

Hillsborough Castle Northern Ireland Welcomed Ben Franklin in 1771 Story pg 32



Irish American News Celebrates 50 Years March 17, 2026



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Egopolitics Meets Geopolitics

Given that the Trump administration seems perpetually poised to hurtle into the next disaster of its own making, commentators will likely forget that Greenland was once a priority. But will historians of this lamentable presidency take the same view?

There are several reasons why the threatened takeover of Greenland may occupy as prominent a position in the foreign policy narrative of the 47th US presidency as the storming of the US Capitol on January 6, 2021, did domestically. But first, let us dispense with any ambiguity. When the leader of a military ally tells a fellow NATO member that it will take over its territory 'the hard way or the easy way', and when the ruthless leader of that power has overwhelming military superiority to back up the statement, that constitutes a threat of invasion.

Yet by the time Trump arrived in Davos, Switzerland, on January 21st, for the annual gathering of the masters of the universe, he had relented considerably. The poor souls who had to sit through

View From Ireland

By Maurice Fitzpatrick



his ninety-minute ramblings at the World Economic Forum were at least able to extract one salient statement for the rest of us: 'People thought I would use force. I don't have to use force. I don't want to use force. I won't use force'. Still, he maintained that the US had to acquire Greenland, calling it vital for security a strategic necessity. Yet absent the use of force, Greenland remains what it is: an autonomous island within the Kingdom of Denmark.

Let's imagine another scenario in which the White House had been serious about pursuing 'the easy way'. A little advance planning and diplomacy could have gone a long way towards that end. Since 1982, residents of Alaska have received a form of universal basic income via the Permanent Fund Dividend to offset the difficulty of living in a harsh climate with long, dark winters. Given that Greenland has just 57,000 inhabitants, compared with Alaska's 740,000, it would have been far easier to offer Greenlanders a generous universal basic income, alongside guarantees preserving the Danish-level welfare provisions they currently enjoy, in exchange for becoming the 51st US state.

Greenlandic-Danish relations have long been complex, and such a proposal from the US, handled delicately, might have persuaded a significant portion of the population, perhaps even a majority. That would have engendered a schism among Greenlanders that Trump could have exploited. But he was too impatient and impetuous for such niceties. Now, in any case, it is far too late for diplomacy. Greenlanders are undoubtedly much more secure in the long-term for remaining united in their opposition to a takeover.

Am I exaggerating the significance of all this, since there has been no invasion after all? More than sixty years later, people still remember the JFK-Khrushchev confrontation that followed the Bay of Pigs fiasco. Not a drop of blood was spilled between the superpowers, yet its centrality to the course of the twentieth century is unmistakable: two enemies at the height of the Cold War came perilously close to 'going nuclear' and did not cross the line.

Beijing will have taken note that the

international community—at least its European component—mobilised quickly and decisively. Like his counterpart in Washington, China's ageing and increasingly autocratic leader, Xi Jinping, is sorely tempted to seize an island (Taiwan) as a legacy project. The Greenland episode will have given him pause, and for several reasons.

The traditionally cautious and often sluggish Europeans did not confine themselves to statements of condemnation. They deployed troops and naval assets to Greenland and placed what is known in Brussels as the economic 'bazooka' on the table. When Trump threatened punitive and escalating tariffs on European states for merely assisting Greenland, EU leaders began preparing to activate the Anti-Coercion Instrument—the European Union's mechanism for responding collectively to economic intimidation by third countries. The instrument allows the EU to retaliate, including through tariffs, investment restrictions and limits on access to the single market.

Full credit to France's president, Emmanuel Macron, for grasping immediately that the threat of the bazooka was the only language Trump would understand. By signalling that Europe would respond decisively, Macron helped shift Europe's focus from criticism to deterrence.

Europe could contemplate such measures because, as economist Paul Krugman argued: 'The European economy is huge – almost as big, in dollar terms, as the U.S. economy – and doesn't depend crucially on the U.S. market. It's worth noting that very high US tariffs on China haven't appeared to slow China's economic growth at all'. The lesson for Europe was clear: economic coercion cuts both ways, and it is not always the coercer who prevails.

America's reputation has been grievously damaged even by the suggestion that it might coerce or conquer a NATO ally. Pulling back does not erase that damage. Trump's assault on US standing in the Western world was profoundly at odds with the views of most American citizens (about 75% of Americans opposed the takeover of Greenland). The world will not simply 'move on'. The rupture has occurred, and the scar remains. Here's hoping that US voters in the midterms will remember how to thank their president and his supporters.

Songs & Stories with Paul Byrom

This coming March Irish Tenor PAUL BYROM follows in the long history of Irish tenors who have come to tour America. Byrom, a Dublin born tenor, grew up studying classical music and also specialised in the works of the great John McCormick. With his first studio album being released at the tender age of 14, Paul Byrom got the taste of performing from a young age.



This brought him to the attention of many musical directors and producers over the years and at 22, he joined the touring show The Three Irish Tenors. Following a number of large tours of America with the show, Paul returned to solo work and released his first major album as a tenor called VELVET with a 56 piece orchestra. This album shot him into the medias attention and as a result was filling venues in Ireland, such as the National Concert Hall. In 2006 legendary composer and producer, Phil Coulter invited Paul to join a new show he was co producing called CELTIC THUNDER. The show became an instant PBS hit in

America and their success grew as far as Canada and Australia and had 6 no.1 albums and were named Billboard's International Act of The Year.

After touring with the show for 5 years Paul returned to his solo work and produced his next big album called THIS IS THE MOMENT which shot straight to no.1 on the World Billboard Charts. This was followed then by his own PBS tv special by the same name. He has continued to tour America as a soloist and this past autumn, Paul returned to the lineup of Celtic Thunder for a 40 city tour of America.

In March, Paul will be back on the road again with his own intimate show "Songs and Stories", and will be visiting 11 cities performing some of the most popular pieces from his 8 solo albums and of course some from his time with Celtic Thunder.

You can catch Paul in his intimate show at the following venues and cities. Tickets and all information will be available at

www.paulbyrom.ie

March 19th Kansas City Irish Center
Kansas City, MO 7.30pm

March 20th First United Methodist Church
Mason City, IA 7.30pm

March 21st Celtic Junction Arts Center
St.Paul, MN 7pm

Happy St. Patrick's Day



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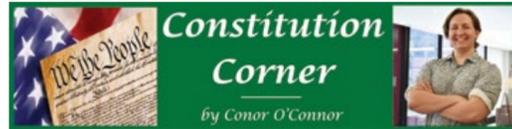


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Number Eight Against Excess

Ah, the Eighth Amendment: a jurist's favorite jumping-off point for philosophical and spiritual debate.

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

Seems pretty straightforward, right? The Amendment prohibits the federal government from imposing excessive bail on those accused of a crime or excessive fines on those convicted of a crime.

Things get tricky pretty quickly, however, when one asks what constitutes an "excessive" bail or fine, and what can be considered a "cruel and unusual" punishment.

The right to bail while one awaits trial has been enshrined in some shape or form in English common law since the 13th century.

For those charged with serious crimes (say, murder), the defendant could be held without

bail. Thus, when the framers included the Eighth Amendment in the Bill of Rights, it was understood that the protection against excessive bail only applied to "bailable" cases.

The Excessive Fines Clause has not been extensively litigated, but the Supreme Court has established that any fines levied must be directly proportional to the gravity of the offense.

The Cruel and Unusual Punishment Clause is where things get interesting—specifically as it relates to the death penalty.

discretion. As for condoned execution methods, the Supreme Court has actually never explicitly barred any execution practice.

While capital punishment was only briefly outlawed on the federal level by this case (in 1988, Congress passed a law to bring it back into existence), Furman drew a line in the sand about establishing universal, narrow standards for determining whether a convicted criminal could constitutionally be put to death.

discretion. As for condoned execution methods, the Supreme Court has actually never explicitly barred any execution practice. Rather, it has left the means of execution up to the states, so long as it is not intentionally drawn out or tortuous or presents a known and substantial risk of non-lethal harm.

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Game On!

By Chris Wheaton

Every 4 years the circus comes to town in the form of the Olympics. Know as the last bastion of amateur athletics, athletes from all over the world gather to compete and live the Olympic dream. I personally love watching the games and have a particular fondness for the winter games which feature sports I am interested in such as skiing, hockey and even curling, which I know nothing about, except that every four years it captivates myself and others.

I don't know what it is about this slow-motion sport that is so enchanting, but I am glued to the tv whenever it is on. Perhaps the reason is because it is the true opposite of a sport we all love that rhymes with curling, called hurling. As most of you know, hurling is a fast paced, semi-violent, orchestra on grass where the goal of the match is to not only score more goals or points but to survive. Curling on the other hand is a slow paced, non-violent game where the hurling stick is replaced with a broom, and a 40-pound rock replaces the slotar. Another nice feature of curling is that it appears age is not a factor; the oldest "athlete" in the Olympics is a man named Richard Ruohonen, a 54 American Curler. Godspeed to you Rich, I cannot fathom the thrill of becoming an Olympian at 54.

The Olympics always produce

several feel-good human-interest stories, and this year proves to be no different than Olympics past. One story I have kept my eye on is that of American downhill skier Lindsey Vonn. As of this writing, she is still on track to compete in the women's downhill in one of the first events of the games. What makes Vonn so intriguing is the fact that she won the Gold Medal in downhill in 2010, yes, 16 years ago. She was the first American woman to win an Olympic downhill gold. She retired from competitive skiing in 2019 with a history of the most severe knee injuries. Shockingly, at the ripe age of 39, Vonn returned to ski racing and this past December shocked the ski world by winning the World Cup Downhill at St. Moritz. Not to be outdone, she set her sights on these Milan-Cortina Olympics and was on track until one week before the opening ceremonies she crashed in a race and ruptured her ACL. That's right, ruptured - not strained, she basically blew up her ACL. Most pundits thought that was the end for Vonn and her skiing career was over for the second time, but the persistence of this athlete was on full display when she said "this is a very difficult outcome one week before the Olympics... but if there's one thing I know how to do, it's a comeback. My Olympic dream is not over." She is aware of

the risks involved but even at the age of 41, Lindsey Vonn continues to fight, and I suspect will serve as an inspiration for many younger athletes for decades to come. As of right now, she is still on track to compete as she fulfilled one of the rules which requires every competitor to participate in at least one training run prior to the formal competition.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Archdiocese of Chicago

By Meisha Lyons

Caring for seniors has always been in my heart, and that's why I joined Catholic Charities 15 years ago.

Growing up in Roseland, I was surrounded by strong, older women in a multi-generational household. I was fortunate to be in the same home as my great-grandparents, and our neighborhood was full of seniors - that population spoke to me. Later, when I became a care coordinator and saw the services we could offer to keep seniors in their own homes and communities, I knew I had found my calling.

I started as a program director for Catholic Charities in the south suburbs and now as vice president of senior services, I manage five care

games, maybe even you will follow Lindsey Vonn's next challenge, or possible some of you will take a broom out of the closet and head outside in the snow and ice and push a 40 pound kettle bell down the street towards a target. We are never too old to challenge ourselves and try something new.

from my team. The way they work with seniors and are passionate about what we do keeps me going. Our care coordinators work with seniors living on their own to determine how we can help. My team talks to them about cooking, cleaning, bathing, mobility issues, medication schedules, and other tasks of daily living. With this information, we create a care plan that details the support we can provide to help the seniors stay in their home and thrive in the community.

That care plan may include a family caregiver or other helper who comes to the home to do the cooking, cleaning, laundry, and assist with grooming. Or the plan may include transporting the senior to a facility for adult day services for socialization, while their caregiver is at work or school. We can also assist with medication dispensary machines, emergency home response systems, home-delivered or congregate meals, and other helpful supports.

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If you are a senior and want to see if you're eligible for services, please contact the Charities Resource Hub at 312-655-7700.

Meisha Lyons is the vice president of Senior Services at Catholic Charities.

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Damn Peckers in County Clare

Fine Gael TD Joe Cooney has discovered that the source of 11 power cuts near the County Clare town of Sixmilebridge over the past 14 months was not a faulty transformer or storm damage but woodpeckers attacking electricity poles.

Mr Cooney asked ESB Networks to explain the repeated outages, which he said had caused significant inconvenience for householders in Clogga, a townland located to the east of Sixmilebridge. Eight interruptions were recorded in 2025, including two multi-day losses of supply in January and November. Three more outages followed in January 2026.

ESB Networks said its staff were "very conscious of the continuity issues" experienced locally and confirmed that a major upgrade of the network is now under way. The company said the unusual problem stemmed from woodpeckers boring into wooden poles, which



had weakened them to the point that they had to be replaced.

"At issue here is woodpeckers. They have been damaging our poles on the network," the company said in its response to Deputy Cooney. "Our colleagues are replacing these wooden poles with a composite pole in order to prevent woodpecker damage going forward."

ESB Networks said the work would require further planned outages, which would be staggered to "minimise the disruption to the customer". It added that customers would receive advance notice of any interruptions.

"We apologise to customers for the inconvenience here, and thank them for their forbearance," the company said. It added that the upgrade would lead to "improved resilience and continuity in the local network."

Mary Pat Flanagan

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THE DANCE OF DEATH

Written by

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In a new version by

CONOR MCPHERSON

Directed by ensemble member

YASEN PEYANKOV

Featuring ensemble members **Cliff Chamberlain, Kathryn Erbe** and **Jeff Perry**

Dance of Death at Steppenwolf thru March 22

Steppenwolf Theatre Company, the nation's premier ensemble theater company, is pleased to continue its 50th Anniversary Season with August Strindberg's masterclass in marital warfare *The Dance of Death*, adapted by Conor McPherson, directed by ensemble member Yasen Peyankov and featuring an all ensemble cast. *The Dance of Death* will play January 29 - March 22, 2026 in Steppenwolf's Downstairs Theater, 1650 N. Halsted St. in Chicago. Single tickets start at \$20 are now on sale at www.steppenwolf.org or the Box Office at (312) 335-1650.

Steppenwolf ensemble member Jeff Perry (*No Man's Land*, August: Osage County, *Scandal*) returns home to the company he co-founded five decades ago, joined by fellow ensemble members Cliff Chamberlain (*You Will Get Sick*, *Fool for Love*, *The Minutes*) and Kathryn Erbe (*The Grapes of Wrath*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*), who returns to the Steppenwolf stage for the first time in nearly three decades.

About the Production:

In the high stone tower of an isolated naval fortress, Alice and Edgar are about to celebrate 25 years of wedded bliss - if decades of resentment, recrimination and mutual sabotage count as bliss. But when an alluring visitor arrives, the delicate balance of their tedious arrangement falls off its axis, cracks growing into canyons. In Conor McPherson's wicked take on Strindberg's masterclass in marital warfare, a twisted love triangle waltzes off the edge of a cliff, plunging us all into the deep.

Steppenwolf Artistic Directors Glenn Davis and Audrey Francis comment, "When we set out to program the 50th Anniversary Season, our priority was to welcome a large host of ensemble members from across Steppenwolf's storied history back home. Nowhere is this clearer than in *The Dance of Death*, which has an all ensemble cast and an ensemble director at the helm. With Jeff, Katie and Cliff - representing three generations of ensemble members - in one room, we know we're in store for a quintessentially Steppenwolf night of combustible and provoking theater."

The creative team includes Collette Pollard (Scenic Design), Ana Kuzmanic (Costume Design) Lee Fiskness (Lighting Design), Rick Sims (Sound Design), Jyreika Guest (Fight and Intimacy Consultant), Jason K. Martin (Voice Coach), Claire Kaplan (Movement Consultant), Abhi Shrestha (Dramaturg), Patrick Zakem (Creative Producer), Tom Pearl (Producing Director), JC Clementz, CSA (Casting), Laura D. Glenn (Production Stage Manager) and Kathleen Barrett (Assistant Stage Manager). For full cast and creative team bios, click here.

Title: *The Dance of Death*
Playwright: August Strindberg
Adaptor: Conor McPherson
Director: ensemble member Yasen Peyankov

Cast: ensemble members: **Cliff Chamberlain (Kurt)**, **Kathryn Erbe (Alice)** and **Jeff Perry (Captain)**

Location: Steppenwolf's Downstairs Theater, 1650 N. Halsted St., Chicago
Regular run: Tuesday, February 10 - Sunday, March 22, 2026

Curtain Times: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at 7:30 pm; Saturdays at 3 pm & 7:30 pm; and Sundays at 3 pm. Please note: there will not be 7:30 pm performances on Tuesday, February 3, Wednesday, February 11, Tuesday, February 17, Wednesday, February 25, Thursday, February 26, Tuesday, March 3 and Tuesday, March 17; there will not be 3 pm performances on Saturday, February 7, Saturday, March 14 and Sunday, February 8; there will be an added 2 pm matinee on Wednesday, March 11.

Tickets: Single tickets for *The Dance of Death* (\$20 - \$148.50*) are now on sale at steppenwolf.org and the Box Office at (312) 335-1650. Steppenwolf Flex Memberships are currently on sale at steppenwolf.org/memberships: Black Card Memberships with six tickets for use any time for any production and RED Card Memberships for theatergoers under 30. *Pricing includes an \$8.50 handling fee

Steppenwolf offers 20 tickets for \$20 (no added fees) for each performance



Steppenwolf Ensemble members **Jeff Perry and Kathryn Erbe**

of every membership series production. Use promo code 20FOR20 to redeem this offer online, available in advance until they're sold out for every main series show. Limit 2 tickets per person. You can also purchase by phone at (312) 335-1650 on the day-of show at 12 pm for main series performances.

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Accessible Performance Dates: Audio-Described and Touch Tour: Sunday, March 1 at 3 pm (1:30 pm Touch Tour)

Open-Captioned: Saturday, February 28 at 3 pm & Thursday, March 12 at 7:30 pm

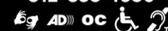
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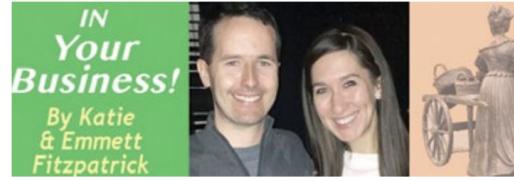
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Ike Reilly and Brendan O'Shea to Display Musical Partnership - & Friendship - in Schuba's Tavern Shows



The story of the relationship between musicians Ike Reilly and Brendan O'Shea could be captured in a book or a long-form podcast series. There's that much to probe and uncover. However, the best way to experience this partnership may in fact be on the stage of Schuba's Tavern, the iconic music venue that will be hosting these two legends for three shows around the St. Patrick's Day weekend. At Schuba's, concertgoers will have the chance to see the chemistry - and mutual

admiration - between Brendan and Ike that developed over the last four decades. They will also be treated to a night of unapologetic rock 'n roll with an Irish flavor, given the time of year, as the duo plans to sing a selection of songs from their own repertoires and those of the late Shane McGowan.

Ask Ike and Brendan how this collaboration first came together, and they will point to two chance encounters. The first took place in Chicago in 1990, at an old Irish bar called Shannacky's on Southport Avenue. Ike, who hailed from north suburban Libertyville,

Shannacky's," Brendan recalls, "and spent the night singing songs together. We got on straight away and felt like we had known each other forever."

As young people do, Brendan and Ike went their separate ways, Ike performing gigs and working as a doorman at the Hyatt Chicago, Brendan moving back to Ireland in 1993. Their second chance encounter did

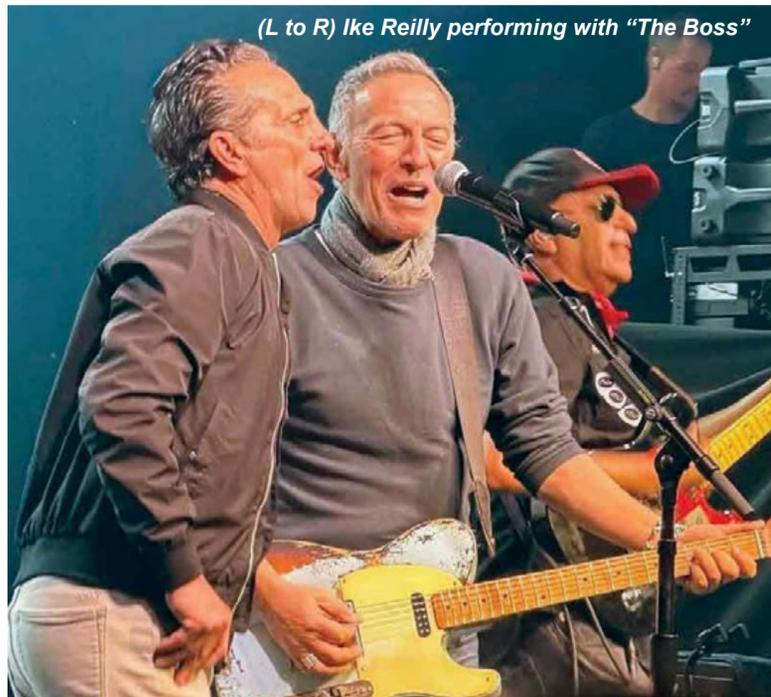
of his friend Tom Morello - of Audioslave and Rage Against the Machine fame - and Bruce Springsteen. Yes, that Bruce Springsteen. Earlier this year, Ike shared a stage with Tom and Bruce in Minneapolis to deliver a moving performance as part of the Defend Minnesota show in protest of the killings of Alex Pretti and Renee Good and the occupation by ICE in the city.

For Ike, this show continued a long career of focusing on social justice, calling out racism and prejudice, and supporting immigrants with his music. As he says, "I've been writing about this stuff for a while."

For all their individual successes, and the impact that Brendan and



(l to r) Brendan O'Shea and Ike Reilly



(L to R) Ike Reilly performing with "The Boss"

not take place until 1997 in New York City, where Brendan had recently returned to live and Ike was vacationing with his wife Kara Dean.

"One night, I was walking with my wife in Soho around midnight, and we literally walked into someone," Ike remembers. "It was Brendan, and we connected ever since."

A simple Google search will show the significant success that each man has achieved in his own respective career. Among his many accomplishments and accolades, Brendan has released several albums and toured all over the world, and he was featured in the movie "Backdraft" after director Ron Howard saw him perform as a member of the Drovers.

For his part, Ike, who earned a degree in theology from Marquette University, boasts an impressive number of records that he has released, and his band - Ike Reilly Assassination - has developed a devoted fanbase, including Stephen King, who called Ike "the Rock God not enough people have heard of." Ike was the subject of a 2024 documentary - "Don't Turn your Back on Friday Night" - and collaborated with the likes

of his friend Tom Morello - of Audioslave and Rage Against the Machine fame - and Bruce Springsteen. Yes, that Bruce Springsteen. Earlier this year, Ike shared a stage with Tom and Bruce in Minneapolis to deliver a moving performance as part of the Defend Minnesota show in protest of the killings of Alex Pretti and Renee Good and the occupation by ICE in the city.

"You come across people in your life, and some you need to hang onto," Brendan reflects. "Ike is one of those people for me. It's just natural that we'll be connected for the rest of my days. I'm grateful. So many musicians are possessive, but Ike isn't at all."

Ike echoes those sentiments and also highlights how the two men appreciate and enjoy each other's music. As he says, "I'm a great fan of Brendan's work. My family and I listen to it at home all the time."

The two have been collaborating for decades, touring Ireland for a selection of shows in 2001 and playing a handful of performances together each year.

This year, they will once again be returning to Schuba's Tavern for three shows around St. Patrick's Day weekend. Brendan will open the show with his trio and will then join Ike on stage to sing a selection of songs from the Pogues and

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the Ike Reilly Assassination.

As Ike, who already counts his sons as bandmates, he is looking forward to sharing the stage with them and Brendan; as he says, "It will be a blast."

While Brendan and Ike have scheduled these shows around St. Patrick's Day weekend, and their set list will feature the aforementioned Pogues songs, they are quick to point out that they will not be typical St. Patrick's shows. As Ike clarifies, "These shows are meant to be a celebration of our own, and they happen to be held around St. Patrick's Day."

In many ways, the shows' subtle embrace of Irishness reflects each man's relationship with what being Irish means to them. On one hand, they are unapologetically proud to be Irish, with Brendan having grown up in Ireland and two of Ike's grandparents coming from Ireland. Brendan serves as lead singer for Trinity Irish

Dance Company, which came through Chicago for a show in February, and he and Ike both call out Shane McGowan as an inspiration - a "beacon," as Ike calls him - for their music.

Brendan shares, "Being Irish is evident in Ike's music. The storytelling, the purpose of saying something profound in a way that's not corny, it's amazing."

On the other hand, Brendan and Ike are both quick to point out that they are not living out the stereotypes of the typical Irish person living in America, nor are they tethered to singing Irish songs or limited to performing in Irish pubs, although they have played their fair share of those over the years.

Reflecting on his sense of Irishness, Brendan notes, "Having spent more than half my life in the United States (his wife Jenna is from Pittsburgh), what it means to

be Irish is a personal thing to me, as it is for all Irish people. I'm very proud of where I came from, but it's not all roses being Irish. In America, we get questions like 'Why are you not drinking, you're Irish?' It's interesting. The greatest thing about being an Irish immigrant in the US is that you see how far a sense of humor goes in a country like this. It's one of

the greatest gifts." Another of life's greatest gifts is friendship. In a world where human interaction has been replaced by technologies like AI, social media, and text messaging, spending time in the same room with Brendan O'Shea and Ike Reilly provides a real-life lesson in true friendship, with all its admiration, good-natured ribbing, and above all,

connection with each other. Concertgoers will have the chance to see this on stage at Schuba's Tavern in March, and it is not to be missed.

Ike Reilly Assassination featuring special guest Brendan O'Shea will perform on March 14, 15, and 17 at Schuba's Tavern (3159 N. Southport Ave. in Chicago). Tickets on Schuba's website: [HTTP://WWW.LH-ST.COM](http://www.lh-st.com)

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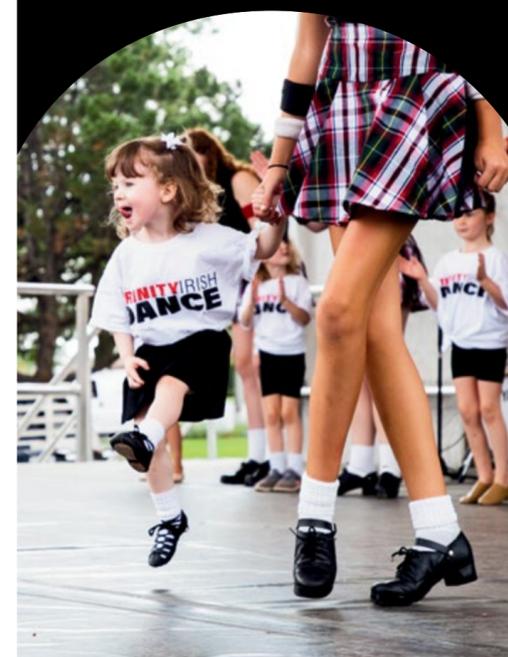
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CHICAGO GAELIC PARK

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

Happy St. Patrick's Season,

Chicago Gaelic Park celebrates Irish culture 365 days a year, but the speed, frequency and intensity of our cultural offerings increases every March. Music, dance, parades and more. Dates and times shown here will help you plan your visits for Ireland on Parade, Sunday celebrations, concerts, pub music, parades and more. If you visit our online box office, you'll see that you can save money by buying tickets to the Sunday celebrations in advance.

Enjoy this special season, and please stay safe. As our friends from Limerick have been known to say: "In March you'll have a fine chance | to go out for the craic and to dance | but while ye are there | Mother said to beware | of yer wan in the fancy green pants."

Cheers!

Bill O'Sullivan - President of the Board of Directors at Chicago Gaelic Park



The Month of March at CGP

We're Irish 365 days a year, but March is a special month around here. Save the date for a few of our March events! Stay tuned to our website for updates.

Parades

All are welcome to march with the CGP community this March! Our float will be in the Oak Forest Fleadh Family Parade (Saturday 3/7), Tinley Park Irish Parade (Sunday 3/8), Chicago St. Patrick's Day Parade (Saturday 3/14), and South Side Irish Parade (Sunday 3/15).



Ireland on Parade - March 11-13

Ireland on Parade is an exhibition of the music and dance of Ireland that takes place at Chicago Gaelic Park annually in March leading up to St. Patrick's Day. Various Irish step dancing schools from the entire Chicagoland area are featured each evening of Ireland on Parade. Join us March 11-13 starting at 5:30pm!



South Side Irish Sunday - March 8

Start the day (Sunday 3/8) with our monthly Mass at 9:30am followed by an Irish breakfast. After that, doors open at 12pm for a full day of South Side Irish fun! We'll have entertainment in each room for the whole family to enjoy including: Kieran Byrne, John Staunton, Evin O'Riordan, Liam Durkin, The Dirty Wellies, Celtic Roots, O'Leary's Lantern, and One for the Ditch. **Pro tip: Grab your tickets online ahead of time at a discounted price!**



St. Patrick's Day Sunday Celebration - March 15

We'll have entertainment in each room for the whole family to enjoy! Walk with us in the South Side Irish Parade and head back to enjoy live music and family fun. Our lineup includes: Ben Traverse, The Narrowbacks, Reilly, The Larkin & Moran Brothers, The Chancers, Gerry Haughey, Chicago Irish Singers, and Joe & Declan McShane! **Secure your tickets online ahead of time to get admission at a discount!**



SIMPLE THINGS IN CONCERT FRIDAY, MARCH 20TH



Simple Things is a three piece band, featuring vocalist Dylan, bass guitarist and backing vocalist Shane and instrumentalist Kealan. They bring a fresh new flavour to pop music, with their traditional Irish background influence.

Both Kealan & Dylan started out their journey in music at a young age. Coming from the heart of Kerry, music was at the forefront of their lives. As childhood friends they started off as musicians playing Irish traditional music together, before developing and exploring new territories in pop music.

Evin O'Riordan will kick things off with live music at 7:45pm.

Secure your tickets online at our Box Office at ChicagoGaelicPark.com.



CHICAGO GAELIC PARK

6119 W. 147th St. Oak Forest, IL 60452 - (708)687-9323 - ChicagoGaelicPark.com

CGP Event Calendar

Visit chicagogaelicpark.com for more information.

- March 6 - GP PLAYERS ALL-IRELAND TRIVIA
- March 7 - OAK FOREST PARADE
- March 7 - THE WHISTLIN' DONKEYS
- March 8 - TINLEY PARK PARADE
- March 8 - SOUTH SIDE SUNDAY
- March 11 - IOP BEGINS
- March 14 - DOWNTOWN PARADE
- March 15 - SOUTH SIDE IRISH PARADE
- March 20 - IRISH FILM NIGHT
- March 20 - SIMPLE THINGS
- March 21 - 22 DONATION DRIVE
- April 11 - ELTON JOHN TRIBUTE

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Music at The Carraig

No cover charge for music at The Carraig.

- March 4 - TRAD SESSION
- March 5 - THE CELTIC ROVERS
- March 6 - EVIN O'RIORDAN
- March 7 - JOE MCSHANE
- March 11 - TRAD SESSION
- March 12 - THE CHANCERS
- March 13 - GALWAY GALS
- March 14 - ST. JAMES GATE
- March 17 - ST. PADDY'S DAY ENTERTAINMENT
- March 18 - TRAD SESSION
- March 19 - OPEN MIC
- March 20 - MY DAD'S COVER BAND
- March 21 - ELROY ACOUSTIC
- March 25 - TRAD SESSION
- March 27 - THE DREAMERS
- March 28 - JESSE PEREZ
- March 29 - COLIN & SAMMIE

Win 2 Tickets to Ireland

\$20 for 1 Ticket - \$50 for 3 Tickets. Purchase tickets online at our Box Office.



Drawing on Tuesday, March 17th at 7pm

2 Round Trip tickets from Chicago to Dublin. Tickets subject to date restrictions.

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CHICAGO GAELIC PARK

The Carraig Weekly Specials

The Carraig Pub is open six days a week (Tuesday - Sunday)! We feature live music on Friday and Saturday evenings with no cover charge.

Wednesday - BBQ Ribs

Thursday - Build your own 14" Pizza for \$10

Friday - Fish Fry - French Fried Shrimp, Brewer Battered Cod, 1/2 & 1/2, or Fried Chicken served with Fries & Coleslaw

Sunday - Sunday Roast served with Yorkshire pudding, mashed potatoes, vegetables & topped with Chef Moe's homemade gravy.



You can buy a Carraig gift card online!



GAELIC PARK PLANNED GIVING ENDOWMENT

How do we maintain the accomplishments of the Gaelic Park Community and ensure that it will thrive in the future?

Give the gift of Irish Heritage to succeeding generations by contributing today!



Chicago Gaelic Park celebrates, preserves and promotes Irish culture and heritage through artistic, athletic, cultural, educational, and social activities. We provide a welcoming place for all to share in our great Irish American experience.

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Investment Securities
IRAs
Life Insurance Proceeds

For more information or to discuss your plans, please contact Michael Bennett - General Manager by phone 708-687-9323 or email endowment@chicagogaelicpark.org. Planned gifts are made after careful consideration of one's financial situation and charitable goals. It is recommended to consult financial, tax, and/or legal advisors regarding these types of donations.

Preserving and Promoting our Irish Mission:

- Chicago Irish Feis
- Irish Fest
- Official Home of the Chicago GAA
- Our Lady of Knock Rosary Procession
- Monthly Mass and Irish Breakfast
- Mother's Day Buffet/High Tea
- Gaelic Park Players
- Heritage and Harvest Day
- Children's Irish Cultural Camp
- The Carraig Pub & Beer Garden
- Young Gaelic Association
- Premier Event Venue for Weddings, Parties, and Concerts



Saturday, March 7



Sunday, March 8



Sunday, March 15



Sunday, March 8



Saturday, April 11

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Know, that I would accounted be True brother of a company That sang, to sweeten Ireland's wrong, Ballad and story, rann and song; Nor be I any less of them, Because the red-rose-bordered hem Of her, whose history began Before God made the angelic clan, Trails all about the written page.

"To Ireland in the Coming Times," W.B. Yeats

Have You Ever Been a Bragger?

Bragging was almost an unforgivable crime in my family growing up. Bragging considered a disreputable personal undertaking. Always flawed. Indefensible. Tightly bound to the sin of pride. An inexcusable character disorder. Shameful attempting to show you're better than others.

Didn't take much to get bushwhacked for bragging. I was never sure if that was because we were Irish, with no patience for people loaded with self-praise.

Or because we were Catholic and surrounded by clergy every step we take helping us assess our flaws, failures and sins. And have a chance for heaven.

Looking back, bragging was probably denounced

and debunked by both our culture and religion. It was always a spectacular shared effort of faith and tribal identity.

Much like the eradication of snakes. Pardon my French, but an examination of our personal bragging is ripe for repentance. A real for St. Patrick's Day "contrition" among the exaggerating Irish.

If you read between the lines, St. Patrick never thought bragging was a virtue among the Irish. The wit, wisdom and poetry of the Irish might be legendary, but listening to long monologues of Irish self-aggrandizing is way out of line. Such self-praise was unseemly. It made no one's light shine brighter.

I can still recall the instant discomfort unleashed when someone, a family member, a relation, a fellow Celt, might take too much credit for some personal enterprise. Or announce some special achievement in life that was quick to be dismissed as "self-praise." Success in a spelling bee. Triumphant in a basketball game. Getting high marks on a report card. Singing like an angel in the choir were all the stuff of the Sacrament of Confession. Like eating a hamburger on a Friday in the old days.

The great thing about the Irish was that it only takes about three seconds for someone to call out a bragger for unbecoming behavior, like a Mother Superior in a convent on Good Friday. There was no delayed criticism should you be caught bragging. It was instantaneous.

At the smallest sign of braggadocio, someone was sure to shout their disappointment. "Well, " someone might say, "who do they think they are?" Or "Someone seems to be getting a bit too big for their britches." Or cutting to the quick with "No one likes a smarty-pants." No shame in this corrective brutality for the Irish.

Keeping us on the straight and narrow. The pathway to heaven. It guaranteed we'd keep our natural humility. Important to note when getting ready for a parade and a day of pints.

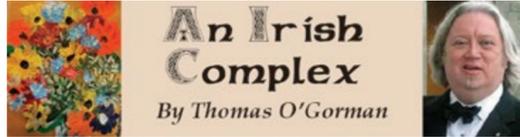
These days I'm not too sure that puts us in the express lanes. I believe we're all in the same traffic jam and the only way out is to give those around you a break. Pull over so they can get by and make some progress for themselves. Aren't we all in this together? No one can really rush the line. And of course bragging never helps.

Strange, but Chicago has always seemed a bragging city to me. Maybe it's our late start in the competition for greatest American city. With some cities having almost a two century head start on us.

Maybe its our extraordinary good luck in being geographically located in the heartland of the nation, at the intersection of the continent's great network of waterways that just makes us want to thump our chest. And brag. You know, in that contest for biggest or the best.

Perhaps its more about the size and beauty of our skyscrapers or the elegance of our lakefront paradise. Or the miracle of the American network of railroads that first put us on the economic map. Or the wonder of our stockyards and our ability to lasso the market for meatpacking and change the eating habits of the world.

Chicago does have a lot to be proud of. But we



must be careful and not brag too much. It's still true that nobody likes a smarty pants.

We don't have to look very long around the city to have our ears boxed for us. Just look at the long line of those braggers who would take advantage of public office. The contagious sin of hubris makes bragging pale in comparison. Imagine having all the political power possible and still not being satisfied with your achievements.

Instead, of always being ready to brag to fatten your own pockets. To get you a larger piece of the pie. More business for your law firm. All those secret deals meant to enrich just a few of the political elite, rather than lifting the burdens of the everyday citizens of the City. You know, the poor souls who continue to elect the panderers and pillagers of the common good. St. Patrick's Day celebrations are just the key to quiet us of our brags.

I'm not naive. Of course, there's always been "the Chicago way," since the stockade walls of Fort Dearborn first went up. The landscape here has always been thick with deal-makers and short-cut takers from the days of Mayor Long John Wentworth. In 1860 the 6'8" mayor helped fellow Republican Abraham Lincoln secure the nomination for president by issuing counterfeit credentials to Lincoln fans so convention goers would cheer and shout for Honest Abe. And sway the vote his way.

Decades later the same went for the way Mayor Ed Kelly shut off everyone's microphones in the Chicago Stadium at the Democratic National Convention in 1940. That's when he had the head of the city's sewer department hidden in the basement of the Chicago Stadium with the single working microphone. His job was to work up the crowd and make them insane for President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

All so FDR could get the unheard of third presidential nomination and accept the call to a third term. Strange but even though those things were wrong and illegal, it makes you want to brag. Especially with the "Voice from the Sewer," as he was known.

We could also brag about the way in which the 1960 presidential election votes in Chicago were held until the wee hours of the morning so Mayor Richard J. Daley could release an avalanche of enough votes in favor of John Fitzgerald Kennedy at just the right time. Ending a Nixon victory.

That certainly seems worth bragging about. Well, its taken a long time, but some progress is being made in Chicago in regard to our Chicago passion for bragging. Especially as St. Patrick's Day nears when dyeing the Chicago River green might be mistaken for the grin of business as usual. Or an open season for fresh shenanigans and the usual Blarney that makes the need for constant bragging all too sad. All the festivity and holiday thoughtfulness is a reminder of who we really are. And that the Irish are more than brags. In Chi-town bragging is still an unforgivable crime.

Naomh Pádraig guí ar ár son

Clans of Ireland Formerly Recognizes Clan Quill (Ó Cuill)

Clan Quill (Ó Cuill), one of Ireland's rarest native Gaelic surnames, has been formally recognized by Clans of Ireland, marking an important moment for descendants of this historic Cork-Kerry border lineage in Ireland and across the global Irish diaspora. The surname Ó Cuill is of single Irish origin and has long been associated with the lowly populated Shehy Mountain district along the Cork-Kerry border (stretching from the west of Macroom town to the east of Killarney town). Even in the early nineteenth century, when Ireland's population exceeded eight million, the name appeared in only a handful of households. Unlike many Irish surnames that became widespread or developed separate origins, Quill remained tightly concentrated in one region



across successive generations. Because of its rarity and sustained geographic continuity, it is highly likely that most people bearing the Quill surname today descend from a shared ancestral lineage, however distant the cousinship. In Gaelic Ireland, identity was rooted not in the narrow nuclear household but in the wider kin-group - the clan - where extended family, shared ancestry and collective belonging formed the fabric of society. While later social and legal systems placed emphasis on the smaller, individualised family unit, the recognition of Clan Quill restores and affirms that older, more inclusive tradition of kinship. The newly recognised Chief of Clan Quill (O'Quill) is 23-year-old King's Inns law student Tadhg Quill-Manley, representing a new generation committed to preserving and strengthening the clan's shared heritage. Membership of Clan Quill is open, and free, to anyone of Quill heritage worldwide. All who bear the name, or descend from it, are warmly invited to join, reconnect with distant cousins, and become part of a welcoming international community grounded in shared ancestry rather than separation. For the Irish community across the world who carry the Quill name, this recognition offers more than historical acknowledgement - it offers belonging: a return to the collective spirit of family that sustained generations before us.



Tadhg Quill - Manley recognition offers more than historical acknowledgement - it offers belonging: a return to the collective spirit of family that sustained generations before us.

West Suburban Irish Calendar of Events

- WSI Quiz Night March 3 at 7:00p Quigley's Irish Pub, Downtown Naperville WSlrish.org/QuizNight
Irish Session March 4 at 7:30p Quigley's Irish Pub, Downtown Naperville WSlrish.org/IrishSession
Irish Mass in Honor of St. Patrick Wednesday, March 11, 2026 6:30p Prelude | 7:00p Mass St. Thomas the Apostle, Naperville WSlrish.org/IrishMass
Naperville St. Patrick's Day Parade Saturday, March 14, 2026 at 10:00 A Downtown Naperville WSlrish.org/parade
Trip to Ireland Raffle Drawing Buy tickets online (through 3/16) or at Quigley's. Quigley's Irish Pub, Downtown Naperville WSlrish.org/IrelandTrip
Irish Session March 18 at 7:30p Quigley's Irish Pub, Downtown Naperville WSlrish.org/IrishSession
Irish Session April 1 at 7:30p Quigley's Irish Pub, Downtown Naperville WSlrish.org/IrishSession
WSI Quiz Night April 7 at 7:00p Quigley's Irish Pub, Downtown Naperville WSlrish.org/QuizNight
Irish Session April 15 at 7:30p Quigley's Irish Pub, Downtown Naperville WSlrish.org/IrishSession
WSI Membership Meeting and Cultural Night The Road to a United Ireland: The Good Friday Agreement Wednesday, April 22 | 6:30p - 9:00p Naperville VFW (908 Jackson Ave, Naperville) Free! RSVP at WSlrish.org
Naperville Irish Fest September 18-19, 2026 Central Park, Downtown Naperville WSlrish.org/IrishFest
BECOME A MEMBER! Tim Johnston 630-235-1390 twirejohnston@pledgemine.com

MYSTIC ROGUE IRISH PUB AND RESTAURANT EST 2019
ST. PATRICK'S WEEKEND CELEBRATION March 12th - 17th
* THURSDAY • MARCH 12 * 6:30 PM - Saol Irish Dance 7:00 PM - Guinness Glass Engraving
* FRIDAY • MARCH 13 * 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM Kieran Byrne 7:00 PM - Dillon Gavin Irish Dancers 7:30 PM - Pigs Band (Tent)
* SATURDAY • MARCH 14 * 2:00 PM - Saol Academy of Irish Dance 4:00 PM - Barry Fagan 7:00 PM - Thing Lizzy
* SUNDAY • MARCH 15 * 11:00 AM - Frankie + Friends 3:00 PM - Ken Dix Band Garda Pipe Band * Throughout the Day
* MONDAY • MARCH 16 * 5:30 PM - Dillon Gavin Irish Dancers
ST. PATRICK'S DAY (TUESDAY) 11:00 AM - Saol Academy of Irish Dance 2:00-5:00 PM - Celtic Rovers 5:00 PM - Garda Pipe Band 6:00 PM - Dillon Gavin Irish Dancers 9:00-10:00 PM Dangerously JOEs 7:00-10:00 PM Barry Fagan

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Shannon Rovers Pipe Band Needs Your Help!

There's a sign hanging outside the Shannon Rover's Clubhouse that says "Help Wanted - Irish DO need apply". But first, a short Rover history lesson.

1935 was a tough time in our country. The Great Depression was in full swing and unemployment was extremely high. It was a tough time for the Shannon Rovers as well. The band was only nine years old, and the members were all Irish immigrants struggling to make a new life in America. So, it came as no surprise that the country's gloomy condition effected the band members. Attendance and morale were low, as well as the band's finances. Things got so bad that the band's founder, Tommie Ryan, called a meeting to discuss dissolving the Rovers. It was a tough decision, and by the grace of God they decided to keep the Rovers intact. In the minutes from that meeting, the band's secretary wrote, "The Irish must keep together."

With that as our mantra, the Shannon Rovers are asking for help from Chicago's Irish community. As we celebrate our 100th anniversary



Eileen O'Connor and Tommy Ryan who is wearing the original Shannon Rovers Uniform!

like to know!

In addition to photographs and documents, we are in search of old Shannon Rover uniforms. The original uniform, worn from 1926 until sometime in the mid-1940's, consisted of white pants with a gold stripe down the side, a green jacket and a white service cap with a gold band. In the 1940's and 1950's the band members wore various colored kilts. From 1958 until about 1963, the Rovers wore green jackets and kilts made from the Gordon tartan. Shortly after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the band decided to honor him by adopting the Kennedy tartan with the assistance of the Sexton family, the uniform we proudly wear to this day.



Color Guard Jim Murphy in Kennedy Tartan Uniform

this year, we are taking a deep dive into the band's storied history in Chicago. We have collected photographs, documents, video clips, rosters, and newspaper clippings but we know there are many more items "out there" waiting to be discovered.

Unfortunately, a storage room used by the Rovers was destroyed in a 1982 fire, taking with it countless memories and historical artifacts. This is why we need your help.

To date, we have compiled a list of over 600 members who, through the past 100 years, have been lucky enough to wear the Shannon Rover greens. This tells us that there are probably hundreds of families in Chicago (and beyond) with a direct connection to the band. Are you one of them? Do you have Rover treasures packed away in your attic? Well, we'd

So, if you, or someone you know, has any Shannon Rover memorabilia that will help us with our research and 100th anniversary celebration, please email us at shannonrovers@gmail.com or call (773) 792-3131. We will gladly accept donations or we can make copies of photographs and documents and return the originals to you. And while you are looking around, did the Shannon Rovers play at your wedding or other event? Please share those photos with us as well!

We just know there's a Rover pot of gold waiting to be found, and with a little assistance from our Irish friends, we can make it happen. After all, "The Irish must keep together!"



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The Universal Language
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Irish Singer/Musician Evin O'Riordan

March Madness is upon us; or, as one of my priest friends calls this time of the year- the "High Holy Days." No doubt you will be venturing out after the long frigid winter to celebrate St Patrick's month, by catching some Irish dancers or a cultural event, attending one of our famous parades, or listening to some Irish music. Or LOTS of Irish music!

And if you wander into one of our Chicago area cozy Irish pubs, you might just be treated to a performance by the multi-talented Evin O'Riordan. This 48 y/o Cork native is known for his skill as singer and guitar player, as well as a talented chef. And he has one of the busiest March performance schedules that I have ever seen.

Although Evin's dream to live and work in America began at age 17, the journey has been circuitous in that it has taken him to many cities, over many years, to finally lay down roots in the south suburbs of Chicago. Evin grew up in the small

fishing village of Crosshaven in southeast Cork. His father John served with the local police force. Marion, his mother, was a lovely singer. Together they had three children, including Evin, and his older and younger sisters.

As a teen, Evin had a grand plan to go to New Jersey and join his father's friends in construction work. After applying for a work visa, he looked forward to this adventure. At the same time, he had been helping in local kitchens, where he was showing

an aptitude towards cooking. One of his first jobs was peeling potatoes at a fast-food place. and it was some tough words from the chef there that impacted young Evin. He called Evin a "waster," meaning, Evin was wasting a talent that he obviously had (for cooking).

When the dream to go to America to do construction fell through, O'Riordan heeded that chef's advice, and turned all his energy towards cooking, enrolling in the culinary arts program at the Regional Technical College of Munster. On weekends, he would work as a chef, gradually working his way up to finer and finer restaurants. Later in his studies, the school assigned students to apprenticeships at high quality restaurants, where established chefs would mentor them. Evin

coaxed him into singing Christy Moore's song "Ride On." But Evin only agreed to do it if Noreen would show him some chords on the guitar. Thus, Noreen showed him the basics, loaned him a small guitar, and introduced Evin to the world of guitar.

However, although Evin got his own guitar for Christmas at the age of nineteen, he "did not do a whole lot with it for some time." Perhaps his budding culinary career funneled away precious time and energy. Much later, at age 31, a friend, Damien Coughlin, asked him to play with a band. Although he did not know many songs and was reluctant to play, Evin acquiesced and the

two "just clicked, especially their harmonies." A music agent approached them, became their representative, gave their band a name- "No Frontiers"- and they started gigging every weekend in Ireland. A third member joined them, Frank McGuire, on mandolin and fiddle. They took on a revival of Irish songs but with a rock twist, often doing 2- and 3-part harmonies. This led to playing bigger venues, adding a drummer,

learned how to prepare very high-quality food and began to make a living by cooking fine cuisine. As a child, Evin learned tin whistle as it is required study for all Irish primary school students, One Christmas, he received a small keyboard, but he did not really take to it, and attempts at lessons turned out even worse. When he hit the teenage years, one day Evin attended a house party hosted by his friend Noreen Burns, who



recording albums, playing in the UK 4 times a year, traveling to most counties in Ireland and playing festivals in Germany and Scotland. The band was known as Gaelic Brew now.

Another turning point came in 2016 when Evin was presented the opportunity to play at O'Shea's Pub in Palm Beach Florida when another musician was unable to make the gig. Finally, Evin had made it to America. Over the ensuing years, he did primarily solo work in Florida, Las Vegas (the Mandalay Bay), New York, Ohio, and Chicago.

Evin's relationship with his future wife, American nurse Kathleen, and her need to work every few years in a different city brought the couple to Washington DC, Boston, St Louis, and Chicago. In each city, Evin managed to succeed handily in his music career, a testimony to his talent and business acumen. For example, in Boston he played the Dubliner Pub regularly as well as Mr. Dooley's Boston Tavern and the Black Rose. Tasting Table (Feb 2026), listed all these pubs among Boston's 14 Best Irish Pubs.

Although he has never done music full time, Evin came to think of music as a business and thinks it important to do so. O'Riordan's continued to work in the culinary industry, currently working as a Dining Manager at Smith Crossing in



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William Kelly School of Irish Music Hour on globalrishradio The Irish Diaspora Station' Launches in March

Emmy Award-winning producer William J. Kelly will launch a new program celebrating Irish culture, tradition, and performance in March, The William J. Kelly School of Irish Music Hour on globalrishradio.com - the Irish Diaspora station.

The weekly show shines a spotlight on local Chicago Irish talent, featuring singers, musicians, dancers, performers, and cultural leaders from across the city's vibrant Irish community, while also connecting that local tradition to the wider global Irish diaspora.

Each week, The William J. Kelly School of Irish Music journeys through Chicago's Irish neighborhoods, opening the doors to sessions, stages, and dance floors—and inviting listeners everywhere to be part of the music.

The program reaches an international audience through globalrishradio.com, bringing the sound and spirit of Chicago's Irish community to listeners around the world.

"This show is dedicated to the voices, hands, and feet that carry the tradition forward," Kelly says. "Irish music holds the laughter and longing of a people, and this program is a gathering place where that living heritage is heard, shared, and passed on—wherever the Irish story is told."

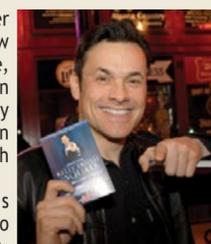
Kelly is a proud member of the Irish American Heritage Center and often says one of the happiest days of his life was celebrating his wedding to his wife, Laura Kelly, at the Center's Erin Room and Fifth Province.

A lifelong Chicagoan, Kelly graduated from Christ the King Grammar School and Quigley Preparatory Seminary. While attending Loyola University's Rome Center, he had the extraordinary opportunity to meet Saint John Paul II on three occasions—an experience he says Orland Park. O'Riordan has two children aged 20 and 17 from a prior marriage, and he boasts that both are marvelous singers. Kathleen and Evin were married in 2024, and they reside in Tinley Park.

O'Riordan plays guitar, bass guitar, tin whistle and a bit of harmonica. He is one of the most popular live performers in the Chicago area, and that is why his March schedule is the busiest I have seen. When asked to explain his brand of artistry, he quipped, "an eclectic party!" Over 95% of his gigs are solo. During a typical 3-hour show: first hour is devoted to playing crowd favorites like pub drinking songs, but he modernizes them by changing the tempo, which allows audience to sing with him. The second hour he focuses on Irish country songs and tunes, while his third hour is devoted to music of the 80's and 90's, and what he calls "upbeat Irish." During his performances, he feels it is important to read the crowd and course adjust if necessary.

Evin performs as a regular at Clancy's on 103rd, the High Stool Bar on Elston, Gaelic Park in Oak Forest, Celtic Crossing downtown, and at Reilly's Daughter. I asked Michael Bennett, the General Manager of Gaelic Park what makes Evin O'Riordan so popular with his clientele, and he offered, "Evin is lively, performs with excellent vocals and brings the crowd alive. He does it a way that really engages the audience." And Evin attributes those vocals to his mother. If you search for Evin O'Riordan on YouTube "The Town I Loved So Well," you will hear exactly how he changes tempo on a song to brand it with his own style. Lovely stuff. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3zPkV4QVzhU)

It was my pleasure to get to know this artist and share his unusual story with you. I hope he and Kathleen plan to spend many, many more years in Chicago. And I hope you get to catch one of Evin's March shows. Contact me at christine.lawless@yahoo.com



inspired his lifelong commitment to service.

Kelly is a former President of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Chicago Division #1, and the founder of the Mother Cabrini Chapter of the Knights of Columbus at Assumption Church.

Listeners worldwide can tune in beginning in March to The William J. Kelly School of Irish Music Hour on globalrishradio.com - the Irish Diaspora station, where Chicago's Irish singers, musicians, and dancers take center stage, and the living tradition of Irish music continues to thrive.

For broadcast times and upcoming episodes, listeners are encouraged to check the program schedule on globalrishradio.com.

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THE SEASON OF GREEN ALWAYS ARRIVES EARLY AT THE IAHC & THAT SEASON IS HERE!
Countdown to St. Patrick's Day with community, culture, and connection at the IAHC. From live music and céilí nights, to hearty fare, traditions that bring us together—and yes, our fan-favorite Irish Season Events—there's something for everyone, whether you're a longtime member or a first-time visitor. Join us for the greenest season of the year!
Details & tickets: irish-american.org | 773-282-7035 (Ext. 10).



MONTHLY BINGO NIGHT

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4 & WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18 | 7:00 PM
Doors at 6:00 PM and first call at 7:00 PM. \$10 per card (stack 'em if you're feeling lucky). The Fifth Province Pub will be open with drinks & a hot express menu. It's not just bingo—it's a midweek mood. See you there!
\$10 PER CARD

FRIDAY FISH FRY

FRIDAYS, FEBRUARY 20 – APRIL 3 | 6:00 – 8:30 PM
Fry-Day is back at the Irish American Heritage Center! A cozy, family-friendly tradition filled with live music, Irish dancing, and a kids' area to keep little ones happy while you catch up with friends. We recommend purchasing admission online for the best pricing, though tickets will also be available at the door during each individual fish fry — making it easy to stop by whenever it suits you. It's the perfect spot for community, craic, and a classic fish fry. Bring the whole crew and make Friday your favorite night of the week!

ONLINE TICKETS \$20 Adults | \$10 Children (12 & under)
IN-PERSON TICKETS \$25 Adults | \$15 Children (12 & under)

2026 BIENNIAL JURIED SPRING ART EXHIBIT

Selective Public Viewing Dates & Times (Details Online)

An event celebrating incredible local artists, creativity, and community. The exhibit will be open Fridays through April, plus special viewing days during our St. Patrick's Day Festival and Irish American Hall of Fame Cocktail Party, with a Closing Reception on April 26! This year's exhibit was judged by Chicago-area artist Danielle Crilly, whose expressive work draws from family history, old photographs, and memories of her Central Illinois upbringing — capturing beauty, nostalgia, and connection across generations. Come experience an inspiring season of art at the IAHC and support our talented artists — we can't wait to celebrate with you!

FREE EVENT

IAHC IRISH NIGHT WITH THE CHICAGO WOLVES

SATURDAY, MARCH 7 | 7:00 PM
Join us for a special St. Patrick's Day Fundraiser with the Irish American Heritage Center at the Chicago Wolves vs. Texas Stars hockey game! The puck drops at 7:00 PM at the Allstate Arena in Rosemont, IL. Get ready for a night of Irish spirit, hockey action, and community pride. All ticket proceeds benefit the Irish American Heritage Center.

TICKETS \$36.04

ST. PATRICK'S DAY WEEKEND FESTIVAL

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, MARCH 14 & 15 | STARTS AT 12:00 PM
Celebrate St. Patrick's season with two full days of Irish music, dance, food, and family fun at the Irish American Heritage Center! Our annual St. Patrick's Day Festival is a lively, all-ages celebration featuring nonstop live bands, traditional Irish dancers, cultural performances, crafts, games, and a dedicated kids' area. Enjoy great food and drinks all weekend long in the Fifth Province Pub and throughout the Center while soaking up the sounds of reels, jigs, ballads, and high-energy performances from morning to night. Whether you're coming to dance, listen, eat, or explore Irish culture, there's something for everyone to enjoy!

TICKETS Saturday: \$30 Adult | \$15 Child (12 & under)
Sunday: \$20 Adult | \$10 Child (12 & under)

IAHC TAKES OVER THE BULLS GAME — ST. PATRICK'S STYLE!

MONDAY, MARCH 16 | 7:00 PM
Join the Irish American Heritage Center for a special St. Patrick's Day Game Night with the Chicago Bulls as they take on the Memphis Grizzlies at the United Center! Come cheer in green, celebrate Irish pride, and experience the electric energy of Bulls basketball — all while supporting the IAHC. And don't miss your chance to grab a special St. Patrick's Day Bulls-themed pint glass at the game! More information and ticket link available online.

TICKETS \$58.70 - \$103.32

ST. PATRICK'S DAY AT THE IAHC — THE PARTY OF THE SEASON!

TUESDAY, MARCH 17 | DOORS AT 2:00 PM
There's no better place to celebrate St. Patrick's Day than the heart of Irish Chicago! Join us in the Fifth Province Pub for a full-blown Irish celebration packed with live music, dancing, great food, flowing pints, and unbeatable craic from afternoon through night. Kick things off with Peter Brady and his classic Irish tunes, sing-alongs, and pub favorites, followed by The Chancey Brothers to turn up the energy with high-spirited Irish music that'll have the whole pub dancing and clapping along. Expect a buzzing pub, Irish dancing, packed floors, and that once-a-year St. Patrick's magic where everyone feels like family. Whether you're here for the music, the Guinness, the laughter, or all of it — this is where the celebration lives. Come for a song, stay for the night — and make memories you'll talk about all year long.

TICKETS \$15

SUNDAY MASS & FULL IRISH BREAKFAST

SUNDAY, MARCH 22 | MASS 10:00 AM | FOLLOWED BY IRISH BREAKFAST
Join us for our most popular Sunday tradition! Attending Mass is welcome but not required; breakfast service begins once Mass concludes and pub doors open. RSVP encouraged; purchase online or call 773-282-7035 (ext. 10).

TICKETS \$30 Adults | \$25 Seniors (65+) | \$15 Children (12 & under)

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“As a new member of the Irish American Heritage Center, I'm excited to connect more deeply with my heritage and the community that celebrates it. I grew up fascinated with my roots, and now, as a mother to a daughter with Irish heritage on both sides of her family, it's especially meaningful to be able to help her learn more about Irish culture and traditions. Very excited to be participating in this year's Biennial Juried Art Exhibit and look forward to attending more community, cultural, and art events at the Center. I am also very excited for the St. Patrick's season celebrations this month!”



—Steph Galan

MEMBERSHIP

Enhance your IAHC membership with options that fit every household and level of support: **Individual/Family** plans start at **\$30/\$50 for 1 year** or **\$50/\$75 for 2 years**, and include **10% off** at the IAHC Gift Shop (non-sale/non-food items) and food in the Fifth Province, **member-only ticket discounts**, **voting rights** for the IAHC Board, eligibility to **run for the Board** (members in good standing for 3 of 5 consecutive years), and an **Irish American News** subscription. Step up to **Harper (3 years, \$250)** for all core benefits. Go all-in with **Bard (5 years, \$500)** and receive all core benefits **plus a private tour of the IAHC, two tickets to the Christmas Bazaar Breakfast, an Irish American News subscription, and an exclusive T-shirt. THIS IS YOUR CENTER—BE A PART OF IT BY BECOMING A MEMBER OR RENEWING TODAY AT IRISH-AMERICAN.ORG.**

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IAHC GIFT SHOP

HOURS | TUESDAY – FRIDAY: 3:00–8:00PM
SATURDAY: 10:00AM–8:00PM

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Buffalo or Jameson glaze, served with raw vegetables and ranch.
- Vol au Vents - 120**
Puff pastries filled with chicken and mushrooms in a white wine sauce.
- Buffalo Chicken Dip - 80**
Served with pita chips and fresh vegetables.
- Sausage Rolls - 120**
Traditional Irish sausage wrapped in flaky puff pastry, served with mushroom gravy.

Reuben Egg Rolls - 100
Corned beef, Swiss cheese, and sauerkraut, fried crisp, served with a 1000 dressing.

Chicken Tenders - 120
Homemade Chicken Tenders served with our delicious honey mustard.

Mashed Potato Balls - 100
Fried mashed potato balls with bacon, cheddar and green onion served with ranch dressing.

Pretzel Bites - 80
Served with honey mustard and cheese

Homemade Brown Bread - 30
Fresh housemade brown bread served with butter.

SALADS

Chopped Salad - 90
Grilled chicken, avocado, crumbled blue cheese, crumbled bacon, hard boiled eggs, mixed greens.

House Salad - 50
Mixed greens, diced tomatoes, shredded carrots, shredded cabbage, and croutons.

Chicken Caesar - 80
Grilled chicken, romaine, parmesan and croutons tossed in caesar dressing.

Buffalo Chicken Salad - 80
Crispy lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber, crumbled blue cheese, grilled chicken tossed in buffalo sauce and served with ranch dressing.

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Pulled Pork, crispy onions, served with BBQ sauce.
- Corned Beef Sliders - 120**
Classic corned beef with Swiss cheese and mayo.

Individual Corned Beef Sandwich - 15.95
Individually packaged corned beef sandwich and served with Irish Tayto Chips.

Blackened Chicken Sandwich Platter - 180
Cajun-spiced chicken with lettuce, tomato, mayo.

Corned Beef Sandwich Platter - 180
Classic corned beef with Swiss cheese and mayo.

ENTREES

Shepherds Pie - 150
Ground beef, green peas, carrots, onion, in a homemade gravy, topped with golden brown mashed potato.

Bangers and Mash - 150
Winstons sausages served over mashed potatoes and mushroom gravy.

Traditional Irish Breakfast - 220
Irish sausage, Irish bacon, black and white pudding, Irish beans, fried tomato, scrambled eggs, homemade brown bread.

Corned Beef and Cabbage - 180
Housemade corned beef served with cabbage, vegetables and boiled potatoes and horseradish.

Chicken Curry - 180
Diced chicken breast, sauteed with bell pepper and onion bathed in Irish curry served with rice.

Mystic Meatloaf Dinner - 190
Homemade meatloaf, mashed potatoes and vegetables, served with homemade mushroom gravy.

DESSERT

Marchins Brookie - 50
Half brownie, half cookie.

Homemade Bread Pudding - 70
Moist Cake infused with cherries.

MA Goes ROGUE

CATERING



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The Irish and How They Got That Way at Ruth Page Center for Performing Arts thru Mar -15

Award-winning Porchlight Music Theatre is proud to announce the cast and creative team for the next production in its 31st season, *The Irish ... and How They Got That Way*, by Frank McCourt, original musical arrangements by Rusty McGee with music and lyrics by various artists, directed by David Girolmo and music directed by David Fiorello, through March 15, 2026 at The Ruth Page Center for the Arts, 1016 N. Dearborn St.

The Irish ... performance schedule is Thursday and Fridays at 7:30 p.m., Saturdays at 2 and 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. The Irish ... is included in Porchlight's 2025 - 2026 subscription series, available at PorchlightMusicTheatre.org. Single tickets & reserved seating on sale for \$24 - \$110 at Porchlightmusictheatre.org

or by calling the Porchlight box office at 773.777-9884

The Irish ... and How They Got That Way is an irreverent and musical history of Ireland through the tumultuous 20th and 21st centuries seen through the eyes of Pulitzer Prize winning author, Frank McCourt (Angela's Ashes, 'Tis, Teacher Man) whose razor sharp wit, coupled with his



trademark satirical irony and boundless love for the Irish people are all underscored by humor, heartache and a glorious score that spans 100+ years from "Danny Boy," "Galway Bay" and "The Rare Old Times" to "Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ra" and U2's "I Still Haven't Found What I Am Looking For."

Sunday, Feb. 8 at 2 p.m.
Thursday, Feb. 12 at 7:30 p.m.
Friday, Feb. 13 at 7:30 p.m.
Sat., Feb. 14 at 2 & 7:30 pm
Sunday, Feb. 15 at 2 p.m.
Thursday, Feb. 19 at 7:30 p.m.
Friday, Feb. 20 at 7:30 p.m. - Porchlight Young Professionals' Happy Hour and A Hit
Sat., Feb. 21 at 2 & 7:30 pm
Sunday, Feb. 22 at 2 p.m.
Thursday, Feb. 26 at 7:30 p.m.
Friday, Feb. 27 at 7:30 p.m.

Satu., Feb. 28 at 2 & 7:30 pm
Sunday, March 1 at 2 p.m.
Thursday, March 5 at 7:30 pm
Friday, March 6 at 7:30 p.m.
Sat., March 7 at 2 and 7:30 pm
Sunday, March 8 at 2 p.m.
Thursday, March 12 at 7:30 pm
Friday, March 13 at 7:30 p.m.
Sat., March 14 at 2 & 7:30 pm
Sunday, March 15 at 2 p.m.
Show dates, post-show discussions, etc. subject to change.

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Tax Season Alert! A Less-Stress Tax Filing Checklist

Tax season can sometimes bring a mix of anxiety and a long list of action items, but it doesn't have to! And you don't have to be an expert on the tax code or a senior accountant to have a smooth filing experience. The secret ingredient is organization. By gathering your documents early, you can help avoid last-minute scrambles, reduce the

everything as it arrives in your mailboxes.

1. Personal Identification & Information
 - Social Security Numbers: Required for you, your spouse, and all dependents.
 - Bank Account Info: Routing and account numbers for direct deposit (the fastest way to get your refund).
 - Last Year's Return: Your

interest statement and property tax records.

- Charitable Contributions: Receipts for cash donations and acknowledgments for donated goods.
- Education Expenses: Form 1098-T for tuition and receipts for books or supplies.
- HSA/FSA Contributions: Records of your health savings account activity.
- Medical Expenses: If you plan to itemize, keep a log of unreimbursed medical costs.
- 4. The Digital Frontier
 - Cryptocurrency & Digital Assets: Records of any sales, exchanges, or "airdropped" tokens.
 - IP PIN: If the IRS issued you an Identity Protection PIN, you must have this to file.

Master Your Money
By Mike Corrigan



risk of errors, and potentially speed up your refund.

Why Organization Matters

The IRS processes millions of returns every year. Errors, even small ones like a transposed digit in a Social Security number or a missing 1099, may lead to processing delays or potentially an audit. Having a clear picture of your annual income and expenses allows you or your tax preparer to help identify tax-saving opportunities and may avoid the headache of mistakes that require more paperwork.

Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) from last year is often needed to verify your identity for e-filing.

2. Income Statements
 - Form W-2: From each employer you worked for in the year.
 - 1099-INT / 1099-DIV: For interest and dividends earned on your investments.
 - 1099-B: Details the proceeds from the sale of stocks or bonds.
 - 1099-NEC / 1099-K: If you did freelance work or participated in the gig economy.
 - 1099-R: For distributions from IRAs, 401(k)s, or pensions.
 - SSA-1099: If you received Social Security benefits.
3. Adjustments & Deductions
 - Form 1098: Mortgage

How We Can Help

While gathering documents is the first step, the real strategy comes into play when we assess how these numbers fit into your long-term wealth plan. Are you taking advantage of tax-advantaged accounts? Is your portfolio balanced to minimize tax liabilities?

Don't wait until April 14th. Reach out to our office today to schedule a pre-tax review. Let's make this tax season an opportunity to review your financial health, maximize your deductions, and set the stage for a prosperous year ahead.

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YOUR TAX PREP CHECKLIST

To help you, we've compiled this checklist based on the latest IRS guidelines. Use this to create a tax folder (physical or digital) to house

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'The Cranberries - That's Where I'm From!'

by Aoife O'Connell, Assistant Arts Officer, Limerick City & Co. Council.

I'm from Limerick City. Originally a Viking settlement, situated on the banks of the Shannon River in Ireland's mid-west. It is home to beautiful Georgian architecture, a Norman castle, and medieval streets. It is sports crazy across soccer, hurling, golf, and rugby. The Treaty city is famed for Richard Harris, Terry Wogan and The Cranberries.

This first time I realised The Cranberries are a global rock band was while I was walking around Phewa Lake, Pokhara, Nepal. Ireland has global musical acts, Enya - sure, U2- obviously, but as I strolled around the edge of this lake, in the Himalayas, a Nepali teenager was sitting, strumming a guitar, singing 'Zombie'.

A few weeks later I found myself on a remote beach, accessible only by boat or hike, in Koh Phangan, Thailand. In the evenings, the guests and the staff would all chill out together, chatting, listening to music, and one night the chef, a woman from Myanmar, performed her party piece. She pulled the long wooden stick she had holding her hair up in a bun, used it as a microphone, and sang 'Zombie'.



Dolores O'Riordan Mural.

When she finished, I yelled "The Cranberries - that's where I'm from!" This is the power of music; it can represent you and your culture across borders, across languages, but also gives you a sense of your home and your culture when you are away. I know many Irish in America stay connected to their heritage through music and stay connected to each other through their shared love of their music. Music can form a large part of your identity.

Live music brings people together to share a unique moment. The energy and atmosphere created between the crowd and musicians is a collaborative

endeavour that fosters connections among strangers, turning individuals into a community. It is a big part of life in Limerick, and growing up here, as a teenager, evenings and weekends were spent in small venues like the Limerick Boat Club or the High Stool Bar to see my friends' bands, nightclubs like Trinity Rooms to dance away to DJs, or Dolan's to see national and international performers.

While some of these venues are no longer in operation, the appetite for live music in Limerick city is unbeaten. The diversity of music events, festivals and venues is stronger than ever. I returned to Limerick city to live in 2022 after some time living both abroad and in other Irish cities, and its musical pulse is palpable. In those short few years, I have danced under the 'Big Top' in Limerick's Milk Market to the electronic tunes of Orbital, experienced the immersive sounds and visuals of Kraftwerk in the 13th century King John's Castle. I have sung along, word for word, with over 20,000 others in Thomond Park, when Liam Gallagher played "Definitely Maybe" 30th Anniversary Tour, and I have sat in small local pubs for trad sessions with local musicians.

This summer will be no different. The long summer evenings will be spent riverside by thousands in King John's Castle with international stars The Pixies performing in Limerick for the very first time with two special outdoor performance as part of their Pixies 40 worldwide headline tour, 31st May and 1st June. Patti Smith, singer, songwriter, poet and influential member of the New York City - based punk rock movement will perform her debut album "Horses" 14th July, live at the castle. Local heroes Hermitage Green will take to the castle stage 3rd May, marking their 15-year anniversary with performances of folk, rock, and roots music.

The Coronas last 4 albums have gone straight to number 1 in the Irish charts and their following has grown exponentially overseas, with recent sold-out tours in the UK, North America and Australia. They will play shannon-side 29th May.

One of Ireland's most enduring and beloved rock bands, The Stunning will play 30th May. When they reformed in 2003 to reissue their debut album independently, the response was overwhelming: their autumn tour became the highest grossing tour in Ireland that year, with fans travelling from around the globe to see them, and new wave of international recognition arrived when Irish anthem, 'Brewing Up a Storm' featured in the hit Netflix series House of Guinness.

Music Festivals like Top 8 will return to present Hip-Hop and Street Dance events across the city centre

venues indoor and outdoor in March. Our University Concert Hall plays host to a choral festival 5th - 7th June. The event will be a vibrant celebration of song, packed full of performances, workshops, sightseeing, and plenty of opportunities to make lasting memories with fellow singers.

In August, Féile na Gréine will fill the venues and the streets across the city with experimental and emerging

celebrating Jazz at Limerick's Jazz Festival. Organised by Limerick Jazz Society, who have been promoting and celebrating all things jazz for over 40 years, they continue to support local and bring international jazz musicians to play for Limerick audiences.

Memories will be made, the energy felt, it will be a summer of conviviality. Limerick's musical pulse will beat.

Each morning on my way to work I



King Johns Castle Concert

Photo: Dean O'Donoghue.

music. Previous years have seen strong programming with ambient sounds, bouzouki, club night take-overs, pop, punk, grunge, and everything in between.

In late September we will be

playing a mural of Dolores O' Riordan, who sadly passed in 2018. Painted by street-artist Aches, it depicts her mid song. As I pass, I look at her proudly and think "The Cranberries- that's where I'm from."

ATLANTIC EDGE
LIMERICK
EUROPEAN EMBRACE

Limerick is a unique destination for tourists, offering a perfect blend of friendly locals, captivating folklore, and hidden gems.

Limerick Greenway invites cyclists and walkers to explore scenic landscapes, while the medieval town of Kilmallock immerses visitors in history.

Thrill-seekers can enjoy the buzz of the Ballyhoura Mountains, while Lough Gur Lakeshore Park and its ancient Stone Circle offer a deeper connection to Ireland's past.

Treaty City Brewery Tours provide a taste of locally crafted beer, rounding out a memorable experience.

Limerick is a must-visit destination for tourists in 2025, where vibrant culture, rich history, stunning landscapes, and a warm, welcoming atmosphere await around every corner.

Limerick.ie #LimerickEdgeEmbrace



Retired Firefighter Kevin O'Connor Saved by Firefighters and Paramedics

Kevin O'Connor spent his 30 year career responding to those in need. He retired as a Chicago firefighter and recently he experienced a medical emergency himself.

On Tuesday, he thanked those firefighters and paramedics who

saved his life.

Kevin, a 79 year old youngster is no stranger to a fire station. For more than 30 years, he was a firefighter with the Chicago Fire Department and helped out in his share of emergencies.

Last September, he woke up

one morning and was having trouble breathing and knew something was wrong.

He contacted a neighbor who got the Fire Dept., to respond.

O'Connor doesn't remember much about that morning as he lost consciousness.

Five firefighters and paramedics from Niles arrived and realizing Kevin was in cardiac arrest.

They didn't realize at first that they were treating a fellow firefighter, they did their job in an exemplary fashion, and

Kevin is with us today!

The team worked fast to get O'Connor to the hospital.

"As soon as we got him into the ambulance, we started working and we were able to bring him back," Darrian Roszkowiak said.

"I found out today I stopped breathing, and they did CPR. They did their job, thank God for them," O'Connor said.

"Working calmly, decisively and one coordinated team, these firefighter-paramedics applied their training, the skill and experience under intense pressure," Niles Fire Chief Patrick Maloney said.

O'Connor is thankful to live and express his appreciation to his fellow firefighters.

"I'm forever grateful," O'Connor said.

Parades, Parties, and a Donor Match Marks Mercy Home's March For Kids

Mercy Home for Boys & Girls is celebrating St. Patrick's Day while raising the funds and awareness it needs to care for children and families in crisis. Mercy Home's March for Kids celebration will help young people heal from trauma and adversity while giving them the tools they need to build brighter futures.

Anyone can make double the difference in the lives of young people throughout the entire month of March. Contributions to mercyhome.org from now until March 31st will be matched by a generous donor. Funds generated by its annual March for Kids effort help Mercy Home provide safety, healing, education, and opportunity for children

24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Friends of Mercy Home will join several events throughout the city, including the annual March for Kids Post Parade Party, a casual, family friendly affair at Venue SIX10, following the Chicago St. Patrick's Day Parade, from 1:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 14. Their all-inclusive tickets include:

Live music by St. Stephen's Green, Dancers from Trinity Academy of Irish Dance & the Hogan Irish Dance Academy

Kid and adult beverages Irish & Chicago-themed food buffets for the family.

Special children's activity section featuring carnival and arcade games, great

prizes, balloon artists, a caricaturist, a temporary tattoo station, and more.

Located on Michigan Avenue, the modern and spacious Venue SIX10 is just steps from the parade and features sweeping views of Chicago's Grant Park and Lake Michigan.

General admission for adults is \$85, and \$35 for ages 6-20. Kids ages 5 and under are free!

Pre-sale tickets are available at mercyhome.org until midnight on March 13. Proceeds benefit Mercy Home for Boys & Girls.

Mercy Home will continue to paint the town green on Sunday, March 15 by marching with its young women in the South Side Irish Parade. Mercy Home's

Walsh Girls Campus lies just blocks from the end of the parade route.

Founded by Irish American priests in 1887, Mercy Home has been led by priests of Irish descent for the past 138 years.

Today, Mercy Home's March

for Kids involves significant promotion from media and corporate partners, involvement in several area parades and events, and direct appeals to donors.

To learn more about a March for Kids, visit mercyhome.org/marchforkids.

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Experience a Real "Taste of Ireland" at the Astound IRISH VILLAGE MARKET on Michigan Avenue for Chicago's St Patrick's Weekend Celebrations

The Astound Irish Village Market returns to Pioneer Court this year on March 14th, doubling in size, bringing an authentic taste of Ireland to the weekend of celebrations.

Kindly sponsored by Astound, the Irish Village Market showcases Ireland's rich heritage through an immersive cultural experience featuring authentic Irish food and beverages, traditional crafts, and live entertainment. Visitors can enjoy live Irish music and dance performances, explore vendor booths offering Irish produce and giftware, and watch the Six Nations Rugby Championship matches on large screens.

There will also be face painting, free hand-outs and a chance to win a luxury trip for 2 to IRELAND!

Founder Joe McKittrick commented, "We are dedicated to providing an experience for people to engage with and appreciate the real traditions and produce of Ireland, coinciding with a global day of Irish cultural celebration.

This event is free-to-attend and is a great place for everyone to come to enjoy the celebrations after the dyeing of the river."



WIN A TRIP TO IRELAND AT THE



Irish Village Market

Pioneer Court, 401 N Michigan Ave



9am-3pm
FREE TO ATTEND

- Live Traditional Irish Music & Dance
- Food Vendors
- Face Painting
- 6 Nations Rugby Live on Big Screens
- And lots more!



Join us on March 14th to enter!

THE ASTOUND IRISH VILLAGE MARKET is a nonprofit, fundraising event supporting local charities.

WHAT: Astound Irish Village Market

WHERE: Pioneer Court, 401 N Michigan Ave, Chicago

WHEN: March 14th, 9am - 3pm Free-to-attend, open to all ages



Live Stage: *The Dirty Wellies, Fitzpatrick Irish School of Dance, The Noble Call and Tom Mulvey*

VENDORS INCLUDE:

- Astound Broadband
- Aerlingus
- Kerry Group
- Immersive Cultural Experience
- Concord Group
- 6 Nations Rugby live on TV
- Blackthorn & Bramble
- Chicago City Soccer
- 2 Pint Provisions - serving Guinness Wagyu Burgers
- Galway Chamber - Sister Cities
- Ballyea Jewelry
- Chicago Hounds
- Embassy Pub - serving Irish bacon sandwiches
- Concern Worldwide US
- SHIFT
- Baileys
- Ireland Network Chicago

THE IRISH VILLAGE MARKET

is proudly sponsored by ASTOUND and supported by: KERRY, Concord Group, Polsinelli Law Further details: irishvillagemarket.com Queries to: dearbhl@whitediamondevents.com

COX - Ed COX - you can see his name plastered all over the Irish American Heritage Center. But you would have to look very carefully. Unassuming, and hidden in plain view, his name, COX, is his small way of saying, "Edward Cox was here."



to work completely on his own pace and talent. When he finished one project, he would quietly move on to the next. He would go on to do this



Created around 800 AD by Columban monks, it is housed at Trinity College Dublin, serving as a masterpiece of Western medieval art and a national symbol of Ireland. A replica is displayed in the second floor museum at the Irish American Heritage Center.

most Tuesdays, Thursdays and every Saturday for the next 30 plus years! The construction committee, astonished by Ed's artistic ability and talent, started building him personal scaffolds and would ask him where he wanted them placed. Eventually they rewarded Ed by placing a chair on a scaffold with wheels so he could sit and paint. They called it Ed's rolling office. They would provide him with the finest paint suited for his painting designs with more vibrant

I recognized him immediately when he opened the front door of his Park Ridge home. I sat down with Ed and his wife Mary who have been married for 62 years. They met in a schoolyard playground on the west side of Chicago. His living room had the identical look of the many paintings and murals he left behind on the walls, arches and ceilings at the Center. His name did not ring a bell at first but while volunteering over the last several decades, I remembered a man in white pants and shirt covered with paint blotches while holding a paint can and a brush. He was quiet, didn't say much and liked to work unnoticed to just concentrate on his art.

He taught art for 30 years in Chicago schools after which he stumbled upon the Center back in the mid 1980s. The building was being renovated by the many construction volunteers and just taking shape. While roaming the halls in wait as his daughter took Irish dance lessons, he noticed the barren walls and archways and thought they could use a little Irish imagination. He attended a building committee meeting and explained his mocked up plans of fine art. They all stared at him with puzzling looks and thought that they hadn't any need for that, but gave him free reign to do his magic.

Inspired by the art from the famous Book of Kells, he went to work in the hallway at the main entrance. The Book of Kells is a renowned 9th-century Irish illuminated manuscript containing the four Latin Gospels of the New Testament, celebrated for its incredibly intricate, vibrant Celtic art and calligraphy.



Ed, & Mary, Cox, & daughter Maura Lally

colors and sheen.

He would be joined by his grand daughter Maura Lally who would help Ed with his murals.

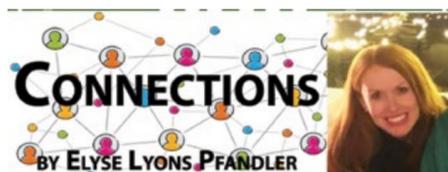
His paintings were of Celtic Art or Hiberno-Saxon. It combines traditional Christian iconography with Celtic motifs, featuring elaborate knotwork, vibrant colours, and animal-based, designs. The next time you visit the Center, look for yourself at the incredible detail and intricacy of each painting.

You can see his work on every floor at the center including the iconic portrait of three musicians on a Guinness break during a session, above the main fireplace in the Fifth Province. His brilliance is exemplified in the IAHC Library where much of Ed's work has a listing of the hundreds of volunteers in calligraphy on the upper walls. When Covid hit, it stopped Ed Cox's from volunteering at the Center. After many years, maybe it was a little too dangerous to be climbing ladders and scaling scaffolds.

Ed and Mary still venture over to the Center for supper and enjoy the music. Recently the musical group that was performing in the Fifth Province recreated and dressed as the portrait above the fireplace. Unknowing that Ed was in the crowd when they did this. I am not positive, but I would assume that Ed Cox spent more time on scaffolds and ladders, looking up at the ceilings and arches, in a single building, than any other human being in the history of the world, except for that fellow who painted the Sistine Chapel in Rome.

Ed and Mary Cox have a brick in the walk at the Center. If you look at the centerpiece of the entire brick work, the main design is a copy of Ed's artistry.

Ed could have been honored as Volunteer of the Year, at the first iBAM! (Irish Books, Arts, & Music Celebration). Instead Ed received the iBAM! Visual Arts Award, because his artwork held it's own with artists around the world.

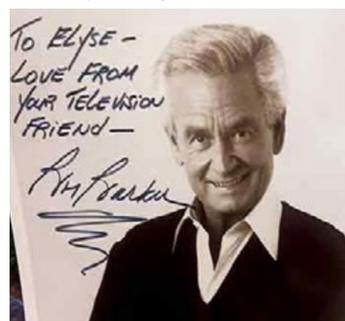


Still, they all sent me back an autographed picture. Since then, I was hooked on writing because I realized you never know who will read what you wrote, maybe even

Pen pals is a phrase that feels almost ancient in today's modern world. A pen pal is someone with whom you correspond by writing letters, sharing things that are personal, and many times, you have never even met. As a child, I didn't have a pen pal, but I was always writing letters to friends

the famous Bob Barker.

When you write something to someone else on paper, it creates a permanent record. You can look at words written years ago and instantly recall how you were feeling on that day. Reading a letter or seeing the handwriting of someone who has passed creates a feeling that just can't be replicated through email or text. My daughter and her cousin are pen pals who have never met. Her cousin lives in Ireland, so it's always amazing to my kids to receive a letter or package from all the way across the ocean. I would have loved this as a child. Their letters are filled with questions for each other, answered one letter at a time. In the most recent letter my daughter received, her cousin included a



or making cards for family. I still have stacks of letters that friends sent to me in my attic. At one point, I took my letter writing even further when I found a book at the library with "celebrity addresses." I decided to write to my favorite TV characters: Mr. Rogers, Big Bird, and Bob Barker. Mr. Rogers was a top-notch choice. Bob Barker was an interesting one, but I loved The Price Is Right and watched it religiously during the summer. Big Bird, however, is a bit questionable.

English translations written beside them. We loved reading the Irish words, and when my daughter wrote back, she made sure to use some of them. It may be months before another letter arrives, but the excitement of finding one in our mailbox is well worth the wait. Having a pen pal is teaching both girls so much—about each other's cultures, about the ways they are similar and different, and about the art of waiting and patience. It allows them to feel connected, even across an

Advertisement for Catherine Boyle, Real Estate Broker, featuring a QR code and contact information for Baird & Warner Real Estate.

Advertisement for Gadabouts 2027 Paris & Normandy Group Cruise, including pricing, inclusions, and contact information for Gadabout Travel.

Advertisement for Clancy's 95th Irish Neighborhood Tavern, featuring menu items like Pot Roast Rolls and Irish Spring Rolls.

Advertisement for Clancy's 103rd Gaming, featuring a \$5 free play promotion and a jackpot promotion.

Large advertisement for the musical 'The Irish... And How They Got That Way' at Porchlight Music Theatre, including cast members and ticket information.

Before America was a Country, Politics Created Strange Bedfellows as Ben Franklin Visited Northern Irelands' Hillsborough Castle in 1771

Hillsborough Castle and Gardens is more than just a place of natural beauty, it is a place of learning, of history and of connection.

This Irish Georgian 'big house' has been a grand family home and is now the official

residence of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, and a royal residence. It's well known for being a place for talk and negotiations and played a pivotal role in the Peace Process in Northern Ireland since the 1980's.

around Ireland. Its nearest train station is just 5 minutes away in Lisburn. Local taxis and bus services make it easily accessible when you visit the area.

With near 100 acres of land, you will find a niche for everyone and explore the natural world at every turn; from the ornamental grounds, peaceful woodland, meandering waterways and charming glens, it is a haven of beauty that will not disappoint. Visitors can avail of a relaxed

hear his passion for the 'big house' and all it has to offer.

Having hosted the NI Science Exhibition in February, David is looking forward to the Benjamin Franklin exhibition and tours starting in April, which is all in commemoration of the 250th anniversary of American Independence, focusing on Benjamin Franklin's 1771 visit to Hillsborough Castle. This will feature letters, portraits, and artifacts, exploring the visit and discussions Franklin had with Wils Hill, the 1st Earl of Hillsborough.

David told me that among many pieces that will be on exhibit, one will be the letter from Franklin describing a conversation he had with Wills. David also told me a story that Hill put his very own coat around Franklin to keep him warm during the visit. During the exhibition visitors will get to be, 'in a room where Franklin and Hill were during that visit in 1771.'

He went on to explain how important the game of chess was to Franklin. David says Franklin was likely 'playing political chess with Wills Hill.' David says that the history of Franklin and Hill is 'not known by many,' and this is so true. So, through this exhibition from April this year, he and all at Hillsborough Castle, hope to 'bring the history of Franklin and his visit to the fore,' so that people will learn of this important time in the history of Northern Ireland.

David Orr told me so much about Franklin's visit to Hillsborough and about the exhibition, but it really would be more interesting to find out from your own visit! One of the markers of the anniversary, is going to be that 'the dining room is going to become The Franklin Dining Room' - a very fitting tribute to the memory of this historical visit. There will be 'three letters written by Franklin alongside Franklin's very own chess set' on display during the exhibition, according to Mr. Orr. In addition to this exciting collection there will also be 'a portrait of Franklin and one of Wills Hill.'

Hillsborough Castle and Gardens is a place for peace and reflection. The exhibition and tours that are set to start this Spring will showcase and explore a very important time in Irish, and in particular, Northern Irish history. It will allow a very important visit and time to be showcased and celebrated.

Franklin and Hill were one of the first examples of the importance of 'political dialogue' and the forthcoming exhibition will highlight this.



Franklin spent a number of weeks in Ireland and his visit to meet with Wills Hill, the builder of this infamous castle, provoked praise from Franklin for his host. Perhaps that coat of Hill's was warm! In one of his letters, Franklin says, 'Hillsborough 'received me graciously and even cordially'.

Whilst talking to David you get a real sense of the passion he has for this location and tourist attraction. It is not one that is immediately brought to mind when thinking about a visit to Northern Ireland, but it is one which will awaken one's appreciation of both the natural world and that of history. It certainly awakened me to a time in history I was ignorant of.

As an art lover I also enjoy the idea that art features very much on a visit to Hillsborough. The art on display here has been selected to represent both the history and the modern use of the house as a royal and government residence. The art has been sourced from many places, including The Royal Collection, The Schorr Collection and collections featuring contemporary Irish artists. There is something for everyone artistically, to enjoy and appreciate as they explore the castle.

Hillsborough Castle and Gardens is a very important place historically, but it is also a very important place in relation to tourism. It has

much to offer and has a very warm welcome awaiting all who come through the gates. The State Entrance Hall has welcomed contemporary visitors from Queen Elizabeth II to pop star Gary Barlow. The art in this hall showcases



residence of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, and a royal residence. It's well known for being a place for talk and negotiations and played a pivotal role in the Peace Process in Northern Ireland since the 1980's.



Situated just 20 minutes outside Belfast and well under 2 hours from Dublin, the Castle and Gardens are easily accessible and will prove very worthwhile on your visit to, or on your adventures

walk, run openly on the play trail, and enjoy savoury delights and drinks in the cafe as well.

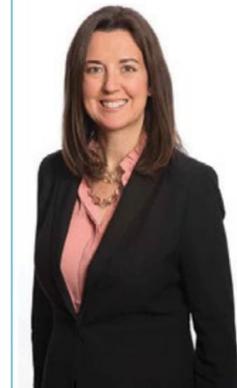
It was a delight to meet Castle and Collections Manager David Orr earlier this year and

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TUESDAY IRISH MUSIC SESSION 7:30PM
WEDNESDAY FREE TRIVIA 8PM



Readers of Irish decent will understand exactly what I am about to write. The phone rang in California where I live on February first and the first sounds of a person I hear is weeping loudly revealing the news that our cousin Patrick has just died I shudder, I am stunned, I weep, and immediately recognize as the eldest in my family I will be flying to Ireland as soon as I pack my funeral clothes.

While I get ready Roy, my best friend in the world, jumps to the phone I assume to book me a ticket. I sit and listen to him wondering if I can manage this long journey alone when he looks at me and asks "Would you like me to accompany you?" I was stunned, but knew God was working in my life. We traveled together.

In the meantime this is what I have read and learned. Death is nothing at all - My friend Paddy has only slipped away into the next room. Whatever this is we were to each other, that we are still. In the meantime, call me by my old familiar name, speak to me the easy way which you always used, laugh as we always laughed at the jokes we enjoyed together. Play, smile, think of me, pray for me. Let my name be the household word that it always was.

Let it be spoken without effort. Life means all that it ever meant. It is the same as it always was: there is absolutely unbroken continuity. Why should I be out of your mind because I am out of your sight? I am but waiting for you or an interval, somewhere

very near around the corner. All is well. Nothing is past: nothing is lost. One brief moment and all will be as it was before - only better, infinitely happier and for evermore - we will all be one together with Christ. I have fought the good fight to the end; I have kept the faith; all there is to come for me now is the crown of glory, which the Lord, the pride judge will give me on the last day.

The word of the lord, Thanks be to God.

GAELIC PARK EVENTS COMING SOON!

The Whistlin' Donkeys Concert, March 7 @ 8pm. Whether you're a fan of Irish folk music or Celtic rock, the Whistlin' Donkeys are a band that you won't want to miss. Hailing from County Tyrone, The Whistlin' Donkeys have been performing together since 2011 and have gained a strong following in Ireland and around the world. The band is known for their unique blend of traditional Irish music and Celtic rock influences, creating their own distinctive sound that will keep your feet stomping and hands clapping all night long.

South Side Irish Sunday, March 8 @ 12pm. Start the day (Sunday 3/8) with our monthly Mass followed by a traditional Irish breakfast at 9:30am. There is a separate fee for Irish Breakfast. After that, doors open at 12pm for a full day of South Side Irish fun! We'll have entertainment in each room for the whole family to enjoy! Plus, the Doonaree Pipe Band will make an appearance! Food will be available for purchase. Cash bar. Grab your tickets online ahead of time at a discounted price!

The Carraig - 2pm - Kieran Byrne, 5pm - John Staunton, 7pm - Evin O'Riordan
Tara Room - 12:30pm - Liam Durkin, 3pm - The Dirty Wellies, 5:30pm - Celtic Roots
Emerald Room - 1pm - O'Leary's Lantern, 5:30pm - One for the Ditch

St Patrick's Day Sunday Celebration, Ma 15 12pm. We'll have entertainment in each room for the whole family to enjoy! Plus, a visit from the Doonaree Pipe Band at 3:30pm. Food will be available for purchase. Cash bar. Grab your tickets online ahead of time at a discounted price!

The Carraig - 12pm - Kieran Byrne, 4pm - Joe & Declan McShane, 7:30pm - Gerry Haughey
Tara Room - 1pm - The Chancers, 3:30pm - Reilly, 6pm - The Narrowbacks
Emerald Room - 1:30pm - The Larkin & Moran Brothers, 5:30pm - Ben Traverse,

Simple Things Concert, March 20 @ 8pm. Simple Things are a Kerry based folk / pop three piece band, featuring vocalist / rhythm guitarist Dylan, bass guitarist and backing vocalist Shane and accordion / keyboard player Kealan Cahill.

Both Kealan & Dylan started out their journey in music playing Irish traditional music together, before developing and exploring new territories in pop music. Shane joined the band in early 2023 with an indie influenced background. Simple Things brings a fresh new flavour to pop music, with a traditional Irish influence.

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- ACROSS**
- Commercials
 - Punjabi believer
 - First Irish woman to win a gold medal, Michelle _____
 - "Well ___-di-dah . . ."
 - Actress Swenson
 - Illinois River city
 - Single unit
 - Perfume brand by Dana
 - Off target, of a bullet eg
 - Baby bottom sprinkles
 - Generosity
 - ___ Bice, Idol runner-up
 - "Strength, Courage and Wisdom," singer, India
 - Spring clamp used in thee office, 2 words
 - City in Cumbria
 - Dwelling place
 - Irish gold medalist in the 800 meter swim in 2024, ___ Wiffen
 - Irish woman who won gold in boxing in 2012, Katie _____
 - Husky burden
 - Supervised
 - Uplifting enlightenment
 - Europe and Asia mountains
 - Credit, abbr.
 - Laughs disrespectfully
 - Pretentious sort
 - Deep ravine
 - ___ adagio (score direction)
 - Vane abbr.
 - "That's a lie!"
 - Pardon me!
 - Modern Irish composer,

- Wilson
- Flat sign, 2 words
 - Sped
 - Capitol Hill vote
- DOWN**
- Many, 2 words
 - West coast town, ___ Point
 - Popular museum in Vermont
 - Presides over
 - ___ hurry, 2 words
 - USSR spy group, abbr.
 - Transport
 - Composer Prokofiev
 - Oliver's request
 - Nest eggs, briefly
 - Cans
 - Venom
 - Grave danger
 - Crash into
 - Half-circle
 - Babylonian god
 - Deception
 - High-speed Internet inits.
 - Old, for short
 - Science of matter and energy and their interactions
 - D.J.'s stack
 - Mixture of a resin and an essential oil
 - Bathroom fixtures brand
 - Coastal flier
 - Earl Grey, e.g.
 - Gallery display
 - Garage floor blemish, 2 words
 - Venture capital, for short
 - Bench locale
 - Cara of "Fame"
 - A long way
 - Cottontail's tail
 - Billionth, prefix
 - Like some flights to LAX, abbr.
 - Jabberwocky poem line, "... Did ___ and gimble in the wabe"
 - Model
 - Insurance company for military personnel and their families
 - Refuse
 - Tic-tac-toe winner
 - Life saving technique, abbr.

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For and Against a United Ireland Discussion with Fintan O'Toole and Sam McBride at Chicago Club March 12

iBAM! award winner, Fintan O'Toole, and Sam McBride, the authors of *For and Against a United Ireland* will be in Chicago 3-12 to discuss their new book.

The discussion regarding a United Ireland in Chicago is heavily focused on the book, *For and Against a United Ireland* by Fintan O'Toole and Sam McBride, which presents



(l to r): Fintan O'Toole and Sam McBride balanced arguments for both sides rather than picking one. While various Chicago-based Irish institutions and networks exist, the discourse, particularly

concerning this new literature, aims for an impartial analysis of the constitutional, economic, and social implications of unification.

For and Against a United Ireland was commissioned by the ARINS Project (Analysing and Researching Ireland North and South), a joint initiative of the University of Notre Dame's Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies and the Royal Irish Academy. Interested in attending? Call the Chicago Club for more information: (312) 427-1825

FOR AND AGAINST A UNITED IRELAND
FINTAN O'TOOLE AND SAM MCBRIDE

"WE OWE IT TO EACH OTHER TO CONSIDER THESE ISSUES THOUGHTFULLY AND RESPECTFULLY. NOT EVERYONE WHO WENT BEFORE US HAD THIS CHANCE."
—FROM THE INTRODUCTION

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EL Translated From the Irish

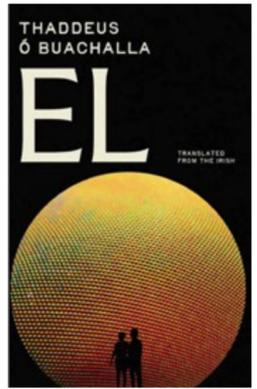
By **Thaddeus Ó Buachalla**
'A brilliant fusion of scholarly detective work and speculative fiction that will leave you questioning the nature of reality itself.' - John Ahern

When Cork academic Seán kills an annoying fly and examines it under his flatmate's microscope, he makes a discovery that will shatter everything he believes about reality. What he sees in that tiny specimen launches him into a labyrinth of historical conspiracy, ancient texts, and dangerous secrets that powerful people have killed to protect.

As Seán and his fellow researchers dive deeper, they uncover evidence that this same discovery was made centuries ago by some of Europe's greatest minds—Galileo, Milton, Newton—only to be ruthlessly suppressed.

From the scientific academies of 17th-century Amsterdam and Paris to the corridors of power in Renaissance Rome, a hidden truth has been carefully buried, one that challenges our understanding of human civilisation itself. But knowledge this profound comes at a price. As the mystery deepens, Seán realises that some secrets have guardians who will stop at nothing to keep them hidden.

In our age of deepfakes and social media deception, EL asks the most urgent question of our time: who controls reality?



Part academic thriller, part historical mystery, EL is a mind-bending exploration of truth, faith and the price of knowledge that asks: what if everything we think we know



about our place in the universe is wrong? Translated from Irish by the author, this award-winning work

captures the authentic voice of contemporary Irish literature.

This novel was first published in Irish by Coiscéim and was awarded Irish Language Novel of the Year at the An Post Irish Book Awards.

Thaddeus Ó Buachalla (pictured), is an Irish language author, poet, and musician from Cork City. He holds a PhD in Modern Irish from University College Cork and is the author of the critical study *Clocháin sa Scoilín* on the postmodern novel in Irish literature. His debut novel *EL* won an Oireachtas Literary Award and Irish Language Book of the Year at the An Post Irish Book Awards. His epic poem *Imram an Phréacháin*, which chronicles a surreal nocturnal journey through Cork City, has been widely performed as a multimedia spoken word show with his own musical compositions. Ó Buachalla's work combines fantastical elements with sharp satirical commentary on contemporary life, blending postmodern aesthetics with distinctly Irish urban sensibilities.

Critics have compared his writing to Umberto Eco, while noting its uniquely Corkonian character that brings metropolitan vitality to modern Irish language literature. He is currently completing his second novel, *Arrazalius, nó Cathú Antaine*, a surreal work inspired by Hieronymus Bosch and set in 15th century Netherlands.

CHECK IT OUT!
the Irish Book Club
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The Original Rules of the Card Game '25'

A newly republished 1870 rulebook preserves the earliest written rules of Irish trick-taking games.

First published in 1870, *The Pocket Guide to Spoil-Five, Twenty-Five, & Forty-Five* by Henry "Cavendish" Jones is the earliest known book devoted entirely to the rules of Irish trick-taking card games—including the game now commonly known as 25.

Jones (1831-1899) was one of the most influential authorities on games of the 19th century. Writing under the pen name Cavendish, he authored definitive guides to card and lawn games and was instrumental in shaping modern sports culture—most notably helping to establish Wimbledon and serving as its first official referee.

This newly republished edition presents Cavendish's original text in a faithful modern reproduction. Inside, readers will find detailed rules covering setup, dealing, play, robbing, and reneging, along with guidance on misdeals, illegal plays, and dispute resolution. Cavendish also provides historical context for these Irish games and offers strategic advice aimed at improving competitive play.

More than a rulebook, *The Pocket Guide to Spoil-Five, Twenty-Five, & Forty-Five* serves as a snapshot of how these games were played and understood in the 19th century. For longtime players, it offers a definitive reference; for newcomers, a direct link to the game's origins.

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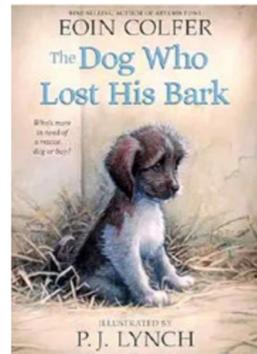
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Much More Than Leprechauns
By Sheryl O'Sullivan

Welcome back to the enchanting land of Tir na N'Óg for books. This month we are going to do an author study of the great Eoin Colfer. Colfer is a legend by now, not only in Ireland, but in the U.S., too. Let's look at two of his books.

Dog Who Lost His Bark
Award-winners Eoin Colfer and P.J.Lynch have teamed up to produce a very engaging easy reader for kids who are beyond read-alouds but not yet ready for true chapter books. The *Dog Who Lost His Bark* will fill an important niche for Colfer/Lynch fans.

The story starts fairly tragically with a young dog mistreated by his original owner, then mistreated and abandoned



by his second owners. This traumatic start to life means the puppy is very fearful and refused to bark. His mother always told his there was a boy for him, though, and he continues to hope.

Patrick, the boy who finally finds him, is going through his own time of trauma. His parents are divorcing, but neither one of them will tell Patrick this. Instead, he and his mother move in with his grandfather, who is a musician, with no explanation given to Patrick. A puppy is the bribe his mother uses to distract him. Patrick chooses the little traumatized dog though the person at the animal shelter warns him against it. He names is puppy Oz because his father is in Australia and doesn't appear to be coming home.

Patrick needs extreme patience to teach Oz to trust again, but nothing he does gets Oz to bark. Finally, Patrick tries music, and finds that Oz has hidden talent and can "sing" along. Soon Oz is not only singing, but barking happily. Patrick, though, is still terribly sad and confused.

Oz decides to turn the tables and bring Patrick back to happiness through music. It worked for Oz and it works

for Patrick.

The story is told in such an engaging style even though the topics (animal abuse and divorce) are difficult topics. The font is often put in all caps to emphasize the words Oz is thinking. For example, Patrick becomes AWESOME PATRICK. The frequent pencil illustrations help the story along, and the drawings of Oz are particularly endearing.

As an added bonus, for good or bad, this book has an AR quiz so your students who take part in Accelerated Reader in school can get two points for reading this great book.

Artemis Fowl
No discussion of Eoin Colfer's work would be complete without looking at *Artemis Fowl*. This is the work that really brought fame and fortune to Colfer. After the first book was published in 2001, a series followed with eventual additions like graphic novel versions of the books. They were wildly popular in Ireland and became popular eventually all over the world.

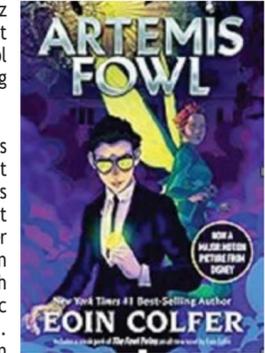
Let's look at the first book in the series, entitled simply, *Artemis Fowl*. Artemis is a twelve-year-old genius who has turned his brainpower to criminality. His father is missing, and his mother has some sort of malady which causes her to hallucinate, so Artemis is pretty much on his own. Well, except for Butler, his able bodyguard.

In this first book, we are introduced to all these human characters and also to a whole underground cast of fairies, elves, trolls, gnomes, sprites and pixies. Artemis' father has somehow lost the family fortune, and Artemis means to regain it using gold from the fairies. He has a secret weapon. He has the Fairy Booke which

tells all the rituals and rules of the underworld. It was written in Gnommish, naturally, but this has proven to be no problem for criminal genius, Artemis.

With this Booke it should have been easy to kidnap a fairy and get the gold ransom, but he makes the mistake of kidnapping Captain Holly Short of the LEPrecon unit. This is an elite unit of the Lower Elements Police (LEP), and Holly is the first female to be a part of it. Leprechaun, then, isn't a type of being. It is just a job. And it has nothing to do with green knickers and golden shoes.

Holly and Artemis go head-to-head over the gold. Holly has the entire LEPrecon unit behind her, and Artemis has



Butler. Since both Butler and the LEP are trained for battle, you would expect this book to have lots of battle scenes. And it does! Far from being gory, though, these scenes are laced with humor and driven by technology, some real and some invented.

The book is a creative treasure that will pull kids in and keep them guessing. The language, like LEPrecon, is also inventive. Droll humor is laced through even the most intense battle scenes. Lots of important themes, such as women in nontraditional careers, what makes up evil and good, environmental damage by humans, and the dangers of arrogance, are all considered through the action of the book. Artemis turns out to be a

criminal with a heart of gold. Holly turns out to be the rare fairy with feelings. The book never lets things be simple, even in battle. Kids will turn to this book for the page-turning action, but they will take away much more. And, as a bonus, every page has a line of text written in Gnommish. This code is never explained, and to decode the Gnommish alphabet and read these lines takes perseverance. Just the type of perseverance you would

expect to find in kids who enjoy the adventures of a genius twelve-year-old criminal. Just a hint: pages 26 and 27 are very helpful in getting started with code-breaking.

It is no wonder this book has spawned a series and a raft of fans. Your kids will like it too, and hear a bit more about Ireland and its fairy-world while they are at it.

Out of space for this month! Keep enjoying those Irish children's books!

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FEBRUARY CROSSWORD ANSWERS



By Jim August
Thought for Food

It's March and you know what that means, at least a couple of weeks of St. Patrick's Day celebrations. Parties, parades, pints, corned beef and cabbage, and of course Irish soda bread. I have been baking Irish soda bread, brown [wheaten] bread, and scones for over 45 years. When we owned The Irish Shop in Oak Park, IL. I would bake fresh breads every Friday for the store. Since closing in 2022 I still bake for my customers for St. Patrick's Day. I sent out an email blast the other day and the orders are already coming in. They are available for pick up only in River Forest on a prepaid basis. I generally bake about 300 orders so if you are interested, I will leave details at the end of my article.

I started researching the history of Irish soda bread and this is what I found. The Austrians not the French invented croissants, but they are associated with French

necessity for Irish families facing poverty and food securities. It required only cheap and basic ingredients with no lengthy fermentation and was key to the survival of many living in rural Ireland.

The soft nature of Irish wheat which was low in gluten was perfect for soda-raised bread when yeast, and high-quality wheat was not available. The lactic acid in sour milk reacts with baking soda releasing carbon dioxide to quickly rise the dough.

Many rural households lacked ovens so bread was traditionally baked in covered iron pots called a Bastable, or on a cast iron griddle over an open-hearth fire. Soda bread was well suited for this type of cooking method resulting in a crusty loaf, and a dense tender crumb that could be mixed and cooked in under an hour. Soda bread quickly became deeply ingrained in Irish culture and daily life. Soda bread was often



cuisine, and soda bread wasn't invented by the Irish. So how did Soda bread become one of Ireland's national dishes? A gradual shifting of circumstance in the 19th century made it Irish. It is a product of Ireland's rural past along with political oppression, and natural disasters that solidified its place in Irish heritage,

Soda bread is a type of bread leavened with baking soda [bicarbonate soda] known as bread soda in Ireland, instead of yeast. The use of baking soda [pearl ash] is not unique to Ireland. Using potash from wood ashes to make bread was a common practice before the advent of yeast and used before the 1800's in other countries.

Experimenting using baking soda leavened bread date back to 1810. This technique made its way to Ireland in the 1830's. The first known recipe for Irish soda bread was printed in the Newry Telegraph in County Down in 1835. It described soda bread as a simple bread made with wheaten meal, salt, bread soda, and sour buttermilk. Soda bread became a

the only bread at the table in post famine Ireland.

Soda bread skills have been passed down through generations with every family developing its own personal recipe.

After 1850 soda bread truly rose to prominence in Ireland. With wheat once again available Irish households turned to soda bread as the daily bread and Irish staple.

Irish immigrants brought their soda bread recipes to America. Over time a characteristic American soda bread took shape resulting in sweeter loaf that included raisins, currants, caraway seeds, butter, sugar, and even eggs, making it more cake like.

Soda bread has become a symbol of Irish heritage especially popular in the lead up to St. Patrick's Day celebrations, accompanying corned beef and cabbage, oyster, smoked salmon, always with a slather of Irish butter.

Here is my recipe for Irish soda bread. This recipe results in a slightly sweet, cake like loaf that is not dry.

La Fheile Padraig sona duit
IRISH SODA BREAD
Makes 1 large loaf
INGREDIENTS;
100Z ALL PURPOSE FLOUR
10Z SUGAR
1/4OZ BAKING SODA
1/2OZ BAKING POWDER
14 OZ SALT
1 1/2 OZ UNSALTED BUTTER
1 1/2 RAISINS
1 1/2 OZ GOLDEN RAISINS
100Z BUTTERMILK

Combine dry ingredients in a bowl. Cut in butter. This can be done in a food processor.

Return mixture to the bowl. Make a well in the center of the flour mixture. Slowly pour and mix in buttermilk to form a soft dough. IT SHOULD BE SLIGHTLY STICKY BUT NOT STICK TO YOUR HANDS! T does and a little more flour. Form dough into a ball. DO NOT OVERWORK! Working will result in a dry and tough loaf.

Place in a floured cake pan. Dust top of bread with flour and cut a 1inch deep cross in the top of the loaf. Tradition say this blesses the bread, lets the fairies, and devil out, and

also helps the bread to rise evenly. Bake in a 350 degree oven for approximately 45 minutes. Bread is done when nicely browned, sounds hollow when tapped on the bottom, and the center is firm. Cool a wire rack before slicing, and slather with good Irish butter. For information about the purchase of Soda Bread, brown bread, or scones Contact Jim August @theirishshop@gmail.com I will text or email you the information with pickup times, dates, and pricing

Who Was Dervla Murphy?

Dervla was a touring cyclist and author of travel books from Co. Waterford. She is known as the first lady of Irish cycling. \

In case you are not familiar with the name Dervla it means poet's daughter. There is another famous Dervla, Dervla Kirwan (actress in house of Guinness—Historical Drama)

I have read that Dervla was very private, reclusive, informal, disarming and fearless. I admire her, as I admire people who travel the world. I think travel is a huge teacher and gives different perspectives on life and helps us understand other people/cultures. Murphy grew up in poverty, to cycling around the world, writing books, winning awards, & becoming an inspiration & role model to countless people.

She has never owned a TV, "and said that there are so many books to read, and there isn't enough time to read them all!"

Murphy rode her bike known as Roz through Europe, Iran, Afghanistan and India. I know you might be thinking about the oceans. You can take routes from Europe thru turkey to the middle east to India.

We watched Mariam Margolyes (Australian) on Netflix, and it brought to mind the iconic Dervla murphy.

My husband and I rode bikes around the perimeter loop of Mackinaw Michigan, and I felt like I could start training for the Olympics. I have to laugh when I think of the thousands of miles Murphy journeyed across the world. She rode 3-4,000 miles from Ireland to India.

Murphy has written over twenty-five books about her travels. She is best known for her book, Full Tilt Ireland to



GETTING TO KNOW THE IRISH!

By Tina Butler - Leonard

India with a bicycle.

I often wonder how strong Murphy must have been to endure all the cycling. One must be extremely fit to try something like this. You would need to be a serious athlete, with strong cardiovascular fitness, have high muscular endurance, strong core, great balance and strong mental stamina. You would have a list of things to cope with such as wind, bad weather, traffic, mechanical bike problems and dangerous places, etc.



Murphy's journey from Ireland to India took about 6 months, it was in 1963. She cycled over 3,000 miles from Dunkirk, France to Delhi on a bicycle named "Roz," passing through France, Italy, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

Murphy experienced some frightening experiences on her travels which are bound to happen with all her miles.

She was nearly raped a few times, she fractured a few ribs, attacked by wolves, threatened by different soldiers around the world and robbed. I think

Dervla Murphy.

Smidin Gaeilge **Travel—taisteal Adventure—eachtra Bicycle-rothar (ruher) Road—bothar**
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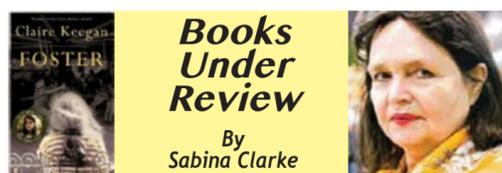
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America's Bishop...The Life and Times of Fulton J Sheen

The Greatest Evangelist of the 20th Century

by Thomas C. Reeves
Encounter Books San Francisco, California 2001

On the Path to Canonization
My review of this riveting biography of the life of Fulton J. Sheen has been preempted by breaking news! And I must say I am thrilled with this news-- as I am sure are so many other Catholics to hear that Venerable Fulton J Sheen will soon be beatified--the first step in the canonization process.

I can think of no American Catholic cleric who has had such a lasting impact on Catholics and people of all faiths-- his footprint was that powerful.

The next step is the celebration of his beatification in which Fulton Sheen would be declared Blessed by Pope Leo--this seems imminent.

In 2019, Pope Francis approved a 2010 miracle attributed to the intercession of Archbishop Sheen that had no medical explanation.

The child, James Fulton Engstrom named after Bishop Sheen during his mother's pregnancy -was conceived stillborn at home and rushed to the hospital by ambulance where he showed no signs of life and had no pulse. His heart stopped beating for more than 61 minutes despite CPR and medical efforts. The child's mother repeatedly invoked the Bishop's name.

Just as the doctors were about to declare him deceased, the infant's heart resumed beating. There was no logical medical explanation for this that the Vatican approved medical and theological panels could explain naturally. Against all medical expectations, the child made a full recovery with no lasting impairments.

In Bishop Sheen's later years, edging towards retirement at age 75, the honorary title of archbishop, was conferred upon him by Pope Paul VI.

Archbishop Sheen died in Manhattan in 1979 and his body was entombed in St. Patrick's Cathedral. His cause for sainthood originated in 2002 in the Diocese of Peoria, Illinois--the diocese of his birthplace in El Paso, Illinois.

In 2016, his closest living relative, his niece, Joan Sheen Cunningham, sued to have his remains moved to Peoria. New York officials disputed the move in court but ultimately ran

out of options and his remains were transported to St. Mary's Cathedral in Peoria in the summer of 2019.

Bishop Sheen said he would "meet with anyone who had a theological problem."

He converted many people he would meet randomly and people in high places. His faith in the supremacy of the Catholic religion was unerring as reflected in these words, "If I were a Catholic and were looking for the true Church in the world today, I would look for the one Church that did not get along well with the world. I would look for the Church that the world hates.... If it is unworldly, it is



Pope John Paul II hugging Fulton Sheen, 1978

other-worldly. Since it is other-worldly, it is infinitely loved and infinitely hated as was Christ Himself."

Today, with the Catholic Church facing significant, violent, and systemic assaults in the United States and globally Fulton Sheen's words seem almost prophetic.

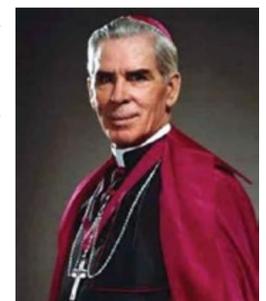
Sheen was the most popular and in demand speaker in

the modern day history of the Catholic Church. He was heard around the world on the 'Catholic Hour' radio program from 1930 to 1952 and launched his TV show 'Life is Worth Living' in 1952 while still teaching at Catholic University in Washington, D.C. It was one of the most popular religious programs in television history and won multiple Emmy Awards--making Bishop Sheen a household name. He combined simple lessons with profound concepts and ended every show with "God love you."

And whenever he was scheduled to preach at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York, 6,000 people regularly packed the Church. On Easter Sunday, 1941, 7,500 worshippers were jammed into the Cathedral, while 800 waited outside.

On Good Friday, Sheen's sermons were broadcast outdoors to the thousands standing outside St. Patrick's Cathedral. Many of Sheen's television shows, sermons and speeches are still available on videocassette and tape. That is

fame was peaking and within a year, his TV show ended amid circumstances that possibly stemmed from a bitter falling out with Cardinal Francis Spellman, the archbishop of New York. Sheen was exiled and transferred to the diocese of Rochester. His three years in Rochester were difficult.



He had been used to drawing thousands all over the world to his speeches. But when he gave a series of retreat talks in Rochester, few people came--according to Thomas Reeves the author of this book.

"The whole world comes to hear Fulton Sheen, except his own diocese," Sheen told a priest, according to this author. He found the diocese frustrating and untenable. When he resigned as bishop of Rochester in 1969 at the age of 74, he was a year away from the mandatory retirement age and in good health. "It wounded him that he was rejected by these people", the author says.

Sheen's retirement during his last 10 years was active but out of the spotlight. In in the twilight of his life when he had time to look back and reflect, he lamented what he considered defects of his past life including his vanity and his luxury. He acknowledged his taste for recognition, applause, titles, fine clothes and Cadillacs-- and considered his mortifications slight. With his failing health, he felt his physical suffering brought him closer to the suffering of Christ on the cross. And for the entire 60 years of his priesthood, he spent his daily holy hour kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament keeping the promise he made to the Lord.

Monignor Jason Gray, the Executive Director of the Archbishop Sheen Foundation in Peoria, Illinois sees the last decade of Sheen's life as a vital part of his story--In an interview with the Catholic Register , he said "I think that those 10 years were kind of a purification for him. Suffering brought him in close relationship with Christ."

His struggles in his later years with Cardinal Spellman took a toll on him. They disagreed with how the funds Sheen raised for the National Society for the Propagation of the Faith should be used. As the Director of the

organization, Sheen thought he was the rightful decision maker. What began as a disagreement turned ugly. Spellman's animosity extended beyond unpleasantness. He called Sheen "The most disobedient priest in the country." Sheen was an outlier among clerics in the Archdiocese of New York and according to this author, "He lived daily with Spellman's wrath hovering over him."

Yet, when Sheen wrote his autobiography almost a decade later, he omitted all details about his conflict with Spellman ---mentioning Spellman eight times in a positive vein. In his 2014 book on Bishop Sheen, Monsignor Franco observes -- "This goes to show you the humility of this guy and the sanctity of this wonderful man."

Sheen's appointment to the diocese of Rochester is thought to have been engineered by Spellman to make sure Sheen would not succeed him as archbishop.

Throughout his life he gave millions to charity from his book royalties, salaries and gifts. He would drop everything for a single person in need.

When Pope John Paul II visited New York City in 1979, at a packed St. Patrick's Cathedral in Manhattan, Sheen at that time feeble, knelt before the Pope who grabbed him by both arms and quickly helped him to his feet. They had a brief though emphatic conversation with the Pope putting both hands on Sheen's shoulders three times as the two men spoke face to face inches apart, while the congregation erupted in thunderous applause.

When asked what the Pope said to him, he replied, "He told me that I had written and spoken well of the Lord Jesus, and that I was a loyal son of the Church."

Sixty-eight days later, on the morning of Sunday, December 9, 1979, Sheen celebrated Mass and practiced part of the Christmas sermon he was planning to give at St. Patrick's Cathedral, according to the author.

Early that evening, Reeves writes, "he died in his chapel before the Blessed Sacrament."

About the author: Dr. Thomas Reeves is a noted historian specializing in 20th-century American history. A former Episcopalian, he was reared with the Catholic Church and became Roman Catholic after discovering that the Catholic Church is the only Church that teaches with the authentic authority of Jesus Christ. He is author of 'The Empty Church: The Suicide of Liberal Christianity' and 'America's Bishop: The Life and Times of Fulton J. Sheen and A Question of Character: A Life of John F. Kennedy.'

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New Book on History of St. Patrick's Day Parades in Chicago

By Dan McLaughlin

After many years of research and writing, the light at the end of the tunnel has come into view.

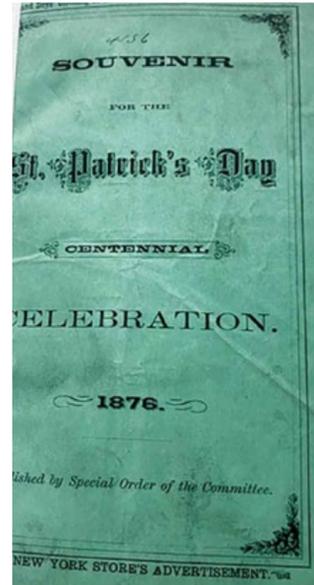
A book on the history of the Irish in Chicago through the lens of the St. Patrick's Day Parades. The first Parade being a small affair in 1843. It's a colorful and interesting story that we are all part of and today with four Chicago parades and many suburban parades, the story continues. I thought you might enjoy a look back 150 years to a very colorful St. Patrick's Day.

1876

The parade and grand balls were planned for another year of impressive tributes to the day honoring St. Patrick, and unity among Chicago's Irish. Or was it? It wouldn't be an Irish event if there wasn't some amount of discord. As with most St. Patrick's Day parades, past and present, there is always more to the story. And unity was often illusive. A meeting of delegates from the different Irish societies was described in a Chicago Tribune article on February 14, 1876. The purpose of the "convention" was to work out

Then it got interesting. There was a motion to adjourn for a week followed by a lengthy discussion described as "useless," but the majority decided the convention would continue and take up the issue of electing a Grand Marshall for the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Now, usually Grand Marshall is an honorary position, appointed or named by a committee, many times in recognition for recent service to the community or an action of note. Not in 1876. There were a dozen names nominated. One nominee, Mr. Meeney, was objected to by some delegates because, as a publicly elected official he was not eligible per the by-laws. The objection triggered a vocal reply that the Tribune reported, was followed by "a disgraceful scene." A reaction of hisses and calls tried to drown out the objectors. If you can imagine a hall with spectators along with 350 delegates joining in, you can imagine quite the confusion and chaos. After things settled down an informal vote was taken on the nominations made earlier and still in consideration. The

cold and sleet filled, windy day. A Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean article from 3/18/1876, described it as "gloomy and cheerless, with the snow drifting in the key holes of every door." The day started



with high mass at St. Patrick's Church at 9am. The different uniformed military groups and organizations gave the most impressive appearance.

The Grand marshals and their aids pranced around on great steeds with high green plumes attempting to organize the large number of marchers from numerous organizations. A squad of police represented all three divisions of the city led the parade and cleared the way. In addition, a procession of clergy led by two Bishops in gold vestments, numerous priests and deacons, along with close to 100 nuns and Sisters of Charity in their habits, added to the solemn but colorful ceremony. The Second Regiment appeared publicly for the first time in full regiments, generating thunderous cheers at their colorful and professional appearance.

The Knights of St. Patrick, which were organized within the past year, gave an impressive appearance on their black geldings. The Ancient Order of Hibernian marchers stretched out over almost half a mile and made quite the appearance in their silver edged, green silk sashes and white gloves. They were kept in step by not one or two but three bands within their ranks. Additional marchers from parishes and Irish organizations

identified with their colorful banners, fought the chill with ear muffs and their tippets (capes and scarves). The marchers that braved the cold, windy and snowy day gave substance to the opening paragraph of the Inter-Ocean article the next day. "No other Saint in the calendar is the object of such self-sacrificing, devoted worship."

The evening was full of grand celebrations with at least five of which could be compared to today's Irish Fellowship Club of Chicago annual St. Patrick's Day dinner. A very impressive show of interest in celebrating the Patron Saint of Ireland. The 7th Annual Banquet and Ball of the Irish Literary Association at the Sherman House. Second Regiment Military Ball and Clanna-Gael Guards with no less than 1,500 in attendance with bands in different Parlors of the McCormick Hall. Knights of St. Patrick celebration in a hall at Green and Washington Streets.

The Hibernian Benevolent Society, 25th Annual Ball at Maskell Hall and Turner Hall, and the St. Patrick's Hibernian Benevolent Society Ball at Central Hall at 22nd Street and Wabash.

What appears to be the only surviving Souvenir Program from an 1876 dinner, is in the files of the Chicago history Museum. The introduction refers to this being the "St. Patrick's Day Centennial Celebration." A more appropriate title might be, Celebrating St. Patrick's Day in the Centennial Year of the United States. I would imagine much reminiscing took place on the role of the Irish in this country's first 100 years. And it might be worth mentioning a little history as reported in an A&E Television Network story. "The first recorded parade honoring the Catholic feast day of St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, was held in what is now St. Augustine, Florida. Records show that a St. Patrick's Day Parade was held on March 17, 1601 in a Spanish colony under the direction of the colony's Irish vicar, Ricardo Artur.

More than a century later, home sick Irish soldiers serving in the English military marched in Boston in 1737 and in New York City in 1762."

Anyone with interesting, comical or touching stories about any of the current or former St. Patrick's Day Parades or photos send Dan an email at mclan24@gmail.com

Dan McLaughlin is former Irish Fellowship Club President, Parade Committee member, former Mayor of Orland Park, and guest contributor to the Irish American News.



details and finalize arrangements. In addition, they would be electing officers of the United Irish Societies. The convention was held at Maskell Hall at the corner of Desplaines and Jackson streets. First order of business was electing a president. Mr. David Walsh won by a small majority and additional officers were also elected.

result was Hugh J. Maguire, Pat O'Brien and M.C. Carroll getting the most votes. A second ballot was required among the three and Hugh J. Maguire came out on top. Although cries were being made for another ballot because of unfairness, the Chair called the decision final and the convention adjourned.

St. Patrick's Day in 1876 saw a terribly

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"Reaching our 25-year anniversary is a major milestone for us, and we are deeply grateful to our clients, media partners, and dedicated team for their unwavering support," said Founder and CEO Noreen Heron.

The agency has earned ample recognition as a testament to the team's commitment to innovation and consistent delivery of impact, with awards including: *Forbes Top 5 PR Agencies in America*, *PR News' Agency Elite Top 100 "It List"*, *Clutch Global Top B2B Companies*, *Expertise Top Social Media Marketing Agencies*, *Influencer Hub No. 1 Influencer Agency*

Despite facing challenges in 2020 as a result of the global pandemic, when the agency briefly dipped from 60 to three clients, Heron Agency adapted with new tactics and services to meet the changing needs of business, emerging in the post-covid economy

stronger than ever. With fewer than 25% of small businesses reaching the 25-year mark, this milestone is a testament to the team's dedication, vision, and collaborative spirit. Every associate has played a vital role in shaping the agency's continued success, and their shared passion remains at the core of this momentous celebration.

Throughout the 25-year journey, Heron Agency has proudly represented more than 75 hotel brands, more than 400 restaurants, over 1,000 theatrical productions including various national tours, and countless major events such as Taste of Chicago, The Chicago Triathlon by Supertri, Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, The Chicago Boat Show, The Race to Mackinac, the Jeff Awards, Randolph Street Market, and the One of a Kind Show. The agency has led national corporate campaigns for respected brands including Vacations By Rail, Procter & Gamble, Smirnoff, Bailey's, Paper Source, Hyatt, Marriott, and six Broadway national tours, as well as top franchises such as Jet's Pizza, Orangetheory Fitness, and Massage Envy. Heron Agency has also promoted A-list concerts and performances by iconic entertainers such as Prince, Jerry Seinfeld, Janeane Garofalo, Gabriel Byrne, Dan Aykroyd, the Beach Boys, Jewel, Johnny Mathis, Louis C.K., and Celtic Thunder.

With a deep commitment to civic engagement, Heron Agency has long been a champion of Chicago tourism, local business, political awareness and nonprofit efforts, leading change-making campaigns for organizations such as the American Writers Museum, Let It Be Us, Alliance Française de Chicago, the National Hellenic Museum and the Chicago Scots.

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Fianna Fáil TD Erin McGreehan of County Louth Welcomes Establishment of a Garda Troubles Legacy Unit to Support Victims and Families

By Estelle Shanley

Mc Greehan emphasized the new service will provide greater access to information and support for families who lost loved ones during the troubles. The unit delivers on a key commitment under the joint frame work on the legacy of the 'Troubles', announced by the Irish and British governments on the nineteenth of September 2025.

It will act as a single point of contact for cooperation with UK authorities on 'Troubles' related legacy cases, while also serving as a central hub for victims and families engaging with a garda síochána on related investigations.

The unit will endeavor to answer questions from victims and families, and where possible, provide family reports on investigations carried out by an garda síochána.

Speaking on the announcement deputy McGreehan said, this new unit will make a real difference for

families who have been seeking clarity for many years. Having one dedicated point of contact will also help people access information and support much more easily. "It reflects the move towards a more compassionate and victim-focused approach to policing, she said, and also noted that survivors and relatives deserve straight forward communication and a clear pathway when they are looking for answers about past cases. "It also ensures that Irish authorities are playing a stronger and more proactive role in addressing the legacy of the conflict and supporting those who continue to live with it's impact." Deputy mcgreehan also encouraged anyone who may need support from the unit to make contact by phone on 01-6661322, which is dedicated to public calls, or by email. "Our priority is to make this process less daunting for victims and families and to establish truth and accountability wherever possible.

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More People Needed at Chicago Police Department Meetings: Next Meeting 3-19

By Timothy Deffett

Good morning. Yesterday, after being in this fine city since the age of 22, basically 30 years, I attended my first Chicago Police Board meeting, with other extremely concerned citizens to discuss the CPD's responsibility to investigate and prosecute ICE members for PAST criminal behavior, and to demand a plan for protecting our citizens in the future. It was an education.

You are let in at 715 PM at 3510 S. Michigan (there is street and other paid parking nearby) and then you must sign a sheet if you want to speak. You will be given exactly 2 minutes (this seems extremely short and could/should be expanded even with busy schedules) and the meetings last until

about 8:25pm. The public is allowed to speak about halfway through the meeting as COPA and other business is discussed. Superintendent Snelling was not in attendance and he should be there to hear from the public in my opinion, especially if the allowance is only a half hour at two minutes apiece.



Although, I am cautiously optimistic regarding the Mayor, the CPD, the ASA, and the State trying to coordinate their efforts as of yesterday morning's news, we are about 6 months behind on the work.

I spoke to several CPD representatives after the meeting (at their suggestions) and they spoke in circles regarding their efforts, especially regarding past violent criminal behavior. They

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Boiled in Lead to Release King of Dogwoods

Legendary Minneapolis Celtic punk (folk, world) band Boiled in Lead will release their 12th album, King of the Dogwoods, on March 20 via Omnium Records on Compact Disc, Colored Vinyl and digital formats www.BoiledinLead.com.

While Boiled in Lead is known for their Celtic roots, King Of The Dogwoods is much more than that. In fact, it will take more than one listen to take in all that is going on this record. In a world that is ruled by checking genre boxes,

Boiled in Lead is radically eclectic: the Serbian folk song "Adje Jano" sits comfortably alongside strong originals like the title track, and multiple instrumentals from the delicate "Keshenever Bulgar" to the brutal "Fast Reels." It rewards the listener after one listen, yet has uncommon depth on repeat listenings.

Sure there are through lines from

the bands career; taking traditional material that excites them ("Bold Lovell"), and finding powerful ways to play it as a rock band. With the strongest four-part harmonies that they have ever had, it's less wild jam improv but more studied although they always value the element of surprise. Celtic, Americana, World, Cajun can all be found on King of the Dogwoods.



Margaret O'Connor, Breege Looney and Siobhainn O'Connor

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Chicago's St. Patrick's Tradition and the Fight for Cleaner Waters

Every March, Chicago transforms into a sea of emerald as the Chicago River is dyed green for St. Patrick's Day, a tradition that has captivated locals and visitors alike since 1962. Behind the festive spectacle lies a deeper environmental story—one that connects Irish-American heritage with sustainability, conservation, and the health of the River and Great Lakes.

The original dye used to color the river green was an oil-based fluorescein compound used by plumbers to trace leaks. When environmental concerns arose, the city made the switch to a more environmentally friendly vegetable-based dye. While officials maintain the current dye is harmless, it raises a broader conversation about balancing tradition with sustainability—something Irish culture has long embraced in its deep-rooted respect for nature.

In recent years, the call for cleaner waterways has grown louder. The Chicago River, once famously reversed to divert pollution away from Lake Michigan, has seen significant ecological improvements thanks to conservation efforts. Wildlife such as otters, herons, and beavers are making a comeback, and local groups have pushed for stricter environmental regulations to reduce industrial waste, improve stormwater management, and restore natural habitats along the riverbanks.

Irish Businesses Along the River
Chicago's vibrant Irish-American community is well-represented along

the Chicago River, with several Irish-owned establishments contributing to the city's cultural tapestry. Nestled between Dearborn and Clark street on the River Walk is the Tiny Tapp Café co-founded by Colleen Flaherty, a native Chicagoan, the café brings a casual dining experience to the Chicago Riverwalk. This venue specializes in craft cocktails and light fare, and entertainment during summer evenings contributing to the city's vibrant riverside culture. Tiny Tapp & Café offers a locally sourced and sustainably crafted menu, featuring fresh coffee, made-from-scratch breakfast sandwiches, ice cream, contemporary American fare, cocktails, and craft beer—all enjoyed with breathtaking views along the Chicago Riverwalk.

O'Brien's Riverwalk Café, an extension of the well-known O'Brien's Restaurant in Old Town, offers patrons a scenic dining experience along the Chicago River. Located at 45 East Riverwalk South, this seasonal café provides a menu featuring American classics also boasts prime riverside location making it a popular spot for both locals and tourists to enjoy meals with picturesque views of the city's iconic architecture. O'Brien's webpage also boasts an environmental promise with the following statement. "A core belief at O'Brien's is preserving our Riverwalk and protecting the Chicago River for future generations.

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We are committed to sustainability by using recycled, biodegradable cups, plates, and utensils approved by the city, along with eco-friendly cleaning products." Both venues are reasonable and will reopen May through October.

Lizzie McNeill's Irish Pub, located at 400 North McClurg Court is a friendly neighborhood bar offering beautiful views of the Chicago River, a spacious patio, an extensive list of Irish whiskeys, and a selection of tasty beers. Lizzie McNeill's is renowned for

hosting one of Chicago's largest St. Patrick's Day celebrations, providing a front-row seat to the river dyeing festivities.

Another notable establishment is Emerald Loop Bar & Grill, situated in the heart of Chicago's Loop at 216 North Wabash Avenue. This welcoming neighborhood Irish bar is ideally located just steps from the Chicago Riverwalk. Known for great food, craft beer, and cocktails, Emerald Loop offers a warm, inviting atmosphere with traditional



Irish decor and friendly staff, managed by everyone's favorite Irishman, Conor O'Keefe. These establishments not only offer a taste of Irish hospitality but also serve as community hubs that celebrate and preserve Irish culture along the iconic Chicago River.

The Brandon Road Project: Protecting the Great Lakes

Beyond the green waters of the Chicago River, a major environmental infrastructure initiative is underway to protect the Great Lakes—the Brandon Road Project. Led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, it is a critical effort to prevent invasive species like Asian carp from entering Lake Michigan. These fish, which threaten the balance of the Great Lakes ecosystem, could devastate native fish populations and the commercial fishing industry.

The Brandon Road Lock and Dam in Joliet, Illinois, serves as a key chokepoint where innovative deterrents, including electric barriers, sound waves, and air bubbles, are being implemented to block the carp's advance. In late 2023, funding for the project saw a boost, signaling renewed commitment to safeguarding the region's waters. With Chicago's Irish-American community deeply connected to the city's waterfront, this project carries particular significance—protecting not just the environment but the livelihoods and recreation spaces that so many cherish.

The health of Lake Michigan is paramount to the well-being of Chicago

and its surrounding communities. The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) is a federal program in place to accelerate efforts to protect and restore the largest system of fresh surface water in the world—the Great Lakes. The Alliance for the Great Lakes is a nonprofit organization dedicated to conserving and restoring the freshwater resources of the Great Lakes. Through research, policy promotion, education, and community engagement, the Alliance addresses issues such as pollution, habitat degradation, and sustainable development to protect these vital waters.

St. Patrick's Day in Chicago is a powerful symbol of cultural pride, but it can also be an opportunity to reflect on the city's relationship with its waterways. With sustainability at the forefront, festivalgoers can make a difference by supporting local conservation groups, reducing plastic waste during celebrations, and advocating for policies that keep the Chicago River and Great Lakes clean and green.

Here are the websites to visit to support local businesses, and get involved in sustainability efforts for the Chicago River and Great Lakes:

- Tiny Tapp & Café - www.tinytapp.com
- O'Brien's Riverwalk Café - www.obriensrestaurant.com
- Lizzie McNeill's Irish Pub - www.lizziemcneills.com
- Emerald Loop Bar & Grill - www.emeraldloop.com
- Friends of the Chicago River (Restoring and protecting the river) - www.chicagoriver.org
- Alliance for the Great Lakes (Protecting and advocating for the Great Lakes) - www.greatlakes.org
- Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) (Federal program funding restoration efforts) - www.glri.us
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Brandon Road Project - www.mvr.usace.army.mil

Stop Invasive Carp (Learn about efforts to prevent Asian carp spread)

<https://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/aquatic/fish-and-other-vertebrates/invasive-carp>

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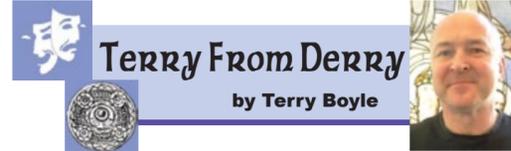
I'm just back from a three-week trip to Ireland and England.

On the day of my departure, I checked in my bag early (a big mistake). My journey home consisted of two flights: Palm Springs to San Francisco, and then to Dublin. As the time neared for my first leg of the journey, the flight was delayed, and the delay meant that I couldn't make the second leg of my trip on time. So, what was to be done? I originally booked with Aer Lingus, which codeshares with United. Since United delayed the flight, they were responsible for getting me to Dublin. I only found this out after spending several hours on the phone with Aer Lingus and United. When I finally spoke to a United agent, they booked me to fly the following day. My journey now entailed three flights: Palm Springs to Denver, then to Newark, and onto Dublin.

However, there was one glaring problem. Since I'd checked my bag in early, United sent it to San Francisco without me.

IT'S IN THE BAG:
A bag tracker is useful; and United's bag tracker had my bag still in San Francisco. When I asked United about this, I was assured

it would eventually catch up with me. The next day, I flew to Denver, and then to Newark, where I checked the bag tracker again. It was still in Francisco. A young representative for United, explained to me that the bag tracker hadn't been updated, and, yes indeed, it was on the plane. I was skeptical. I was under the impression that he would've told me anything to get rid of me, and



I was right. When I reached Dublin, I watched everyone reclaim their luggage until there was nothing else on the carousel. My bag was still in San Francisco. Once again, I was assured that it would follow me to Derry once they found a way to fly into the country.

Eight days later, I'm on the bus to Belfast airport to see my sister in England when I get a call from Dublin airport that my bag has finally arrived in Ireland. The code for Aer Lingus is EI, and some bright spark thought the E stood for Ethiopian Airlines. In those missing days, my bag may have enjoyed an exotic trip to a faraway place, who knows?



But one thing was for sure, it would be another week before I saw it again. To cap it all, I had a small stroller bag with me for my flight to England, and on my return to Belfast, I checked it in. I'd taken the early flight from Bristol at 6 a.m., and when I arrived in Ireland, my bag was not on the carousel. Everyone else had their bag but me. I went to where the chute expelled the bags. There it was, stuck

in no man's land between the belt, and the rollers, refusing to move. Throwing a computer bag, and a kind lady's bag at it did nothing to dislodge the bag. There was no one around to help. I had to wait until the carousel stopped before climbing over and retrieving it.

Despite the fact that my luggage wanted nothing to do with me, I had a great time with my family. Yes, it was cold and damp. And, yes, it was probably the worst time to visit, but I still enjoyed it. What I loved most of all was getting back to some kind of normality. When you've lived too long in the circus of Bozo's making, you lose perspective. It's nice to see that Ireland has

come a long way from being the church-ridden place it used to be. It's great to see the cultural diversity newcomers to Ireland bring to the country. And while the future of Northern Ireland is still uncertain, there's no desire to return to the violence of the Troubles. The whole of Ireland has changed dramatically since I lived there in 2004, and it's for the better. Ireland may have been, at one time, a place to escape from, but now it's become a place to escape to.

A TALE OF TWO COUNTRIES
However, it never ceases to amaze me that Irish Americans have a very sentimental view of the homeland that refuses to consider the amazing changes that have happened over the last two decades. Irish people

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are bewildered by American politics. They are even more astounded by the fact that so many Irish Americans would vote for Bozo and his crew. Losing my luggage was one thing, but had I lost my mind. Why would I choose to live in a place where peaceful civilians are shot for disagreeing with the establishment? A place where American citizens are deported based on racial profiling? These are hard questions, and they're not easy to answer.

I've lived here for over twenty years and the changes I've seen have not been good. Ireland has found a way to regain the power it lost to the church, and those politicians who kept them in their place, whereas this country has surrendered itself to a fumbling would-be despot. There is much to love about this country and much to be proud of, but the current administration is not one of them. I speak fondly of the things that I enjoy here when I'm back in Ireland, and avoid speaking about the elephant in the White House. I'm proud of

how Ireland has embraced its democratic roots, and changed things for the better. I can only hope that what has been misplaced in this country, a sound mind, will find its way back to the polling booths. It's time to no longer tolerate Bozo's idiotic meanderings, and his desire to exploit the American people while helping out his rich friends. We need a government that's accountable to the people, and not the other way around.

*Terry is a retired professor now living in Southern California. Originally from Derry, Northern Ireland. In 2004 he took up a position at Loyola University, Chicago where he taught courses on Irish and British literature. Apart from teaching, Terry has had a number of plays produced and has recently been included in The Best New British and Irish Poets 2019 - 2021 (published by The Black Spring Press). His book of poetry, Angels & Empty Pages, can be purchased at Barnes & Noble, and Amazon. He can be reached at:

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February we celebrate American Presidents. Here are a few with direct connection to Ireland

The influence of the Scotch-Irish (Ulster-Scots) on American history is both deep and enduring. Of the 44 men who had served as President of the United States by 2018, no fewer than 20 were believed to have Scotch-Irish roots. Many were descendants of families who emigrated from Ulster in the 18th century, bringing with them traditions of Presbyterian faith, resilience, and a strong sense of independence—qualities that would leave a lasting mark on the developing nation.

Andrew Jackson The parents of Andrew Jackson left Boneybefore, near Carrickfergus, in 1765. Jackson's father died shortly before his son was born in 1767, and he was raised in modest circumstances in the Waxhaws region on the border of the North and South Carolina.

Jackson went on to become a successful lawyer and businessman in Nashville, Tennessee, and a celebrated war hero after defeating the British at the Battle of New Orleans in 1815. He served as President from 1829 to 1837 and was the first occupant of the office not to come from a privileged background. Though controversial—particularly for his policies toward Native Americans—his influence was so great that the era

GOOD GRIEF

By JOSEPHINE COLEMAN



1880 and became President following the assassination of James Garfield in 1881.

In 1882, Arthur's son returned to Cullybackey with his aunt, Mary Arthur, reconnecting the family with its ancestral home.

Ulysses S. Grant Grant, far more comfortable as a soldier than as a politician, served as President from 1869 to 1877 after leading Union forces to victory in the Civil War. His Ulster ancestry came through his maternal line: the Simpson family, who farmed for generations near Ballygawley.

During a visit to Belfast in 1879, Grant remarked that there were "no more thrifty, self-reliant and contented people in Europe" than those of the north of Ireland.

William McKinley McKinley's ancestors emigrated from Conagher, outside Dervock, around 1743. A Civil War veteran, congressman, and Governor of Ohio, McKinley became the 25th President of the United States. He welcomed the Scotch-Irish Society to Ohio in 1893 but was assassinated in 1901 during the first year of his second term.

Theodore Roosevelt Roosevelt, who succeeded McKinley, also claimed Scotch-Irish ancestry, tracing family lines to the Gleno area of County Antrim. Writing about the Scotch-Irish, he described them as a "stern and virile people" who formed the core of the pioneering American stock that pushed westward across the continent.

Woodrow Wilson Born in a Presbyterian manse in Staunton, Wilson grew up very conscious of his heritage. His grandfather is believed to have come from Dergalt, near Strabane.

Wilson often spoke of the influence of the Covenanter tradition, once remarking that "no one who amounts

to anything is without some Scotch-Irish blood."

Other U.S. Presidents Commonly Associated with Scotch-Irish Ancestry

Historians and genealogists have also linked the following presidents to Scotch-Irish roots:

James K. Polk (1845-1849)
Andrew Johnson (1865-1869)
Grover Cleveland (1885-1889, 1893-1897)

Benjamin Harrison (1889-1893)
Harry S. Truman (1945-1953)
Lyndon B. Johnson (1963-1969)
Richard Nixon (1969-1974)
Jimmy Carter (1977-1981)
Ronald Reagan (1981-1989)
George H. W. Bush (1989-1993)
Bill Clinton (1993-2001)
George W. Bush (2001-2009)
Barack Obama (2009-2017)

(Do not forget Baracks Great-Grandparents came from Co. Offaly. He is definitely a son of Ireland)

After working his way through college with scholarships and student loans, Obama moved to Chicago, where he worked with a coalition of churches to help rebuild communities devastated by the closure of local steel plants.

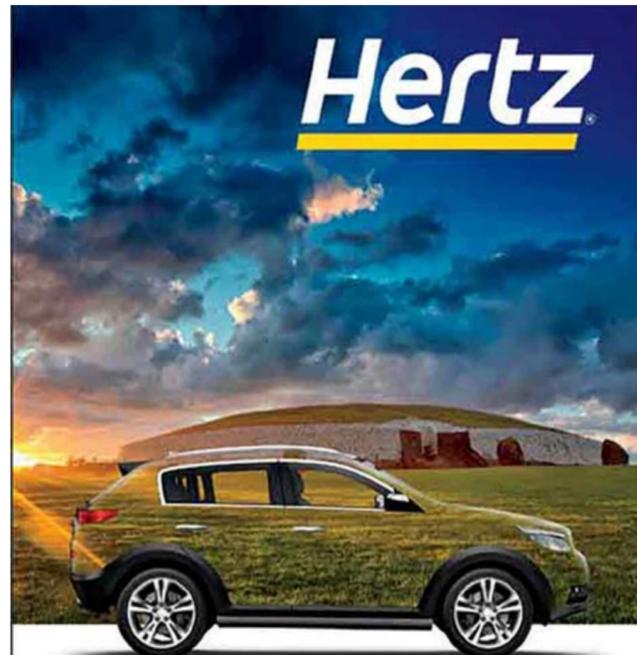
He later attended Harvard Law School, becoming the first African-American president of the Harvard Law Review. After graduation, he returned to Chicago to lead voter-registration drives, teach constitutional law at the University of Chicago, and remain active in community life. He was elected President on November 4, 2008, and sworn in on January 20, 2009. He and his wife, Michelle, have two daughters, Malia and Sasha.

A Shared Heritage

The Scotch-Irish story in America is one of migration, hardship, faith, and determination. From frontier settlements to the highest office in the land, their descendants helped shape the political, cultural, and democratic character of the United States. Their legacy reflects the journey of many immigrant communities whose values and perseverance became woven into the fabric of the nation itself.

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- Landmark Pub, Harwood Heights: Daily March 1-17 (open-close)
- Kenosha Indoor Farmer's Market @ Kenosha Women's Club: Sat., Feb. 28 (9 a.m.-1 p.m.)
- Forest Park St. Patrick's Day Parade @ O'Sullivan's Public House: Sat., March 7 (8 a.m.-4 p.m.)
- Ireland On Parade @ Gaelic Park, Oak Forest: Sun., March 8 (9 a.m.-close)
- St. Patrick's Day Festival @ Irish American Heritage Center, Chicago: Sat., March 14 (9 a.m.-close)
- Kenosha St. Patrick's Day Parade @ Cap'n Mike's, Kenosha, Wis.: Sat., March 14 (8 a.m.-)
- A la Mode, Arlington Heights: Daily Feb. 28-March 17
- Anne's Unique Boutique, Palatine: Daily Feb. 28-March 17
- Ireland On Parade @ Gaelic Park, Oak Forest: Sun., March 15 (9 am-close)

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The Irish Fellowship Club, President Michael G. (Mick) O'Rourke invite you to join the Club to kick off the civic celebration of St. Patrick's Day on Friday, March 13 at the Annual St. Patrick's Day Dinner. Held at the Hilton Chicago, the Dinner will begin with cocktails at 6pm, dinner at 7:30pm with dancing to the Rich Daniels Orchestra following. Reservations for tickets or tables are available at: <https://www.irishfellowshipclub.com/patricksdinner>.

Proceeds from the Dinner support the Irish Fellowship Club Education and Cultural Foundation, which funds scholarships at Catholic High Schools and provides grants to Irish cultural organizations across the Chicagoland area. Sponsorships are also available to support this important mission.

The Irish Fellowship Club St. Patrick's Day Dinner will recognize the outstanding leadership of IFC Chairman, Fr. Jack Clair, President/Executive Director of Misericordia Home with the Richard J. Daley Award. Fr. Jack served as the President of the Club in 2025. In partnership with IFC past Chairman, Jim Coyne, the Dinner will honor the Grand Marshal of the St. Patrick's Day Parade, Fr. Tom McCarthy, OSA of the Augustinian Order and the Guest of Honor of the Parade, the Shannon Rovers, in recognition of their 100th Anniversary.

To provide sponsorships or buy tables or tickets, please visit the Irish Fellowship Club website at www.irishfellowshipclub.com or contact Executive Director, Kathy Taylor at irishfellowshipclub@gmail.com



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March is a special month for the Irish community in America, though we go to press too early for me to tell you who won at the BAFTAs or the 98th Academy Awards right now, but keep your eyes out - and your fingers crossed - for all the Irish nominees.

The Oscar nominations were announced on January 22, and as expected, Killarney-born actress Jessie Buckley was nominated for Best Actress for her role in Hamnet, a story that looks at the tragic inspiration behind Shakespeare's Hamlet. She's up against Rose Byrne (If I had Legs I'd Kick You), Kate Hudson (Song Sung Blue), Renata Reinsve (Sentimental Value) and Emma Stone (Bugonia), and it looks like she might be a good bet to win on the night.

Hamnet also got a nomination for Coleraine-born author Maggie O'Farrell alongside director Chloé Zhao for Best Adapted Screenplay of O'Farrell's novel, while Ireland-produced comedy-drama Blue Moon has been nominated in the Original Screenplay category; it was made in association with Dublin-based Wild Atlantic Pictures.

Talking of dark sci-fi comedy Bugonia, which was produced by

Dublin-based Element Pictures, it has nominations in Adapted Screenplay too, plus Original Score and Best Picture, the latter of which means Irish producers Ed Guiney and Andrew Lowe are in the hunt for the famous golden statue.

In the technical categories, Dubliner Richard Baneham is among the team nominees for Visual Effects for his work on Avatar: Fire and Ash. He's looking for a three-peat, as he has already won for Avatar and Avatar: The Way of Water.

Finally, in the Animated Short Film category, Retirement directed by Dublin-based filmmaker John Kelly and voiced by Domhnall Gleeson has been nominated.

The biggest news from the nominations was the record 16 nods for horror thriller Sinners, starring Michael B. Jordan and directed by Ryan

Coogler. Action thriller One Battle After Another was hot on their tail though, picking up 13 nominations including for actor Leonardo DiCaprio, director Paul Thoams Anderson, Best Supporting Actress for Teyana Taylor, both Supporting Actors - Benicio del Toro and Sean Penn - Best Adapted Screenplay, and Best Picture.

Things followed a similar



Melanie Harrison and Michael Smiley at The Harrison Hotel Chambers of Distinction in Belfast

course at the BAFTA Award nominations in London, England, though also Kildare-born Pual Mescal was nominated as Supporting Actor for his role in Hamnet, and Baneham again got the nod for his work on

Avatar: Fire and Ash. How to Train Your Dragon, which shot in the North of Ireland, was nominated in the Special Visual Effects category, and Terry Palmer of Northern Ireland based Hive Effects is part of that team.

Also, the short Nostalgie written and directed by Belfast's Kathryn Ferguson, was nominated in the British Short Film category. It follows "Drew Lord Haig," a faded 1980s English pop star invited to perform at a revival gig in Northern Ireland, with unexpected consequences. It stars Aidan Gillen, Jessica Reynolds, Sean Kearns, Michael Smiley (pictured), and Seamus O'Hara.

Over in Ireland, the Dublin International Film Festival (DIFF) ran from February 19 to March 1 with a program of 83 movies, including 17 world premieres and 53 short films.

The festival opened with the world premiere of David Gleeson's Once Upon A Time in A Cinema, a joyous and heartfelt celebration of the enduring magic of cinema, which is described as "an Irish counterpart to Cinema Paradiso."

DIFF 2026 presented a record number of 26 Irish features and documentaries, and some of the premiers include 500 Miles starring Bill Nighy, Clare Dunne and Maisie Williams, The Three Urns starring Ciarán Hinds, and Samanta Nobody, directed by Ciaran Creagh.

Irish documentaries premiering include Forever Is Now, Every Moon is Atrocious, The Slightest Touch and The Charlie O'Leary Story, while Displace: The Battle for Dublin examines the current housing crisis in the capital, and in An Irish Atlantic Rainforest they reverse ecological damage on the Beara Peninsula.

The festival closed with a gala world premiere of John Carney's Power Ballad starring Paul Rudd and Nick Jonas at the Bord Gáis Energy Theatre. It's described as a rousing, feel-good celebration of music, friendship, self-respect and the price of ambition.

Finally, we'll finish with perhaps the best Irish movie news: there was a record-breaking production spend in 2025, with €544 million contributed to the Irish economy. That means 87 projects will be coming to the big or small screen this year, including 22 feature films, 17 documentaries, 13 TV dramas and animated series, and over 30 short films.

A very happy St. Patrick's Day to all of you!



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Slán Rev. Jessie Jackson

A letter from Ireland
I can't remember the details of what he said, but I remember how he said it. The rhythm and cadence of his voice as it rose and fell, quickened and slowed. It was not like anyone I had heard before. It was gospel, spiritual, musical, and far removed from the sermons at mass I had heard growing up. A shared sense of connection came alive in his words. His accent unfamiliar, his words of struggle are too familiar. I felt that connection again when I visited the Lorraine Hotel in Memphis—the site of the shooting of Dr King. Rev. Jackson was at his side that day. It is now the National Civil Rights Museum. I was stopped in my tracks by the sound of singing. A chorus of "We shall overcome." It was a recording, not of a choir in a concert hall, but of protestors on a street. It could have been Selma or Derry. The US civil rights movement inspired the Irish civil rights movement. Injustice respects no boundaries, and hope can transcend borders. Rev. Jackson remained a friend of Ireland and of Sinn Féin when our party was



(l to r): Martin McGuinness, John Hume, and Jesse Jackson all working for freedom, peace, and human rights in Derry, Northern Ireland.

marginalised and censored. He supported calls for Irish unity in the 1980's. As the peace process developed, he and other African American leaders, such as Rep. John Lewis and Rep. Donald Payne, stood on the side of human and civil rights. They challenged the record of abuses by the old Royal Ulster Constabulary and recognised that peace and reconciliation required a new beginning in policing. I remember sitting on a green outside the community centre in Portatown as we protested the imposition of an Orange march along the Garvaghy Road. Rep Payne sat across from us. He had travelled as an international observer to monitor the policing response. He placed himself on the frontline, recognising that sectarianism was just another version of racism.

Rev. Jackson has left many friends in Ireland. Those who knew him always spoke of his good humour, his laugh, and his wide embrace. He returned to Ireland and to Derry in 2017 to open the Museum of Free Derry. A history of a risen people, inspired by leaders on the other side of the Atlantic, bound together in a fight against injustice, discrimination, and inequality.

In 2020, Rev. Jackson said, "We're not going backwards; we're not going to give up. It's a healing time, it's hope time. I stand with the people of Ireland and Irish Americans and Irish in Ireland."

I'm not religious, but I'd say amen to that and thank you, Rev. Jackson.

Have a great weekend.
Ciarán
Ciarán Quinn is the Sinn Féin Representative to North America

First Installment Cook County Property Taxes Due April 1

Pappas says pay property tax bills online now at cookcountytreasurer.com

Cook County Treasurer Maria Pappas will mail nearly 1.8 million Tax Year 2025 First Installment property tax bills by March 2. Payments are due Wednesday, April 1, 2026.

"Each year more and more people use our website to pay their property tax bills online," said Pappas. "People like the convenience of paying online and not having to come downtown to pay in person or write a check and pay for postage."

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Select the blue box labeled "Pay Online for Free."

Enter your address or 14-digit Property Index Number (PIN).

A picture of your property should appear so you'll know you're paying the correct bill. There's no fee to pay online from your bank account. The Treasurer's Office accepts partial payments, but First Installment taxes must be paid in full by 11:59 p.m. April 1, to avoid a state-mandated late charge of 0.75 percent a month.

The First Installment is 55% of the previous year's total tax. Exemptions are applied to the Second Installment due later this year.

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Ireland's Regional St Patrick's Day Festivals Showcase Culture, Heritage, Identity And The Famed Irish Welcome

SAINT PATRICK'S DAY holds a special place in the hearts of Irish America, and its significance has grown well beyond a single day. In the United States, the entire month of March has been designated Irish Heritage Month for a number of years, offering an opportunity to reflect on the lasting contributions of Irish emigrants and their descendants. This year carries added meaning as the country prepares to mark the 250th anniversary of American independence.

It was in the United States that St Patrick's Day parades first began, with the earliest recorded celebration taking place in New York in 1762. The New York parade remains the largest in the world, while Chicago's tradition of dyeing its river green has become internationally recognised. San Francisco, meanwhile, will host its 175th consecutive St Patrick's Day parade this year.

For decades, the holiday was celebrated more enthusiastically in the United States than in Ireland itself. Until the 1980s, St Patrick's Day in Ireland was largely observed as a day of reflection, beginning with Mass and marked by a simple meal, with pubs traditionally closed. That has since changed, with modern celebrations embracing a more festive spirit.

Today, St Patrick's Day has become one of the most vibrant times of year to visit Ireland. Towns and cities across the island mark the occasion with parades, music, dancing and the unmistakable "craic" that has come to define the national holiday.

Dublin's St Patrick's Festival (March 14-17) and **Parade** is now among the biggest in the world, and among the most famous. Nationally televised in Ireland, the Parade welcomes hundreds of thousands of visitors, many from this side of the pond, and features stunning floats, bands and other attractions.

But it is certainly not the only show in town. There are many other regional community-based festivals which offer the visitor a more intimate opportunity to experience and interact with Ireland's rich cultural heritage, including the deep connections between the island of Ireland and America.

Here is a rundown of some of the major regional events that will mark the feast day of our great Patron Saint.

Let's begin in **Armagh**, the ecclesiastical capital of Ireland where the legacy of St Patrick remains deeply rooted. It was here that he founded his first large stone church, and the city today is home to two cathedrals bearing his name. Visitors can remember the life of Ireland's Patron Saint at the **Home of St Patrick Festival**, a major annual celebration of culture and community held in the place Patrick once described as his "sweet little hill." Running from March 8-18, the festival offers a packed program of events across Armagh, including music, song and dance, as well as workshops



The Cork Saint Patrick's Day Festival. Photograph courtesy of Michael O Sullivan Photography_OSM.



The Saint Patrick's Parade in Kilkenny. Photograph courtesy of Dylan Vaughan Photography.

and family-friendly activities. Highlights include the Sunrise at Navan event at Navan Fort and an open-air St Patrick's concert featuring the Tumbling Paddies and special guests.

Irish country music star Cliona Hagan is also set to perform at the Market Place, while the free Live Music Trail will bring 20 acts to 12 venues across the city. Other events range from a Uketrud Workshop and a St Patrick's Stained Glass Workshop to an Irish coffee masterclass.

If you're in Northern Ireland and you're a music fan, then there's no better place to be than **Belfast's St Patrick's Music Festival** (March 13-17)—five days of concerts, workshops, dance, pipe bands and community celebrations. A highlight of the program is the free Festival Village in the Cathedral Quarter, reinforcing Belfast's status as a UNESCO City of Music.

The festival offers a wide-ranging, cross-cultural program of traditional arts. Events include headline performances, informal workshops, set and céilí dancing, reflective pilgrimages and a series of indoor and outdoor events designed to welcome audiences into the city center. A strong line-up of performers includes Dougie MacLean, Planxty legend Andy Irvine, and Manchester flute virtuoso Michael McGoldrick.

Cork City has chosen "**Marsh, Myth & Magic**" as the theme of its 2026 **Saint Patrick's Festival** (March 13-17), which culminates in a fantastically colorful parade on March 17. The parade will include floats and units from every section of the community in Cork and will again

welcome a strong contingent of three marching bands from America. Another highlight will be Batała—a 75-strong international samba fraternity returning for its third year. The festival will feature live music in iconic venues across the city (such as the Cork Concert Hall and St Peter's), a Céilí Mór in City Hall (March 15), traditional games at Elizabeth Fort, as well as pop-up band performances and The Lee Sessions trad trail.

Visitors to Ireland's Medieval city of **Kilkenny** will be able to take part in the "**Together—Le Chéile**" Festival (March 14-17). The festival's packed program features more than 80 events celebrating Ireland's heritage, folklore and contemporary culture. The schedule includes family and street entertainment, walking tours and workshops, historical talks, live music and performances from acrobats, Latvian dancers, and drumming groups. There will also be food tours for the culinarily inclined, and a Music Trail. At the center of the festivities is Kilkenny's Parade Plaza and vibrant festival market. Open daily from 11am to 8pm throughout the celebration, it features nostalgic carnival rides, including the big wheel, helter-skelter, and a vintage carousel, along with local food and craft stallholders. The parade on March 17 will present over 2,000 performers, dancers, stilt walkers, puppeteers and local community groups winding through Kilkenny's medieval streets. There will be pre-parade performances from the St Patrick's Brass & Reed Band and Samba Katz. The festival and parade will have a distinctly American feel with the inclusion of the Campo Verde High

School Band from Arizona—one of the nation's top programs—and the Ohio State University Band. Other US marching bands are to be announced.

The **Saint Patrick's Festival in Killarney**, County Kerry, bills itself as Ireland's family Festival and takes as its theme this year: "**Echos of Killarney Future**." It is one of the longest festivals, running from March 13-19. Highlights include the Annual 'Charity Duck Dash' fundraiser on March 14; AbleFest—an 'Inclusive Music & Arts Festival' for people with disabilities, their family & friends (March 15); a Battle of the Bands event (March 16); and on Saint Patrick's Day itself, the dazzling St Patrick's Day Parade through the streets of Killarney with music and entertainment, followed by 'Plunge for Palliative' Dunk tank.

In **Limerick** the **St Patrick's Festival** celebrations will burst into life (March 13-17) with five days of family fun, parades and a feast of action! The theme for this year's festival is "**Legends of Limerick**," honoring legends from the past and present—from ancient myths, medieval figures and folklore, to sporting heroes, literary giants, cultural trailblazers and contemporary icons who continue to inspire. Most of the events will be centred around the city's historic Milk Market. Some of the highlights include: a Band Jamboree Concert in St Mary's Cathedral (March 14), and the 54th International Band Championships (March 15) covering 20 bands, over 1,000 musicians, and eight performance categories. Other things to look out for if you're visiting will be the Curious Street Theatre, the Irish National Clown Orchestra, and

aerial performances by Fidget Feet.

In **Sligo** the "**Legends Live Here**" Festival takes place from March 15-17, and includes a truly unique event as the town tries to achieve the World Record for "Most Leprechauns ever at a Soccer Match!" The parade on March 17 will feature two US marching bands. Elsewhere visitors can enjoy the Trad Trail in Sligo's pubs (15-17 March), a historic walk along the parade route, a Leprechaun Trail and a Cathedral music event. For all three days Patrick's Pavilion will feature community performances along with a major closing concert on March 17.

The **Waterford: 'Where St. Patrick's Day Began' Festival** (March 13-17) pays tribute to Luke Wadding, the local Franciscan Friar who, in the 17th Century, got March 17 recognized as St Patrick's Day on the Liturgical Calendar in Rome. The festival presents 30 live music acts across three stages, and visitors will be able to take a self-guided Urban Greenway tour, thanks to the city authorities' 'greening of buildings and monuments.' A new addition for 2026 is the St Patrick's Paschal Fire Show. On offer also will be free museums, historical talks, re-enactments, whiskey tasting, celtic knotwork, arts and crafts workshops, poetry, storytelling, theatre, dancing, river cruises, food stalls, and a fairground.

These smaller regional festivals offer visitors the chance to really immerse themselves in local culture. It's much easier to join in a music session, or any other community event, once you get outside Dublin. It's a more interactive experience. You'll be dancing in a céilí—if you want to—rather than watching one. The cities outside Dublin all have distinct cultures, food traditions and their own historic heritage sites. And in all of these places you will feel the warmth of the welcome that Irish people famously afford their American cousins, especially at this time of year. It's no accident that so many high school and college marching bands make the trip across the Atlantic each year to play an important part in the festivities. In many ways Irish history is bound forever with US history, and for many Irish American band members there is a huge emotional resonance to marching down the same city streets where their forbears walked many years ago.

If you are planning to be in Ireland this March why not go to more than one Saint Patrick's Festival? Ireland is small and nowhere is very far away from anywhere else. At this time of year the towns and cities all over the island really put their best foot forward. Saint Patrick's Day is no longer just for parades, it has become a national celebration of culture, identity and welcome. We don't necessarily believe in the alleged powers of leprechauns, but there really is something magical about Ireland in March!

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