Being ready begins with getting the most up-to-date and accurate information. When the President announces his executive action, CIIS will host a number of information sessions both at the Irish American Heritage Center and Gaelic Park. To stay informed you can join our newsletter through our website (www.ci-is.org) or check out our Facebook page for updates. In addition, you can check www.undocumentedirish.com or www.ilisready.org for information.

Raia Stoicheva

Remember, there will be a gear-up period of a few months after the announcement before anyone will be able to lodge an application. You should begin collecting important documents: your birth certificate, passport, criminal history, and any document showing your physical presence in the country for as long as possible. And, if you want, you can come to our walk-in clinic on Thursdays from 4pm to 8pm for a consultation.

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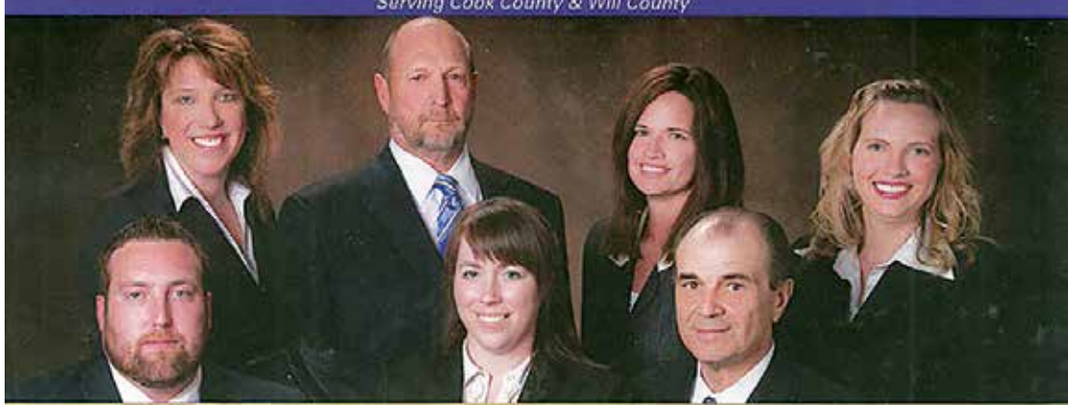

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Remembering Joe Dooley

"On your right," his brother Jim would say, introducing the members of the Dooley Brothers Band, "is Joe Dooley, the 'father' of the band" – this in acknowledgment of the fact that his big brother had, at 22, been the oldest of the group when they got their first paid gig at the Butcher Shop in Old Town in 1966. "As a matter of fact," he would add, "Joe is also the Father of Our Country."

This always got a laugh. But there was more to it than whimsy. For the Dooley brothers, six of us in all, knew we owed a special debt to Joe, even though he was only the third son of Chicago Tribune photoengraver Tom Dooley and artist Avis McMullin, whose celebrity portraits of the 1920s and '30s captured, the Trib said in her obit, "the spirit of an era." Because it was Joe who reconnected all of us, born and reared in Chicago's western suburbs, to the country of our souls: Ireland.

He had only been playing music professionally for about two years when he left his day job teaching history at Lucy Flower High School in the summer of 1968 for three months knocking around Europe with his buddy Karl Sundstrom. Their arrival at the family cottage near Tulla, a few miles from Spancil Hill (one of the best songs Joe sang, by the way) could have been a scene out of Going My Way, where the old priest (Barry Fitzgerald) is reunited with his ancient mother. In Joe's case it was our Aunt Jane, who had treasured our father's letters home. "But for Tommy Dooley," she told her grandchildren, "we'd know nothing of the family over." The frail old woman embraced the lad from the States, murmuring, "Tommy's boy, Tommy's boy."

The memory of that encounter – and the many other trips "home" Joe made with us in tow – flowed into his singing and playing. "Joe was always the last one ready to go out on stage," recalls Jimmy Moore, who's played hundreds of gigs over the years with the Dooleys. "He would be tuning his autoharp with the 36 strings. 'C'mon, Joe!' we'd plead. 'It's time!' But he made up for the grief he put us through with the passion he brought to his music. Joe sang and played from the heart."

Look at the photograph. You can see it in his face.

Besides the autoharp, which he strummed lovingly, eyes shut, face aglow, as he segued from "The Bells of St. Mary's" into "Fisher's Hornpipe," Joe contributed a strong rhythm guitar, a sonic rainbow of percussion instruments he'd fallen in love with when they toured the Caribbean as a cruise band, and saxophone. Once, after a decade of early success on Chicago's Old Town/Rush Street scene, the band was invited back to the Old Town School of Folk Music, where Joe blew away the hushed audience of purist folkies by strapping on his sax and chugging his way passionately through the Fats Domino classic "Yes It's Me and I'm in Love Again!" (He plays it on the Dooley Brothers' CD Black Sunshine.)

Mike, Joe and Jim Dooley visit the Cliffs of Moher.

Mike, Bill, Jim and Joe at a photo shoot in Lincoln Park for the front cover of the July 2010 edition of Irish American News. (photo by Cathy Curry Carlson.

He could play, and loved, all kinds of music, but his life's blood was the songs he, Mike, Jim and Bill had learned on several tours of Ireland and performing over the decades in such landmark Chicago area pubs as Fitzgerald's, the Abbey, Gaelic Park, Reilly's Daughter, Irish Village, the Fifth Province and Kilkenny Castle Inn of fond memory – where owners Margaret, Peter and Eamonn Brady's own group Brogue alternated with the Dooleys. "It didn't take long for the two families to bond," says Peter, who remembers Joe's "great sense of humor and quick wit."

Joe's favorite tunes, which he sang with a warmth that could be felt in the back row, included "Dublin in the Rare Ould Times" and "Limerick, You're a Lady." On YouTube he performs a song of his own, composed on a hill at Gurthcummer, County Clare, Jim remembers, while 100 jackdaws swirled overhead like autumn leaves, "I Guess We'll Never Know."

For years the Dooleys have played Chicago's (now discontinued) Celtic Fest, Milwaukee's Irish Fest, Navy Pier, Taste of Chicago, and every Irish Fest at the Irish American Heritage Center since it opened in 1985. Before a stroke in 2007 forced Joe to retire from the band, they had given an estimated 4,000 performances, appearing before five mayors.

This would have pleased both their grandfathers.

Tommy Dooley, the founding captain (1910) of Cicero's Engine Company No. 1, was an accomplished fiddler, whose well-thumbed copy of O'Neill's 1903 Music of Ireland was one of Joe's personal treasures (along with the trunk and fiddle his grandfather had brought with him from Clare in 1892). T.W. McMullin, whose wife's family's home across the alley from the infamous O'Learys' barn on DeKoven Street survived the Great Fire of 1871 when the wind blew the other way, had performed popular Irish American ballads like "Odd Fellows Hall," "Dan O'Brien's Raffle" and "The Great McCloskey Fight" in the saloons of Holy Family Parish in the 1890s.

The Dooleys still do these songs. Joe's own favorite was "The Irish Jubilee," which he always did a cappella with great zest. "*A short time ago, boys, an Irishman named Docherty / Was elected to the Senate by a very large majority,*" he would begin.

He felt so elated that he sent for Denis Cassidy
Who owned himself a barroom in a very large capacity.
He said to Cassidy, 'Go over to the brewer
For 1,000 kegs of lager beer and give it to the poor!'
So Cassidy at once sent out the invitations,
And everyone that came was a credit to their nation.

Was it any wonder the students at Lane Tech High School had once voted Joe teacher of the year? After he retired from teaching to devote full time to the band, an administrator from Lane approached him one night and asked what it would take to get him back. "If I could have a pint of Guinness on my desk like I do on stage here," he grinned, "I would do it."

Like many of his male Irish ancestors, Joe married late in life, having taken major responsibility for his aging mother, whom he goodnaturedly squired to many a doctor's appointment and kept laughing merrily, in spite of illnesses, up to her death at 94. His greatest joy, besides music, was his own Maryrose and Maggie, the pair of lovely colleens who were the fruit of his marriage to Kathleen Mogan.

A couple of months before he died, on November 1st at age 70, a freak rainstorm cancelled an outdoor concert in Brookfield. Feeling bad for the fans who'd come out, some from far away, the Dooleys gave an informal acoustic performance under a picnic pavilion. And they were four again, Joe singing along from his wheelchair. His face glowed like a sunset.

"Joe was a gentle soul," several people remarked at the funeral Mass at St. Luke's Church where we said goodbye to him. And then Jimmy Moore and Kathleen Keane played "Spancil Hill" and O'Carolan's tender "Si Bheag Si Mhor" there by the altar where Joe had served 7 a.m. Mass as a boy on many a dark winter's morn. And his brothers Jim, Mike and Bill sang "The Lord of the Dance." And we went out into the morning.

– Dennis Dooley

Irish Books and Plays in Review

Frank West

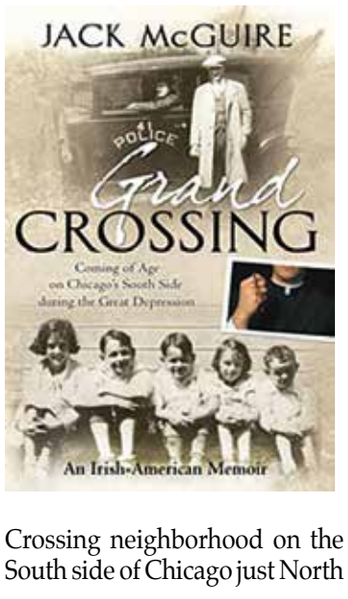
Grand Crossing - Coming of Age on *Chicago's Southside During the Great Depression*

By Jack McGuire

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book because it is lively, humane and compassionate. And, because it is about the experience of growing up in Chicago, which I can strongly identify with. Jack McGuire writes in a clear and colorful prose so that his childhood experiences are told in a vibrant and memorable manner.

Grand Crossing tells the story of growing up during the 1930's, the era of the Great Depression. As the author says, "It is a story about growing up during this defining period in our nation's history, and an impressionable boy's life in a vibrant culturally diverse Chicago Neighborhood."

The author's family lived at 79th and Maryland in the Grand



Crossing neighborhood on the South side of Chicago just North of Chatham.

I grew up on the North side in the Lake View community in the 1940's, so I recognize McGuire's world and many of the things he refers to.

The "old" neighborhood was a warm and intimate place - almost like a small town or village. In it there was a great importance to human skills. It is not by chance that the author devoted his working career to being a press agent and in public relations. He even founded a public relations firm.

"The block we lived on, and the whole Grand Crossing area, had a mixture of almost every nationality. Lots of Irish, Swedes, and Italians. There were some English, German, and a few Poles, and even a few Jews."

There were no recriminations or negative comments about national origins or religion. People lived together peacefully. I understand this because there were many nationalities in the huge "v" shaped court building where I lived as a boy

McGuire has a wonderful description of the magic of Riverview. This was the amusement park located at Belmont and Western Avenue, on the Northside of Chicago. As you entered you were greeted by a gigantic picture of Alladin's face. This welcomed countless children to the wonders of Riverview and to the funhouse called Alladin's Castle.

There were only three or four books in the McGuire home. One of them was the Baltimore Catechism. I remember this book well. It consisted of many questions and absolute answers about the Catholic religion. The answers were not to be questioned. Questions were often answered by "These are the mysteries of our religion, my son. Thruths that we can't fully understand. You must accept them on faith!

That attitude was succinctly stated by Sister Clarissa in this quote from Över the Tavern." She says, "Stop thinking. Your instructions were to memorize. It's thinking that gets you into trouble. "Despite living in that parochial environment, Jack feels he has to ask questions.

A friend shows him his books and offers to let him have on. "I rummage through the stack of books and come up with "Treasure Island" by Robert Louis Stevenson. It has a beautiful color drawing on the cover of Long John silver, the pirate with a parrot on his shoulder. Once I start reading it, I can hardly put it down. I've loved books ever since."

I remember this book and how it expanded my imagination. I still keep a copy on my bookshelf.

The book ends with a beautiful reflection by Jack. "Looking back on those days of my early childhood, I know now that Grand Crossing was more than just a place. It was an impressionable young boy's rite of passage through the Depression years and beyond, leaving an indelible mark on the man he would become." Pages: 208, ISBN: 978-145752-344-1, $15.95, Category: Memoir Biography, Perfectbound.

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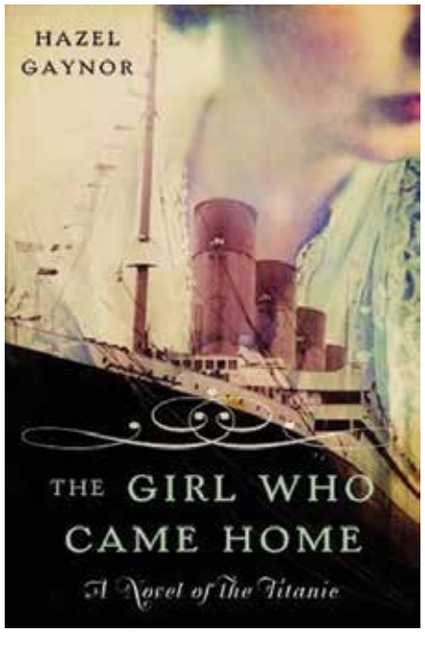
Words With Melody

By Melody Gallagher

The Girl who Came Home "It wasn't worth agonizing over or wishing for things to be different or declaring that life was cruel in its playing out; that was just how it was, and how it would always be." Hazel Gaynor's historical novel The Girl who Came Home, recounts the tragic story of the Titanic and a handful of the lives impacted by it. It parallels the lives of Maggie, a sweet young girl traveling



from Ireland to America, and her great-granddaughter Grace seven decades later.

The first chapter introduces the reader to Maggie whose story begins in the rural town of Ballysheen, Ireland. Though far from the rich and stylish cities of America her aunt often boasts, Ballysheen is home to Maggie. She remains content with her quiet life as well as her budding romance with the young Seamus. However when her mother passes away, Maggie must pack up the life she knows to follow her aunt to America. With thirteen other Ballysheen residents, Maggie sets sail on the Titanic's maiden voyage leaving behind her home and sweetheart. After the great ship meets her fate, Maggie looks to begin a new life by starting over and forgetting all about that terrible night.

Seventy years later in Illinois, Grace is an intelligent college student with promises of a bright future. When her father suddenly passes away, she leaves her college life behind her to come home and take care of her mother. Unsure of where her life will take her next, Grace is surprised when her great-grandmother Maggie suddenly opens up to her about a part of her past she has almost never shared with anyone- her voyage and survival on the Titanic.

Grace begins recording her great-grandmother's tale as Maggie travels back through all the years to that terrifying night. They come to see the parallels between their two lives, the unpredictable changes life brought them. However for both Maggie and her great-granddaughter, they realize that their lives do not come to a stop after tragedy but can still move forward.

Moving back and forth between two lives seventy years apart, The Girl who Came Home is a wonderful historic read. It offers not only a memorable look into the lives of the passengers of the titanic but the crew as well. With Gaynor's attention to detail and flair for story-telling, her book brings the reader aboard the ship and further. From the lofty, luxurious first class to the cramped, modest accommodations enjoyed by the third, the book portrays the drastic social and class distinctions aboard the ship. These are distinctions not just highlighted by the descriptions of the differing class accommodations but even as the ship began to sink and much of the third class becomes trapped below.

What sets Gaynor's book apart from any other take on the Titanic is that it is not just a book about the lives impacted by this one voyage. It is a story about all those who have left behind a home and family in pursuit of a better life. It is heart-breakingly beautiful account of the many sorrows faced by immigrants: the life left behind, fear of the unknown, and the uncertainty that they will ever see their loved ones again.

The book is a touching, tear-jerking story. Although the end may appear to wrap up a little too neatly for some, for those with a taste for heart-felt endings, this one is exquisite. Just be ready with a box of tissues.

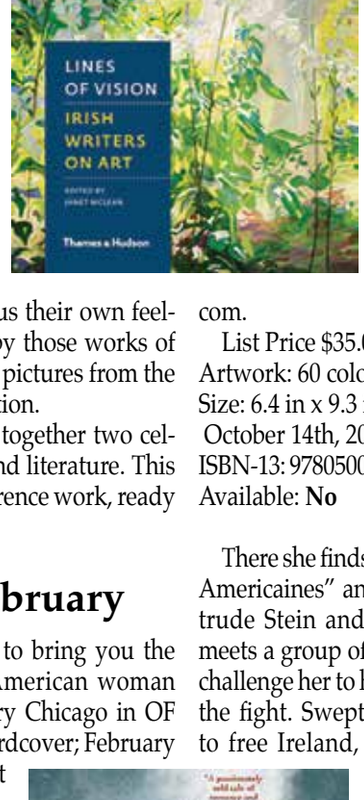
Lines of Vision

Review by Frank West
Edited By Janet McLean

Pablo Picasso asks us the question: "Who sees the human face correctly. The photographer, the mirror or the painter?"

Janet McLean, of Ireland's National Gallery, has presented us with an extraordinarily beautiful book. And one that is intensely evocative with emotion and thought.

McLean is Curator of European Art at the National Gallery. she grew up in County Down, was educated at Trinity College in Dublin, and at Courtauld Institute of Art in London.



The Picasso quote above, asks us to think about what the artist saw,felt, and put into a painting. It also asks us what feelings and thoughts does that work of art evoke in us.

To answer these questions, Janet McLean asked 50 of Ireland's novelists, playwrights and poets to share with us their own feelings that are prompted by those works of art. To do this they chose pictures from the National Gallery's collection.

Lines of Vision brings together two celebrated traditions - art and literature. This is a book to keep as a reference work, ready when you want inspiration. These writings and poems will provide it!

Quoting from the information sheet: These writings "explore ideas and tell stories about art, love, loss, family, dreams, memory, places. Both the artworks and the literary responses to them are wonderfully vibrant in their diversity."

I have read the observations of Colm Toibin, Billy Roche, John Banville, Jennifer Johnston, and Sebastian Barry. The imagination and intimacy of their observations are profound.

In the March, 2015 issue I will have an interview with Janet McLean and a fuller review.

A quote from the observations of Jennifer Johnston shows the magic of this book. "I do meet paintings that I like a lot and we speak silently to each other."

Frank West is a retired teacher and has written book and play reviews since the paper's inception in 1977. Many are online at www.iannews.com.

List Price $35.00, Hardcover, Pages: 232
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ISBN-13: 9780500517567, Genre: Art, E-book
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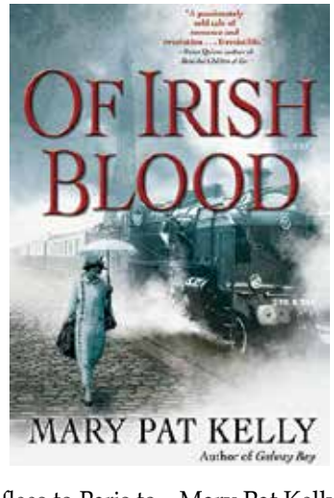
Irish Blood Coming in February

Forge Books is proud to bring you the tale of a vibrant Irish-American woman in early twentieth century Chicago in OF IRISH BLOOD (Forge Hardcover; February 3, 2015; $25.99). Mary Pat Kelly, the author of Galway Bay, creates a vivid and compelling tale woven with authentic detail and historical characters, and based on her own great-aunt's life.



Nora Kelly is thriving in the new land and new century in Chicago, making her large Irish family proud as she climbs the ladder of the Chicago fashion industry. But when she gets involved with the wrong sort of man she flees to Paris to escape trouble.

There she finds friends in the "les femmes Americaines" and luminaries such as Gertrude Stein and Sylvia Beach. Nora also meets a group of Irish revolutionaries who challenge her to honor her heritage and join the fight. Swept into the bloody struggle to free Ireland, Nora faces betrayal and violence, but her greatest heartache is wondering if she will ever find her way home again.

Pulitzer-prize winning author of Angela's Ashes, Frank McCourt, called Mary Pat Kelly's Galway Bay, "Laughter and tears and pure magic." Follow the magic of Kelly's luminous tale about a self-assured woman carving a place for herself in a world both tumultuous and new.

OF IRISH BLOOD, By Mary Pat Kelly, ISBN: 978-0-7653-2913-4
512 pg $25.99, On sale: February 3, 2015

Bridie's Boy

By Sean Brennan

For 19 years, from 1946 to 1964, Thomas Brennan each year sewed matching Easter outfits for his wife and their 11 children. The family, who lived on the Near West Side and then Oak Park, became quite famous, receiving letters from around the world.

The Brennan Family was featured in the Tribune with photos and copy as the 13-member family wearing outfits custom-made by Pops Brennan, paraded down Michigan Avenue in an unforgettable tribute. The city took them to their heart and the Brennans became "extended family" to many Tribune readers.

Now, the 10th child, Sean Brennan, has written an unforgettable memoir that will bring back those memories and create some new ones. For the Brennans (even though the boys had to share their beds and even their socks,) was that rarity: a happy family.

You don't have to be Irish or Irish-American, or raised in Chicago, to appreciate Sean Brennan's memoir of growing up the son of his Gaelic-speaking, fresh-from-Eire mother, Bridie.

Everyone will love Bridie, who with her husband, Pops, had 11 children – 5 lasses and then 6 lads-all in a sex-sequence coordinated rows. How did they arrange that lineup by sex?

"Flipped the mattress over," was Pops reply.

The author, Sean was #10 and

the Catholic Hospital waived the fee for his birth and Bridie's hospital stay in a "Bear 10 babies, get 1 Free" deal.

Bridie was the best of mothers whether she is baking her famous Irish Soda Bread, reading the tea leaves in her cup, giving each child an extra portion of her love or dragging the author by his ear to the Monsignor when she found out Sean, age 10, was dealing out a hand of "durty pictures." Although cast as an altar boy, at Catholic school, Sean was in constant trouble with the nuns. Life in the family castle "Cloonmore", a shabby mansion in Oak Park, was loving chaos—

with one-size clothes fittin' all the boys— a huge family with heart to match. Bridie's Boy does for the Irish what "I Remember Mama" did for Norwegians and all Americans with immigrant mothers, and "Cheaper by the Dozen" did for big families.

Enjoy Bridie and her brood—and shed a tear or two between the mighty laughs.

About the Author

The tenth of eleven Brennan's, Sean began his writing career at the dining room table in Pop's sewing room. Sometimes the brunt of some ordained punishment and sometimes payment for Pops' largesse, Sean cranks out essays that even Pops says are 'pretty good.'

His writing goes dormant, and after a thirty year career at the Board of Trade is awakened when the stories that he has been squirreling away are revived by a personal challenge to 'put up' or 'shut up.' A natural Seanachi, Sean resurrected his desire to write with a short story called "The Paper Boy," a reminiscence of his years bringing the news to Oak Park's south side. That led to "The Altar Boy," several others and finally, a full memoir, "Bridie's Boy".

bridiesboy@gmail.com , www.bridiesboy.com

Published July 04, 2014 (Kiltimagh Press)

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Always Patsy Cline at Oubique

Review by Terence Boyle

I'm no diehard country fan, far from it. I grew up in Ireland railing against the overwhelming support for what I considered to be sentimental drivel. Even today, Ireland still loves the twang, cringing yodel and the good tragic story that typifies country music. No matter where you go in Ireland you just can't escape the distant cries of the Honky Tonk bars. And among those country greats, venerated by my country folk, is of course Patsy Cline, who lived and breathed the highs and lows of those memorable lyrics of hers (I fall to pieces, Crazy) until her tragic death at the age of 30.

I went to this show as a cynic, and came out not quite the zealous convert, but definitely a satisfied man. I wanted to be entertained, and I wasn't disappointed. The Oubique cabaret theatre performing at No Exit theatre on Glenwood exceeded my expectations. I laughed, clapped along, and discreetly tapped my foot under the table.

What makes the performance work is its theatricality. This is not simply a tribute to the singing talent of a torch song Diva, but rather a biopic. Louise (Danni Smith), a housewife who became a close friend of the Cline's though a chance meeting in Huston in 1961, becomes the medium through which we see Cline's humanity. Through the narrative of this ardent fan we are taken beyond the glitter of rhinestone and into the private life of a famous country star. The intermingling of Louise's story, coupled with the talented voice of Christina Hall, as Patsy Cline, works to combine the private and public life of women caught up in an age of immense social change. Both actors take us on a journey beyond the illusion of stardom and into the shared experiences of two friends struggling with domestic hardships. Against the painful realities of life, they laugh, cry, and enjoy a meaningful friendship, topped off with a beer.

Hall, a gifted singer/actor, perfectly conveys the pathos of Cline's emotions through her singing, while Smith perfectly compliments the darling of country music with her crass but infectious 'hick' approach to life and men. Smith charms us with her southern humour, and delightful informality. She wonderfully translates the star's life into the blue-collar ranks of the masses with a robust vulnerability and swagger.

This is no 'cry in your beer' recollection. What writer Ted Swindley achieves in this work can only be described as heart warming.

Put aside any preconceptions of a country and western cliché. The Oubique cabaret theatre at No Exit delivers a fun, entertaining night that leaves you wanting more. In this story, the boot slapping; tear jerking, country moonshine Diva strikes again.

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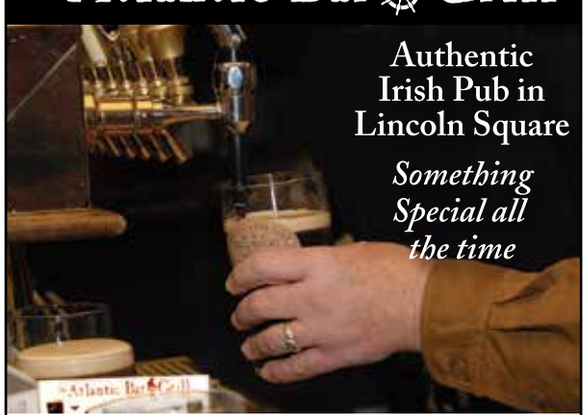

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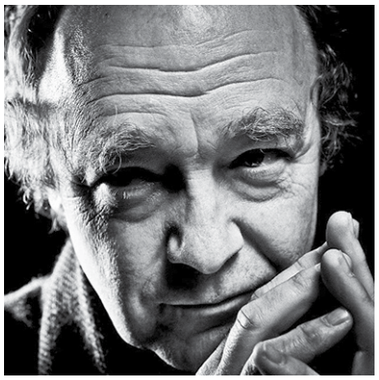
A Christmas Carol, a cherished tradition that has become Chicago's definitive family holiday production, will be presented through December 23, 2014 at Drury Lane Theatre for Young Adults, 100 Drury Lane. The joyful Charles Dickens classic, which has played for more than 25 years on the Drury Lane stage, is directed by Scott Calcagno (A Christmas Carol and The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee at Drury Lane Theatre, Legally Blonde at The Civic Theatre, and Grease at The Long Lake Theatre). Over 30 colorful Dickensian characters are brought to life on stage in this uplifting tale of hope and redemption. Complete with falling snow, magical illusions and special effects, the play is a visually-stunning experience, and at one hour long, perfect for children of all ages. On select performance dates, families will have the opportunity to have breakfast or dinner with Santa Claus in Drury Lane's elegantly decorated dining room. The buffet-style menu will include festive winter specialties and kid-friendly items.



The New York Times hailed A CHRISTMAS CAROL as "Enduring and endearing holiday entertainment!" and The Washington Post raves it is "Infectiously jolly!" Set in Victorian-era London, A CHRISTMAS CAROL tells the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, a miserly old man who receives a Christmas Eve visit from the ghost of his old business partner, Jacob Marley, warning him to mend his ways. During the night, three spirits appear before Scrooge showing him visions of Christmas Past, Christmas Present, and Christmas Future to reveal the results of his selfish life. Scrooge promises to redeem himself and vows to honor the spirit of Christmas with all his heart, spreading good cheer, kindness and generosity to everyone he encounters.

Regular performances are at 10:00 a.m. Some performances on Fridays are at 12:00 p.m. Saturdays include performances at both 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Call the box office for specific details. Performances will take place Wednesday through Saturday from November 20 through December 6 (excludes November 26 and 27) and Monday through Saturday from December 8 through December 23. Performance only tickets are available for $15 and a group rate of $12 per person is available for parties of 20 or more. For reservations, call (630) 530-0111 or visit www.ticketmaster.com or www.drurylane.com.

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Hooliganism

Mike Houlihan

Having just recovered from our second annual Skinny & Houli Return to Ireland tour, I bring sad news from Northern Ireland.

Sectarian violence once again broke out last week in the Irish border city of Derry, when Skinny Sheahan left a "dirty bomb" in the toilet of the Tower Hotel.

The incident was triggered when a Buddhist named Ronan McNamara was leading our group along the walls of Derry. Skinny sidled up to me and said, "Ask him where the nearest bathroom is, it's an emergency! And don't bring attention to me!"

I raised my hand and asked the question, which was met by laughter from the group. And even more laughter when Skinny broke from the crowd with a butt-clenched trot in the direction Ronan had indicated.

I could write a book about the puny man's many peccadilloes while in Ireland but probably the most offensive breach in our cultural relationship with Eire came to be known as "Pillow-gate".

Regrettably I wasn't aware of Skinny's malfeasance until it was too late. We were staying in a charming little hotel in Stranorlar in County Donegal one night whilst traveling across the island. The Kees Hotel hosted a sumptuous dinner for our entire group.

Our driver and tour guide, the inimitable Philip Duffy, took me aside. We'd been invited to bring our entire group next-door for a music session with our Irish fiddler Katie Grennan. "You'll have the whole bar to yourselves and Katie can put on a private show in the back room."

Sounds great I said, but Duffy then cautioned. "How will you explain to the hotel manager that you are taking the whole crowd to the pub next door?"

It was indeed a breach of etiquette since the Kees Hotel has a cozy bar of their own we could spend our money in, but they had music booked of their own. I told Philip I would simply make an announcement after dinner informing the group that we would just be popping next door to The Snug for our private concert and then return to the warmth of The Kees at 9:30. Problem solved, or so I thought.

Before I could make any announcement the hotel manager, an imposing fella named Liam McElhinney, appeared at my table inquiring, "Which one of youse is Houli?"

That would be me.

"What the hell are you trying to pull? Your partner tells me you're taking all 30 of your group to the pub next door, and me just serving you all this great dinner!"

I turned to see the giggling face of Skinny laughing as he watched me once again being ground under the wheels of the bus he had thrown me under. I managed to mollify Mr. McElhinney by telling him we would be back by 9:30, plenty of time to spend oodles of dough in his establishment.

Suddenly our driver, Philip Duffy, summons me and says, "I need to speak to you in private! 'Tis very important!"

He then steers me over to Skinny's table where he is having a grand old time, toasting the ladies at his table and basking in their adoration. Duffy beckons Skinny with his finger, "I need to speak to you both privately!"

Skinny saunters over with a big stupid grin on his face and Duffy grimly looks at Skinny and says, "Did you steal a pillow from the Europa Hotel in Belfast?"

Looking squeamish, Skinny points at me, "He did it!"

Duffy says, "We know it was you. The guarda have driven down from Belfast and are waiting outside to speak to you, come on now the both of youse and we will speak to them, You're in a heap of trouble. That pillow cost over 350 Euro!"

He then hustles us both out the door of the hotel and out to the street where the guarda are waiting. On the way, Skinny starts double-talking.

How the hell could it cost 350 Euro?

"It was embroidered."

My sister gets headaches, she needed the pillow, and I took it for her!

I was starting to enjoy watching Skinny squirm.

We came out of the hotel and our bus was parked in front, but no sign of the guarda.

We looked at Duffy, where's the cops?

He laughed at us and led us into the pub next door. "Come on, I'm going to buy you two amadons a drink!"

That's the funny thing about Ireland, everybody likes to get in on the joke. The whole pillow-gate incident was Philip Duffy having us on. Well Skinny did steal the pillow, that much was true. The three of us then concocted the story some more, kept it going, and I was sent back into the hotel to inform Skinny's sister Mary that she was now implicated in the crime and would have to give up her credit card number to pay for the pillow. The story spread among our group like wildfire and the next thing we knew, Skinny had become Public Enemy Number One in Belfast.

Freddy the Lithuanian, one of the more colorful members of our tour group, took Skinny aside and told him, "Take it from me Skinny, I come from a criminal background: deny, deny, deny!"

Katie was transcendent playing her fiddle and we all headed back to the Kee's Hotel for our nightcaps. As I walked into the lobby, Liam McElhinney, ran out from behind the counter in a faux rage, "What the hell time do ya call this Houli? You told me 9:30 and it's now 10:30!"

He spent the rest of the night and into the next day busting my balls. Gotta love Ireland, everybody gets in on the act!

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View From Ireland

By Maurice Fitzpatrick

Calvary Redux

The credits had hardly rolled on John Michael McDonagh's new film, Calvary, before a pointless spate of controversy, generated by the director himself, threatened to subsume the genuine worth of his sequel to The Guard (2011) in a public row. At issue was the quality or otherwise of Irish films. More about that later.

Calvary is in every sense a follow-up to McDonagh's first feature, The Guard (a third film would certainly be welcome to form a trilogy). This film involves just as equally compelling a performance from the protagonist as its predecessor, played by Brendan Gleeson on both occasions. In Calvary he is a priest. The priest's swaying soutane and the Garda uniform in small town Ireland are still the clearest symbols of community, and touchstones of communitarian common cause, although trust in them has been greatly diminished by scandals in the recent past. It is therefore appropriate that McDonagh, in his demythologisation of small town Ireland, cast Gleeson first as a guard and now as a priest. In neither role does Glesson fulfill the stereotypical function of his uniform or cloth: instead, he restlessly seeks to rehabilitate the role and make it meaningful in a changed Ireland. Just as the Garda was irreverent and brutish, the priest is flawed, yet both characters are good people determined in their own quirky manner to serve the public.

Many other parallels to The Guard come to mind—in both films, a black man, a deliberate anomaly in a rural Irish drama, plays a central character; both feature a precocious child, albeit a somewhat miscast one, who is a keen observer of the world; both films are elevated at moments by gorgeous images captured by cinematographer Larry Smith.

In Calvary, too, Patrick Campbell's magisterial music score and his choice of songs sees 'The Beatitudes' in Irish followed by Calvary's theme song, which, in sounding almost foreign, was just the musical transportation that the film required. And foreignness is a desirable effect since Calvary sets the most unlikely characters side-by-side. Some sensibilities may be offended by the presence of a lippy New Jersey rent boy in small town Ireland beside a frighteningly insensitive hospital doctor. Then there is a misanthropic Celtic Tiger aristocrat, determined to regain his soul, using Fr. James as a handler. Another character who comes closer to the bone in this film is a pub owner, played by Pat Shortt, whose premises is about to be repossessed by the bank, and who instances the Catholic Church's theft of Jewish wealth and collusion with the Nazi regime as adequate evidence that the church has no moral authority to pontificate to those who overextended themselves financially.

Scenes in Calvary switch very rapidly and, for the most part, effectively. One scene that sounded a rare duff note saw Fr. James passing the time of day with a young girl, a visitor to the locality, only to have her father pull up in his car in high dudgeon, concerned that his daughter is being pumped by a priest. The personal insult, the condemnation by association, the harsh public perception of a very individual and private priest, pushes Fr. James to drink—but the dramatic context and chain of causation do not seem authentic.

The burning of the church in this film, like many churches that have been burned in Ireland in the past fifteen years, is done with malicious intent. Only the stone altar remains after the arson attack. It is set against the sea as a symbolic sole remnant of a ruined church, still somehow standing in spite of such assaults. Through exploring such themes in Calvary, McDonagh shows a new form of Catholicism possible in Ireland in 2014: the church's ecclesiastic dogmas are exchanged for the pastoral sympathy of a priest such as Fr. James, who embodies a capacity to endure the worst abuses of a disaffected community. Gleeson is at his most solid and convincing in this respect: he holds his character's position with dignity and has clear concern for the hurt that people have experienced. That said, the director is careful not to allow matters to become overly solemn. The dialogue sparkles, moving the action at a good tempo, leavened throughout by the McDonagh trademark wit for which his playwright brother is also famed.

Now back to McDonagh's comments on Irish film: he who damns shall be saved? Calvary is one of the very few genuinely Irish films ever to squarely face issues of the meaning of life. So it is a pity that McDonagh wants to distance himself from the Irish film-making tradition. As he stated in an interview: "I'm not a fan of Irish movies, I don't find them to be that technically accomplished and I don't find them that intelligent... So I'm trying to get away from the description of the movie as an Irish film in a way." That wasn't very nice, and neither is it accurate. The film is set in Sligo with an Irish cast, and McDonagh is of Irish extraction. McDonagh's comment is implausible.

How will the BIFA (British Independent Film Awards) assess Calvary in early December, remembering that its counterpart, IFTA (Irish Film and Television Awards) gave it the Best Film plaudit? Does this film present an Ireland for Britain, with its director jeering Irish films and film-makers along the way as a bonus? Surely it is possible to analyse films, including those set in Ireland, independently of such limited criteria? Steve McQueen, who in 2008 made Hunger (for my money one of the best "Irish" films of the past decade) happened to be an Englishman, although he made no to do about the fact. At the risk of tempting fate it seems likely that BIFA will give Calvary an award, but will do so for the film's own proper merits.

Whether or not BIFA claim McDonagh as their own, and whether or not McDonagh wishes to acknowledge Calvary's self-evident Irishness, it still feels like the second expression of an Irish film trilogy. A better line of inquiry than all this speculation about national appropriation might be: if McDonagh makes another Irish film what subject matter will spark his interest next?

Maureen O'Looney: Friend of Immigrants

By Maureen Callahan

In light of the recent immigration news, I thought I would focus this installment on Maureen's contributions to the assistance of immigrants. An immigrant herself, she never lost sight of the needs of others in the same situation. She never forgot what it meant to start out as a stranger in a strange place. "I once had a group of 4 Irish girls wander into my store with packs on. They had just arrived here in Chicago. Someone at the airport told them they should come see me. So I put the kettle on and toasted up some bread. They hadn't yet sorted out somewhere to stay, so I brought them home with me."

Maureen O'Looney was always doing things like this. There were countless folks who crossed her worn path. Some introduced through friends, some encountered randomly. Even if she had never met you, she would help you as if you were an old friend. "I had a lot of connections around the city, you see, so I usually never had trouble helping them find jobs. Often they would stay with me until they were sorted with a home. I liked it really. I never minded."

Longtime friend P.J. O'Dea recounted to me "I arrived in the States in 1961 via San Francisco to play Irish Football. After two years, I came to Chicago. Maureen was my landlady, and also the secretary of Erin's Own Football Club, an Irish Football and Hurling Club. She helped me with learning the city and making friends. Any footballer who came into town she would either board with her or find somewhere for them. The boys were from all over Ireland. She was a hurling player herself. (When women play it's called camogie). If you could play at football or hurling, the Club made sure they took care of you.

Everyone knew Maureen and she helped each and every one of them. She helped me get my first job. We had wonderful camaraderie. She also took care of our football uniforms. We were the cleanest team in the league. From head to toe! She was strict about our appearance, " P.J. chuckled as he recalled.

Longtime friend Cyril Regan reminisced on Maureen's role as a founder of Chicago Irish Immigrant Support, a 501 (c)3 not-for-profit immigration and social services provider in 1998. "I came to a meeting. I met Maureen at the meeting. When it ended, she asked if I would join the group. I asked if I could have some time to think about it. Maureen said I had already had three hours to think. Fifteen years later, and I'm still here! That was how she was. She wouldn't take no for an answer."

Taoiseach Enda Kenny and Cyril Regan

The group was founded to serve the needs of the Irish community of Chicago and the 19 states represented by the Consulate General of Ireland, Chicago. The center was established in 1998 with an agreement between Francis Cardinal George and the Irish Bishops, who saw the need for pastoral and social services for a new wave of Irish immigrants to Chicago. Originally located in in the offices of the Archdiocese of Chicago, the organization now has a permanent home on the third floor of the Irish American Heritage Center. Since then, the group has grown to provide a comprehensive array of services to the elderly and a full range of immigration and naturalization services. "We serve more than just the Irish," Cyril is quick to remind me. "Eastern Europeans, Latinos, other groups. Whoever needs help, really. We work to provide direct immigration and social services and we have a great part of the group that serves senior citizens, too. We help with providing crisis management for elderly citizens in distress. We also organize outings to help them build camaraderie."

Maureen spent countless hours of time and energy fundraising for immigration support; a cause in which she fervently believed. "I had family when I came here; my auntie. It was different for me; I had someone to help me. So many are on their own, going it alone," Maureen once told me. Immigrants truly had seeds firmly planted in Maureen's heart, and it was one more group to whom she gave a piece of herself. "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" Matthew 25:35

I have a few installments left in the Maureen O'Looney series. I know many of you readers knew her in one way or another. I encourage each and every one of you to contact me with your stories, memories and anecdotes. I promise to reference all of them. I may be reached at misscallahan@hotmail.com. If you prefer to speak via telephone, please call Cliff at this newspaper, 847-872-0700.

Maureen Callahan is a Chicago writer and frequent contributor to the Irish American News.

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WhyHunger Strives to Make Hunger History

By Michael Joyce

Inspired by the stories she heard of her grandparent's struggles, Noreen Springstead rose from an administrative assistant to managing director of WhyHunger, an organization seeking to ensure everyone has access to nutritious food.

Noreen Springstead

Though born and raised in America, Noreen's Irish heritage formed a large portion of her upbringing.

"Four of my grandparents were born in Ireland in four different counties. They met when they came over to America. My grandparents didn't grow up with much, and so they came to America looking for a better life, very much like the immigrant experience of most people."

One of Noreen's grandmothers was named Joanna Quill, the first cousin of Michael Quill, the transit worker union leader in New York; Noreen says she was "very motivated by his tireless work for the working man."

Hearing her grandparent's accounts of the hardships of living back home inspired Noreen to join WhyHunger.

"We believe nutritious food is a human right, and that no person in the world should go hungry, and no person should be told politically or economically that this is the box you should live in."

In Noreen's experience, the reasons behind famine often go beyond ecological factors.

"When there are environmental disasters such as drought or something else people can understand it," said Noreen, "but there are often political reasons for why people are oppressed and unable to provide food for their families."

In their quest to combat world hunger, WhyHunger has partnered up with many big names in music to help raise awareness of global hunger issues. Among these are Paul McCartney, Yoko Ono and the Lennon Estate and Bruce Springsteen.

Noreen said, "Bruce Springsteen had a long standing relationship with the WhyHunger. On every single tour Bruce has done in the last 25 years WhyHunger has either been a direct beneficiary or we have directed him to the local food bank or soup kitchen in the town he's performing in. Music is a very big part of the organizations identity."

On Springsteen's charitable endeavors, Noreen said, "When he does charity, you don't get a big press release about it, he just does it. We've been fortunate enough to partner with him in a way that has generated millions of dollars to fight hunger on the frontline."

Noreen thinks that solving the global food crisis is possible, but it will require a drastic change in the current system.

"I think it's realistic if we get back to basics on food. A lot of it is addressing what's wrong with the global food system. There's about 5 companies that control global agri-business, and more or less dictate what we're going to eat, and have much of us, particularly in America, addicted to processed food."

One way of providing nutritious food is through grassroots community programs, which Why Hunger organizes throughout the United States.

"I'll give you an example in Detroit, where all of these brown fields have been turned into growing gardens that empowers people in the community to grow healthy food and create access to healthy food. It has a holistic approach, not like a food aid approach where a federal relief agent dump commodity type food to solve a problem, it needs to come from within the community."

Noreen says certain government initiatives could also do a lot to curb hunger in the United States.

"SNAP, or the Supplemental Nutritious Assistance Program, is looked at more as a wage support program rather than a dependency program or an allotment of money to supplement a families food budget," she explained. "Its an entitlement program so there's guaranteed federal dollars. A mother of three living in Chicago gets her snap allocation for the month, and those federal dollars provide local economic stimulus."

If you or someone you know is having difficulty accessing nutritious food, call The National Hunger Hotline at 1-866-3486479

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Having studied for many years with Michael O'Toole at the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama, John is the first Irish guitarist to graduate with a Masters in Music from the USC Thornton School of Music in Los Angeles. At USC John studied with Scott Tennant, founding member of the Grammy Award winning Los Angeles Guitar Quartet.

John has performed as soloist and featured player for the Irish Composers Collective, RTE National Concert Orchestra and the Dublin Philharmonic.

John has toured both Ireland and the United States as soloist and a member of the Dublin Guitar Quartet, Ireland's leading guitar ensemble.

John teaches guitar, ensemble and guitar technique full time at Limerick School of Music.

For booking information or for more information contact: johnosheaguitar@gmail.com

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Calling All Trinity Academy Alumni

Remember that beautiful Celtic knot work on your first dress or vest, and how your mom would carefully secure any loose threads so that it wouldn't unravel? If that image releases a flood of great memories, then that means that you are an integral piece of The Knot, Trinity's newly formed alumni association. Please contact us at trinityalumni.theknot@gmail.com so that we have your current email for the official Evite and like us on Facebook!!

WHO: ALL Trinity alumni -whether your last dance class was in 1989 or last spring!!

WHAT: "JINGLE AND MINGLE"

WHEN: December 27, 2014, 8-11 pm

WHERE: Mystic Celt, 3443 N. Southport, Chicago

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Chicago Gaelic Park

Serving the social & cultural needs of the Irish community throughout Chicagoland

A Chairde:

In Ireland, the Christmas festivities can go on for two weeks or more as families, friends and co-workers avail of the many opportunities to get together and celebrate the season. It is possible that with Christmas Day this year falling on a Thursday many of us will extend the holiday to a long weekend. Gaelic Park has a full schedule of events for December with many chances to celebrate the season. Our Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony is set for Thursday, December 4, and our wonderful Gaelic Park Choir will be on hand to sing Christmas Carols. We have Brendan Grace in Concert on December 6 and the Tony Kenny Christmas Show on December 14. Gaelic Park will be hosting Mingle and Jingle parties December 11 and 18, as well as various County Association and constituent group parties. We have our Super Fundraiser Draw on Sunday, December 7 when some lucky individual or individuals will win the $40,000.00 Grand Prize (there are still some tickets available). Our monthly Mass and breakfast on December 14 is always well attended, as is our Musical Luncheon on December 3. I am probably missing a couple of events, and I realize that Gaelic Park enables us to celebrate the Christmas season all month long. I want to thank all who supported our Super Fundraiser, and to wish all our readers a healthy Christmas and a Happy New Year.

John Devitt, President

The County Connection Corner

The Galway Fellowship Annual Christmas Party, will be held on Sunday December 14 from 1pm to 5pm at Chicago Gaelic Park. For reservations call 708.444.8366.

Antrim Armagh Carlow Cavan Clare Cork Derry Donegal Down Dublin Fermanagh Galway Kerry Kildare Kilkenny Laois Leitrim Limerick Longford Louth Mayo Meath Monaghan Offaly Roscommon Sligo Tipperary Tyrone Waterford Westmeath Wexford Wicklow

Share your County upcoming events with our readers....call the Gaelic Park Office or email your news to dunmaynor12@yahoo.com.

Membership

NEW ❑ **RENEWAL** ❑ **Family $50** ❑ **Individual $30** ❑

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Mail to: *Chicago Gaelic Park Membership, 6119 W. 147th St, Oak Forest IL 60452*

phone: 708.687.9323 fax: 708.687.0120

www.chicagogaelicpark.org www.facebook.com/ChicagoGaelicPark

Gaelic Park can be found on FACEBOOK AND TWITTER! TAKE A MOMENT AND "LIKE" US!

December Event Calendar

12/3	**Monthly Musical Luncheon** NOON NO LUNCHEON IN JANUARY	
12/6	**Comedian Brendan Grace (RR)**	
12/7	**Super Fundraiser Drawing**	
12/11 & 12/18	**Mingle Jingle Office Parties (RR)**	
12/14	**Sunday Mass & Breakfast**	10am
12/14	**Tony Kenny Christmas in Ireland Concert (RR)**	
12/31	**Family New Year's Eve Party (RR)**	
1/06	**Women's Little Christmas Night with Karaoke!**	
1/14	**Ladies Auxiliary Meeting**	7:30pm

Welcoming New Members, join us for the first meeting of 2015!

***(RR) = Reservations Required 708.687.9323**

Monthly Musical Luncheon Doors open at noon, hot lunch served at 1pm for just $15 per person. Entertainment12/3 Kara & Jerry. *RESERVATIONS REQUIRED*

Sunday Classic Carvery Full hot buffet dinner and entertainment from 3-8pm. Call for reservations.

Pub Irish Music Sessions Thursday Evenings at 7:30pm

Pub Trivia Tuesday Evenings at 7:30pm

Monday Evenings	**Set Dancing**	*7:30pm*
Tuesday Evenings	**Ceili Dancing Lessons** 7pm/**Ceili**	*7:30pm*
Sunday Evening	*CGP Radio Live* *WCEV 1450 AM*	*7-8pm*

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Gaelic Park Annual SUPER Fundraiser

Tickets are now in circulation!
$80,000.00 in prizes will be awarded!

The drawing will be held at Gaelic Park on Sunday, December 7 at 8pm. Come early, join the fun and hear the winning tickets announced!

Chicago Gaelic Park wishes you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Health & Happiness to All

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Serving the social & cultural needs of the Irish community throughout Chicagoland

Christmas Tree Lighting

SOCR

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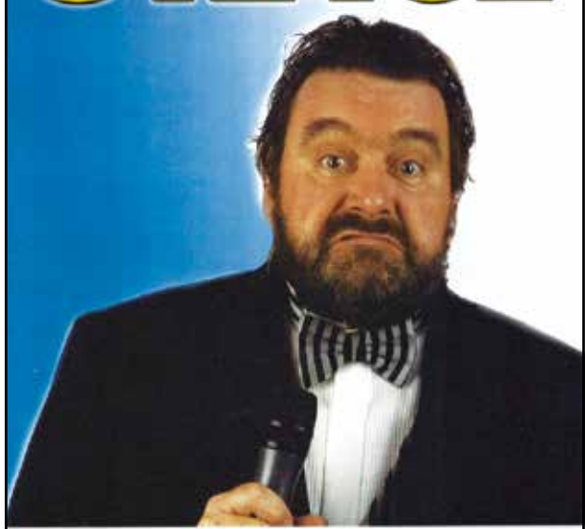

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- Pub Trivia every Tuesday, October-May starting at 7:30pm
- Traditional Irish Music Session Hosted by Members of The Irish Musicians of Chicago and their Students every Thursday at 7:30pm

the CARRAIG IRISH PUB

Live Music in the Pub

Fri	Dec 5	Guy Dominick	8:30pm
Sat	Dec 6	Coco & Fancy	9:00pm
Wed	Dec 10	Frank Rossi	6:30pm
Fri	Dec 12	Fabtones	7:30pm
Sat	Dec 13	The Chancey Bros	8:00pm
Fri	Dec 19	Customer Appreciation Night Ploughboys	8:30pm
Sat	Dec 20	Bernie Glim	8:00pm
Fri	Dec 26	Kieran Byrne	9:00pm
Sat	Dec 27	Chicago King Snakes	9:00pm
Wed	Dec 31	Brian Thoma & Nick Gonzales Band	9:00pm
Thursdays		*Irish Musicians Traditional Sessions*	

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The Place To Be is the Carraig Pub at CGP

Friday, 12/19 Customer Appreciation Night Music by the Ploughboys at 9pm… drink specials, appetizers and giveaways!

Wednesday, 12/31 Ring in the New Year NO COVER CHARGE!
Entertainment by the Brian Thoma & Nick Gonzales Band, Party Favors, Drink Specials, Complimentary Hors d'oeuvres, Free Shot, Champagne Toast!

The place to have your "perfect" party! The Carraig Pub is now offering a catered affair for small group parties in the Pub! We have a variety of food and drink options available. Give Pub Manager, Teresa, a call today, and she will be happy to help you with all the details!
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GAELIC PARK GIFT CERTIFICATES THIS CHRISTMAS...for the hard to buy for person on your Christmas lists! Right now, if you purchase one gift certificate, you will receive a second gift certificate for 10% of the purchase price of the first gift certificate! It is a win win! Get a gift by giving a gift!

Gaelic Park gift certificates can be used for:

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Gaelic Park Merchandise
Concert Tickets
Admission to our Monthly Musical Luncheons
Sunday Mass & Irish Breakfast

Chicago Gaelic Park's

FAMILY NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

On New Year's Eve, Celebrate Ireland's Midnight Hour at Chicago Gaelic Park's Family New Year's Eve Party!

Wednesday, December 31, 2014

4:00pm-8:00pm in the Emerald Room
Buffet Dinner 5:00pm
Kids Sparkling Juice Toast 6:00pm
Adults Champagne Toast 6:00pm

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presents

Dancing for Our Stars

February 7, 2015
at Gaelic Park

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Nominate Your Favorite Male or Female Dancer

St. Jarlath's will provide the services of a professional dance instructor. Dancers will be required to train a minimum of 3-4 hours a week for 6 weeks with a partner. Contestants must be over 21.
Nominations will not be accepted after October 1st at noon.

St. Jarlath's Youth GAA
CHICAGO

ST. JARLATH'S DANCING FOR OUR STARS will be held on Saturday, February 7 at Chicago's Gaelic Park, and doors will open at 6pm! This exciting fundraiser is back for its second run and is based on the popular television show Dancing With The Stars. Adults are invited to attend and ticket prices are $15 prepay (online only) or $20 at the door. Prepay tickets will go on sale December 1 and make great stocking stuffers!

Twelve amateur dancers will be given professional dance lessons two nights a week for three months to prepare for one night of competition. The couples will perform one group dance and either a ballroom or Latin dance. Judges' scores and audience votes ($1 each) will decide which couple takes home the trophy. Viewers can vote as many times as they choose. If you are unable to attend the exciting night, you can vote for your favorite couple online. Your business or organization is also invited to sponsor the event. Every dollar spent in sponsorship will be a vote for the dancer of your choice. St. Jarlath's is a 501c(3) non-profit organization. All money raised will go to Chicago St. Jarlath's Youth GAA, which promotes the sports of Hurling, Gaelic Football and Camogie in Chicago's south suburban areas. Equipment demands increase every year with this growing club, and successful fundraisers are necessary to purchase hurls, sliotars, helmets, footballs, practice bibs, jerseys, etc. Your support as a voter and/or sponsor is greatly appreciated!

For more information or to purchase advanced tickets go to the website www.chicagostjarlaths.com or send questions to dancing4ourstars@gmail.com.

The Francis O'Neill Club

cordially invites you to a

New Year's Eve Ceili

5:00-6:30pm Light Supper

6:30-10:00pm Ceili & Dessert

Set, Ceili & Old Time Waltz

Featuring

The Pauline Coneely Quartet

Wednesday, December 31, 2014

Irish American Heritage Center

Rooms 109 & 111

Tickets: $15 (12 & Under are free)

Tickets are available at Francis O'Neill Club events or email Theresa Murray (theresamurray@u.northwestern.edu)

Boyle the Kettle

We'll Have A Sup Of Tea

Tom Boyle

Happy Christmas!

During penal times in Ireland the candle in the window was a signal that it was safe for a priest to say Mass there. Holly was used to decorate the homes of the poor. Nollaig Shona Duit is the Gaelic greeting.

Do you remember the Christmas of your childhood? I remember singing in the choir at St. Mary's Midnight Mass. I can still hear the strains of Geso Bombino.

When Blossoms Flowered
'Mid the Snows
Upon A Winter Night,
Was Born the Child, the
Christmas Rose
The King of Love and Light

The Angels Sang the
Shepherd's Sang
The Greatful Earth Rejoiced;
And at His Blessed Birth the
Stars
Their Exultation Voiced

O Come Let us Adore Him
O Come Let us Adore Him
O Come Let us Adore Him
Christ the Lord

As children we knew what to expect at home for Christmas. A navel orange and some Brazil nuts in our stockings and maybe a used toy from a rummage sale under the tree. Nobody we knew, did any better.

How about selling Christmas trees, in the freezing cold at Bill O'Shaughnessy's Christmas Tree lot.

We often fought over the frozen cream on the top of a gallon of milk, when it came in glass **bottles. It was the closest thing we could get to ice cream**

As we grew older and we were better off financially, Christmas gifts were practical things, like hats, gloves, shirts, and maybe a sweater.

Make the best of Christmas, whatever your means. If you have plenty, help somebody else out.

Merry Christmas!

Vatican Dogma

The Vatican claims they don't judge people, after Britney Maynard, 29 years old, suffering from an incurable brain tumor, decided to end her life with dignity rather than endure the excruciating pain that would ultimately kill her. The Vatican described her decision as being absurd so said Father Ignacia Carrasco de Paula, President of the Vatican Academy for Life.

I wonder if he ever watched a loved-one suffering from Cancer slowly die an agonizing death on a morphine drip? I have!

Britney, I know Jesus welcomed you at the Gate.

Mr. Obama

An article published in Newsweek Magazine, published by Matt Patterson, is making the rounds on the internet. The article points out many well-known deficiencies and lack of experience our President had when elected to office, going as far as to say . . . "In short our President is a small minded man, with neither the temperament nor the intellect to handle his job." Also stated in the article is a comment on affirmative action:

"Unfortunately, minorities often suffer so that whites can pat themselves on the back. Liberals routinely admit minorities to schools for which they are not qualified, yet take no responsibility for the inevitable poor performance and high drop-out rates which follow. Liberals don't care if these minority students fail; liberals aren't around to witness the emotional devastation and deflated self-esteem resulting from the racist policy that is affirmative action. Yes, racist.

Holding someone to a separate standard merely because of the color of his skin - that's affirmative action in a nutshell, and if that isn't racism, then nothing is."

We all know affirmative action only leads to more problems. Qualified applicants are passed over for jobs in the public sector on the basis of race. The solution to the problem is simply a good education and everybody competes on the same level regardless, of race, color, or creed. Still in every election politicians campaign for better schools as part of their platform. None of them seem to be able to deliver better schools. What it's all about is school districts, property taxes, and state funds. In wealthier communities people pay higher taxes and have better schools.

And now, wealthier people are being scorned just because they are successful.

Governor Rauner

With the Democrats controlling both the Senate and the House in Illinois, he'll have a tough row to hoe. Governor Quinn was working in the same row, but the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate kept getting in his way. Let's hope Rauner can weed the garden in Springfield, but like a salmon, he will have a difficult swim upstream before spawning and God knows he might even run into a dam.

Executive Order

The arrogance is still oozing out of the Oval Office. By the time you read this President Obama will no doubt have issued his executive order.

Rep Luis Guitierrez

Know as the "Little Fighting Rooster," he is of Puerto Rican descent, and he supports Puerto Rican independence. Mr. Guitierrez was born in Chicago and spent part of his childhood growing up in Puerto Rico. He's a liberal and an advocate of worker's rights, LGBTQ rights, and gender equality. He has a socialist agenda.

In the case of the Republican victory, giving the majority in the House and the Senate, the rooster is fighting mad.

The rooster has essentially put President Obama on notice that if he doesn't intercede on behalf of immigration reform by Executive Order, Hispanics will desert the Democratic Party. Furthermore, he said, "the Democrats can't win the White House without the Hispanic vote. The Repulican leadership has warned the President that using an Executive Order would "poison the well" and Washington would remain in stalemate with the Republican Congress.

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Careers

By James F. Fitzgerald, CPA

Have Your (impossible) Dreams Escaped You?

In the mid-1960s the song "The Impossible Dream" from the Broadway musical, Man of La Mancha, spoke to many of us. It was a huge success recorded by numerous artists including, Jack Jones, Robert Goulet, Richard Kiley (who sang it in the musical) and Jim Nabors to name only a few who recorded it. My wife and I heard Andy Williams sing this magnificent song years later in Branson, Missouri. It evoked a deep spiritual feeling in me. I find the song to be somewhat haunting. An impossible dream, what is that? Nothing is impossible to dream; the real challenge of life is translating the dream into reality.

As we approach the end of another year, I find myself thinking about how we fulfill our dreams. Whether you are 19 or 90, don't you find yourself day dreaming about some thought/dream that you have had for years? What is that dream? I don't know how many of us ever get a chance to "fight the unbeatable foe." I find it hard to even consider "fighting" such a foe. Where does one find the courage to do that? Obviously some people have such courage. But sometimes an unbeatable foe is really just surviving the illness of a loved one, the death of a parent, the loss of a child or dear friend, or maybe your BFF moving away. You are convinced that your life will never be the same and you are probably right, but you need to go on.

That song has always stirred my emotions because it seems like the impossibility itself makes for an awesome challenge. The song deals with things that are beyond our reach. But what about the dreams we had when we walked across the stage and collected our high school diploma or our college degree? Many of us heard singer Johnny Mathis claim that he wanted to

own the first house on the moon. What dreams do you remember having? I am convinced that LIFE gets in the way: we lose sight or touch with our dreams.

I recently read an excellent book, The Dream Manager, by Matthew Kelly. He addresses the dreams of people who work for his fictitious company. The dreams are NOT of the majestic variety. They are more pedestrian i.e., ownership of one's own home, possession of a new car (not another old beater), or perhaps learning to speak another language comfortably and competently. Perhaps just taking the first step towards a cure for cancer would be achievement enough for most of us.

Certainly my mother and father felt that they had fulfilled one of their dreams when we moved into the first house they ever owned. They had married in the early 1920's, but it was more than 30 years before they could afford to buy a home. I can remember my mother walking around that modest little house with four bedrooms like it was Buckingham Palace. And probably to Mom, it was a palace.

I watched the recent TV reporting of the aerial walk of Nik Wallenda between the west tower of the Marina City buildings to another high rise building 454 feet away, in downtown Chicago. One of the people interviewed said it all; she said that Wallenda had achieved one of his dreams with the walk.

My older brother, John, was awarded his undergraduate degree, from Loyola University when he was 63 years old. I have no doubt that he was convinced that he had conquered that "unbeatable foe." He didn't really need to have a college degree to succeed in his own business, but apparently felt that achieving this dream was vitally important to him.

According to Mr. Kelly's book, we all have unfilled dreams; do you agree? But we live in a fast paced world that doesn't permit us time to really think about ourselves. We spend time thinking about the demands of our boss or our jobs. We think about the needs of our family such as school tuition, mortgage payments, repayment of school loans, and retirement plans. We may take a little time to think about our next vacation. But do we really spend much time thinking about the things we dreamed about as young people? In the movie, Up in the Air, George Clooney's character asks the person he just fired why he didn't consider following his educational experience, which had been in the culinary arts. . He replied saying that he had put aside his interests in the culinary world once he got out of school; he had to make a living. As I recall, he left the room feeling good about his potential opportunities in the culinary field, rather than feeling terrible about being fired from his job. He had never really been crazy about the job he had just lost.

Have you taken an hour or a couple of hours out of your busy life to consider, what dreams of yours are still unfulfilled? And, can you get back to your earlier dreams? Some dreams will have evaporated given your advancing age. There is not much call for 56 year old professional football quarterbacks. Certainly earlier in the football season, there were questions raised about the advanced age of Tom Brady, he was already 37. What's old for a pro QB?

As all the ads for financial planners state or imply, you need to spend some time NOW thinking about the future because it will be here TOMORROW. Wasn't it just a short while ago that you met your first sweetheart? So as we approach the New Year, take the time to attempt to make one or more of your (impossible) dreams come true. Carpe Diem.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION: Edmund Burke once said that "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing". Mr. Burke, Dublin-born British M.P.

James F. Fitzgerald is the president of James F. Fitzgerald & Associates, Inc., an Oak Brook, IL-based senior executive and outplacement firm. Web jamesffitzgerald.com. Jamesffitz37@hotmail.com 630-684-2204.

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An Immigrant's Musings

Michael Leonard

Post Election-Action

As I sit to write this month's reflection we are finally seeing an end to the crazy political "attack ads" with which we have been bombarded for many weeks. It seems to many levelheaded folks that the amount of money spent in this election cycle is nothing short of unjustified. And how much you may well ask?

The Center for Responsive Politics, a nonpartisan Washington group whose job is to track political spending, estimates that candidates, parties, committees, outside groups and donors will spend at least $3.67 billion on the 2014 midterm elections, $40 million more than what was spent in 2010.

Just imagine, gentle reader, what serious good could have been accomplished in poorer section of this city, not to mention in numerous countries in the developing world with this enormous amount of dollars.

So now that the election is over and the Republicans controlling both the Senate and the House of Representatives, what can we expect to see on the immigration issue? Listening to both leaders McConnell and Boehner one is left in no doubt. Their first priority is to repel the Affordable Care Act aka "Obama Care". They plan to do so knowing too well that Obama will veto any effort to undo his signature legislative achievement. This leaves the President no choice but to stick to his promise and issue an executive order that will bring relief to millions of law-abiding families torn apart by our broken immigration system.

Now therefore, is the time for the President to take a bold step and issue an executive order that will include as many as is legally possible, offering relief for our undocumented brothers and sisters. This would be a truly good Christmas present for millions of decent, hard working family members who have lived far too long under the threat of deportation. Now is the time to act Mr. President, there are no more excuses, please deliver on your promise to deal with immigration reform.

A Simple Gesture

Mark was walking home from school one day when he noticed the boy ahead of him had tripped and dropped all of the books he was carrying, along with two sweaters, a baseball bat, a glove and a small tape recorder.

Mark knelt down and helped the boy pick up the scattered articles. Since they were going the same way, he helped to carry part of the burden. As they walked Mark discovered the boy's name was Bill, that he loved video games, baseball and history, and that he was having lots of trouble with his other subjects and that he had just broken up with his girlfriend.

They arrived at Bill's home first and Mark was invited in for a Coke and to watch some television. The afternoon passed pleasantly with a few laughs and some shared small talk, then Mark went home. They continued to see each other around school, had lunch together once or twice, then both graduated from junior high school.

They ended up in the same high school where they had brief contacts over the years. Finally the long awaited senior year came and three weeks before graduation, Bill asked Mark if they could talk.

Bill reminded him of the day years ago when they had first met. "Did you ever wonder why I was carrying so many things home that day?" asked Bill.

"You see, I cleaned out my locker because I didn't want to leave a mess for anyone else. I had stored away some of my mothers sleeping pills and I was going home to commit suicide. But after we spent some time together talking and laughing, I realized that if I had killed myself, I would have missed that time and so many others that might follow. So you see, Mark, when you picked up those books that day, you did a lot more, you saved my life."

John W. Schlatter (true story)

A Very Blessed Christmas And Prosperous New Year To All Our Readers

Should you have any comments, questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at: sliabhanoir@yahoo.com

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Therese Meany Retires From MWRD

Outgoing President Kathleen Therese Meany, of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, has concluded 26 years of service to the District and recently officiated at her final Board Meeting.

President Meany has a rich history with the District. From 1987 to 1989, she served as an aide to her friend and future colleague, Commissioner Nancy Drew Sheehan. Pres. Meany won her first campaign for elective office as Commissioner in 1990. She was re-elected in 1996, 2002, and 2008. Her colleagues on the Board elected her as Vice Pres. in 1995, and she served in that capacity for 16 years. In 2013, she became the first woman elected President of the MWRD Board in its 125 year history.

During her 24 years as Commissioner, Pres. Meany established and served on various committees. One of her legacies was establishing the MWRD's successful Household Hazardous Waste Collection program in 1993 that continues today. Also, as a result of her association with the Windy City Vets and appreciation for the greater veteran community, Pres. Meany implemented the practice of flying POW MIA flags at MWRD facilities.

Pres. Meany's career path began with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Education from Roosevelt University. She then earned her Masters Degree in Public Administration from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. She taught elementary school for several years in suburban Matteson and with the Chicago Board of Education. She later taught at The Good Shepherd Mission on the Navajo Indian Reservation in Fort Defiance, Arizona.

"Teaching on the Reservation was a turning point for me," Pres. Meany explained. "I was already aware of the value of an education, but I also become sensitive to the needs of the environment. This experience was the spark that triggered my interest in environmental protection which is the primary mission of the District."

In the late 1970's, Pres. Meany began a long association with the City Colleges of Chicago, which included teaching a variety of adult education courses, later earning the status of a tenured Assistant Professor of Political Science. She met her future husband, Salvatore Attinello, a retired Harold Washington College librarian, while working there.

"We all will miss Kathy's leadership, integrity, enthusiasm, patience, kind heart, bright smile, friendship, and above all, her commitment to the District's mission and the people of Cook County," said Vice President Barbara McGowan.

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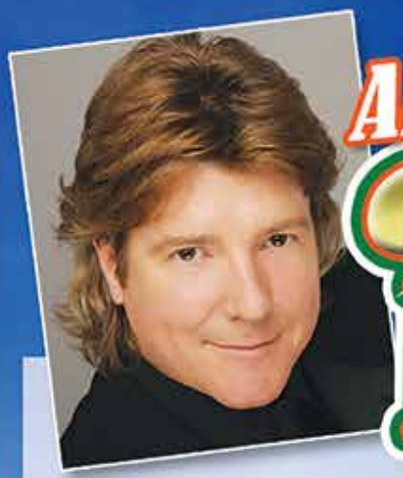

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Getting to Know the Irish

By Tina Butler

Who were the Normans and why did they come to Ireland? The Normans were an interesting mix of cultures. They were from Scandinavia. They were a combination of viking settlers who married into the local Frankish cultures and as a result their society was a conglomerate. The Normans were a war like culture. The Normans cavalry were to form the basis of "medieval knights" and what we call "chivalry" today. It stems from the codes of conduct on the battlefield. Ironically my name is a Norman name The Butlers had a dynasty in Ireland in the 12c. The Kilkenny Castle was owned by the Butlers for many years. Coincidentally, my father is from Kilkenny therefore I grew up with these stories. The Normans invaded England, Scotland and Ireland. They were more than just fighters, they brought fantastic architecture and style with them. They were devout followers of the medieval Christian church. The best example can be found in churches, castles, and monasteries across the country. The battles were resolved through one on one fights between clan heroes. (similar to classical Greek)

Norman invasion of Ireland was a two stage event that began on May 1, 1169 near Bannow, Co. Wexford at the request of Diarmuit Mac Murchada an ousted king. He sought the help of the Normans. It wasn't long before "Strongbow" Richard Fitzgilbert de Clare (Norman Lord) married MacMurrough's daughter Aoife.

Henry II lands at Waterford

The Norman invasion of Ireland is a very important piece of Irish history although short lived in terms of occupation. But it lead to the English occupation on Irish soil which lasted over 800 years.

The Normans brought new things to Ireland such as languages, (French & English) farming ideas and architecture. They constructed many castles in Ireland. They settled in Ireland and as the saying goes became "more Irish than the Irish themselves" It describes a phenomenon of cultural assimilation of Medieval Norman Ireland. Many Norman soldiers starting settling in Ireland and married into Irish families.

To overcome the problem of the Norman fitting into the Irish way of life, King Henry II decided to travel to Ireland. On October 18, 1171 Kind Henry II (from England) landed a bigger army in Waterford to ensure control. He took Dublin and accepted the Irish King and bishops. This was the first time an English king invaded Ireland. Irish chieftains called on help from Scotland. Edward Bruce from Scotland became a High King of Ireland. Sadly he was killed and his body cut into pieces and placed in towns across Ireland as a warning to the Irish.

In 1155 Pope Adrian IV, the only English Pope issued a Papal bull (Laudabiliter) it gave Henry II permission to invade Ireland as a means of strengthening the papacy over the Irish church. The Norman invasion of Irish thus had backing of the Papacy. They had Irish people pay taxes to Rome. This is a brief picture of what happened in Ireland during the Norman Invasion in the 12c.

Gaelic words for the month:
Church: Seipeal (shaypale)
Normans: Normannaigh
Princess: banphrionsa

If you have any questions or suggestions please email me: Molanive@yahoo.com

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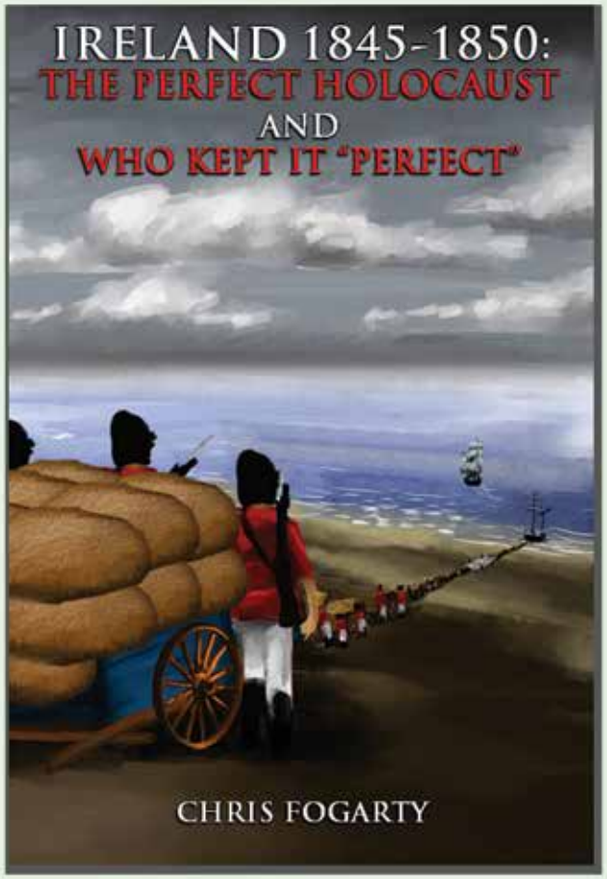

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Recently at the annual Hennessy Family Dinner in November, I was reminded how important my grandpa was to my family; as my cousin Mike Hennessy said, "Pat was the glue, and we are missing that." It never dawned on me until he said that. In that moment, I realized how important my grandpa was not just to me as his granddaughter, but he was important to the family, his nieces, nephews, cousins, their extended family; and family was extremely important to him.

So that brings me to writing this article today; I have three siblings; Patrick, Kalynn and Debbie. Even in the time of Facebook, Instagraming, and twitter, all things that are supposed to make it easier for us to connect; sometimes I feel a disconnect. We are all at different part of our lives; there is eight years between myself the oldest and my sister, Debbie, the youngest. Not only is there an age gap, but there is a distance gap. Debbie lives in Boston, Massachusetts, my brother Patrick lives in Wyoming, and my other sister, Kalynn lives in Indianapolis, Indiana which is only 3 hours away from me.

The last time all four of us were together was at my grandpa's funeral. Of course parts of us have been together for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter. My sister, Kalynn comes home from Indianapolis whenever we have a Hennessy get together going on and so forth. The problem the four of us are experiencing is we all have gone our separate ways in our lives; we are reaching out to make us who we are and we who want to be. It's not a matter of us not loving each other or not wanting to spend that quality time with one another; we all just have gone on with our lives; and my grandpa was our glue that made us come together.

Imagine, grandpa was the glue for the four of us; now imagine what he was like to that entire Hennessy clan. Grandpa was the reason people would show up at the family picnic in 90 degree weather to sit outside at a park and eat chicken. Grandpa was the reason 50 to 60 Hennessy family members and friends would stand in the freezing cold or freezing rain or both and march in the South Side Irish Parade. He was also a reason that family started to get together for the holidays in November at Gaelic Park. Grandpa would start to make phone in October telling everybody when the dinner was, and then he would tell Gaelic Park how many tables he wanted.

On my run this morning, I asked myself why did my grandpa do these things, and why was it so important to him; then my answer came to me as I finished, "family."

The Hennessy Family originally started with twelve children and eight of the twelve children came to the US; they were a strong devoted to each other type of family. There was twenty-five years between the youngest; my grandpa and the oldest my Great Uncle Bill. Uncle Bill served in World War I on the America's side, of course, according to my mom. As the twelve Hennessy children got older, they married and had children of their own; my mother Ellen Hennessy; being the youngest of that generation. As those children aged they got married and had their own children and so on. The Hennessy family get-togethers have gotten smaller as branches of the original Hennessy family have chosen to do their own traditions with their immediate family.

My purpose in writing this is to ask the question what happens when you lose the glue that brought your extended and in my case, my immediate family together; and how do you get the glue back? Clearly, as I said to my mom and cousin; "we can't bring grandpa back," but I am learning what we can do is to reach out. I guess this is my way of reaching out to the branches of the Hennessy family; the Harstads; the Dudas; the Jennings; the Harans; the Flaws; the Sullivans; the Hennigans; the Stajuras; the Hennessys, the Burkes; the Holohans; the Kinnanes; the Kings and the many more. It is time the Hennessy family comes together again and have a big showing in March; either at a parade or if not a parade, a luncheon after one of the parades. I have faith we can make it happen; we all come from the strong Hennessy Clan; just how all of them stayed together when the eight moved to the US. After all, St. Patrick's Day is just like Christmas--- it is about family.

Family, that is why this article means so much to me. Recently another cousin passed away, June Stajura. She meant a lot to me because at last year's family dinner, two months after my grandpa passed away when I was still having a hard time dealing with his death, June and her daughter Dawn told me that my life would go on and that is what my grandpa would want. It's true, and I needed to hear from somebody other than my mom, sisters, friends, or coworkers. I needed somebody else to tell me. My life has gone on and it has only gotten better. The day that I was at June's wake a lot of the family members (parts of the Hennessy branches) were there and they were talking about relatives who have passed. They shared stories about the original twelve Hennessys and all the fun times they had with each other. It made me wish that I was around then. It sounded like they all had fun with each other, and yes, I am aware that family rifts happen, but I am also learning it's a lot harder to hold a grudge against somebody then just to let it go. But that was the message from the original twelve. So I challenge my extended family from the original twelve Hennessy's, it's time to comes together again; time to prove that the glue might be in heaven, but it's still in our hearts.

The Sunday Classic Carvery at Gaelic Park

In November, about 40 family members got together for the annual Holiday dinner at Gaelic Park. The food was outstanding. The conversation was great and fun was had by all.Gaelic park offers a delicious menu with two soups, salad bar, a carving station, a potatoes bar, vegetable and a dessert; a child friendly option is available such as their wonderful mac and cheese. The cost is $17 for adults and $13 for children age 4 to 12. The dinner takes place every Sunday from 3pm to 8pm and reservations are required. I highly recommend everyone goes at least once during these winter months.

Holiday Wishes

Remember, in a world full of social media and mass communication, the best communication still comes in the form of a phone call or a handwritten card. A simple gesture or a smile can mean the world to a person. You never know what struggle somebody is going through; it is important to treat everybody with the same love and respect that you would want. This Holiday, remember—Family—and gather your own close and plan how you can keep the stories going. With that, I wish you all Merry Christmas and Happy New Years! "Beannact na Nollaig, a cairde" (Blessed Christmas my friend.)

Look of the Lass

By Serafina Marmo

The holidays are upon us and getting together with friends and family will keep all of us plenty busy during this festive time. In our family we have a yearly tradition for all of the ladies. A gathering that is hosted by my Aunt Maggie and this is by far my favorite party during the holidays. My aunt fondly calls it a Hen Party!

Now, this Hen Party should not be confused with the ever popular hen parties in Ireland.

Better known in the States as a Bachelorette party. These parties usually occur a week or so before a Bride's wedding for all the Bride's girlfriends as an "evening of debauchery."

So, here is a bit of information for you! Did you know in 1940 Eleanor Roosevelt hosted a Christmastime "hen" party for cabinet wives and "ladies of the press" in the White House? The term Hen Party has been used in the United States for years bringing women together for a chitchat with a cup of tea and sweets dating as far back as 1897.

think about having a party for all the girls this holiday season! Invite all the cousins and aunts and women close to your heart. Keep it simple. You may even want to consider a cookie exchange for your Hen Party. Ask everyone invited to bake their favorite cookies and bring as many dozens as their are ladies and an extra to share that night. Each woman receives a dozen of each and so will you! When everyone goes home that evening they will have an assortment of everyone's holiday favorites and the baking will be complete.

It is very important to connect with the generation above us. We cherish those moments listening to our grandmothers and aunts telling stories of growing up and family traditions. the camaraderie and laughter that rings through a cozy home during a Hen Party is priceless. It lets you know that everything is safe in the world and that you will always have these wonderful women in your life.

2014 Christmas at Auntie Maggie's - Some of the young Hens!

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Irish Theatre of Chicago is Now the Official Theatre of iBAM!

The Irish Theatre of Chicago, formerly Seanachai Theatre, has agreed to be the official theatre of iBAM!, the Irish Books, Arts, and Music Celebration.

"It's only right that the Irish Theatre of Chicago should become our "Official" theatre, says, Cathy Curry Carlson, co-producer and co-founder of iBAM!.

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Save the dates so you can attend iBAM! October 9, 10, 11, 2015! For more information call 847-872-0700.

Charles Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol' at the Goodman Theatre

By Christine Gallagher Kearney

Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," an annual tradition in its 37th year at the Goodman Theatre, offers a heartwarming step into the holiday season, as 28 all-Chicago actors' young and old envelop you in the magic of this classic story about love, life and transformation.

Larry Yando plays Ebenezer Scrooge and Patrick Andrews is the Ghost of Christmas Past in 'A Christmas Carol.' Photo courtesy of Goodman Theatre.

Larry Yando, who plays Ebenezer Scrooge for the seventh time, expertly portrays the angry old man who we imagine Scrooge to be. But what I admire in Yando's performance is his ability to bridge the old Scrooge with the new Scrooge; with the transformation taking place through humorous facial expressions and comical body movements, which were met with many chuckles from the audience throughout the show.

The set design, dating from 2001, still wows today, with Bob Cratchit's family's home, Scrooge's office and a redesigned bedroom (completed in 2013) for the grumpy old man, all rolling effortlessly across the stage as the scenes change.

There are even actors suspended in the air: the character of Christmas Past drops in, white angel wings sprouting from his back. Christmas Present sits lavishly on Scrooge's bed, which hovers above the stage. Christmas Future appears dark and tall, silently looming over the stage and audience.

I'd forgotten just how eerie the portrayal of the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future are. If I was a child watching the production, I would probably have covered my eyes and maybe even shed a tear. The ghostly effects are indeed frightening and made so more by the on-point sound production — I jumped twice in my seat. The smoke machines help set the tone, too.

If, like me, you've only ever seen the film version, spending a few hours to experience the story live is a treat. Just like the cast members who come back year after year to play, sometimes the same, sometimes different roles, I'll be returning next year, to see what year 38 brings to Dickens' Carol. Tickets at http://GoodmanTheatre.org/Joy, or 312-443-3800 or at the box office, 170 North Dearborn St.

The Boy Who Talked to Dogs

When Martin McKenna was growing up in Garryowen, Ireland, in the 1970s, he felt the whole world knew him as just "that stupid boy." Badly misunderstood by his family and teachers, Martin escaped from endless bullying by running away from home and eventually adopting—or being adopted

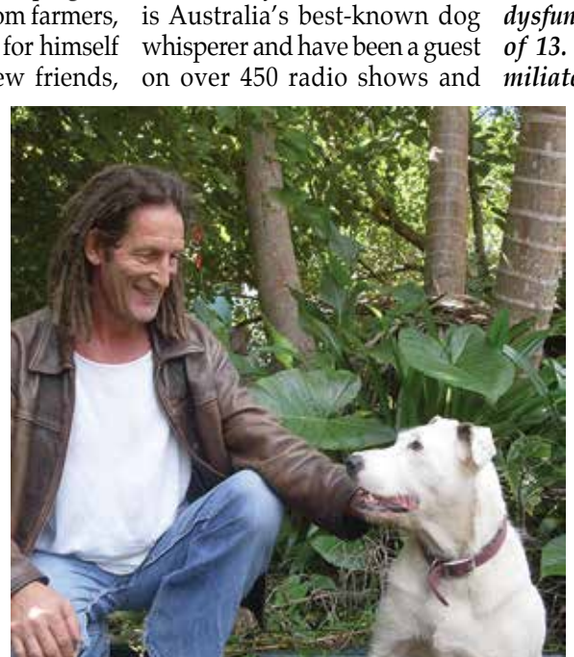
by—six street dogs. Camping out in barns, escaping from farmers, and learning to fend for himself by caring for his new friends, Martin discovered a different kind of language, strict laws of behavior, and strange customs that defined the world of dogs.

More importantly, his canine companions helped him understand the vital importance of family, courage, and self-respect—and that he wasn't stupid after all. Their lessons helped Martin make a name for himself as the "Dog Man" in Australia, where he now lives and dispenses his hard-earned wisdom to dog owners who are sometimes baffled by what their four-legged friends are trying to tell them. These days Martin is Australia's best-known dog whisperer – Helearned how to communicate with dogs in a very unusual way.

As a boy growing up in Limerick, Ireland, he escaped family violence by running away from home and living in hay barns with a pack of six stray dogs. These dogs became his close family for three years. They taught him the secret language of dogs – but more than that – helped him understand himself much better. It's a moving, hilarious book, filled with larger than life Irish characters and some profoundly moving moments that will help anyone put a difficult past to rest.

Not only will you learn some of the secret language these stray dogs taught Martin – He believes his story will also help you appreciate and cherish the special dogs who changed your own life.

These days Martin McKenna is Australia's best-known dog whisperer and have been a guest on over 450 radio shows and many TV shows helping people understand and communicate with their dogs better.



An emotional and poignant story seasoned with plenty of Frank McCourt–style humor, The Boy Who Talked to Dogs is an inspiration to anyone who's ever been told he or she won't amount to anything. It's also a unique, fascinating look into canine behavior. In these pages, Martin shows how modern life has conditioned dogs to act around humans, in some ways helpful, but in other ways un-

natural to their true instincts, and how he has benefited enormously from learning to "talk dog."

"The boy Martin leaves a dysfunctional home at the age of 13. Bullied beaten and humiliated he establishes his own family composed entirely of dogs. He learns their language and they learn his and finds the dog's life to be his path to self-knowledge and development. This is an astonishing story well told filled with humor and pathos whilst giving us humans a rare insight into the workings of the canine mind. I will not look down on a dog ever again after reading this book."

Malachy McCourt, author of A Monk Swimming

McKenna has published three books in Australia on dog language, two of them best-sellers: 'The Dog Man', 'What's Your Dog Telling You?' and 'What's Your Dog Teaching You?'

"The Boy Who Talked To Dogs" by Skyhorse Publishing. thedreadlockdogman@gmail.com

For The Republic

Chris Fogarty

APPRECIATION for flowers, cards, and phone calls to my Mary since her Oct. 2 surgery. No vital organs involved, but hip area bones required reinforcement. She heads for full recovery and sends thanks to everyone, also to signers of POW Christmas Cards.

CORRECTION. Last month I misnamed Irish patriot Gerry McGeough, erroneously referred to him as "Tommy McKearney," the name of another immortal patriot of our time.

DID CHICAGO ENABLE OMAGH? Some in Ireland are asking. A recent visitor from Ireland pointed out; "Didn't the impunity granted to MI5/FBI criminals re the Langert murders in suburban Chicago enable their replications in Omagh?" He knows that the same individuals perpetrated crimes in both locations.

JUDGES, LAWYERS, LEGISLATORS, POLICE: This is for you. Who among you will fulfill your obligations to end the criminal impunity granted to MI5/FBI agents regarding the Langert murders and their fabrication of evidence to frame innocents for it? Impunity enabled them to go to Omagh and arrange the Omagh bombing to be blamed, as they did the Langert murders, on the IRA.

NEWS MEDIA: Will you finally inform Chicagoland of these crimes? Why am I the only reporter in Chicago to ever report the facts here-below.

IS IT TOO LATE? Too late for America to save itself? Have corporate criminals permanently taken over our gov't? They already possess the world's weaponry. Readers: you are already familiar with these crimes. Please bring this column to the attention of your relative/friend the judge, lawyer, cop, legislator or reporter. This time, if nobody in authority proves willing to uphold the law against these mass murders we must conclude that America is finished; that people in the know accept that we are officially a criminal nation. The record shows that the head of the US State Dept's Britain Desk explained why the US abetted Britain's crimes that led to Ireland's disputed Six Counties becoming an undisputed British province. The quid pro quo? Use of Britain's military. The US attack on Iraq required "the international community" (mostly Britain's military).

THE URGENT TIP. FBI Agent Joe Doyle informs Mary and me that our lives are in danger; that some of his colleagues were subverted by MI5 and are planning crimes against us. We don't believe his warning when, despite his Oath of Office, he says he cannot do anything to stop the crimes.

DAVID BIRO'S two 1st degree murders and one homicide with FBI Agent Lewis' 357 Magnum weeks later begins MI5/FBI's crime wave. The local police name one suspect only; Biro, but MI5/FBI Agent Patrick "Ed" Buckley arrives, usurps investigatory authority, prohibits investigation of Biro, and sends the cops chasing IRA phantoms. Murderer Biro, protected by Buckley, conducts tours of the crime scene. Buckley obeys MI5: he and FBI mole Jerry Boyle get TV Anchor Carol Marin to "break the news" of IRA involvement. The rest of the media spread Marin's lie. Buckley's men then frame me for that atrocity so cunningly that I was doomed, but Biro later blabbed himself into Life Without Parole.

AGENT BUCKLEY, on another set of equally bogus charges, incarcerates my wife Mary, our leader Frank O'Neill, Tony McCormick, and me, "the Chicago Four" in Chicago's Federal jail at Clark and Vanburen. Mary hungerstrikes, but we bail out after three days. $100,000 for me, $50,000 for Mary. We all face many years in prison based solely upon an FBI evidentiary audiotape. After fifteen months of pre-trial motions that audiotape is proven criminally, grossly, fabricated, and U.S. Prosecutor Fleissner, trapped, successfully pleads Judge Lindberg to drop all charges against us.

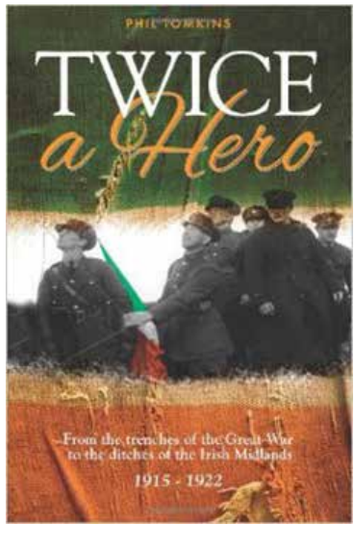
While Agent Buckley and Mole Boyle, through Carol Marin, had deceived Chicagoland into believing that the IRA had murdered the Langerts, they failed all their other MI5 missions. They fail their attempt to frame me for the Langert massacre when Biro blabbed himself into Downstate Pontiac Prison. They fail to frame "the Chicago Four" when their evidentiary audiotape proved massively "doctored." Biro's blabbing also destroyed the FBI's cover for him. It also exposed FBI Agent Lewis' failure to report the criminal use of her gun, or to report it missing. Buckley left Ireland briefly in 1996 and framed Richard Jewell for the Atlanta Olympics bombing murder. Jewell is awarded damages.

THE NEO-CONS APPRECIATED Buckley's crimes. The State Dept's Head of the Britain Desk explained to UVF leader David Ervine why the US had sided with Britain's crimes against the IRA; that Britain's military were indispensable to the Neo-Cons' plans to attack Iraq. Britain's price proved to be exclusive sovereignty over Ireland's disputed Six Counties. There's a problem: the IRA's clean record made it nearly impossible to achieve the sine qua non, demonization of the IRA. Enter Buckley. He is sent to Ireland with life-long criminal David Rupert to arrange an abomination plausibly attributed to the IRA. Their mission ends upon the murder of twenty-nine innocents in Omagh. That evening MI5 orders Rupert to report to HQ, then in London, that tickets awaits him and his wife in Belfast airport, and to be sure to NOT talk with gardai.

SO, JUDGES, LEGISLATORS, ETC., by your continued silence you will abet those flag-waving Neo-Cons and their crimes against humanity in Iraq, Omagh, and elsewhere or you will support the U.S. Constitution by, first, acquiring from me the documentation of all of the above and, two, you will prosecute these crimes. Contact fogartyc@att.net or 312/664-7651.

Twice A Hero

Twice a Hero is the true story of George Adamson, a young Irish patriot and rebel, who started his quest for freedom by joining the Irish Volunteers in Moate, Athlone, in the Irish Midlands. Then, on the promise of Home Rule for Ireland at the war's end, Buy Book Here Buy Ebook Here he enlisted in the British Army



and fought in two forgotten conflicts, the Great War, Salonika & Palestine. Decorated for bravery, he returned home to Ireland after four years of war to find that Home Rule was not forthcoming. He rejoined the National Volunteers, which later changed its name to the Irish Republican Army. Now a wanted man, he went on the run, living off the land during the two years of the Irish War of Independence. Following the signing of a treaty with Britain, he joined the National Army with the rank of Commandant. During the Irish Civil War that followed he was promoted to Brigadier General in command of the Midland Division of the Irish Army. His life came to an end when he was murdered on a street in Athlone. He died from his wounds on his 25th birthday. The title of the book reflects the fact that he was a decorated hero in the Great War and again in the Irish War of Independence, where he was promoted to Brigadier General in the Irish Army. The book cover reflects the end of 700 years of conflict as the Irish National flag was raised over Athlone Castle, a national monument to, and a concrete symbol of, the centuries of tyrannical imperial rule. My research uncovered the history of conflict, ethnic cleansing and oppression denied to me by the educational system in Ireland during my school days. I would encourage my fellow Irishmen, the Irish of the great Diaspora and in particular Irish/Americans, to read the book and be proud of their ancestors who fought and died for the freedom and prosperity that Ireland now enjoys.

Biography

Phil Tomkins, born in Dublin, Ireland, educated at CBS Westland Row, Dublin, awarded a BA Hons. Degree in Creative Writing by the University of Bolton, Lancashire, England. An ex-elite forces soldier' whose writing reflects his continuing interest in military history.

During research for his latest book 'Twice a Hero' he found that heroes like Brigadier General George Adamson, Commandant Jim Tormey and his brother Volunteer Joseph Tormey, who fought and died to liberate their homeland, lie buried in an untended cemetery right in the heart of the community from which they came.

His sincerest wish that his book 'Twice a Hero' may help awaken the memories of all the Irish fallen heroes, that they may assume their deserved place in the folklore and history for as long as the flag they raised flies over Ireland.

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Putting Petal to the Mettel: Lake Geneva's Flower Essence Entrepreneur

The Irish Rover

By James McClure

Your nose knows.

Inhaling that first suitor's gift of a dozen roses, side-sifting that bouquet of the wine seller's nouveau boujelais, savoring that aroma of Grandma's Thanksgiving turkey and pumpkin pie, or sniffing in that flu vaccine in hopes of staying healthy—all ways from commonplace to common sense that the sense of smell can bring healing and comfort.

Since 1997, Deborah Werner (pictured) has been the self-appointed deliverer of a genie in a bottle that every one of her committed customers wants to unleash. The Flower Doctor's prescription is a healthy snootful of flora-based potions that Werner claims can bring energy, well-being, and even attraction.

Aromatherarpy first came to prominence back during the 1990's, a downtown gift shop sensation that the web site Aromatherapy.com defines as 'the practice of using the natural oils extracted from flowers, bark, stems, leaves, roots or other parts of a plant to enhance psychological and physical well-being."

Practitioners believe that the aroma inhaled from those "essential oils" stimulate brain function, and can also be partaken of through the skin, bringing whole-body healing as they travel through the bloodstream.

Surprisingly, Deborah Werner traces her Earth Wind and Flowers business founding back to when she was a little girl growing up not in meadows or flower nurseries but in a heavily urban part of Chicago. "I lived in a four-flat in the city and I always had a garden growing, "says Werner. "You could say I was an organic natural farmer even then…growing tomatoes, carrots, zucchini and basi" in the shadow of the bustling L-trains that passed her family's Ravenswood home.

After graduation from Barat College in Lake Forest with a degree in Nutrition, advanced study in Design at the Art Institute of Chicago, and 20 years as a professional florist making designer arrangements, Werner founded her company with a dead-center landing on a powerful focus….the essence of a blooming flower.

"I put it all together—scent and enzyme" says Werner, who markets private health consultations and more than 200 sprays of "flower essence" that custom treat a condition or custom scent a profusion of desired energy and emotional balance.

It may all too easy to dismiss such talk by the stunning, athletic and joyful blonde beauty as a little too much California flower power and new age mystical centering of force and balance. Not so fast, at least not so fast as the slipping of Werner's kayak through the Geneva Lake waters or her graceful glide through Walworth County nature areas and flower nurseries in pursuit of the perfect combination of mood and health.

"There is a definite science to how I create these essences," Werner points out, and taking care not to go to far in detailing just what goes into each mixture or blue spray bottle of well-being.

Good luck trying to find what exactly is in each of the individually decorated bottles. Werner's balancing sprays, a combination of flower essences and aromatherapy oils, are every bit as secret as the recipe of a Big Mac secret sauce or The Colonel's Southern herbs and spices.

"Because we are all energy, if we are under stress or trauma it can cause imbalance in our physical, mental and emotional systems," explains Werner. "Scientifc studies have proven that aromatherapy is a powerful tool that works with the olfactory and limbic system to bring about well being."

A brief spray of "Attraction" as a sample brought an immediate flush to the face, beating of heart and frankly, attraction to the already alluring business woman. The sprays do pack a punch, and Werner has plenty of testimonials to back up claims that start with product names that speak of mood, and moment and calm. She sells balancing sprays such as Open Heart, Loving Protection, Playful and Creativity online, at stores throughout the Midwest and East Coast, and direct from her www.earthwindflowers.com website.

Customers and distributors include alternative health practitioners, veterinarians, acupuncturists and even realtors. One Werner creation found a boom during a real estate bust. "I love it when I help people sell houses," says Werner with a broad and confident smile. Confidence that comes from nearly 18 years spreading health and wellness by spraying it, not just saying it.

For private consultations, Earth Wind and Flowers Owner and Founder Deborah Werner can be reached via phone at 262-245-9853.

Feel the **LOVE**
in the IAN
Wedding Issue
coming January 2015
To advertise, or submit your wedding photos please call or email
Cliff: 847-872-0700 cliff@irishamericannews.com

Photo by Marianne Mangan

My wedding cake was a traditional Irish Christmas cake, all three white-fondant-covered tiers of it.

When I was 18, I had a very different idea of what my wedding cake would look and taste like. I imagined something elegant and refined, with artfully crafted frosting flowers cartwheeling up and down five epic tiers.

As a wedding server during my last summer before university, I sampled upwards of 20 different cakes. After the nuptial celebrations had come to an end, there were always leftovers, and we servers would sneak slices in the kitchen prep room between dirty dish drop-offs. (Busing was the worst and stickiest part of the job, but cake was our reward.)

My favorites included marble with rich vanilla frosting; vanilla sponge cake filled with layers of fresh berries and topped with chocolate frosting; and chocolate-on-chocolate-on-chocolate cake (a rare but fantastic combination for the bravest of chocolaphile brides).

As you can see, Irish Christmas cake was not on the list. When my fiancée and I decided to get married in Belfast, however, I quickly realized that my cake expectations needed to change.

For one thing, wedding cakes in Ireland are not all the rage like they are in America, where love-struck couples pay upwards of $1,000 or more for the fanciest of cakes.

So in an effort to make a potentially expensive and complicated process much simpler, I walked into the local Marks & Spencer's two days before we tied the knot and retrieved three round and differently sized Christmas cakes, which my future mother-in-law had pre-ordered.

These round white discs would later be organized on a silver dessert tray, each wrapped at the base with aubergine ribbon, the very top tier adorned with an assortment of autumn-colored flowers.

My cake set me back 100 pounds, less than $200. I got a deal.

What I wasn't expecting was that I'd like it. I loved it actually, all the dark, crumbly, dense, Christmas-fruity mess that is firmly held together with fondant (edible, of course, although sometimes, it seems like it shouldn't be). It looked simple, but beautiful. And even though it wasn't what I'd imaged at 18, it was perfect.

The funniest moment came when it was time to cut the cake. In my mind, the beautiful silver knife would slide right through the cake as Michael and I gripped the handle, hand over hand. Just before the actual event, we paused for a moment while everyone took pictures of our glowing faces, then we pressed down it was like cutting concrete. I quickly let go of the knife and Michael pressed into the white rock with all of his strength, and finally, the cake gave way. I sighed with relief.

To this day, on Christmas trips back to the home country, I bring back that delightful cake from Marksy's (as Marks & Spencer's is fondly called in Ireland). I then proceed to eat every last bit of that Christmas cake during the first and bleakest weeks of January in Chicago.

For those of you who are wondering, we did not save the top tier for our first-born's Christening. It was devoured only a few days after the wedding.

I have my cake and eat it too.

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Carol's Fruit Cake

This is a family recipe and an American version of fruitcake.

¾ cup brown sugar
1 cup butter
4 well beaten eggs
2 tbsp. sour cream
6 tbsp. cold water
2 tsp. cinnamon
2 tsp. nutmeg (freshly ground if possible)
2 ¾ cups flour
1 tsp. baking soda
2 tbsp. whisky
1 oz. orange extract
1 oz. lemon extract
¾ cup maple syrup
1-2 tsp. vanilla
½ lb. pineapple
¼ lb. cherries
½ lb. citron or cherries
1 lb. dates
1 lb. seeded raisins or mixed dried fruits
1 cup nuts (walnuts recommended)

Cut up fruit and soak in liquid* overnight; make cake as usual** and fold in fruit; grease fruit cake pans and line with wax paper; fill pans around 2/3 full; bake in the oven at 275 F for 1 ½ - 2 hours with a pan of water in the oven.

*Soak fruit in water, just enough to cover fruit; cover with plastic wrap and set in refrigerator.

**'Usual' refers to mixing the wet ingredients together and the dry ingredients together and then slowly combining the two.

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2015 Saint Patrick's Day Queen Contest Looking for the New Parade Queen

James F. Coyne, General Chairman of the 2015 St. Patrick's Day Parade, announced plans for a city wide search for Chicago's fairest Colleen. She will represent the Chicago Irish community as the Queen of the Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade.

The Queen and her court of four will be expected to attend civic, neighborhood, parish, and Irish events on behalf of the parade committee.

Any girl of Irish ancestry, never married, 18-28 years old, is eligible to enter the contest. Entrants should send a snapshot with name, age, address, phone number and brief biography and explanation on why you want to be Queen.

Contest finals will be held Sunday, January 18, 2015, in the Chicago Journeymen Plumbers Hall, 1340 W. Washington Blvd., Chicago, Illinois 60607. Deadline for entries is Friday, January 2, 2015.

Please go to www.chicagostpatsparade.com download, complete and print the form. Mail the completed form along with a check for the $25.00 registration fee to:

Queen Contest P.O. Box 16215
Chicago, Illinois 60616

Please pay the $25.00 Entry Fee using PayPal Buy Now button. Then download, complete and save the form. Email the completed form to queencontest@gmail.com as an attachment and include the PayPal confirmation number in the email subject line.

Sponsorship Benefits

Emerald $4000 1 VIP table for 10 guests at the Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner - Commemorative bottle of Wine for each guest at your table - Full page Color ad in the 60th Anniversary Parade Ad book - 2 Front Inside Pages, 2 Back Inside Pages or Back Cover Page - 5 opportunities on a first come first serve basis. - Jumbo Screen Video Advertisement at Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner - Parade Entry for your Float or Marching Group - 60th Anniversary Commemorative Light Pole Banner - proudly displayed with your company/organization's name along Columbus Drive on Parade Day. Banner will be returned to you as a keepsake for your office to display after parade festivities.

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Shamrock$2500 1 Premiere table for 10 guests at the Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner - Commemorative bottle of Wine for each guest at your table - Full page Gold ad in the 60th Anniversary Parade Ad book - Jumbo Screen Video Advertisement at Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner. - Parade Entry for your Float or Marching Group - 60th Anniversary Commemorative Light Pole Banner - proudly displayed with your company/organization's name along Columbus Drive on Parade Day. Banner will be returned to you as a keepsake for your office to display after parade festivities.

2 tickets on a Chartered Boat to accompany the Dyeing of the Chicago River Green on Parade Day

Trinity$1500 1 table for 10 guests at the Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner - Commemorative bottle of Wine for each guest at your table Full page Black/White ad in the 60th Anniversary Parade Ad book Deadline for the premium sponsorship-packages above is December 15, 2014

(l to r): 2014 Court; Moia Dolehide, Lauren Corry, Grand Marshall; John McDonough, St. Patrick's Day Parade Queen; Lauren Elizabeth Catinella, Court; Erin Mulcahy, and Mary Catherine Casey.

60th Anniversary Parade Ad book

Full Page Ads
(approx. 7.5 x 10.5 vertical)
Full page Gold - $750
Full page Black/White - $500
Half Page Ads (aprx. 7.5 x 5 horizontal)
Half page Black/White - $300
Contribution Only - no ad

Advertisers must submit new artwork for this year's book! Submit a NEW ad in High Res. JPG or PDF format to chicagostpatadbook@yahoo.com.

Include 'Ad Book' in subject line.

Deadline for all ads January 15, 2015.

Mail to Chicago St. Patrick's Day Parade, PO Box 16215, Chgo, IL 60616. (312) 942-9188.

www.chicagostpatsparade.com, Questions for: **Sponsorship Packages and Corned Beef Dinner** email mcmcorr@gmail.com or call (312) 942-9188.

AD Book & Banners - please email: chicagostpatadbook@yahoo.com

Annual Queen Contest - please email: queencontest@gmail.com

Jumbo Screen Video Advertisements - email: info@chicagostpatsparade.com

Parade Entries and Floats - Parade registration and information (312) 942-9188.

Parade Marshals - please email: stpatparademarshal@gmail.com

Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner

Please attend our Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner, January 29, 2015 at 5:00 pm, at Plumbers' Hall, 1340 W Washington Blvd, Chicago, Il. The dinner is the major fund raiser for parade. Tickets are $85.00 per person or $850.00 per table of ten which includes beer, wine and soft drinks before and during dinner. The evening will feature the introduction of the 2015 Grand Marshal and the 2015 Queen and her Court. Dinner Reservation Form at www.chicagostpatsparade.com

The form is in Adobe Acrobat Reader

It Starts With A Song

By Joe McShane and Margo O'Donnell

Hello everybody It's almost that time of year again, yes Christmas 2014 has crept up very quickly it seems.

On September 22nd I launched my Autobiography "The Promise And The Dream" and also started my concerts to celebrate fifty years in show business. The first part of 2014 seemed normal but as I look back now I know my Mother R.I.P. was getting weaker. I lost her May 18th when she went home to join my Dad and God in Heaven. On March 21st Mam pulled out all the stops when she came to the Millenium Forum in Derry City for the recording of my live D.V.D. I was so happy she was there, for what was her last curtain call. Mam's last concert. I miss her so much and speak of her and Dad every day. Life now will never be the same but of course it goes on. All my wonderful fans and friends have been coming along in force to my concerts as I start the celebrations for my fifty years.

For those of you who would like to read my autobiography, you can purchase on line from O'Brien Press and they ship worldwide or you can download to the Kindle. I have also recorded a new C.D. Along with my latest D.V.D. My record company released a "Fifty Songs For Fifty Years" C.D. It is a three C.D. Box set and is very popular, with some old songs and some new.

I have done my concert tour now, nine concerts in all and I enjoyed everyone. I met so many fans and friends over the few months, some I had not seen for awhile so that was nice.

On 4th December I did a concert for "Cuan Mhuire" Sr. Consilio In the Carrickdale Hotel, Dundalk. "Cuan Mhuire" is a centre for people with addictions and the centres also help the families. There are seven centres around Ireland. Sr. Consilio is a wonderful human being and works endlessly to help anyone in need. All proceeds from the concert went to the Centre.

I also wrote and recorded a song in honour of sister and all the proceeds also are going to "Cuan Mhuire".

You are so special to me and I really hope your Christmas will be wonderful and Peaceful.

I will be spending a quiet Christmas at my home in Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan. I hope to take a holiday somewhere nice and hot in the New Year.

I will miss my Mam as she was such a big part of my life but I know Mam and Dad will be spending their first Christmas together with God in forty-six years.

Thank you all for your love and support through good times and bad times.

Love to all of you. Margo

Thank you Margo,

I hope you will celebrate many more years performing. I was so happy this last summer to get to perform at your INEC show in Killarney. During your sets, I stood side stage and watched and listened to your whole performance. You had the crowd in the palm of your hand and your voice was so full of resonance. I heard a television presenter say you actually out sold the Beatles at a time during your career. I'm sure any singer would love to be mentioned in the same sentence as the most famous pop band of all time. I and I'm sure everyone here wishes you continued success and most of all good health for many more years.

Well thank goodness the music scene in starting to pick up a little. After a long, long recession. I played a few of the "Classic Carvery" Sunday afternoon dinner dances at Gaelic Park lately. It really is great to see people doing the social dancing. I highly recommend checking it out. Even if you don't dance, its a great way to spend a Sunday afternoon. They also have plays on at the weekend. We are very lucky to have such a place for Irish sport, music and culture of all genre's.

If anyone is interested in a very special and unique tour to Ireland in October 2015, watch for details in the January edition of the "Irish American News". The tour will have a tinge of music, dancing, folklore, history and much, much more. There will be a full itinerary including the dates in the January edition. This will be the trip of a lifetime!

This months song was written out of a conversation that Margo and I had about years ago, when loved ones never actually said I love you but they showed it in other ways. I remember when my mother would smile at me I knew she had a deep love for me. So we came up with the idea of "Unspoken Words" I'm sure a lot of Irish people can relate to this.

Songwriting tip - I think its a good idea to spend some time, not trying to write a song but just writing a list of titles. Spend an hour and you will be surprised at how many you will come up with. Tell you more later.

I wish everyone a very happy and peaceful Christmas and a healthy New Year!

Thank you so much for your support in 2014.

"Unspoken Words"
Written by Joe McShane and Margo O'Donnell
While walking down this road of life, someone crossed my mind
Someone very dear to me, a real good friend of mine
The gift of love is special, a truth that never lies
Unspoken words say more sometimes, when whispered through the eyes
Chorus
Friendship is a jewel, beautiful and rare
like knowing for certain that somebody cares
Don't take it all for granted, reach out a loving hand
Tell them what they mean to you, make sure they understand

Someone touched my life today and it really warmed my heart
The silent joy that comes from looking at a work of art
Sincerest thoughts and feelings, a love that never dies
Unspoken words say more sometimes, when whispered through the eyes

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We'll Never Be Royals

By Katherine Stewart

My husband, Matthew William Stewart, grew up listening to his grandfather tell magnificent stories about Fort Stewart, the family's ancestral seat in County Donegal. The first of the Stewarts to come to America, William Stewart, was a descendant of another William Stewart, who built Fort Stewart on the banks of the Lough Swilly in 1608.

Matthew's grandfather cherished some hope that the Stewart line before that might be traced to the royal Stuarts, rulers of Scotland and then of the entire United Kingdom. Instead, a little genealogical research revealed that our Stewarts merely descended from a man who somehow worked his way into the position of "High Steward" – basically, servant to the king. As my husband put it, "Our people scrubbed the royal bed-chambers!"

One afternoon, after a long discussion about the injustices of genealogy—especially with respect to the women whose contributions to the genetic pool are typically forgotten after a generation or two—I decided to turn to the internet for some answers about the infamous Fort Stewart. After a brief search, I jumped up from my laptop. "Honey," I exclaimed, "it's for sale!"

We arrived in Donegal on a mild September afternoon, just cloudy enough to make for dramatic skyscapes. In preparation for our assault on Fort Stewart, we stayed at Lough Eske Castle, a Tudor-baronial structure that was first built in the late 1400s, then rebuilt several times thereafter. Now a boutique resort, the castle is situated on 43 acres of rolling hills that, like so much of Ireland, are wet, green and beautiful.

After checking into a well-appointed room of suitably aristocratic proportions, we headed to the restaurant to fortify ourselves for tomorrow's adventure. Our delightful meal was composed of locally sourced ingredients, including oysters and salmon from Killibecks and a tender rack of lamb. As we tucked into a porter cheese made with Guinness, my husband enthused, "This must be my ancestral diet!" He bravely washed down his cheese with a glass of poteen, a traditional Irish drink usually made from potatoes that is so strong (60-plus per cent alcohol) we imagined it served our ancestors as disinfectant.

After dinner, wandering about the manicured grounds of our castle, Lough Eske, we anticipated Fort Stewart would be something equally grand.

The following afternoon, we showed up unannounced at the address specified in the real estate listing for "Old Fort Stewart," our genealogical papers in hand. The real estate agent had seemed oddly uninterested in our query, and we had taken for granted that the place would be uninhabited. We were taken aback when a man with jovial blue eyes and a paint-flecked shirt emerged from one of the side buildings just as we pulled up. Fort Stewart was inhabited after all!

It turns out that Martin Mooney, the present owner of Old Fort Stewart, is a celebrated Irish painter who has won numerous prestigious awards and distinctions, and frequently shows his work in Dublin, Belfast, and London. It also turns out that the main house for sale, which looks like every postcard picture of an elegant Regency-style house you have ever seen, was built by him in 1998.

"Let me show you the old fort," Martin said, waving off in the direction of the fields that stood between the striking five-bedroom house and Lough Swilly, a tranquil, oyster-filled estuary surrounded by hills.

Katherine and Martin Stewart checking out the oyster shells that are found in the loch just in front of Old Fort Stewart.

Mooney led us a short distance to Old Fort Stewart. I am sorry to report that the "grand palace" that featured in the stories of my husband's youth, erected by his ancestors for their own, everlasting glory in 1608, is now a hapless pile of rocks. Two piles, actually, spaced about 100 yards apart, marking two out of three corners of a triangular fortress that once upon a time must have looked mighty imposing to agricultural laborers of Donegal who had the misfortune of living within eyesight.

After wandering through the moss-covered stones, we retreated to Martin's painting studio, where he composes meticulously rendered still lifes, sweeping landscapes of the Donegal countryside, and compositions inspired by his worldwide travels.

Soon we were joined by Aislinn, Martin's wife. Over tea we exchanged stories of our heritages. She told us of her own grandfather, Peter Paul Galligan, who joined the Irish Republican Brotherhood in 1910 and commanded the Irish Volunteers in Enniscorthy, County Wexford. Arrested by the British in 1916, he narrowly escaped a death sentence, eventually spending five years in a variety of English prisons.

"He paid a huge personal price to attain freedom for his country," noted Aislinn, who says her name means "Dream of Freedom."

My husband asked Aislinn delicately whether she harbored any ill feelings toward his ancestor, William Stewart, who, as part of the plantation program in the early 17th century, surely helped sow the seeds for the bitter conflict in the 20th century. She laughed. "Let's let bygones be byegones!" she replied.

Leaving Old Fort Stewart behind, Martin and Aislinn took us to see the "New Fort Stewart," a large Georgian-style home down the road where the Stewarts eventually relocated. A little further along the shores of Loch Swilly, they took us to an ancient ruin of a graveyard to view the Stewart crypt.

Moss and vines covered the faded old stones, but we managed to spot the names of some Stewarts who were buried long ago. None, however, were in the direct line that descended to Matthew. Somewhat disappointed, he looked again through his file of genealogical papers, and came to a realization: The William Stewart who emigrated from Ireland to America was the seventh of seven children. And his father was also the seventh of seven. "The oldest sons inherited the estate, the fort, and the desirable gravestones," Matthew mused, "and the youngest shipped off to America!"

There was that curious moment that sometimes happens on an overcast late afternoon in Ireland, when the sun sinks below the level of the clouds and the day comes to a misty golden finish. We rambled out of the graveyard with Martin and Aislinn, musing on our genealogical journeys and lamenting the injustice of the system of primogeniture. Aristocrats are just people who happen to have descended from a line of first-born sons. But so what? Why is the first born thought to be better than the second born? And what about the women? In the end, you may just trace your heritage back to someone who was a servant to the king, scrubbing his washroom floors.

Our ears perked up when Martin told us of his own encounters with royalty. In 2001 and 2003, he was appointed the official artist for Prince Charles's royal tours of the Baltic states and of Russia.

So Martin himself is a "high steward" for the royal family! As he regaled us with stories about his life, travels, and art-world adventures, we agreed that we surely have more in common with him and his wife, the child of freedom fighters, than with the other "high steward," from whom we draw our last name.

Katherine works with Christine Kearney via the Op Ed Project, as a mentor-editor. Her work has appeared in dozens of publications including The Guardian, The Atlantic, The New York Times, Conde Nast Traveler and many others.

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Bell's Hell

Remember ATT before the advent of U-verse, when the corporate behemoth was nicknamed "Ma Bell"? Many now forget the reasons for the almost universal resentment then felt against Theodore Vail's US phone monopoly. In 1911, faced with the threat of government regulation and a hodge-podge of competing phone systems unable or unwilling to interconnect, Bell System's President Vail worked out a solution which worked well for a good while: accept some government regulation in return for an ATT monopoly over all telephone communications. The alternative would have been a total government monopoly supervised, as it was in many European countries, by the Post Office. One can hardly imagine in what state our communications would now be, had that come to pass. But a hundred years later the new ATT, its monopoly dissolved by a 1982 court decision, is still driving customers "postal".

Like most Americans, our family has been long-term ATT land-line customers, and when our two youngest "needed" those first Apple smart phones, we switched them to ATT's cell service with unlimited data plans for $20. / mo. My wife and I didn't feel the need then, and kept our Cingular analog phones. Later, fed up with constant satellite TV failures, we also opted for ATT's "money-saving" U-verse offer. The die was cast. Had I known beforehand the ordeal ahead, I would have hugged my iffy satellite dish.

One early discovery I made in the trip through Bell's hell was that ATT voice service is not supposed to be on speaking terms with ATT cellular or internet; nor do those three divisions talk to ATT U-verse. I wondered whether that was a ruse to keep regulators happy. I pictured ATT corporate bosses walking the streets in their pajamas, acting looney like "Vinnie the Chin" while meeting "baby Bell" capos to talk business in secret.

[I'll save my early close encounters with "the system", which you can read in the online version of this paper, or on my website (see below). Included there also is a story of how two Irishmen, Bing Crosby and a young Army Signal Corpsman, breached the walls of secrecy surrounding not only corporate ATT, but the Nazi war machine, to bring America superb recording quality and open the path to the computer age.]

Calling customer service, no matter how pleasant the operators are instructed to be, is akin to a dental appointment. I've often told the reps: "Do you know, when I call other utilities like electric or gas, and they're busy, a robot voice will offer the option of leaving my number in a queue to be called back by a human when one is free. You guys run a telephone utility. Why can't you use one of your telephones to call me back instead of making me wait here on the line hoping I won't be cut off?" The invariable reply: "That's a good idea", but not ATT policy. [Lately, some will offer to call back. Perhaps ATT can occasionally take a hint.]

After its '82 breakup ATT struggled a bit, but like Robert Patrick, the mercurial T-1000 Terminator, ATT's scattered parts began to flow together and re-assemble. By March of 2011 AT&T announced it was buying T-Mobile to create the largest wireless US network, leaving just two other major players in the industry: Verizon a close second and Sprint a distant third. Sprint and consumer rights groups cried 'foul'; and in August the Department of Justice sued in federal court to block the takeover. By December ATT had abandoned its T Mobile dreams.

I settled in with the expensive service, but longed for an alternative. Earlier this year I had a Dish guy come and to pitch me an estimate, but my neighbor's tree has now put me permanently behind an iron communications curtain. Then I checked my September ATT bill and saw it was about $50 above normal. I thought it likely due to one of us overusing texting, and did not investigate further until the October bill arrived, also over by a similar amount.

I called ATT customer service and finally reached another pleasant lady who decided my phone plan was "outdated" and told me new plans were available that would bring my bill down well below the average I was now paying. I replied, "great" but asked whether that would affect my kid's unlimited plans. She told me it would be hard to exceed the limits of this new plan no matter how much data we were using. So I said, "OK- sounds great- switch". She assured me I could easily reverse the changes without penalty anytime within three months.

Later that evening I scrutinized the bill more closely. (ATT statements are long and confusing. Understanding the services and billing is difficult, apparently even for service agents.) I called again and explained to another agent that our family was already using over the limit we had just now been switched to. Incredibly she tells me I can not reverse the changes made by the first agent, but instead must mail a request form to ATT- one they were free to honor or deny at their own discretion.

I then asked for a supervisor. A Mr. Blaydes got on the line. I discussed the switches to cheaper plans since April which led to ever higher charges, including the latest, resulting in extra charges of at least $100 per day. Blades was unbending. He told me that $80 had been refunded two days earlier while switching to the plan which the agent said would save costs, but now was running up extra charges of at least $100 per day. He determined that NONE of the overcharges since April would be refunded. I asked him if he thought I was a crazy person, calling up to lower my bills, but instead accept a plan costing a great deal more and with absolutely no service improvements. He replied: "People do it all the time". His answer was a revelation. ATT was telling me "Caveat emptor, buddy, tough luck!" My son had warned me that ATT tries to get customers off unlimited plans to make more money. I thought he was just quoting a rumor, but now I began to believe.

I went directly to a trendy local ATT phone sales office and first got the same story about mailing in a form, but after summoning a supervisor, Josh B. there, got an assurance of rolling back the changes, but not the charges. There's more- too much to cover here. Meanwhile I'm waiting for the next bill to arrive before going postal. See you online.

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Terry From Derry

by Terry Boyle

History is What You Make of it

We all know the old adage, and I'm sure I've said it before now, 'the first casualty of war is the truth'. For all our talk of objectivity when it comes to the news or politics, it's hard to get away from the propagandist bias of the media or indeed our own viewpoints. For example, when growing up during the Troubles in Derry Ian Paisley, I believed, was in league with the demonic forces of Unionist oppression. His influence on hardening sectarian viewpoints seemed unquestionable. Having co-founded the Free Presbyterian Church, a leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, he had amassed popular support from the most extreme theologically, and politically speaking. Notoriously anti-Catholic, with morally conservative views, was aligned with his fierce non-conformist attitude towards dealings with 'Sinn Fein/I.R.A'. He was as Tom Paulin 'a big man among his wee people'.

For years, the contention between the 'No' party (DUP), and those who struggled for political dialogue, the moderates, was frequently newsworthy material. Paisley was first to suspect every act of conciliation as an attempt to conspire towards a United Ireland. Under his leadership, we watched him stand against the Civil Rights protests, the Anglo-Irish Agreement, and the inclusion of Sinn Fein into the democratic process. His achievements were largely based on his ability to exploit the fears of the Protestant majority, and, as a Catholic, it was easy to perceive his intransigence as simple bigotry personified in Protestant cleric 'blessed' with the mindset of a Catholic inquisitor.

And now he's gone. One of the last photographs I saw of him was in the Derry Journal. There he was, the big man, laughing with his perceived enemy, Martin McGuinness (Sinn Fein). In his final years, the unyielding diehard, compromised on his refusal to speak with Sinn Fein and as his story continues to unfold, it will becomes what we make it.

On the other side of the fence, we have Gerry Adams, who has recently come under attack over the failure of the IRA to protect the rights of a victim of rape, when it was discovered the rapist was a prominent member of the Republican movement. This latest scandal, compounded with earlier accusations with the execution of Jean McConville, has seriously affected the credibility of the organization and the integrity of the man himself. His defense is: 'The IRA was ill-equipped – it was inappropriately equipped – to do what it did and I have acknowledged that failure and I see that as a mistake now' can seem like very poor excuse in light of the consequences. But then again, the state and the church have also employed this argument relating to the matter of sexual abuse. Can victims excuse ignorance.

I remember once hearing someone say that when the Troubles were officially over stories would emerge, and sure enough they have. The saints and sinners are deified or demonized as more and more tales hit the fan. History, and those characters that define our history, is a very flexible friend to both media and politician. As Northern Ireland tries to restore a true sense of justice, the old methods employed by the paramilitaries come under greater scrutiny. The flawed system of the judiciary becomes less of an enemy as the rough justice of the vigilante is ripped into shreds whenever the mistake becomes fatal, or perpetrated by the vanguard of the street court.

The IRA and the DUP have a lot more in common than they would like to believe. Each has in their own way distorted their perception of the truth to suit the needs of the time. Paisley, though a believer in Christian values, incited violence and political chaos. He has demeaned a whole community theologically and politically without questioning the consequences of his words. And, yet towards the end of his life we see a moderating influence creep into the language, and diatribes of this extreme fundamentalist that creates a bit of a paradox, or, if one were cynical enough, confirms political pragmatism. History softens, at least for the present, the one time maniacal naysayer.

Whereas for Gerry Adams, the pendulum of perceived history, has moved from his being the voice of reason, and an instigator of the Good Friday Agreement, to unveiling a less than noble character. History is what we make of it since it always in a state of flux. Familiar events become less known and complicated as more and more evidence comes to the fore. Such thoughts must surely make us cynical of what has becomes the popular opinion of the day. If we really do believe 'that the truth will out', then we must also accept that the 'outing' of the truth is more than what is doled out to us by the media.

I think this frustration with the acceptance of the easy answer is what fuels one of Heaney's best works

Whatever you say, say nothing

Who proved upon their pulses 'escalate',
'Backlash' and 'crackdown', 'the provisional wing',
'Polarization' and 'long-standing hate'.
Yet I live here, I live here too, I sing,

Expertly civil tongued with civil neighbors
On the high wires of first wireless reports,
Sucking the fake taste, the stony flavours
Of those sanctioned, old, elaborate retorts:

'Oh, it's disgraceful, surely, I agree.'
'Where's it going to end? It's getting worse.'
'They're murderers.' 'Internment, understandably...'
The voice of sanity is getting hoarse.

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