



Christmas at Chief's

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DECEMBER 2021

View From Ireland

By Maurice Fitzpatrick



Callan's Kicks

A new series of comedy sketches of key Irish figures over the past century is being broadcast on RTE television just now, 'Callan Kicks the Years'. Oliver Callan stars in an array of impersonation roles from Michael Collins to Taoiseach Micheál Martin. The title echoes Callan's hit radio show on RTE, 'Callan's Kicks', his weekly



himself to the trajectory we have taken since the foundation of the state. As Callan put it, in his publicity for the series, it features 'the most, least and barely ever respected figures in Irish history'. There is much to send up in the past hundred years of Irish life and the series is somewhat breathless in doing so. All the predictable cows are tilted: Eamon de Valera and Archbishop McQuaid appear across a table from one another in a scene depicting the carve-up of power during the early decades of the state. The camera pans to reveal that each man is sitting on a woman. Bono and Bob Geldof are hammered as self-absorbed, ageing rock stars; Senator David Norris and President Michael D. Higgins are portrayed as balls of pretence and convoluted rhetoric; Gerry Adams' inimitable speech pattern is, well, imitated impeccably. Not shy about donning lady's clothes, Callan excels

as Mary Lou McDonald. The comedian has said that the key to his 'cracking' an impersonation is perceiving a small gesture or tick. In McDonald's case, it was her prissy way of saying 'first of all'. As with the television series, so too on his radio show senior figures in Fine Gael are mediums for Callan's social anger. Former Taoiseach Leo Varadkar appears so gauche on the show that he could hardly feel at ease in his own company and is too consumed by self-satisfaction to be capable of feeling empathy with others. By contrast, Minister for Finance, Paschal Donohoe, exudes saccharine charm and dimply smiles that divert from self-serving right-wing policies. Callan undoubtedly misses the grist that former Minister for Housing, Eoghan Murphy, provided through the abortive housing policies he presided over. And this is the nub of Callan's satire. He is convulsively angry about the way the country has been run. The state of the health service, the cronyism of politicians and, above all, the circumstances of a mass of young people who have been deprived of a fair chance to buy a place to live is the source of much of Callan's most piercing satire. The pressures of writing and performing weekly comedy sketches on his radio show have led to repetition. One ongoing skit is about Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney. It portrays him as 'Noveney', a person so lacking in presence that he is effectively invisible in a room and surprises everyone when he speaks up. If it was ever funny, it no longer is on the 20th occasion. Clichéd jingles and jokes that feature on Halloween, or in the run-up Christmas, are also hackneyed. Other sketches wear better. For example, Mary Lou McDonald, stamping her authority by outlining Sinn Féin's party direction, finds her speech being overwhelmed as though by a poltergeist within her lungs that sounds uncannily like Gerry Adams. Callan has done this live, and the immediate transference of McDonald's voice into Adams' voice is a great example of his skill. When he impersonates other politicians, like Boris Johnson and Donald Trump, he understands that they are ludicrous enough just by being portrayed as themselves. 'Liberal Ladies' is a regular sketch as well—a group of women from monied South Dublin who tie themselves in knots to display pho-

ney virtues and, in the process, their own vacuity. RTE, the hand the feeds Callan, is also one that he is happy to bite. But his most vicious gouging in that sphere is reserved for RTE's legion of overpaid and self-entitled presenters. Callan is not averse to lacerating presenters whose slots he may well fill if they were fired. Callan occasionally adopts and sings popular songs, changing the lyrics to poke fun, and he brings poetry into his sketches too. All of this results in Callan being, on his day, a formidable impresario. None of his critics could deny his ability to nail an impression. Many of his listeners (Callan's Kicks consistently ranks in the top ten radio shows in Ireland by listenership ratings) acknowledge that he is much more than an impressionist. He manages to provide a weekly vaccination that protects against fully contracting the political viruses that our politicians transmit in their discourse. Being able to 'pass' as the figure he imitates also empowers Callan to stage pranks. He has been a political party 'colleague' who desperately phones late at night with a breaking story that may cost his listener a night's sleep. He has turned the tables on interviewers trying to corner him by instead giving back to them a repertoire of their own idiosyncrasies. He would give Conan O'Brien a run for his money. The humour in Callan's shows substantially depends upon intimately following Irish political life. Dissecting that is a national pastime. Not every bus stop in the world is enlivened with a conversation about political scandals that waiting passengers have just heard on the radio. But that is what we do in Ireland. So it takes a diligent following of national affairs, as well as an attuned ear, to stay on board with many Callan sketches and to follow him in the persona of politicians like Phil Hogan and the Healy-Rae brothers as they negotiate the byroads of political shortcuts towards a vote or a cover-up. There may be a fork in the road in Callan's career in the coming years if a slot opens up at RTE and the executives try to persuade him to channel his social anger on a platform of 'serious discussion'. That would be a ruse to neuter him. So far, however, he has defended his independence admirably and earned the right to keep 'kicks' in the title of his shows.

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Happy Christmas from our family to yours!



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and a Happy New Year)

to All the readers of *Irish American News*



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Home is Where the Heart Is

By Aishling Kelly



Home Care is Hurting

I cannot believe we are a few weeks way from Christmas. Time flies when you are having fun although I would say this year has not been a fun year for any small business owner. On November 8th and 9th I spoke and attended the HCAOA (Home care association of America) state conference in lisle. It was wonderful to see My fellow agency owners in person. It has been two years since our last conference skipping a year due to covid. Despite the attendance being half of what it was two years prior it was still a tremendous conference. How sad it was to sit in the conference and

hear each agency verbalize the same dilemma "We have no workers and are turning more clients away than we are bringing on".

Again, I say to America "come back to work". The baby boomer generation is exploding and will continue to do so till 2050. By 2050 there will be more seniors in America that those under the age of 18 creating a massive population shift. If you think we have a work force shortage now believe me when I tell you this is just the tip of the iceberg! Home care has been unrecognized for years. The average family has precon-

ceived notions about what it is and how it works. Many folks think getting home care in place is like ordering a pizza.

Now that folks are starting to realize the real value of home care over facilities, nursing homes and or memory care communities, the real education needs to be implemented. We now need to speak about cultural diversities and acceptance of immigrant workers who don't have English as their first language. We don't have the work force here to take care of current needs and some families are going on wait lists for home care; how sad is that! For those Immigrant workers already here, I say thank you and thank God for you.

Our IDPH (Illinois Department of health) Home Health, Home Care, Home Nursing and Home placement representative spoke at conference and applauded the home care agencies on the work and strides we have made these past few years during covid. Sadly, she reported that 58 home service agencies closed since January 2021. She spoke

on how every home care agency is vital to service the needs of the aging population. She stated that we need even more Home Care agencies although Illinois has over 820 agencies, its simply not enough. Bottom line more and more agencies will close due to the lack of workers.

For those retirees who may be bored and looking for a few hours a week with a flexible schedule I invite you to come back to work. Keep yourselves active and engaged in society and community. To those workers burnt out from the last two years in hospital's I invite you to come to home care and work one on one with clients where you can be the difference.

Let's turn the corner and not look back at 2021 but instead embrace and acknowledge that for 2022 we have to get the service industry back on track and meet the needs of our communities and most especially our seniors.

Merry Christmas to each and every family and hopefully Santa can bring us all gifts of workers.



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Thomas Boyle Named Grand Marshal of 2022 City of Countryside St. Patrick's Day Parade!

The City of Countryside's annual St. Patrick's Day Parade will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Satur-



day, March 5, 2022. The Parade Committee is pleased to announce that **Thomas Boyle** has been named the Grand Marshal

for the 2022 St. Patrick's Day Parade. A first generation Irish American, Mr. Boyle's parents hailed from Causeway, County Kerry before meeting and starting their family on the south side of Chicago. Mr. Boyle has been instrumental in the Irish American community in the City as a banker as well as a member of Chicago Gaelic Park, where he sat on the Board of Directors for over twenty-five years and was President for three years (1989 - 1992). Mr. Boyle was included in the Business 100 List by Irish America Magazine. Dedicated to community banking, Mr. Boyle worked at Countryside Bank since 1982 where he started as a Loan Officer; he became Pres-

ident in 1997 and Vice Chairman in 2009. Recently, Mr. Boyle moved to First National Bank of Brookfield where he serves as a Director. Mr. Boyle and his wife Josephine raised their four children in Burr Ridge and are parishioners at St. John of the Cross in Western Springs.

City of Countryside Mayor Sean McDermott said, "Thomas Boyle is a proud Irish American who is well known throughout the Chicago area for actively promoting Irish heritage and culture. As a leader in community banking, Tom has helped countless Irish contractors and businesses get started. Having him serve as Grand Marshal is a fitting tribute to someone who has given so much to Countryside and the region in general."

Parade Chairman John Finn said, "Thomas Boyle has demonstrated a lifetime commitment to the values of St. Patrick; community engagement, volunteerism and service to others. It is a true honor to have him as our parade Grand Marshal."

All parade proceeds benefit BEDS Plus and Interfaith Community Partners. For more information on the Parade or to volunteer, email parade@countryside-il.org or 708-354-7270.

Eileen Ivers & Friends Joyful Christmas at Irish Cultural & Heritage Ctr Wisconsin

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Her recent CD, "Beyond the Bog Road", and its liner notes, focuses on the influences of the Celtic tradition on roots music including bluegrass, French-Canadian, Cajun, Appalachian, and Americana and describes how the music journeyed to become a fundamental ingredient of the American country music tradition.

A founding member of Cherish



Called "the future of the Celtic Fiddle" by the *Washington Post* and the "Jimi Hendrix of the violin" by the *New York Times*, the Bronx born Ivers continues to push the fiddling tradition from a folk music staple to a fiercely fresh, powerfully beautiful, intensely driving world stage experience

Ivers is a 9 time All Ireland Fiddle Champion, and a guest soloist with more than 50 symphony orchestras.

the Ladies, Ivers has performed many times during Milwaukee Irish Fest including the 2021 festival.

Ivers will be joined by her new band, Universal Roots, an ensemble with vocals and a broad array of instrumentation including guitar, upright and electric bass, trumpet, baritone sax, button accordion, whistles, percussion and piano. In addition to fiddle, Ivers also play mandolin, bodhrán and is an award winning banjo player.

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Swimming Upstream

By Charles Brady

Growing Up in Public

Life is so much more interesting when something unusual comes along. It's not always better, mind; but it is definitely more interesting.

Mine got very interesting this past month. I went in for a routine hospital check-up and came out with the knowledge that I was facing into some far from routine surgery. Sounds grim, eh?

But hold on; just hold on a

moment. Before those of you less than enamoured with my take on things start getting out the bunting, pulling the crackers and popping the champagne corks, let me tell you that I have no intention of falling off the twig just yet. If it happens, it happens; but I'm not in any rush to embrace the final act. Curious about it, but not in a rush.

Here's an aside that may or may

not be pertinent: a few months before Lockdown kicked in, I was at the funeral of an elderly lady, a neighbour that I was awful fond of. Her brother is a priest and in his late eighties. He was up there on the alter as were many other priests who knew her, none of whom were under about 85.

In a moment of utter irreverence, I whispered to the guy next to me that for men of the cloth none of them seemed in a rush to shuffle off the Old Mortal Coil. To which he whispered back: 'Which one of us is ever in a hurry for a meeting with the boss?'

Funny at the time, but I've been thinking about that of late.

I was baptized a Catholic but spent most of my life as an atheist. Then around the age of fifty I had what I can only describe - and hope that it doesn't sound too pretentious - as an epiphany.

It wasn't one thing; it was a lot of things that came together. And I went back to the Church. And I found that I loved the sense of ritual every morning, just as my old man had; that I liked poring over the words and the history of the early Christians. Those tough-minded people of two thousand years ago, the way that they used words to elucidate and educate and quite often infuriate. And if you want to see what I mean by that then read Robert Louis Wilken's 'The Spirit of Early Christian Thought'.

And the more I got into that the more I found that there was no way that I could continue to rationally recognize the Vatican. Especially their behaviour during Lockdown when they seemed more concerned about the money that they were losing than about the many people who were in

genuinely dire straits mentally.

So, these days I dismiss the Vatican from my thinking completely. To my mind, if or when the Christ comes back to this earth, he will clear the entire lot of them out, starting with their utterly amoral Vatican Bank.

So where does that leave me? Well, probably confused - and possibly not. When you get interesting news things become a little sharper. And it may just be that my religion is morphing into spirituality. I'm not sure that the two things are the same.

Well, I won't know until I get to the other side, so not much point in worrying about it.

The other interesting thing that happened to me this past week was actually meeting the editor/publisher of this magazine, Cliff Carlson. It may sound crazy but although I've been doing this column for around 16 years, this was the first time I'd met him. He was on a visit to Ireland and staying for a night in Galway.

I was reluctant. Very, very reluctant. I don't think that it's a great idea at all to meet up with people you have a certain mental image of and admiration for. It's gone pear-shaped for me before, brilliant playwright and actor Steven Berkoff being my most notorious example.

Then again, in cases like Liam Neeson or John Hurt or film director Ken Russell and actor Oliver Reed (the latter two of whom I got absolutely hammered with) you found that they were just as pleasant as you hoped they would be.

Well, Cliff didn't disappoint. It was lovely to finally meet him. And, of course there's no way to say much more about a guy who is actually checking this copy with-

out seeming like a creepy crawling sycophant. But there is one more thing I have to add: if this guy is REALLY the age he says he is then there is a horrible painting in his attic - because he would give Dorian Grey a run for his money.

Why the title of this piece? Well, I suppose because I think that this column, running over such a length of time, has given me the opportunity to grow up in public. It's stolen from Lou Reed's long-ago album by the way:

Some people think being a man is unmanly

Some people think that the whole concept's a joke

But some people think being a man is the whole point

And then some people wish they'd never awoke

Ahead of his time, I think. In my birthplace of Scotland this past month a school made the bizarre decision to suggest that the boys wear skirts for a day in order to let them feel what it is like to be a woman. They said it was in the spirit of diversity. I say it's in the spirit of utter nonsense.

Let's leave aside the fact that we have these things called kilts in Scotland; why would this advice make any kind of sense?

Here's the advice that my old man Tom Brady gave me as regards women: always walk on the outside of the pavement; stand up when a lady enters the room and always pull her chair out for her.

What he didn't tell me was to dress up as a woman.

And we wonder why kids are more screwed up than they ever were?

Let me wish you the very happiest of Christmases. Yes, we've entered a strange old world these past two years; but a friend of mine who sometimes gets on my nerves (although I doubt as much as I get on hers) told me this afternoon that nothing was going to change her, that she would just continue to be the person she is.

And that, by the way, is a kind person.

And we need people like her in the word.

Merry Christmas, folks.
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Mother Jones, The Most Dangerous Woman in America

Elliot J. Gorn
Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux

This is the first half of the amazing story of Mother Jones. The quotes are from the author's work or from the "Autobiography" which is quoted here.

We are all very proud of our Irish heritage. And a glorious part of that heritage is the influence Mother Jones had on America. She worked against child labor and for the establishment and strengthening unions, and for the dignity of laboring people.

Her "ultimate goal was a living for workers...sufficient pay for men so that women could stay home and children could go to school." Workers were exploited as she had seen in Ireland.

Irish Books and Plays in Review



Frank West



She described this: "Labor has not protection...all wealth and power center in the hands of the few and the many are their victims." She was adamant that more of the money produced by workers end up in their hands. She didn't want "capital to take a disproportionate share of wealth so that the producing class be reduced to poverty." She, "and unions advocated the end of the piecework system, uniform pay scale, and a ten-hour workday. The union's message of the dignity of labor...resonated deeply for many given the hard circumstances of her parents' lives in Ireland."

Mary was born Mary Harris in 1837 in

County Cork. She left Ireland during the Great Hunger. She went to Canada and settled in Toronto. She went to school in Toronto and applied for a teaching job in the United States. She became a teacher here. Then moved to Memphis, where she met and married George Jones, an iron worker and they had four children.

Life looked optimistic, but a sudden yellow fever outbreak killed her husband and their four children. She didn't let herself become depressed. What inner strength and courage! She decided to move to Chicago, which was the greatest boom town in American. She and a friend opened a seamstress shop near where the Drake Hotel is today. "We worked for the aristocrats of Chicago and I had ample opportunity to observe the luxury and extravaganza of their lives. Often while sewing for the lords and barons who lived in magnificent homes—I would look out of the plate glass windows and see the poor, shivering

wretches, jobless and hungry, walking along the frozen lake front. The contrast of the people for whom I sewed was painful to me. My employers seemed neither to notice, nor to care."

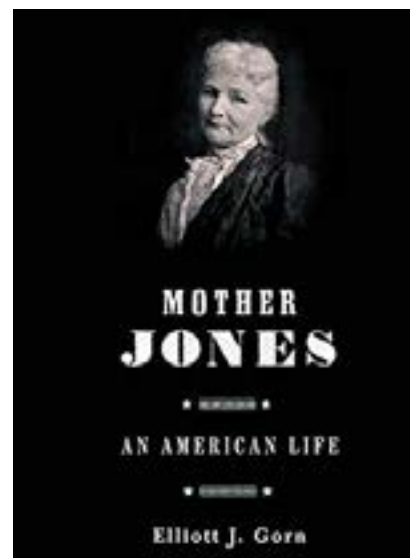
"Chicago was a divided city, and these divisions grew deeper as large-scale capitalism became entrenched." Wealth displayed itself shamelessly alongside shocking scenes of poverty. Ethnicity coincided roughly with social and economic states. Simply put, the wealthiest fifth of Chicago's population—mostly native born Protestant help 90% of the city's total assets, while the poorest half (which included most of the Irish) possessed less than 1%.

The Great Chicago Fire destroyed her home and seamstress business. "Mary Jones underwent a sort of

conversion...Her ideas matured as she immersed herself in the labor movement of that period."

Elliot J. Gorn is a professor of history at Brown University. He tells the dramatic and emotionally powerful story of Mother Jones.

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Hi, I'm **Annie Nestor**. I was born in Ireland and have family from Galway, Mayo and Kerry. I'm a locally owned Home Care Agency founded in 2015.

After 50 yrs in early childhood education and owning several child care centers, I decided to pass the baton. Our children are the third generation in our family to start schools and after seeing their success & passion I decided to venture into another area of caregiving, **seniors!** I thought, I'm not going to retire I'm going to RE-FIRE!

Working with seniors reminds me of my wonderful years teaching children loving, laughing, and appreciating the joys of life.

HAPPY SENIORS singing old favorite tunes is music to my ears. Now I get to continue doing what I love with a new generation.



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One of the first signs of the Christmas holidays arriving is that first carol we hear. We have our favorites sung and played by those we enjoy most, and they help us settle into the season. Many bands shy away from putting out holiday albums as their appeal for the year is short lived, and it is very iffy that they would recoup the investment in getting



it recorded, produced and out to their fans before the season is over. Many of us have been asking We Banjo 3 for a Christmas album for several years, and the lads decided over the Covid plague to give it a shot. Like everything they do, it is well thought out, interestingly arranged, and beautifully done. Included in the eight selections you'll find a bit of wistful, some spiritual, and those

with the hope and joy of Christmas.

Titled A WINTER WONDERFUL, the cover, designed by Enda, is a fall of intricate snowflakes, not with the typical icy blue or grey background, but with their "You Are My Sunshine" message yellows and oranges. The medallion snowflake is a beautiful Celtic knot giving off the light of the season.

The opening song "Christmas in Prison" is a tribute to the late John Prine, and may end up becoming WB3's "Fairytale of New York." David sings Prine's song with just the perfect melancholy in his voice to pull you into the lyrics. Before long, you find yourself swaying to it as you listen. The picking and soulful fiddling are perfect in helping to tell the story. You will also hear their beautiful harmonies, which often get lost in short bits in their regular arrangements. On this song and in several others on the album, you'll get to hear how magnificently they sing together.

"Sunrise at Solstice" was composed and arranged by the lads, and while we don't get airs from them too often, no one can do them more beautifully. This tune is the 'sit in your chair, stare into



On the Upbeat

By Maryann McTeague Keifer

the fireplace with your drink, and get lost in the music' piece. I played it over several times before moving on to the next when doing my first listen. It is special!

"Driving Home for Christmas" is a WB3 style song. The lyrics are meaningful and memorable. Delivered perfectly by David, as you listen, you see him driving along and singing. Enda's, Martin's, and Fergal's accompaniment are absolutely enjoyable and carry the song. This will be a 'must listen to it every year' favorite song.

For those of you purists who like your traditional carols, their "We Three Kings" will not disappoint. Not an easy song to sing, David's lead, with the again truly lovely harmonies, will bring you into the season with beauty. The accompaniment is subdued and truly captivating.

I expected "Joy to the World" to be a song, but they surprised me with an instrumental. Enda's banjo intro is gorgeous and then he is joined by Martin on the mandolin and the tune just grows. Half way through, Fergal brings the melody in, and then they all take it up tempo for a fun, happy holiday finish. It is a highlight on the album.

Beloved by many, "Silver Bells," is going to be a treasure for WB3 fans who will find warmth in David's singing and the lads' harmonies and accompaniment. It will replace many of their previously favorite versions.

There is a Fergal fiddle solo in it that will have you hitting the replay button. This carol, too, will make the traditionalists overjoyed. It is lovely!

The "Little Drummer Boy" begins with Enda's expressive banjo, playing the tune we love with the mandolin and guitar

then joining in. It is simple and beautiful. Seamlessly, Fergal suddenly joins in and transitions them into "Calliope House." It works perfectly, as if it should have always been a part of the carol which they artfully bring back in the last

measure or two to close. Fun and surprising!

The album closes with a stunningly beautiful version of "The Wexford Carol." Beginning as an instrumental led by Fergal's spiritually moving fiddling, Ruth Smith then comes in to sing a verse. Her voice, clear and angelic. It's alluring. The lads then have a surprise for us. The carol goes right into an uplifting and toe tapping "Christmas Eve" set. Does it seem abrupt? Yes. Does it work? Superbly, and takes us out on a high ready to start listening to the album from the beginning again. Kiana Howley also joins them on this set.

Throughout the album you are going to hear some deadly double bass from Scott Mulvahill. I wonder how WB3 as a quintet would fly...

After you have enjoyed the album several times, listen with your headphones. Being able to hear the individual instruments being played is mesmerizing. It will distract you from the tune as whole, but has a beauty of its own.

This album is a gift from them to us. I doubt they produced it thinking they'd make a profit or even break even. I hope we all prove them wrong. Put your orders in on their website or Facebook page, treat yourselves and get some extras for gifts. They are shipped from The States, so getting them in time for Christmas should not be an issue. Enda, Fergal, Martin, and David never disappoint, and they have, once again, created a winner!

We have had a difficult year. I have you all in my heart, and wish for you a happy and peaceful holiday and the hope of an uplifting New Year! Nolaig Shona agus Athbhliain Faoi Mhaise daoibh!

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Kari McClowry, St. Patrick's Day Parade Queen 2020-2021

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www.chicagostpatricksdaysparade.org

The search is on for 2022 Chicago St. Patrick's Day Parade Queen. The Chicago St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee today officially launched the search for the next young lady who will be crowned the Queen of the 2022 St. Patrick's Day Parade. Applications are now being accepted for the role of Queen or a member of the Queen's court to represent Chicago's Irish community at the annual parade and throughout the course of the year at civic



events and other public appearances. The contest is open to young women of Irish ancestry who are between the ages of 18 and 29. Applications will be accepted through Jan. 3, 2022, according to James Coyne, General Chairman of Chicago's annual St. Patrick's Day Parade. The Queen Contest and judging will be held on Jan. 16, 2022 at Plumbers Local 130, 1340 W. Washington Blvd, Chicago. To fill out application, visit website listed above!

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Roaming in the Gloaming

By Estelle Shanley

The film BELFAST opened in early November, heralding the first time I entered a cinema in two and a half covid riddled years. The lobby of a large cinema in Palm Springs California dazzled, the beckoning odor of freshly puffed popcorn sizzled the nostrils although I skipped quickly to the usher to authorize my reserved ticket and settle in my seat. This film, I knew by experience and instinct, would not be entertaining, the nibbling of a chocolate bar or crunching buttered popcorn not appropriate. I took my seat, a notebook and pen in hand, ever present tools for a journalist. Memories of an assignment from Boston to Belfast covering the death of the hunger striker Bobby Sands some forty years ago, flooded my mind. My accommodations, the Hotel Europa, encased by a tall wall diligently topped with razor sharp barbed wire was hardly calming, I had a keen sense from that experience covering Belfast in 1960 and the death of hunger striker Bobby Sands, this film by Kenneth Branagh would not be falling under the category of entertainment. I expected dreary skies, darkness, slaughter, burning houses, killing and heartbreak. My misgivings proved correct. Wasn't it filmmaker Federico Fellini who pronounced that all art is auto-biographical? This new film represented a rare dive for

Branagh into personal territory. As a young boy he lived with his family and experienced the raging war between Catholic and Protestants. His black and white film, the setting a working-class neighborhood where Catholics lived. That street is front and center filmed during Covid, hence the mainstay stage for savage action by Protestants who light fires, bombs, molotov cocktails, creating intensity and death for Catholics whom they intend to oust. As a young lad, Branagh's childhood was dramatic played remarkably by Buddy, his stand-in, a young actor Jude Hill who lived with his protestant family while the Northern Ireland Troubles, for purposes of the film, hovered in the background. When Ulster was plunged into sectarian violence Buddy asked his parents why Protestants hated Catholics. His parents had no answer. In large measure that underbelly of hatred and suspicion although diluted, continues today in silence and secrecy in Ulster. Buddy steals the show, a charmer, his Belfast twang easy on the ears, an Oscar nomination definitely in the wings. Dame Judy Dench cast as his grandmother, a typical old granny, a fine broth of a sharpened tongued wee woman with traditional Irish bulging ankles. Dench has mastered a perfected Belfast accent as has the actor who plays Buddy


ailing Grandad, played beautifully by Ciaran Hinds, a unique auld fella who takes young Buddy under his wing in a loving patient way. See the film! Buddy has an older brother, a teenager, quiet, sullen, frightened by the pandemoniac raging every night on the street aware of his parent's difficulty. Father works in England, a skilled laborer, home occasionally for weekends as the burden of rearing two sons falls to his wife. The camera weaves over the vast land of Belfast's ship building docks, dark laden clouds hanging low ready to drown the earth below in continual spilling rain. Is it all too dreary? When trailers of the film were viewed, criticism of the Irish Northern accent was strong and American reviewers pushed for subtitles. Accustomed to the accent I had no difficulty, although I heard local folks muttering at the end about the difficulty of listening.

It has been asked if Branagh's film goes deep enough into the Troubles. A dumb question. If you lived and survived the Troubles, the question is insulting.



Personally I found it a needless addition to Belfast Brandagh's insertion of film clips of John Wayne and High Noon. Although I wept through the film, I'll vouch for Branagh's emotional restraint. The film does not prompt tears, mine swelled, the simple act of being Irish. The heartbreaking aspect presented by the film was the father's announcing a dose of reality, the family had to leave Belfast and join him in England. The savage street fights, the killings, murders, no safety but the probability of a nice little

affordable house in the United Kingdom, both boys having their own bedrooms, wife attending to a small garden, all of it affordable while the housing tax in the North of Ireland continued to spike. How do you pick up and leave the place where you were born, where people know you and your family, neighbors who look out for you, adding to the pillar of safety that can disappear in an instance, a bullet, a bomb, continual tumult on the streets. How do you pack up and go, leaving grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends, behind? We know the answer. So many of us did just that despite the absence of warfare, required by hunger, a famine that killed millions and pushed more millions of Irish men and women onto ships, too many never achieving America where a life worth living was possible. Our ancestors did it, standing on the shoreline of Cork, bidding goodbye to family they may never see again. Migration was the necessary lifeline, the choice of a new life or death at home. The film is worth seeing. estelleshanley@aol.com



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The Gene Pitney Story of Music Magic

Morning Man McGrath Part II:

Last month we met multifaceted Wisconsin broadcaster Dave McGrath, whose Irish American roots would branch out to encompass a business and professional relationship with a singer so legendary the music spread back to Ireland and Europe. McGrath has just added "author" to his professions including radio newsman, print journalist, television weatherman and U.S. Army soldier. These melded with his avocations of music aficionado and promoter of several famous top 40 pop stars of the 1960s. Chief among them is Gene Pitney, world

renown for singing songs like *"Only Love Can Break a Heart"* and the movie-based classic *"(The Man Who Shot) Liberty Valence."*

McGrath's new book, *Gene Pitney, The Singer, The Songs, The Songwriters* describes Pitney as "the Frank Sinatra of his generation."

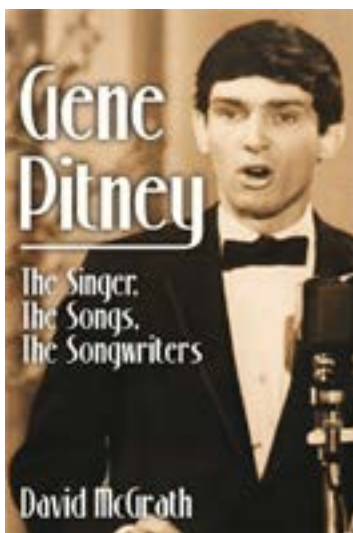
His close relationship with Pitney, who also wrote songs for household

name artists and sang songs for household name composers like Burt Bacharach, Carole King and Mick Jagger, is the source of McGrath's fascinating inside look at the lyrics and life of Pitney.

So close in fact that Pitney was Best Man for McGrath's wedding, and McGrath was a pallbearer for Pitney.

"I met Gene while I was in high school, and in 1983 he asked me to run his International Fan Club," says McGrath.

"Then, in 1985, we became partners in the merchandise business. We created, produced and sold Gene's merchandise on tour. That relationship with a star of Gene's stature led to other stars, like Peter Noone of Herman's Hermits and Dion Dimucci of Dion and the Belmonts asking



me to handle their merchandise, too. With my wife, Guida Brown, we continue doing so today," McGrath states.

"I've been blessed with the opportunity to work with some musical greats, selling merchandise like CDs, books, DVDs and T-shirts at their concerts," McGrath explains. "It's a great way to make money, travel, and meet all of my musical heroes."

McGrath's travels include sightseeing in Ireland and competing in long distance running events there, where Gene Pitney continued to be a concert draw until his untimely death in 2006.

He is currently the News Director at Kenosha's WGTD Radio, which airs McGrath's local newscasts as part of



Dave McGrath

Each chapter explores the lore and background behind each song presented and brings the lyrics alive for McGrath's depiction of the life work of Pitney, a Rock and Roll Hall of Famer.

The phenomenal pop star, who charted 16 times in the Top 40 in the US and 22 times in the Top 40 in the UK, was a hometown hero because he never left. He loved being known as "the Rockville Rocket."

McGrath says "Gene was oftentimes described as the small-town boy who made it in the big-time world of music."

Gene Pitney truly was one-of-a-kind. So is new author Dave McGrath.

Get the book on Amazon.com. www.GenePitneyBook.com.

Email Jim at IrishRoverJim.com



At this time each month, we usually have a feature on one of our Craftspeople. These features have brought our members great exposure and created a supportive audience for them that they truly appreciate.

This month, we think it's the time to have the spotlight put on you. Your support has been the difference in make or break for us. You have shown us that you love reading the story behind each product and how they came to be. You also love learning all about the person who made the jewellery or the pottery. You have shown us that the distance between us makes no difference, you have been there to appreciate what we do. We would like to say "Thank You". Your continued interest and support means the world to us.

When we started out, we thought we were writing fantastic press releases. We eagerly sent them out far

and wide. As brilliant as we thought they were, no one replied.

One day an email arrived from the Publisher, Cliff Carlson, who had taken time out to give us some pointers on how to write a press release properly.

We never looked back! This kind gesture set in motion the publication of many of our press releases in magazines and newspapers. It enabled us to get in front of an even wider audience. The great thing about it too is, when people ask "where did you learn to write a press release" my reply always gets a "wow" response followed by "Did you ask him? I say "No, he obviously could see that I had no idea what I was doing" As we say in Ireland, I am now a "dab hand at it"

We have had a fantastic journey. It has certainly been very tough at times. However, the highs have far outweighed the lows. Recently we won an award. Namely, 'Business Con-

sultancy of the Year 2021/22' for our service to this sector. We have three live art and crafts exhibitions per year in collaboration with the Irish American Business Network and December may see our

second exhibition in Portugal.

We are calling out to Celtic craftspeople in the US to join us, we can put your work in the spotlight in the US and Europe. Spread the word!

Over the last 19 months, we have all been affected by Covid and lockdowns. We are looking forward with optimism that things will change. May 2022 see a brighter, peaceful and better world. We wish you and yours a Very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

All of us at Crafters of Ireland, would like to extend a massive "Thank You" to Cliff Carlson and to the team at *Irish American News*. We also would like to thank all the wonderful readers of *Irish American News* for their interest in learning about Irish Crafts.

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Sincere condolences go out from the members of the Francis O'Neill Club to the family of Tony McLaughlin, on his sudden passing this week. May his memory be a blessing to us all.

Mingle & Jingle Christmas Party at Chicago Gaelic Park December 16

Chicago Gaelic Park presents its annual Mingle & Jingle Christmas party on Thursday, December 16, 2021.

The party runs from 6:30 PM until 10:30 PM in the beautiful Emerald Room.

Gaelic Park's Mingle & Jingle Christmas party is the perfect venue for many businesses that are too small to rent a hall, unable to host an in-office party, or are too busy to organize a spirited and reasonably priced holiday celebration. Everyone

attending will enjoy a delicious hot buffet dinner featuring soup, salad, choice of entrée, vegetable, potato, and dessert. Also included is a four-hour open bar and Tone Productions a live DJ; all for only \$45.00 per person.

Reservations are required and must be paid in full by December 6, 2021. Gather your co-workers and friends to celebrate the holiday season.

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So, You are invited over for dinner and you ask what can I bring? Why don't you bring a dessert the host replies. Okay I'll see you on Saturday at seven. If desserts are not one of your culinary strong points not to worry. No need to panic or go to the store and pick up some mediocre ready made cake or pie. I have the perfect no bake solution that anyone can make and I guarantee will be the star of the dinner party and it only takes 20 minutes to make. Irish Coffee Tiramisu. This is an adaptation of an Italian classic and so easy to make. All you need is a hand or stand mixer, assemble the ingredients then pop in the fridge to chill. This is a dessert everyone will love.

Irish Coffee Tiramisu serves 6-8

All of these ingredients are readily available from your local grocery store

1 package of lady fingers about 24 dry ones are better

4egg yolks
 ½ cup sugar
 8oz mascarpone cheese
 8oz heavy whipping cream
 1 tsp vanilla extract
 2 tbs brown sugar
 12 oz strong black coffee expresso if possible
 2 oz Irish whiskey
 2 oz Bailey's Irish Cream liquor
 2 tbs cocoa powder
 2oz bitter sweet chocolate bar shaved into curls with a potato peeler



Using an electric mixer and whisk attachment or hand mixer with beaters beat egg yolks and ¼ cup sugar for about 5 minutes or until ribbons form in the mixture when whisk is lifted from the bowl. Transfer to a medium bowl. Clean bowl and whisk and beat heavy whipping cream and ¼ cup sugar until soft peaks form. Add mascarpone cheese, Baileys, and vanilla and whisk until incorporated. Add to egg mixture and fold until combined.

Combine coffee, brown sugar and Irish whiskey until sugar is dissolved.

To assemble you can use a 8in(2quart) square glass dish or a large wine glasses with a for individual servings.



Using a sifter dust the bottom of the dish or glasses with cocoa powder.

Working one at a time dip the lady fingers in the expresso mix being careful not to leave them in the mixture too long. Counting to three should be sufficient. Place half the lady fingers in the dish or glasses breaking lady fingers if necessary to form an even layer. Top with half of the mascarpone mixture. Repeat with the remaining lady fingers and mascarpone mixture. Dust with cocoa powder, and garnish with chocolate curls.

Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate 24 hours.

Jim August is an award winning local chef and co-owner of The Irish Shop in Oak Park Il.

You can contact Jim with any questions or comments at jimaugustfood@yahoo.com

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Condolences to the McNamara Clan who lost their Patriarch, Thomas Edward McNamara, on November 23, 2021 at the great age of 93.

Tom is shown here, front and center on Father's Day, 2021.

To his wife, Mary, and his extended family, know that he was a shining light and lit the way for you. He will be missed by many.



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**Generation
Next**
By Conor O'Connor

Invoking Article 16 Would Be A Disaster For Everyone--So Why Is the UK Considering It?

It doesn't take too much effort for me to remember a time when Brexit was a chaotic mess. The United Kingdom went through Prime Ministers like a chainsmoker goes through cigarettes. There was a lingering hope that a second referendum would be held regarding the issue in light of the chaos a withdrawal from the European Union entailed. And, through it all, I'm fairly certain a large percentage of Europeans had a persistent migraine that would just...not...go...away! Fortunately, those headaches seemed to clear up after a Brexit deal was finalized and the United Kingdom bid farewell to the European Union. Everyone was finally able to carry on with their lives without fear of another Brexit mess popping up in the near future. That is, until now.

One of the major obstacles that kept a final Brexit deal from being reached between the EU and the UK for some time was the sticky situation regarding the status of Northern Ireland. Loyalists living in Northern Ireland wanted to be treated like every other country in the United Kingdom when it

came to Brexit. Namely, they wanted to be separate from all European Union entities, including the customs union. This, however, would have effectively reimposed a "hard" border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. This would have meant reopening long-closed customs checkpoints between the two nations, which would have undoubtedly increased sectarian tensions between unionists and nationalists.

The United Kingdom wisely opted to keep Northern Ireland in the EU customs union as part of its final Brexit deal with the EU, meaning that many goods flowing from the United Kingdom to Northern Ireland would have to be inspected once they arrived in port. This effectively imposed a trade border between Great Britain and Ireland in the Irish Sea, much to the chagrin of many Unionists in Northern Ireland. Despite signing off on the deal only a short time ago, it appears that the Boris Johnson-led government in the UK has already grown weary of the EU customs inspections carried out in Northern Ireland ports.

Johnson and his cohorts now claim that the circumstances exist for them to invoke Article 16 of the Northern Ireland protocol that was agreed to by both sides last year. Article 16 essentially lets the UK (or the EU, if needed) to unilaterally take "safeguard measures" to ease "serious economic, societal or environmental difficulties that are liable to persist, or to diversion of trade." Invoking Article 16 would immediately require both parties to meet again and revisit the stipulations of the Northern Ireland protocol. If negotiations drag out after this invocation, a trade war between the EU and the UK could result. Both sides may take retaliatory economic action to counteract the "safeguard" actions of the other. This could mean the imposition of tariffs, further restrictions on the flow of goods from one party to another, etc.

Johnson's willingness to invoke Article 16 speaks to his populist sympathies; his unionist constituents hate the protocol and would love nothing more than to see it weakened or scrapped entirely. What remains to be seen, however, is if Johnson is willing to jeopardize his entire Brexit agreement with the EU, as well as the economic prosperity of the UK, all to satisfy a small portion of his constituency. For the sake of every European, I truly hope that Johnson comes to his senses and relents from invoking Article 16. Border checks are a headache, but peace and prosperity are worth it.



(l to r): Billy Lawless and IAN publisher, Cliff Carlson wishing all their friends around the world, Happy Christmas!



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We'll never forget 2021. We were thrilled to be able to bring back many of our events, and we've heard from so many who enjoyed the bands from the end of May through now, the Easter Egg Hunt, youth and adult Gaelic football and youth hurling, evenings on the patio, Irish Cultural Camp, Harvest and Heritage Day, the Family Halloween Party, the Carraig Pub 5K, and more.

Plans for 2022 are underway, with Ladies Little Christmas being first up, so tell the Ladies in your life that they should take a break on January 6th and come out for some fun. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Go raigh maith agat,

Bill O'Sullivan



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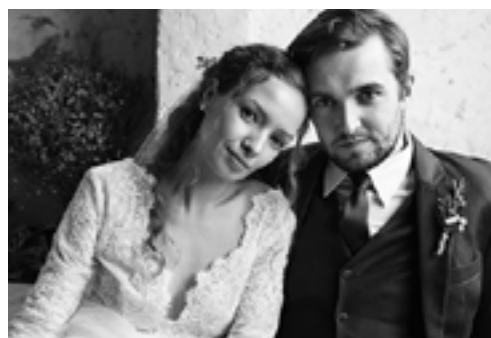
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2021 Front Entrance Improvements

Several years ago, Gaelic Park purchased a residence adjacent to the main entrance which was known as The Lightholder Property in reference to the family who had been great neighbors for many years. Many ideas for optimum use of the 1-acre site were discussed with a consensus voting in favor of landscaping to enhance the frontage of the building and highlight the creek at the rear of the site.

In spring of 2020, plans were put on hold as COVID-19 stalled anticipated grant requests. The Park's normal business operations were severely impaired by the pandemic, but supporters of Gaelic Park stepped up with loans to fund this ambitious project, which has become a rallying point for us. Just as in the beginning, several sub-contractors and our wonderful team of volunteers donated their time to minimize the labor costs of the project.

A very special Thank You to our very generous sponsor of the pergola and seven park benches.

Gaelic Park Charities, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, is offering **sponsorship opportunities** to fund the unfinished items which include 5 park style benches & memorial trees dotted around the property.

Park Bench Sponsorships
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Happy Christmas to all of you from all of us!
 We look forward to being with you in 2021, and we wish you safety, freedom, health and prosperity in the New Year.

From the staff, volunteers, members and directors of
 Chicago Gaelic Park

GAELIC PARK
 CHICAGO

MINGLE & JINGLE

Christmas Party At Chicago Gaelic Park December 16

Chicago Gaelic Park, 6119 W. 147th Street, Oak Forest, IL, presents its annual Mingle & Jingle Christmas party on **Thursday, December 16, 2021**. The party runs from 6:30 PM until 10:30 PM in the festive Emerald Room.

Gaelic Park's Mingle & Jingle Christmas party is the perfect venue for many businesses that are too small to rent a hall, unable to host an in-office party, or too busy to organize a spirited and reasonably priced holiday celebration. Everyone attending will enjoy a delicious hot buffet dinner featuring soup, salad, choice of entrée, vegetable, potato, and dessert. Also included is a four-hour open bar and Tone Productions a live DJ; all for only \$45.00 per person. Reservations are required and must be paid in full by December 6, 2021. Gather your co-workers and friends to celebrate the holiday season. For further information, call Gaelic Park at **(708) 687-9323**.



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On the Law

Martin Healy Jr.

John P. Scanlon

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This is the next of a series of columns on how the law can impact your life. Each month we will focus on various aspects of the law relating to personal injuries, those that happen both on-the-job and otherwise, including mishaps which occur in driving vehicles, using products and receiving medical care. The column will also respond to legal questions relating to personal injury that are sent to us.

HealyScanlon, formerly The Healy Law Firm, is comprised of six trial attorneys. We are located downtown at 111 West Washington Street, Suite 1425, Chicago, Illinois 60602 (800-922-4500 or 312-977-0100). www.HealyScanlon.com. The firm concentrates in the representation of injured victims of all types of accidents.

Christmas is almost Here

Believe it or not, Christmastime is here again. While Christmas brings warm thoughts of family, friends and much needed time away from work, it is also important to think about toy safety at Christmas. Unfortunately, while we all hope that the toys we buy for our children are safe, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), the government organization that regulates the safety of most consumer products, including most toys, reported that on average 200,000 children a year were treated in emergency rooms for toy-related injuries.

Common Toy Issues

In preparation for Christmas this year, taking some simple precautions can be very important. One public interest group, the United States Public Interest Research Group (U.S. P.I.R.G.) makes the following recommendations to avoid potential serious injuries:

First, "bigger is better": choking is a common cause of toy related injuries, and unfortunately, deaths, especially for children under three. If a toy can pass through a paper towel tube, do not buy it for a child under three.

Second, avoid small powerful magnets, such as are found on toy darts, building toys or jewelry. If a child swallows more than one magnet, the magnets can attract in the body and

cause severe complications.

Third, be conscious of strangulation hazards and possibilities. If a cord or string is more than one foot long, it could tangle into a dangerous loop.

Fourth, always buy safety accessories, such as helmets, reflective lighting, pads and guards when buying toys such as bikes, hoverboards, scooters, skateboards, and skates.

Finally, report any toy safety issues you observe to the CPSC. The CPSC can only monitor a problem, and if necessary, recall a toy, if a problem is brought to their attention.

Lead Paint and Chemicals

Unfortunately, another significant concern with toy safety continues to be lead paint. Many of us may take for granted that the paints and dyes used in the toys we buy for our

children are safe. In 2010, the CPSC recalled more than half a million toys and children's products for violations of the federal lead paint standard. More recently in 2018, over 30,000 units of BSN Sports rubber critter toys were recalled due to lead contamination.

While many of us assume that only "generic" imported toys could pose lead paint dangers, notable lead paint recalls listed by the CPSC in recent years have included popular name brand toys including Thomas the Tank Engine, Sesame Street, Dora the Explorer, SpongeBob SquarePants, and Toy Story 3 toy bowling pins.

Exposure to lead paint can affect almost every system in the human body and is particularly toxic to the developing brains of young children. Exposure to even low doses of lead can cause problems for children. Children are more vulnerable to lead exposure than adults, because young children often put their hands and other objects in their mouths.

Recent Toy Recalls

There have been several notable recalls over the past few months. In August, there was a mandatory recall of 10 million Zen and Neoballs magnets due to ingestion hazard and risk of death. When these magnets are swallowed, they can become lodged in the digestive system resulting in the twisting or blocking of intestines, blood poisoning, or even death.

In May, Home Shopping Network (HSN) recalled over 5.4 million Joy/JM-branded My Little Steamer and My Little Steamer Go Mini, because it posed a serious burn hazard. The steamers could expel, spray or leak hot water during use which could burn a child.

In April, Target recalled its Cat & Jack Rompers, which consisted of heart-shaped graphics, because the graphics could peel off or detach, presenting a choking hazard.

In January, Ozone Bicycles recalled several models of the Ozone 500 Density Bicycle, because the locking hardware on the front wheel can become loose creating front wheel instability, presenting fall and injury hazards.

Products Liability Claims

Products liability lawsuits not only attempt to make whole those injured by unreasonably dangerous products, but they also encourage corporations to act in a responsible manner. At The Healy Scanlon Law Firm, we have represented clients seriously injured by dangerous consumer products. As just these short summaries show, many children's toys are released into the market without appropriate safety evaluations and testing. Products liability law provides an important safeguard which strives to discourage corporations from making decisions focused solely on financial return rather than a strong concern for safety.

Fortunately, the large majority of toys are completely safe, and do what they are supposed to do: create joy for children, especially at Christmastime. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all our readers.



*By: Neil Schelhammer,
Robert Hanrahan, Law Clerk,
contributed to this article*

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE DECEMBER 2021



It's the most wonderful time of the year (and usually the busiest)! I hope you had a lovely Thanksgiving and are able to count your blessings on more than one hand. Last month at the Center, we had many events, including our Celebration of Life Mass where we remembered all of our founders, members, family, and friends who passed away in 2021 and 2022, followed by the Irish Heritage Singers concert. I'm grateful we are able to remember those we have lost, and it was so wonderful to have our singers perform

in our building again! Our tea series also kicked off in person last month again with a sold out event for Tea with Jackie Kennedy.

This month, we have many festive events happening! We had our Christmas Bazaar on December 5th to kick off the Christmas season for us, and we were joined by The Ashley Davis Band on December 4th. To keep the merriment going, our Christmas Tea is back on December 11th, and Eileen Ivers joins us again for "A Joyful Christmas" on December 18th

(don't forget to get your tickets to both of these events on our website www.irish-american.org). We'll also be hosting live music in the Fifth Province on Friday and Saturday nights, and have a New Year's Eve on Irish Time dinner planned. I hope you include us in your holiday celebrations!

If you haven't bought your raffle tickets for round trip flights to Ireland on Aer Lingus yet, they make the perfect stocking stuffers! They're a great way to gift someone the chance to win and support the

Irish American Heritage Center. Our Annual Appeal has also started, and this is another great way to support the Center as part of your holiday giving. All gifts are welcome, and all funds raised through our Ireland 2022 raffle and Annual Appeal go directly to the upkeep of our building and funding the mission of the Irish American Heritage Center. Please consider including us in your holiday giving as well as in your celebrations. Raffle tickets and Annual Appeal contributions can be made on our website at www.irish-american.org.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays! Until we meet again, in my heart is where I'll keep you all for a joyous holiday season! Happy New Year, and see you all in 2022!

Thank you,

Nicole McDonagh-Tueffel
President
Irish American Heritage Center

A call for Artists

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theme:

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The Voice of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago

By Angel Gutierrez, Vice President of Institutional Advancement

Ever since I was a young boy, Matthew 25:35 has had a particular draw on my heart: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me... Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." (Mt 25:35-36, 40)

For a child who had trouble sitting still through mass, I felt that Jesus' call to action—to actively help anyone finding life difficult—was something very tangible to me. I could see it; I could do it. And as an adult who might even now have trouble sitting still through mass, knowing that our faith doesn't rest in the pews but actively reaches out beyond our church walls helps bring the Gospel to life for me.

That is why I have felt so blessed to be a part of Catholic Charities for the past 23 years. Each day, Catholic Charities answers Jesus' resounding call to serve and accompany the vulnerable, the overlooked and the suffering. Whether we are providing a bag of food at one of our food pantries, safely sheltering a mother and her children fleeing domestic violence, delivering hot meals to homebound seniors, counseling those impacted by trauma, or serving peo-

ple through any one of our 55 programs, Catholic Charities is honored to do the important work that our faith inspires. Together with our volunteers and donors, we are Christ's hands in the world, serving people regardless of their religion, race, or ethnicity, and asking only, "How can we help you?"

When people come to the doors of Catholic Charities, we meet them wherever they are on their life's journey, accompanying them with professional services and heartfelt compassion so that they may grow to live with the dignity God intends for them. We strengthen and empower individuals and families with the genuine mercy and brilliant hope that can be life-changing. Ours is careful work. We do it one person, one heart at a time.

The past 21 months have been difficult for those in need. Demand for Catholic Charities services doubled and tripled in many locations. The long-term health and economic repercussions of COVID-19 are exacerbated in people already facing poverty, and especially in people of color, who have experienced higher rates of infection, more loss of life, greater job losses, less access to needed services, and more interruption in their schooling. We are called to bring help and hope to these most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters so they don't get further behind.

If you are not already a part of Catholic Charities' mission to serve, then the Christmas Season is a wonderful time to get involved. Please consider donating toys or gifts to our Celebration of Giving, making a financial contribution to our Year End Appeal, or attending our largest fundraising gala, the St. Nicholas Ball, on December 4. Together, we can do more—answering Jesus' call to action, reaching out to the hungry, the homeless, the hurting, one person at a time. www.catholiccharities.net.



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Your Life in 2022!

How will your life next year be different from your life this past year? When we were kids we got to ask for a "do over" if something didn't turn out as planned. "Do over's" are a thing of the past..... but as adults we know, there are "fresh starts" that occur each January. We are gifted with a fresh new year every 365 days. What do you want to do with your gift called 2022?

In an article by Professor Al Gini of Loyola University, he reminds us that we need to look carefully at how we are spending our life. His research says, on average, a double income couple with two children put in 16.5 hours a day on work, community and chores. That only leaves 7.5 hours for tenderness, love and care, plus sleep.

Allow me to suggest a few alternative things that you might consider for the New Year. Maybe you should rethink your goals for the New Year; do they sound too big already?

Are you really planning on a HAPPY new year? I am convinced

that the saying, "Happy New Year," is just that for many of us; it's a greeting, it is NOT an expectation. We don't really plan to be HAPPY during the next year. Some people say that you can't control your life; I disagree. Just watch how people conduct themselves on a day to day basis. See how people doing any variety of jobs are smiling and pleasant whether they are cleaning your teeth, making your Starbucks coffee or delivering the mail, aren't they normally smiling?

You need to have dreams in order to achieve dreams. Too many of us are comfortable settling for a mediocre job and salary with a low grade future. We don't face the future with gusto; we view it as "same old, same old, that's the way it has always been." I simply reject that approach to life. Why can't you improve your circumstances? Have we just been conditioned to accept our "station" in life without questioning it?

Careers

By James F. Fitzgerald, CPA



world, in the full glory of some passion then fade and wither dismally with age". Yes, we can ABSOLUTELY do something about our status, but we need to recalibrate our thinking.

If you don't think you are advancing in your career, consider this five step approach. First, talk to your boss: what specific steps does s/he suggest you should take to advance yourself? Second, determine what deficiencies would be corrected with more education and then set a schedule for the completion of those requirements. Third, seek the counsel of two or three mentors who can guide you through the organizational thickets. Seek their advice on a regular basis. Fourth, always remember you are in charge of your career, not the Human Resources Department or your boss. Fifth, periodically review your status and make a STAY or LEAVE decision.

Whether you decide to stay at or leave your current organization,

My wife and I watch a WTTW series called "Indian Summers"; it is set in India during the 1930's. The local people have been conditioned to accept second-class citizenship; they don't think much about improving their circumstances or getting a better job. They take what they have been given and are thankful for that. It pained me to watch the program, perhaps because it reflects not only the reality of the 1930's in India, but I would contend, it reflects the current state of things in our beloved USA. We have been conditioned to accept the status quo.

So what can we do about it? We can complain about our status in the world, or we can respond more pro-actively about it. The famous Irish novelist and poet, James Joyce, wrote it is "Better to pass boldly into that other

do some honest evaluation of how you are projecting yourself to your boss, your fellow employees, and the world at large. There is an expression used by motivational speakers that could be the title for part one of our three point remedial program, "FAKE IT TILL YOU MAKE IT." This statement reflects the belief that your abilities are probably better at any given task than you are willing to believe. Maybe we don't accept this belief due to our fear of failure; we don't want to embarrass ourselves. Next time you are confronted with a situation that requires an action-beyond your known abilities—consider the truthful downside, what's the worst thing that could happen? Give it a try. Step out of your comfort zone.

The second part of our approach, to enhance the perception that people have of you, is to SPEAK POSITIVELY. "How can this challenge be met?" "What steps should be taken to achieve my goal?" Rather than saying things such as "We are never going to find a solution for this mess". Try taking a POSITIVE approach or looking at the problem from a different angle, it will be far more likely to succeed.

Third, LIVE IT! There is the scientifically validated Law of Attraction which says that your positive conduct and action will attract other like-minded people. Look for evidence of this Law around you, every day. "Doers" tend to attract doers - not duds.

As we approach the New Year think about how the adoption of these 3 concepts could be more helpful to you than a long list of resolutions. Research shows only 8% of people stick with their resolutions for the whole year. It is my suggestion that these three attitude changes are a much better bet for you in the New Year. Try them. CARPE DIEM.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR!

I want to thank my two wonderful editors, my wife Sandee and my daughter, Erynn for all their help this past year.

JAMES F. FITZGERALD #630-420-0362 Jamesffitzgerald.com Jamesffitz37@Hotmail.com

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Events for Seniors

At the Irish American Heritage Center

Monthly Musical Gathering

Every month—usually on the first Wednesday—we host the *Monthly Musical Gathering*. Through live musical performances, we celebrate our shared Irish heritage. The *Monthly Musical Gathering* always takes place at the *Irish American Heritage Center*. There is no charge to attend and **ALL** are welcome. Refreshments are served free of charge.

Monthly Musical Gathering

IAHC — Wednesday 1st December — 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Live Music with Sean Clealand

Join us for a morning of good cheer and great live music with our friend Sean Clealand providing the tunes! Remember, there's no fee to attend and we offer refreshments!

At Chicago Gaelic Park

The Get Together

There's nothing like a good get together! Twice each month—usually on the second and fourth Wednesday—we host *The Get Together* at *Chicago Gaelic Park*. We express our Irish heritage through an engaging variety of educational programs, cultural performances and lectures, and fun activities. There is no charge to attend and **ALL** are welcome. Refreshments are served free of charge.

The Get Together

Due to the holiday, there will be no meeting in December. Meetings will resume in the new year. If you would like stay up-to-date on our upcoming gatherings at Chicago Gaelic park, please call 773-282-8445 and we will be happy to mail a printed schedule right to your door! We wish you and your loved ones a very happy Christmas!

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Jack Chambers, Minister for Sports & Gaeltacht Visits the U.S.A.

Irish American News talked to Jack Chambers TD for Fianna Fáil for Dublin West. He is Chief Whip and the Minister of State for Sport and the Gaeltacht, and was in Chicago to launch the North-western/Nebraska game in Dublin in 2022. He attended a game at Northwestern while he was here, and he welcomed the Wildcats to travel to Dublin for the game.

He was also here to followup on Ireland's ambitious College Football Series which will be held over the next five years, including the Notre Dame game to be held in Ireland in 2023.

Organizers include the AER LINGUS College Football series, the sponsors - AER LINGUS, Tourism Ireland and the Irish Consulate.

While here he also met with Irish language learning groups at the Irish American Heritage Center, some of the Centers board members, and stopped in at the offices of the Irish Community Services located at the Center.

Before his return to Ireland he also found time to meet with members of Ireland Network Chicago during a business breakfast.

"While we are here we are working on organizing and seeing how we can best arrange a positive return for the colleges and Ireland with academic and business connections and strengthen the cultural activity between Ireland and the U.S.

IAN: We like your new "Have

You Pushed the Green Button campaign."

Minister Chambers: Yes, it's a really good initiative being rolled out. As a nation we have a high vaccination rate - over 90% - and we are eager to build a return to tourism between our countries.

I did two tours here in Chicago as a J-1 in 2011 and 2012 and really enjoyed working at the East Bank Club,

As Minister of the Gaeltacht, It was great to meet with those at the Heritage Center who are learning the Irish language and those who have great interest in it. There is a bill going through the parliament at the moment which we are using to strengthen the use of the Irish language both in the diaspora and in Ireland. There are a lot of universities and heritage centers in the world who promote the Irish language, and it was great to engage with people from a whole range of generations who have a passion for the language as well.

I also met with the Ireland Network Chicago and the many people who have set up their life in Chicago, and are really passionate about the Irish-American connection. It was my pleasure to brief them on the economic situation in Ireland, the difficulties around Brexit and about the importance of the J-1 program as well. They are an impressive and collaborative group, and I look forward to being back here in the near future.



Attending a business breakfast hosted by Ireland Network Chicago are, (l to r): Garrett Diamond; President of Ireland Network Chicago,, Jack Chambers; Chief Whip and Minister of State for Sport and the Gaeltacht, and Ireland Network Chicago member, Joe McKittrick.

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Who is Enya?

Eithne Patricia Brennan was born in the, Gaeltacht, (Gaelic Speaking area) of Co. Donegal called Gweedore parish. She is known as Enya. She is a singer-songwriter. She is one of the nine, talented Brennan children. Some say the Brennan's are Ireland's most successful music family. She started her career in her family's Celtic folk band, called Clannad. The word Clannad means family.

Enya started her solo career early-on, she didn't stay with the family band very long. She is said to be shy and has stage fright. I'm like Enya in that way. Most people are familiar with her song, "Sail away". Her style is a mix of new age, Celtic, classical, world, pop and Irish folk. When asked what genre she would classify herself, her reply is, "Enya". She has sung in ten different languages mostly Gaelic, Latin and Welsh. However, she has also sung in French and Japanese.

Enya has been on Jay Leno, David Letterman, and Live with Kelly & Michael.

Her songs have been in several films a few include Madagascar, Girl with the dragon tattoo, Limitless, Sweet November. In 2002 Enya performed at the academy awards and said it was the highlight of her career. She has also performed for Pope John Paul.

Awards won: World Music Awards, Grammy Awards, Best new age album & Ivor Novella Award (named after the entertainer Ivor was a Welsh composer). She was nominated for an Academy Award and Golden globe Award for "May it Be" a song written

Getting to Know the Irish

By Tina Butler

for the Lord of the Rings. She received an honorary doctorate from National University of Ireland, Galway. A minor planet was named after Enya in 2017!

Unfortunately, Enya has attracted some bad attention too namely several stalkers. About 25 years ago a man in Dublin wearing a picture of Enya around his neck stabbed himself outside her parent's pub, after he was told to leave the property. Sadly, five years later two men broke into her home in Dublin and tied up her housekeepers. The burglars stole several items from the home. Enya also has a home in France. She prefers to lead a private & quiet lifestyle. She has been ranked third on the list of the wealthiest Irish entertainers. Enya bought a castle in Dublin called, Manderley castle. That sounds like a fairytale but also sounds chilly and even lonely. She is a very talented lady, and her music is very soothing and angelic, I wish her happiness.

Gaelic for the month:
Sing-canadh Singer-amhranai
Talent-tallann Music-ceol
I'd like to highlight and



send a profound thanks to our dear and talented friend Lori Prater. She works on Capitol Hill with senators and congress men and women. Her position is the Policy Director/Tax and Trade counsel. Lori works closely with the "Friends of Ireland Congressional Caucus" organization on Capitol Hill. The Friends of Ireland Caucus was started by these late politicians Ted Kennedy, Daniel Moynihan and House Speaker Tip O'Neil. There was another group called Irish National Caucus founded by Fr. Sean McManus from Fermanagh. However, that group was defunct about 20 years ago. These groups were created to support peace in N. Ireland. We appreciate all the bonds these groups forge with our friends and family in the Emerald Isle.



Happy Christmas everyone & that you feel the spirit of Christmas well into the New Year! Molanive@yahoo.com

We Get Letters

Dear Tina:

I look forward to your column each month and thank you for giving us some of the Irish and its meaning - I wish I had learned more about it as I was growing up!

Would there be a book I could get that would have both words and meaning? If you could let me know, I would appreciate it.

What does 'A Chairde,' mean?

What does Le "Mise Meae." I might have misspelled that one. I hope you can help me out, and keep writing your column!!!

Thank you so very Much! Slainte (I know that one!)

Marge Ricketts

Our Irish Pub Returns to Cork & Kerry

On Saturday Dec. 18th celebrating Houli's Birthday and Hibernian Hooligan Ball!

Hibernian Media will be hosting their 4th Annual Hibernian Hooligan Ball fundraiser at Cork & Kerry Irish Pub, 10614 South Western on Saturday night Dec. 18th starting at 7PM while also shooting their TV show, OUR IRISH PUB, which has been broadcast on WTTW the last three years running. The show is produced by Hibernian Chairman Mike Houlihan, who says, "This is our only fundraiser of the year for Hibernian Media, and we're thrilled to welcome back The Larkin & Moran Brothers to entertain along with Jimmy Cloonan & Friends and figured while we were throwing a party, why not bring Irish fiddler Katie Grennan to host our latest episode of OUR IRISH PUB? So please join us for the craic, it's also my 73rd birthday and we will all be in an Irish party mood, aka a "hooley". Hope to see all our Beverly pals that night to help celebrate my birthday and Irish culture thanks to Hibernian Media."

Katie Grennan is an internationally known Irish fiddler/dancer who has performed all over the world and with the Irish band Gaelic Storm for the last several years. She has been the hostess of Our Irish Pub since its inception on PBS in 2018. Hibernian Media is a not-for-profit public charity dedicated to Irish culture and produces a pair of weekly Irish radio programs on Global Irish Radio, an annual film festival at the Gene Siskel Film Center, an annual trip to Ireland, and a variety of one-off concerts, films, and TV shows. Suggested donation for this once in a lifetime event is \$100 and all donations are tax deductible. The event includes a cash bar, music, free Paddy's Irish whisky raffle, Irish dance exhibitions and door prizes. All are welcome!

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Movie News - December 2021

by James Bartlett

Can it be that we're already at the end of the year? 2021 seemed to pass by in a flash, didn't it? Hopefully 2022 will be a good 365 days, and we'll be able to banish COVID-19 to the rearview mirror and really start our lives fully again.

For now though, try and catch new Irish rising star Aisling Franciosi, who is starring alongside Sandra Bullock in new drama *The Unforgivable*, which had a recent cinema release and is on Netflix from December 10th.

The movie follows Ruth Slater (Bullock) as she re-enters a society after a long spell in prison for a violent crime. Judged everywhere she goes, her only hope for redemption is finding Katie (Franciosi), the estranged younger sister that she was forced to leave behind.

In her quest to reunite with Katie and adjust to life outside bars, Ruth encounters problems she knew would disrupt her new life - and some she never saw

coming from the people whose lives have been disrupted by her release back into society.

Bullock is also producer alongside Oscar winner Graham King (*Bohemian Rhapsody*) and the impressive cast includes Viola Davis, Vincent D'Onofrio, Jon Bernthal and Richard Thomas, with Nora Fingscheidt directing a script by Peter Craig, Hillary Seitz, and Courtenay Miles.

Youngster Franciosi is known for playing the part of Katie Benedicto in the RTÉ-BBC Two crime drama television series "The Fall", for her role as Kate Crawford in TNT series "Legends" and in the sixth and seventh seasons of "Game of Thrones" as Lyanna Stark.

Also on Netflix at the moment after a brief cinema release is *Passing*, a drama from actress Rebecca Hall, who is making her directorial debut. *Passing* stars Tessa Thompson (*Thor: Ragnarok*), and Ethiopian-Irish actress Rugh Negga (who was Oscar nominated for 2017's *Loving*).

Based on the 1929 novel by Nella Larsen, the story centers around two light-skinned African-American women who are former childhood friends and reunite later in life - only now Clare (Negga) "passes" as white, while Irene (Thompson) identifies as black.

Also, a documentary about Holy Cross Boys in the North of Ireland had its world premiere at the DOC NYC Film Festival in New York. Tackling the difficult but interesting subject of teaching Philosophy in a North Belfast primary school, *Young Plato* by filmmakers Neasa Ní Chianáin and Declan McGrath is an observational story set post-conflict Ardoyne.

The movie charts the dream of school principal Kevin McAreevy and his dedicated, visionary team and how critical thinking and pastoral care can empower and encourage children to see beyond the limitations of their own community.

The movie is based purely on observations, meaning there are no interviews or talking to the camera, and McAreevy notes that:



"Philosophy is a massive thing at the school. I would encourage all schools to teach it for at least one hour a week. It promotes emotional and social development as well as helping with reading and dialogue skills."

Around 700 hours of footage were edited down to the 100-minute movie, and what could be a valuable resource for children worldwide is also set to be remade into a more formal documentary for the BBC, which means a wider audience could get to see it.

On the absolute other end of the scale, Ballymena-born actor Liam

Neeson who, believe it or not, is now approaching 100 movie credits and shows no sign of slowing down, has more on the slate.

He's set to star in *In the Land of Saints and Sinners*, a thriller that takes place in Ireland and sees him star alongside Belfast-born man Ciarán Hinds (currently on screen in Kenneth Branagh's *Belfast*). Shooting is due to begin in March next year, and the story takes place in a remote Irish village where a newly-retired assassin (Neeson) finds himself drawn into a lethal game of cat and mouse with a trio of vengeful terrorists.

Before that hits the big screen, Neeson will star in another action movie called *Blacklight*, in which he plays Travis Block, a shadowy Government agent who specializes in removing operatives whose cover has been blown - but on his latest mission he uncovers a deadly conspiracy within his own ranks. Filming began back in 2020 in Melbourne, Australia, and it's due to be released here in February.

Going back to Kenneth Branagh, and it has been announced that

Continued to page 38

"From Ireland to Chicagoland"

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Caroleann Gallagher

“Press The Green Button” For A Vacation In Ireland In 2022

By Liam Cassin

The last twenty months have been a long haul for all of us as we have adjusted to life during the pandemic. For many Irish Americans one of the many impacts of Covid-19 has been the restrictions on travel in and out of Ireland. Thankfully over the last few months those restrictions have eased, and over the last few weeks most have been lifted completely. So, at long last, the island of Ireland is ready and eagerly awaiting the return of American visitors. The deep connection Ireland has with its diaspora stateside is second to none, and nowhere on earth will you receive a reception as warm and friendly. Not for nothing is Ireland known as the land of ‘Ceád Míle Fáilte,’ a hundred thousand welcomes

Tourism Ireland is encouraging us all to ‘Press the Green Button’ with a newly launched campaign which highlights all the fantastic opportunities of a vacation in Ireland. Full details are available at www.ireland.com, along with all the information you will need to make your trip home both safe and hassle-free.

Speaking of safe, Ireland is one of the leaders in vaccination rates with over 94 percent of adults in the Republic of Ireland and around 90 percent of those over 16 in Northern Ireland being fully vaccinated. Add to that a highly effective and widely embraced vaccination booster program that is being rolled out all over the island. In October Bloomberg named Ireland as the number one country in the world for its handling of the pandemic, for the second month in a row!

Getting to Ireland is easy now. If you are fully vaccinated, nothing else is required for entry. You will have to show a

negative covid test result (taken within 72 hours of your departure) to re-enter the US, but even that is amazingly straightforward with two companies, RocDoc Health Check and Randox, offering that service at Dublin airport. Both guarantee results within 24 hours for a small fee. Full details can be found at dublinairport.com. There are a host of other companies around the country which offer similar services, details of these can be found at gov.ie.

In more good news Aer Lingus are flying direct to Dublin from Chicago seven days a week, and United and American Airlines have both announced plans to resume their direct services in the Spring of 2022. Connectivity between the US and Ireland was never higher than immediately before the pandemic, with more airlines flying from more US cities than ever before, and the hope is that those days will soon return.

An Irish vacation in 2022

There are a host of reasons why the island of Ireland keeps winning international tour-



“The deep connection Ireland has with its diaspora stateside is second to none, and nowhere on earth will you receive a reception as warm and friendly. Not for nothing is Ireland known as the land of ‘Ceád Míle Fáilte,’ a hundred thousand welcomes.”



Pictures: from the top:
The Ha’penny Bridge in Dublin City.
Golfing in Ballyliffin, County Donegal.
Castle Ward, aka Winterfell in Game of Thrones, County Down.

ism accolades and why visitor numbers were on the increase for the entire decade before Covid hit. Put simply, Ireland is on nearly everyone’s bucket list

The sheer beauty of the place is enough to astound. Rugged and unique coastal features— for examples the Cliffs of Moher in County Clare and the Giant’s Causeway in County Antrim—offer stunning seascapes. Inland, the lakelands of County Fermanagh and the Lakes of Killarney, set against the majestic peaks of McGillicuddy’s Reeks, are just two of the many scenic spots that have become destination points for visitors. We won’t pick favorites, every county in Ireland boasts its own idyllic scenery.

A great way to see Ireland’s coastline up close and personal is to take a drive along the Causeway Coastal Route (CCR), which runs from Belfast to Derry/Londonderry, or along the Wild Atlantic Way (WAW), which covers almost 1,500 miles of shoreline between Counties Donegal and Cork. Along the way you might stop off numerous points of interest, such as the Glens of Antrim, Dunluce Castle and the Bushmills Distillery along the CCR, or the Slieve League Cliffs in Donegal, the Aran Islands in County Galway, the Burren National Park in County Clare or the Dingle Peninsula in County Kerry. Be a free spirit and go wherever

the mood takes you. Wherever you end up you won’t be far from a wide range of accommodation from quality Bed and Breakfasts in quaint villages to downtown hotels to fit every preference and budget.

History is everywhere too, not surprisingly in a land that is home to neolithic tombs older than the Great Pyramids of Egypt! Ireland’s story is 10,000 years old and can be seen both in its landscape and its many museums and exhibitions. Some of the most popular include Titanic Belfast, EPIC - The Irish Emigration Museum in Dublin, the Book of Kells at Trinity College, Dublin. Castles and monastic ruins abound throughout the island, and many of Ireland’s churches and cathedrals are hundreds of years old, some over a thousand.

Outside activities

One of the charms of an Irish vacation is that there is so much to do outside. Walking, hiking, cycling are all immensely popular as are equestrian sports, kayaking, surfing and angling. Outdoor sports venues are now operating at 100 percent capacity and, if you get the chance a day at an Irish racetrack is a thoroughly unique and fun experience.

After a brief hiatus US College Football will return to the Aviva Stadium in Dublin next summer, with the highly anticipated Nebraska-Northwestern match. The Aer Lingus College Football Classic will see the teams and thousands of Northwestern Wildcats and the Nebraska Cornhuskers supporters travel to Ireland during August 2022.

With over 400 golf courses, including over 100 links courses (more than any other country) the island of Ireland has become a mecca from golfers of all abilities, from single-digit handicappers to weekend warriors. Courses such as Royal County

Continued to page 38



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 Ireland.com

Continued from page 36

Down and Royal Portrush in Northern Ireland, Ballybunion in County Kerry, and the Old Head Golf Links in Kinsale, County Cork, are famous the world over. But don't miss out on the many hidden gems that dot the countryside, particularly in the north and northwest, like Rosapenna and Ballyliffin in Donegal, and Portstewart in Northern Ireland. These tracks offer unique challenges and are very affordable, and a lot easier to get on than some of the bigger ones. There are also 'stay and play' opportunities available which offer fantastic value. Druid's Glen in County Wicklow and Fota Island in County Cork are two worth

checking out and there are many more besides.

City streets are a lot of fun too. On most days you will see very talented street performers as you wind your way through foot traffic between stores, restaurants, bars and open air markets. Some of the buskers in the big cities—Dublin, Cork, Galway and Belfast—have to be seen (and heard) to be believed, they are that good. One of the most popular, Allie Sherlock, a 16-year-old who sings in Grafton Street and St Stephen's Green in Dublin, and who was a guest on the Ellen Degeneres Show a few years back, has several videos on her youtube channel with more

than 10 million views, including at least one with over 50 million views!

Culture abounds all across the island, both the ancient and the new. One of the major attractions in recent years has been the Game of Thrones connection. Much of the mega-hit TV fantasy drama—winner of just about every award going—was filmed in Northern Ireland. Winterfell—shot at Castle Ward in County Down, and the Haunted Forest—Tollymore Forest Park in real life, are just two of over 25 locations in Northern Ireland which comprise the backdrop for GOT. A whole range of GOT experiences are on offer for ca-

sual fans and fanatics alike. For ease of use you can take a coach tour of the different locations, for the more adventurous helicopter tours are available. You can enjoy a banquet or practice your archery skills at Winterfell or take a 'sea safari' to discover the coastal filming locations. A new GOT Studio Tour will be set to open in County Down in 2022! More details to come in the new year.

As if all this wasn't enough to whet your whistle, consider that, even through the pandemic, Ireland continued to win some of the global travel industries most coveted awards. In October Dublin was named 'Top City' by

Lonely Planet's 'Best in Travel 2022.' In November CNN Travel named Kenmare, in County Kerry, in its Top 15 list of Europe's Most Beautiful Towns. Also in November, Belfast achieved UNESCO's City of Music status, becoming the first Irish city to do so and only the third city in the UK to do so, after Glasgow and Liverpool. High praise indeed.

The island of Ireland has so much to offer its visitors, from culture, and scenery, to great accommodation and food options, and everything inbetween. It is as easy to get there now as it has ever been, so why not take the plunge in 2022 and Press the Green Button.

Movie News

Continued from page 35

the writer/director/actor will be honored at the US-Ireland Alliance's Oscar Wilde Awards on March 24 alongside other honorees including Oscar-winning writer-director-producer Adam McKay and Irish actor Dónall Ó Héalaí, who will receive the "Wilde Card", an award presented to up-and-coming talent.

Branagh's Belfast raked in an estimated \$1.8 million at the box office in the first weekend, and has already won many awards. His semi-autobiographical, nostalgic family drama looks certain to pick up some Oscar nods too.

Branagh will again direct and star as Hercule Poirot in Agatha Christie's mystery *Death on the Nile*, which we'll see next year, and the Belfast lad will soon be seen as stuttering, wild-haired Boris Johnson in "This Sceptered Isle", which tells the story of the events surrounding the British Prime Minister, the UK government, and the country in the face of the global pandemic. Finally, if you have some money to burn this Holiday Season, you could splash out on a DeLorean, the Irish-built car made famous by the *Back to the Future* movies - or maybe just the Playmobil version, which is set to be a kid's favorite this year.

However, if you have money to burn, Ty DeLorean, who claims to be the son of the late John, has

created a custom-made "DMC21". It raised eyebrows at the British Motor Show recently, especially when he was served legal papers by the Texas company that now owns the rights to the DeLorean Motor Company brand.

That Ty's custom-made vehicle is based on the iconic three-wheel Robin Reliant Rialto - a car that's much-loved but also much-laughed at in the UK (Google it!)

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- 45 Aer Lingus
- 2 Aishling Home Care
- 33 Amazing Grace Sen. Care
- 2 Ann's Irish Goods
- 17 Appearances
- may have something to do with it, but either way Ty is going for broke: his has a BTTF faux flux capacitor, and costs around \$34,300 for its 850cc 4-cylinder engine.
- 18 Art Murphy
- 7 Athletex Therapy
- 44 Authentic Irish Tours
- Burke Whistle
- 28 Catherine OConnell
- 42 Celtica Gifts
- 14 Celtic Knot Pub
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- 28 Chicalba Bagpiping
- 20 Chief O'Neill's
- 10 Clancys
- 4 Central Recycling
- 30 Considine, MaryEllen
- 28 Corrigan Financial
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- 19 McGonigal's Rest/Pub
- 28 McNulty Dance
- 15 McNulty Rockford Dance
- 39 Megan Grealy Real Estate
- 39 Megan Lee Design
- 28 Memoirs for me
- 8 Miller & McGing Law
- 9 Mystic Rogue Pub/Rest
- 39 O'Connor Radio
- 6 O'Hara's Salon
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- 1213 Plumbers Local 130
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Places are most often named by prominent people in that region and some places are named after a phenomenal occurrence. Most names in America are taken from the European nations that colonized the land. In America there are 18 places named Dublin. (roughly 20 around the world) Nine places in America are named Mayo. (for ex. Mayo, South Carolina) In Alabama we have the cities: Kennedy, Butler and Killen. Killen is a city in Co. Tyrone. And of course, my name Butler is a famous surname in Co. Kilkenny (Butler castle) In Indiana there is a town named Avoca & Waterford. Some of you may know that's a town in Co. Wicklow (Wicklow was established as we know hundreds of years ago) Avoca, Indiana was established about 1800. The community took its name after the River Avoca, which was mentioned in a poem by Thomas Moore. In Maine there is a city named Bangor. Some dispute if it's named after the Bangor in Co. Down. There is no dispute with me. If it walks and talks like a duck...Other names in Maine include Belfast, Limerick and Newry. We can't dispute that they are from Ireland. In Michigan we have a lot of Antrim County, Clare county, Dublin, Roscommon, Waterford, and Wexford county.

In Minnesota we have a city named Kilkenny, population 200. Around the world there is a Cashel, Zimbabwe. As most of you know Cashel is in Tipperary my hurling sports competitor.

In Cape town we have Athlone in Co. Westmeath.

In New Zealand there is an Ardmore that's in Co. Waterford. As you can see small towns in Ireland have spread their name far and wide maybe not so small after all.

I'd like to recap some Irish Christmas traditions we had. Hunting the wren-is when the wren boys would dress up and hunt for a wren and they caught it they put it on a pole. They would go around looking for donations to bury the bird. This happened on St. Stephens day. The Candle in the window-means the holy family is welcome here. (a priest is welcome) "The Last Christmas Gift".

"After her sister died of a brain aneurysm, Judith didn't know how she would make it through Christmas. One night, Judith had the strangest dream. She saw a pair of earrings, hoops delicate shimmering gold. Judith knew the dream mean something. Was this her sister's way of communicating with her? Why these earrings that she had never seen before?

The salesclerk removed the pair of earrings from the case and dropped them in my hands. I had trouble believing it. The same hoops and delicate, all shimmering gold. The department store clatter faded into the background. Enraptured, I held one up to my ear and looked in the mirror. "A terrific Christmas gift," the clerk said, cheerily. "For your mother, maybe?"

Out of the corner of my eye, I saw my mother walking over from the perfume counter. "They're...they're not for anybody," I murmured to the clerk. How could I explain to her when I couldn't even explain it myself.

Before I slept I asked my sister to forgive me, if I've ever hurt her. I love you dearly."

Sleep came and an odd image breaking into my consciousness. A human ear-shaking, vibrating almost violently. The ear was pierced, and dangling from it was the hoop earring. Was this Jan's way of letting me know she had heard me?

Exactly like the pair of earrings the salesclerk had put in my hand. What did it mean? "Find anything?" my mother said, joining me by the jewelry counter. "These earrings," I said. I lifted them up so she could get a better look.

Mom gasped and covered her face with her hands. She was so upset, I put my arm around her.

"I have those earrings at home. Jan bought them to give you for Christmas."

Happy Christmas to everyone! Nollaig Shona duit

Please call with any comments/questions or if you want to tell me of an Irish place name in America. (708) 425-7021

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CORK & KERRY



Game On!

By Chris Wheaton



more information about this fantastic weekend of Irish culture, food, music, family fun and some hurling.

Hurling as a whole was as exciting as ever as the All-Ireland final was contested at Croke Park with

As 2021 comes to a close and we all anxiously await the start of a new year it is a great time to take a deep breath and look back on the year that was, or wasn't. From a sporting perspective 2021 wasn't all bad. Hurlers and footballers got back on the pitch to some degree as training and competitions resumed at a near normal rate. 2020, the year that WASN'T became a distant memory and one we hope we never have to relive. Many clubs were still reeling from the pandemic and continued to limit training and social events as the world tried with to get back to normal, or at least the "new normal". Athletics is one of those staples in life that unites people and brings them closer for a common cause. The lack of sport in 2020 had a definite emotional impact on many sports fans.

For us here at the Naperville Hurling Club, 2021 was a year of great advancement and the precursor of what the future hopefully holds for us. We enjoyed some tremendous success at the Madison Tournament, winning 2 games and barely losing the other. The Naperville Tournament in conjunction with the first ever Naperville Irish Fest was great fun and exposed a lot of people to a sport they had never heard of or seen before. People commented that they are already looking forward to the coming year's fest which will be held on August 5 and 6th. Stay tuned for

near capacity crowds again. Limerick continued to display its dominance but that could be coming to an end as Henry Shefflin takes over as manager for Galway and tries to lure Joe Canning out of retirement. Shefflin snatched the job right out from under the odds on favorite, Davy Fitzgerald much to the delight of the Galway faithful The King Henry and Prince Joe act would make for a very exciting 2022 in the world of hurling. The North American Championships were played in Boston and were a rousing success after taking a year off and excitement has already started to build for the 2022 championship which will be contested right here at Gaelic Park from August 19-21. Mark your calendars for this event as it provides you with the opportunity to see all of the GAA sports played at the highest level. It promises to be a fantastic tournament.

As Christmas approaches it is a great time to think of your favorite hurler in the family and order some gear from Ireland. The big outfitters, Masita and O'Neills have every piece of fan gear your heart desires for each county and



just about every GAA and USGAA club. Show up at a New Year's party with a game jersey from a hurling club and I guarantee it will be a conversation starter.

On a personal note I am thankful that I was given this opportunity to create a column every month and spew my thoughts about GAA sports. As a longtime fan of *Irish American News* I am honored to be a part of the team and hopefully a few of you have enjoyed bits and pieces of what I have provided for you and maybe some of you have been intrigued enough to learn more about the sports and even give them a go. I promise 2022 will have some great content and will feature some wisdom from my teammates from Clare, Cork, Limerick, Sligo and Wexford. They are the true experts and I will try to incorporate their thoughts and insights as much as I can in the next year. Many of us Americans are late comers to the sports and I for one love to hear the stories of those who have played since they could barely walk. Hurling and Gaelic football are sports deep in tradition. The passion for the games exhibited by the combatants is something I look forward to sharing with you.

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GOOD GRIEF

BY JOSEPHINE COLEMAN



This is one of my favorite stories before the pandemic hit us.... Enjoy!

What beautiful weather we are having. It was so beautiful I decided to go 'SKY DIVING' for my birthday. My husband and son, daughter made the arrangements. We headed off to Indiana on beautiful sunny morning. My children kept asking me if I was nervous and what if my parachute failed to open could they please have my car and valuables. Thanks. Yes I have real witty kids. I wasn't feeling nervous if anything I felt very calm. I was actually thinking about my younger brother and sister who recently passed from cancer and whose lives had been drastically cut short so I guess in essence I wanted to do it for them too. Originally I wanted to do it as a family activity but my daughter was under eighteen years old, my son said it wasn't his cup of tea and my husband has knee problems but they gave me their support.

When we arrived I saw the planes and skydivers laying out the parachutes double checking they were in order. There were three young girls ahead of me with beautifully braided hair later I would see my hair on video and realize why they braided their hair. They asked for a package deal with video and photographs. I got the same deal especially for my insurance company in case my parachute didn't open. Just kidding, seriously I was confident nothing would happen to me until they asked me to step on the scales, I didn't want to look as I had been in Ireland with my daughter for a month over indulging in Irish cuisine {fish'n'chips with salt, vinegar} and treats. I don't generally have a sweet tooth as my mother gave us dessert seven days a week.

I also had under taken a six week 'Sweatshop' challenge to build up my stamina. The terms of the

agreement were that you work out at least three times a week either in a group setting to music with intervals of strength training or individual classes. They are open six days a week. I went every day. I thought I was going to have an asthma attack or something worse but I slowly found my happy place sometimes venturing back for the evening classes too. Naturally I dragged a few friends with me but I haven't seen them since, just joking they did amazing and actually loved it so much they took out gym memberships. I didn't as I have my own gym membership but enjoy challenges so I'm looking forward to signing up for the fall or spring challenge. I want to shout out to Matt. Congratulations upon opening your new 'sweatshop' premises in Palatine. Your coaches, staff are amazing and made us feel so welcome.

Ok, so I'm now getting strapped into the skydiving harness I'm telling myself this is really happening. We are taken over to another corner for instructions which literally lasted 4 minutes. The main instruction being to keep your feet up upon landing and listen closely to your tandem coach who would be strapped on behind you. Wow. That's it. I thought it was going to be at least an hour long class on safety etc. I was still in shock when my coach came over to introduce himself. A nice tall young fella from New Zealand. He checked my harness again and motioned to me that we should walk

towards the airplane. I was hoping I wasn't too heavy for him after all those Irish treats. I looked back at my husband and kids waving and snapping pictures. I knew they were looking for an inkling of fear on my face but I waved back with both arms and a fearless smile on my face. I didn't realize I was the last one to get in and would be the first one out. My coach and I sat on the floor with the door wide open his foot was dangling over the edge. I could see my family below getting smaller and smaller. I was given goggles to protect my eyes and fastened with another harness onto my coach who then told me to shift myself over to the edge of the plane and smile for the camera that he was holding to video everything and suddenly BOOM. We were out of the plane flying high in the sky. The air just hit you in your face like a ton of bricks [cleared my sinus] Once you adjusted to it the feeling was exhilarating out of this world such a rush of emotions you don't know whether to laugh or cry. I had every confidence in my sky diving coach he was wonderful and kept talking and joking with me the whole time and captured my emotions on tape. I felt wonderfully empowered, strong, brave and very peaceful all at the same time. The landing was very gentle better than I thought. I couldn't wait to see my children's faces and give them a huge hug hoping that I showed them their mother comes from a long line of strong Irish women and nothing not even cancer can take me away from them. Dedicating this to all the strong mothers out there past and present. Wonder what escapades I can get up to for my next birthday. Bye for now.

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8pm following a November run at New York City's Lucille Lortel Theatre. Quinn's NYC residency

and tour is the latest offering from the stand-up comedian and off-Broadway favorite whose past beloved shows include *Red State Blue State*, *New York Story*, *Unconstitutional* (all streaming on Netflix), and *Long Story Short*. Tickets are at thedentheatre.com or by calling (773) 697-3830. Regular, mezzanine and VIP table seating is available. Drink service is provided for all seats

(two drink minimum). **Please note:** The Den requires proof of vaccination for all guests, staff and performers and adheres to all CDC, state and local safety guidelines. Additionally, masking



is required for all guests during performances. For the most current information on The Den's COVID guidelines, visit thedentheatre.com/covid19-policy. Colin has become one of the most beloved voices in comedy. His most recent one man show, *Red State Blue State*, premiered in January 2019 to rave reviews at The Minetta Lane Theatre in New York City. *The New Yorker* lauded the hour as "among Quinn's funniest so far" and *The New York Times* lovingly described Quinn as a "barstool philosopher." The show aired on CNN as the network's first comedy special in May 2019 and is currently streaming on Netflix. *Red State Blue State* followed the wildly successful off-Broad-

way run of *Colin Quinn: The New York Story*, directed by Jerry Seinfeld, and *Colin Quinn: Long Story Short*, which garnered a Drama Desk Award nomination.

Colin's book *OVERSTATED: A Coast To Coast Roast of the 50 States* came out on St Martin's Press in September 2020 with *Publishers Weekly* writing "Quinn's sardonic portrait of America in decline will resonate with readers suspicious of ideological stalwarts on both the right and the left" and NPR naming it one of its favorites of the year. His HBO Max special/documentary *COLIN QUINN & FRIENDS: A PARKING LOT COMEDY SHOW* premiered in November 2020. Part standup showcase and part documentary, the show was shot at a repurposed drive-in theater in Brooklyn. With a socially distanced audience and a lineup of NYC comedy staples, the special is a time capsule of live entertainment during the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic. Colin is also known for his beloved run hosting *Weekend Update* on NBC's iconic *Saturday Night Live* and as host of Comedy Central's classic fan favorite series *Tough Crowd with Colin Quinn*.

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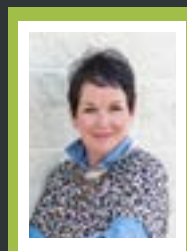
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It Starts With A Song

By Joe McShane



Happy Christmas!

It's good to be back this month after missing the November issue. I was traveling quite a lot and November seemed to come and go before I knew it. Writing new songs in my free time helps to keep me centered as the pandemic lingers on. At least I've been able to perform more lately (fingers crossed) and I hope it continues.

I was watching the COP 26 for a couple of days and then realized how much lies are told with a straight poker face. So, for the sake of my sanity, I just stopped and listened to my own heart. Oh! Boy, your heart can tell you so much, and all of a sudden you can see things for what they are. When I think of world "leaders" I think of prevarication (twisted truth). When I think of my parents R.I.P. I think of loyalty. They are the leaders I look up to. So, that makes it easy for me to make up my mind about what goes on around me.

On a lighter note, I spent some wonderful hours lately writing new songs with Stephen Smyth and recording in Stephen's studios. I also spent some time with Nathan Carter and we were in Killarney for a day while Nathan was recording a video with people like Foster and Allen, Margo, Brendan Shine, and just about everyone you can think of in the Irish music scene. I will post a link to the show on FaceBook when it's available. It was hosted by Trudi Lawlor. Trudi and her manager-husband, Billy Morrissey are the brains behind a project called 'Reach Out'. It is focused on the Irish music scene and is giving viewers and listeners a taste of our homegrown brand of entertainment. You can catch Trudi on Tipp FM every Sunday morning from 11 am Irish time. After being in Killarney, Nathan was to go to Nenagh, Tipperary, to record a couple of tracks for his new Album 'Little Old Town', which is now available. We were

a little late arriving so we met with Peter Maher of 'Peter Maher Music Production' and had a few pints of Guinness in 'Una Power's Pub' Nenagh. If you like Guinness and a warm welcome it's a must-visit for you. The next day I was pretty tired (hangover) but as I sat in the studios listening to Nathan laying down his flawless vocals, I thought Wow! Nathan's voice was crystal clear and I watched a true pro at work.

This month's song is one I wrote

some years ago just after the terrible shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

The shooting occurred on December 14, 2012, in Newtown, Connecticut, when 20-year-old Adam Lanza shot and killed 26 people, including 20 children between six and seven years old, and six adult staff members.

My song is called 'Who's Gonna Feed The Young'. I wish you a Blessed Christmas and a Healthy and Happy New Year!

As always, be good to one another,

Joe

Joe's FaceBook Music Page
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'Who's Gonna Feed The Young'

Written by Joe McShane

Verse 1

Standing by the Mountains and gazing out to Sea
 I watched an eagle take to flight so beautiful and free
 Then you broke the silence of nature's natural sound
 I felt my heartbeat flutter as I gazed upon the ground

Chorus

I stood there and I wondered who's gonna feed the young
 When mother doesn't come home and the hunger song is sung
 Who will fill an empty place where love was so alive
 Who will hold them closely when their day turns into night

Verse 2

We saw it on the evening news and tears flowed into pools
 As little children, boys and girls were carried from their school
 Broken hearts and anger and a thing called human nature
 So many times my fellow man makes me feel like I'm a stranger

Chorus

I listened to the useless words as those families mourned their young
 While another mother broke her heart as the funeral bell was rung
 Who will fill an empty place where love was so alive
 Who will comfort Dad and Mom when their day turns into night

Verse 3

Will, there ever come a day when brother will greet brother
 And share the troubles and the joys and the color of each other
 The spirit that we're born with, will fly the day we die
 There'll be no more threats or promises, no more dirty lies

Chorus

So, I'll stand here and I'll wonder who's gonna feed the young
 When Mother Nature breaths her last and the hunger song is sung
 Who will fill an empty place where love was so alive
 Who will hold us closely when our day turns into night

Joe McShane

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Eire 2021 Recap

By Mike Houlihan

I've been traveling to Ireland every year consecutively since 2013, and just returned last month from my 10th trip back into the arms of Kathleen ni Houlihan.

She never disappoints.

Usually, I'm lucky enough to have between a dozen and 40 companions on these journeys but Covid kissed all that goodbye. Most people were too spooked to hit the airports and be humiliated and interrogated like spies as we crossed over international waters. But our small but mighty crew leapt at the opportunity to joust with Vax Nazis, bureaucrats, and hotel security. We survived and live to tell the tales.

The lovely and vivacious fiddler Katie Grennan joined us along with her paramour, Irish music guru John Williams. Without them, we were a crew of Magnificent Seven including Haggerty brothers Ricardo and Billy, Walking Eagle Peckham, retired CFD "Chief" Mike Miller, Robert "Moon" Mullins, former military intelligence agent flown in from Dallas, Dennis A. Kearns, grandson of "Weeping Jim Kearns" the father of the Chicago flag and the star of our film, who arrived last from Austin Texas by way of Heathrow, and me.

It was a wild group of old geezers drinking like they were headed to the electric chair and whenever there was a lull in the pub-crawling, Katie and John would introduce their instruments, take center stage and with electrifying trad music just blow the roof off the joint. Memories were made. Much credit to Derry Cronin of Specialized Travel for helping us make this pilgrimage.

The expedition had begun auspiciously when Chief Miller and I met up at O'Hare airport, the requisite four hours early, to ensure that our "papers would be in order." Now we know what it was like in the late thirties entering Berlin. Once you get there it's not that bad, but they've created so much paranoia about Covid and vaccinations, passports, people locator forms, and PCR tests that you go into it fearing worse than the bowel prep for your last colonoscopy.

That kind of stress makes you want to start drinking. So, Mike and I breathed a sigh of relief as we got close to our gate and strolled into the British Airways Lounge and shouted to the scary lady at the desk, "Skinny Sheahan sent us!"

That was good enough for her as she invited us into the VIP Lounge. Mike cracked wise as we entered the room and the ladies in attendance treated us like dignitaries, thirsty dignitaries. We ordered up some drinks, ("keep 'em comin'"), lunch, and relaxed for our three-hour wait. Mike chuckled, "Looks like we're on scholarship!"

Of course, we duked the sweet

down to the Fitz Castle lobby for waffles and bacon for breakfast. Havin' a cuppa tea and enjoying the scenery when the Hags brothers show up with Moon Mullins and Walking Eagle Peckham, who is wearing General McArthur's uniform hat, and a t-shirt that reads "Booty Hunter" across his ample bosom. This guy is a dead ringer for the late Professor Irwin Corey, looking like Santa Claus with white beard and man-bun. And he thinks he's a chick magnet!

Ignoring him the best I can but it's difficult when he is approaching waitresses and asking them "would you like to pet my weasel?" and producing a bagpiper's

filmmaker and resident genius, for a quick catch up before embarking for our cruise on Killary Fjord.

On Monday we left for Westport and the Irish premiere of our film IN SEARCH OF WEEPING JIM, ostensibly the actual reason for this trip. I asked the hotel concierge to call me a cab. She called Mary O'Toole who chatted me up on the way. I told her my film was premiering that night at the Town Hall Theatre and she says, "Oh I wanted to go to that, but have to work." Then insisted on not charging me for the ride! Yes, the Irish are great people, especially Mary O'Toole.

It turned out to be a magical

O'Toole, the lovely audience and Matt Molloy himself of The Chieftains as we filmed an on-the-fly episode of OUR IRISH PUB with Katie Grennan, John Williams, Matt and his son Peter Molloy, jammin' trad tunes late into the evening.

It was epic as I turned to Walking Eagle, who was romancing a pair of old Irish witches lookin' to party, and caught him on camera telling the ladies, "I've got more women than I can shake my wick at!" Bizarro World in Westport.

That's when I decided to make the Irish exit and head back to the hotel. Billy Haggerty guided my stumbling old fella self as he extolled the film to our cab driver, who I asked, "Do you know Mary O'Toole?"

"Of course, I do!", he chuckled, "She's, my sister!" Or something like that. At that point the peak of the party had been hit and the next day we jumped back into our bus for the ride back to Killiney for our final night at the Fitz.

The Magnificent Seven assembled for our final dinner of this adventure. It had been a Jim dandy exhibition of Irish roguery for the last week and as our waitress came to our table to interrupt our nitwits' powwow, she turned to Walking Eagle, and her mask could not mask her extreme sarcasm through her lilting brogue as she said, "Did'ja bring your weasel?"

She may be the only human on this earth who could shut up Walking Eagle Peckham. He just sorta dribbled into his beard while we all laughed.

It was time to go now. We'd all be heading out of Dublin in no time on different flights and dragging our asses home.

So, I'm on the flight back and the gorgeous Aer Lingus gal sez to me, "Would you like a drink?"

Her name was Eimear and I told of her my friend, fiddler, and singer Eimear Arkins, and that she should listen to her music or some bs like that and then I asked, "You don't happen to have any of that Grainne O'Malley the Pirate Queen Irish whiskey, do you?"

And she smiled and said, "Do you believe in Grace?"

I said, "I do indeed, and her name was Mary O'Toole.



The Magnificent 7 (l to r): Billy Haggerty, Houli, Ricardo Haggerty, Dennis Kearns, Walking Eagle Peckham, Chief Mike Miller, and Bob Mullins.

young ladies who helped us out all afternoon and then made our way to the plane feeling no pain. Great start to the journey.

We arrived at 6am to check into the Fitzpatrick Castle in Killiney. Mike and I were jet lagged and worn out and the gorgeous blonde at the Fitz asked what we would do if there were no rooms ready at that hour? "That's okay, we'll just sleep here in the lobby!"

In a flash she handed us keys and welcomed us back to the Fitz. It helps to know the boss. We threw Eithne Fitzpatrick's name around and it was magic. My room was the size of Gately Stadium, a suite with a dining room table and breathtaking view of Dublin Bay. As I collapsed in the boudoir with adjoining bath I mused, "It just gets better and better."

Woke up around 11am and went

sporrán that looks like he found it in the alley next door.

I overslept after a raucous first night dinner with Dennis et al at the Castle and chastised all along the road to Galway, where we would spend the next 3 nights gettin' after it. We hit Kilbeggan Distillery on the way and caught up with Katie and John on Friday.

Saturday night was spent at "Moran's on the Weir" in Kilcolgan just outside Galway in a private room where we feasted on oysters, prawns, and Chief Miller described the dinner conversation as a "nitwits convention". He was right but we all settled down when Katie and John put on a concert that soothed the savages by candlelight as we supped and sipped.

Mass on Sunday at Galway Cathedral and then back to meet with my old pal Aodh Ó Coileáin,

night with over a hundred folks in attendance, many of them featured in the film that we shot over several years in Kilmeena and the tiny island of Inishcuttle in County Mayo. The Irish audience embraced the film, because of course it was about them and they got ALL the jokes.

I was touched when footage of Inishcuttle came on the screen as The Saw Doctors broke into "The Green and Red of Mayo" and the audience started singing along. I broke for the bar in the lobby, but it was closed, when I ran into theatre manager Rosaleen Heraty who asked me, "Mike, do you like whiskey?" Rosaleen opened a bottle of Grainne O'Malley's, the pirate queen. "Believe in Grace" it said on the bottle, and I most certainly did that night.

That grace was evident in Mary

Wishing all of our friends

Nollaig Shona Daoibh and a Happy New Year



Aer Lingus 

From Jamestown to Jonestown Enslaved Africans had been in North and South America since the 1500s. In 1619 a Spanish ship brought the first black slaves, about 20, to an English colony, Virginia. Existing records are sketchy, but indicate that once there, some were treated less like slaves and more like white indentured servants, with an opportunity to earn their way to freedom. 400 years later New York Times writers thought up the 1619 Project, "to reframe the country's history by placing the consequences of slavery and the contributions of Black Americans at the very center of the United States' national narrative." Historians have expressed "strong reservations" about the project, accusing its creators

of putting ideology before historical understanding.

Less obvious, but far more ambitious than the Times project is a related effort by a Washington, D.C. not-for-profit NGO promoting Critical Race Theory (CRT) which educator Paul Rossi labels "a cult, a gradual descent into error and control like Jonestown".

Rossi then began teaching at one of the best private schools in New York City: Grace Church High School. "Ten years ago, I changed careers when I discovered how rewarding it is to help young people explore the truth and beauty of mathematics. I love my work." But troubles began after the school joined the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). They offer "a whole nexus of curriculum and opportunities around diversity, which are really part of a whole industry that's controlled by NAIS", says Rossi. "They control the accreditation of 1600 of the elite private schools across the country" (per NAIS's website: "nearly 1800" schools).

Mick

Mike Morley

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NAIS targets America's next generation of elite leaders. The average tuition cost at a member school is \$23,707, three times higher than the average Illinois private school tuition cost of \$8,351. (The price at Grace is more than \$50,000.) NAIS reports that 19% of their "schools here in Illinois are religiously affiliated." Catholic school members: Sacred Heart Schools, Frances Xavier Warde, Woodlands Academy of the Sacred Heart, Ignatius College Prep and Loyola Academy.

Rossi: "They started out training us in a very gentle way. They would come to us and ask 'what does anti-racism mean to you?' And I would say, and some of my colleagues would say, it means treating people equally regardless of race. And working to ... eliminate those biases and treat people equally. And (they'd say) 'OK, that sounds pretty good, OK'. "It started to get a little bit more concerning when they gave me the pyramid of racism, and they wanted me to teach my advisory group this. ...At the top of the pyramid is genocide. And the closer you get to genocide the worse things are... 'Looking at both sides of the story' is on the pyramid. 'Locally sourced schools' is on the pyramid: things like school vouchers, I guess that's what that means. I'm not going to teach children this. There was definitely a cult-like mentality there: just the tenor of the speeches. So, I refused to teach it. And (again) they accommodated me. They said OK. They backed off ...they would test the waters with something and pull it back.

"I raised questions about this ideology at a mandatory, whites-only student and faculty Zoom meeting" (actually, two separate Zoom sessions— one for "white-identifying students" and another for "people-of-color-identifying" students.) "It was a bait-and-switch 'self-care' seminar that labelled 'objectivity,' 'indi-

vidualism,' 'fear of open conflict,' and even 'a right to comfort' as characteristics of white supremacy." (Literacy, 'worship of the written word', was also listed as a white evil). "I doubted that these human attributes — many of them virtues reframed as vices — should be racialized in this way... My goal was to model for students that they should feel safe to question ideological assertions if they felt moved to do so."

"If you are a white student, you are told that that is the important part of your identity, it's not whether you're Italian, or Irish, or French... but really... being white is the salient feature of your existence. And it gives you a privilege... And so, to be responsibly white means you have to address the privilege... these things are part of the grab bag of ideas that students as young as, in my school, 13,14, are being asked to imbibe, to really embrace. ... if you are a minority, if you're Black or brown, your story is one of constant, withering exposure to oppressing forces... that becomes the dominant narrative of what you can expect your life to be, and what your mission in life is... you must identify with how society sees you...You do have a lot more leeway if you're not white identified, if you can identify a bit more with your African side than your Caribbean side, things like that." It's a gussied-up retread of the tired old joke: 'heads I win, tails you lose'.

"If you present discomfiting evidence... you will experience some either direct talking to by the teacher, or you'll suffer reputation in your social group. All of this is done in the name of "equity," but it is the opposite of fair. In reality, all of this reinforces the worst impulses we have as human beings: our tendency toward tribalism and sectarianism that a truly liberal education is meant to transcend... A recent faculty email chain received enthusiastic support for recommending that we 'officially flag students' who appear 'resistant' to the 'culture we are trying to establish'. Imagine being a young person in

this environment. Would you risk voicing your doubts, especially if you had never heard a single teacher question it?

"I was reprimanded (for asking questions). I had... several meetings where the faculty met. I was allowed to be there but I couldn't speak... I did get to make a statement at the beginning. But you have to sit and listen to your colleagues talk about you; and real critical... But at this meeting someone who I really respect, and we differ widely on political opinions, he said: 'listen, if we're going to be a school where questions like the one Mr. Rossi asked are not allowed, we need to be very clear that's the kind of school we're going to be'."

Rossi met with Head of High School, George Davidson who "reprimanded me, then he agreed with me. He said 'I agree with you. We're demonizing white people for no other reason than being born. And we have a problem in the school.' I was recording that because I was afraid for my job, so I needed something- I had some private conversations with administrators that would go completely 180 in public."

Davidson had all teachers read a statement to their classes expressing firm commitment to the diversity program and dismay at the dissenting faculty member; but no mention of 'demonizing white people for no other reason than being born'. Rossi mentioned it an article, and Davidson called him a liar; "so then I published the recordings." Rossi is now out of a job.

If a group of schools is chained to an ideology, are they still "independent"? Under this "mairesey doats, dosey doats" belief system, the elimination of accelerated and gifted programs in schools makes perfect sense. (Actually, schools are now "circling back" to my childhood experience: everyone together, same classroom, same lessons.) "And, akiddley divey, too". Wooden shoe?

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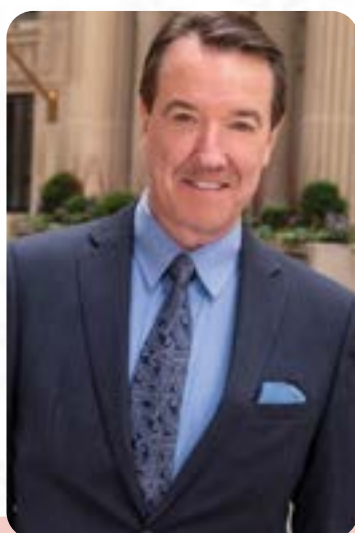
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