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What if the Protests Demanded Universal Basic Income?

View From Ireland

By Maurice Fitzpatrick



What if the street protests that have engulfed Western Europe since late September channelled their energies into one demand, and that demand was universal basic income?

A big risk to the protesters' efforts is that governments manage to contain them by framing the protests as lacking a coherent narrative. That would be especially unfair in France where, until the middle of October, the protests were unified in the demand for increased investment in schools.

Then things got out of hand. Les casseurs (the smashers, i.e. rioters) became increasingly prominent alongside les manifestants (the protesters) and grabbed the headlines. An elderly woman in Paris responding to the vandalism and looting said: 'It says a lot about society – it shows we have neglected our education system and that we're living in a consumer society where all we say to our young people is: "buy, buy, buy". In this type of extreme capitalism, some people don't have enough money to buy all of this and so they attack'. Yes, the clash between the ideals held up by the capitalist system and the reality of poverty has driven some protesters onto the streets. But important political issues will remain long after the Gucci bling has been torched.

Protests about the cost of living, and particularly rent, caused Spanish prime minister Pedro Sánchez to call a snap election for November 29th. The protests in Spain were triggered by the eviction of an 87-year-old woman from her home after an investment fund hiked her rent from around €500 a month to €2,650 (the company did not explain to her where she would get that money). The eviction precipitated a health collapse for Maricarmen Abascal, who died in hospital a fortnight later. Protest spread as her case became symbolic of the general malaise.

Yet few political leaders have grasped the nettle. Here's one, Jacinda Ardern of New Zealand, now safely out of the prime ministership where she could have actually done something: 'We have a responsibility not to engage in binary thinking, not to engage in the language of violence, [but] to rebuild trust by building financial security in a time of deep insecurity'. She added: 'There are things we could be doing but, right now, we're making it worse'. Disappointed younger Kiwis who voted for her might ask: What things and what form of financial security? That brings us neatly back to the radical redistribution of wealth.

Protesting the cost of living is legitimate, but it remains a complaint, not a solution. If leadership emerges from the amorphous demonstrations from Milan to Lisbon it would do well to focus on a concrete and long-term remedy. The task is to translate the anger of the masses into a political programme. If protesters took a step further from their grievance about the cost of living and channelled their energies into a demand for wealth redistribution they would find their elected representatives considerably more on the back foot. When was the last time you heard a politician argue against the proposition that the 21st century has witnessed an obscene transference of wealth to the billionaire class? And when was the last time you saw them doing something about it?

Governments that can (like the Irish one) have thrown money at quasi-violent protests in the form of quick-fix solutions. Witness the Irish government's capitulation to the fuel protests this April. A government that has less recourse to that lever, such as the French one – currently borrowing at a ruinous 4.94% on its ten-year bonds, with national debt standing at €3.6 trillion, or 119% of GDP – may appear to be disadvantaged in its ability to address the immediate source of grievance, but that nevertheless gives more scope for the fundamentals to be revealed.

Universal basic income puts the distribution of wealth on the agenda like few other policies. It forces societies to question who benefits from economic growth, and who has the power to decide how it is distributed. If economic prosperity is generated by resources and technologies accumulated collectively over generations, why should its returns accrue so disproportionately to private owners of capital? The protesters who have paralysed European cities this autumn do not feel that they have a stake in their societies. The old and complacent political order would ignore that at its peril.

Perish the myth that universal basic income is a new and untested approach to succouring citizens. Alaskans in their early forties have never not had an annual dividend. The 2026 Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend pays around $100 a month to every man, woman and child. The benefit to a family that would otherwise struggle to fill the supermarket trolley is obvious. The Fund also has the benefit of being manageable for Alaska's coffers since it is funded from the investment returns on Alaska's sovereign wealth fund.

While not every country can establish a sovereign wealth fund for the purpose of wealth redistribution, those that can (and they are far more numerous than have done so) would be doing their citizens a signal service in the age of mass job losses to AI. Those that cannot, can put their hands on another lever: wealth tax.

A wealth tax that immediately and proportionately redistributed its yield for universal basic income to address income inequality would be congenitally impossible for some leaders. Friedrich Merz, the German chancellor, who helped to manage billions for BlackRock Asset Management Deutschland AG from 2016 to 2020, comes to mind. So, too, does the collapse of his party's support from 37.1% in 2021 to 17.2% in 2026 in the recent state election in Saxony-Anhalt.

In Berlin in 2021, more than one million people (59.1% of voters) backed a referendum to take the homes owned by the city's largest corporate landlords into public ownership. The result was non-binding, and successive governments failed to implement it. Then Die Linke (the Left), which had campaigned on the promise to implement the referendum result, won the state elections on September 20th this year for the first time, and became the largest party in the city's parliament. One day later, before a state government had even been formed, Merz announced that he would fast-track a federal law banning the expropriation of housing companies. Berliners had voted for a change in economic policy on housing, and then elected a party to implement it, only to have the chancellor repudiate both of those democratic acts without blinking.

Unsurprisingly, then, the protests in Europe seem to be asking what the point of political process is if not to enable people to introduce change. At the epicentre of the protest and destruction, Place de la République in Paris, graffitied beside the smashed shopfront of a designer clothes shop, was 'tax the rich'. Of the many slogans bandied about by the half-a-million-strong protest movement, these three words are the ones to stand by. The French government (and other governments too) should take note. Tax the rich. Redistribute the wealth. Don't push people too far.













17's for Democratizing the Senate

The Constitution originally only allowed for the direct election of members of the House of Representatives. This meant that the House of Representatives was the only body in the entire federal government chosen directly by the people. Meanwhile, the President was chosen via the Electoral College, the Supreme Court was composed of presidential appointees, and the composition of the Senate was decided by state legislatures This, however, would not last.

The **Seventeenth Amendment** was ratified in 1913 and required Americans to directly elect their Senators. It also empowered state legislatures, if they so chose, to delegate the power to appoint a Senator to the governor of their state in the event of a vacancy.

So why the change? If so much of the Constitution is considered sacred and very nearly perfect, why did this aspect of it need to be tossed entirely?

The reasoning behind drafting and passing the Amendment had a twofold aspect. The first was populistic in nature: special and elite interests had what was perceived to be an undue influence on the election of Senators. State legislatures could easily fall victim to the overtures of a robber baron keen on preventing anti-trust action in a state where his industry had a large footprint. In addition to the financial power of such a figure, the outsized economic power of these wealthy individuals could also place political pressure on public officials to maintain a status quo so as to not drive business (and jobs) away from their communities.

The second was a harsh political reality. State-level government gridlock and dysfunction allowed for some Senate seats to remain vacant for months and years on end. It turns out that picking two candidates to send to Washington D.C. was a difficult task for diverse legislative bodies full of egotistical politicians.

In fact, by the time the Seventeenth Amendment was adopted, several states had adopted workarounds for their residents to play a more direct role in the election of their Senators. Some states held primary elections to "elect" party Senatorial candidates. Candidates for the state legislature then pledged to vote for their party's candidate once elected to the statehouse.

Thus, the Seventeenth Amendment was an effort at reflecting a new political reality. Rather than transform American society, it caught the Constitution up to what was already happening in states all over the country. The same cannot be said of next month's amendment. The Eighteenth Amendment banned the sale, manufacture, and transportation of alcohol across the country. The temperance movement sought to rid America of a harmful vice. In so doing, vice flourished in an era of organized crime. Learn all about it in January!



Coming in January: A feature on the Valentia Hotel in County Kerry, and the new owners, Bobby Christian and Nancy Schoeck

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Game On!
By Chris Wheaton

There is a song that says that Christmastime 'is the most wonderful time of the year". It is that festive holiday season that helps us battle the doldrums of the Chicago winter, get together with friends and family and hopefully slow down a little bit from the usual rat race we find ourselves living in.

At this time of year, I think it is important for all of us to "find joy". That may be easier said than done in this wacky world we are currently living in but trust me, if you can weed out the BS and focus on the things that make you happy, your well-being will thank you for it. Find something to rejoice in; maybe it is something as simple as not being inundated with political ads while you are watching tv, maybe it is the success of the Bears (as a Vikings fan, I find no joy in the Bears being very good this season), or possibly it is just the fact that you are alive, well and reading this article. If you suffer from the winter blues and you are struggling with the baseball, hurling and football seasons being over, don't despair – they will be back in the spring, stronger than ever and who knows, maybe County Mayo can repeat as football champs! Wouldn't that be something?

On a personal note, I have been feeling extremely joyous. A few weeks ago, my daughter Olivia and her husband Jack visited from their home in Georgia with some fantastic news – they are going to be parents for the first time! Which means, my wife and I are going to be grandparents for the first time as well!!

I have spoken of Livi and Jack in the past as Jack was a very handy hurler back when Naperville had a hurling club. Jack was liked by everyone in the club and had a thirst for learning the game and went from neophyte to all-star in a matter of weeks. His stint as a solid hurler was cut short when the United States Army transferred him to Fort Hood in Texas and then again to Fort Stewart in Savannah. Knowing him as I do, I know that Captain Jack will rise to the challenge of fatherhood with the same gusto he did hurling.

As for my daughter, it is equally exciting to see her ease into motherhood. The first few months have not been any fun, adding a bad cold to the rigors of morning sickness but she faces challenges as well as anyone I know. Both her and Jack have a spirit and a bond that sets them up very well for parenthood.

I always thought that Livi would have been an outstanding camogie player, with her athleticism, attitude and tenacity but I could never get her hooked.

The next months will be full of new experiences as we anxiously await the arrival of the baby but it makes it simple for me to "find my joy". Every morning when I wake up, I am thankful for many things; first, that I actually did wake up and secondly that I have friends and family that are such a big part of my life.

I hope that each of you reading this can find things to be thankful for and to be joyous in this holiday season.

I know that many of you have personal challenges that make you want to run away and hide during the holiday,s but I can assure you that even in your darkest moments there is someone out there that cares about you.

We may not all experience Christmas as the "most wonderful time of the year" but it is my desire that each of you can find hope and happiness and something to be thankful for and something that brings you joy.

You Are Invited to the Galway Fellowship Club Christmas Party December13th at Gaelic Park

Reservations are required by December 9, 2026

Greetings! Nollaig Chridheil dhut - Merry Christmas to you!

The Christmas season is almost upon us once again, and It's that wonderful time of year when we gather with family and friends to celebrate the joy of Christmas and our cherished Irish traditions!

We warmly invite you and your family to join us for our annual Galway Fellowship Club Christmas Party, Sunday, December 13, 2026 at 2:00 PM at the beautiful Gaelic Park - Emerald Room, 6119 W. 147th Street, Oak Forest, IL 60452

Tickets are $40 per person, Children under 12 are free.

(Due to rising food costs, ticket prices have increased. We appreciate your understanding). You may pay at the door. There will be a cash bar. Please contact (text or call) Bernadette Harney Wolinski at 708-408-5994, or Maureen Harless at 630-479-1246.

We kindly ask that you honor your reservation.

Please note, if you reserve a table for six and only five attend, we must still charge for all six guests. **You may adjust your reservation until December 9. After that date, we are required to provide Gaelic Park with our final headcount, and you will be charged according to your reservation placed by December 9, 2026.**

Santa will be making his grand arrival around 4pm, weather permitting! After all, he has quite a journey from the North Pole!

Please bring a wrapped gift (with your child's first and last name on the gift) for Santa to personally present it to them.

Christmas sweet table!: We welcome your contributions of homemade cookies, cakes, and other holiday treats. There's nothing quite like sharing homemade goodies with friends!

We're delighted to welcome back ***Gerry Haughey***, who will once again provide wonderful music for our Christmas celebration!

We will also be kicking off our annual Super Bowl Squares! Squares are $100 each, so be sure to grab yours at the Christmas party before they're all gone!

We look forward to an afternoon filled with laughter, friendship, music, Christmas cheer, and the warmth of our Galway family. Whether you've been joining us for years or this will be your first Christmas party, we hope you'll come celebrate with us! We can't wait to see you there!

Giving thanks always for all things unto God. May your holiday be full of happiness, love, and an abundance of blessings

Wishing you and your family a beautiful and blessed day

As we celebrate this season of gratitude, the Officers and Trustees of the Galway Fellowship Club wish you and your family, a Blessed and Bountiful holiday season. We are truly thankful for each of you and the wonderful friendships that make our Galway Fellowship Club so special!

Warmest Thanksgiving Wishes,
Bernadette Harney Wolinski
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Getting to Know the Irish!



By Tina Butler - Leonard

This month I am shining a light on Centenarians. The book, ***Blue Zones Secrets for Living Longer,*** written by Dan Buettner in 2008 and the Netflix documentary became a major hit.

Globally about 3,000 academic articles have been written on this topic. A Centenarian is someone who has reached the age of 100 or older. It's important to note that becoming a centenarian is no small task and very rare. For the record I have no notion or interest in meeting such a milestone I am more life in the years gal. However, I have great respect for people who are a 'great age' as they say. I am fascinated with seasoned citizens because they have lived through major events and therefore are first-hand witnesses. They've learned to be resilient, adapt, and look on the bright side of life. Asian countries lead showing respect for elders I admire their deference for the aged population. Sadly, sometimes in America people view helping an older person as a waste of their time.

Japan boasts the most centenarians in the world. Most of the centenarians in America live in California. However, Hawaii has the highest number of centenarians per capita.

Lifespan and longevity tend to run in families, though genetics are only a part of the equation. If your grandma ate a wholesome diet and you exist on processed food, you'll never live as long as her.

Ireland has about 1,000 centenarians and in America there are about 110,000 currently. You probably know Dick Van Dyke and Mel Brooks, they are still tipping away.

Ireland is a good place for longevity because many residents express lower daily stress levels, there are strong community ties & Ireland boasts a higher quality of food. They have a reliable public health care system, good air quality, and one of the safest countries in the world.

There is a documentary, Older than Ireland featuring 30 centenarians. A quote from the documentary. "If you dig a hole in your back garden today, and fill it in again tomorrow, you'll be doing yourself a power of good." ***Michael O'Connor***

If you make it to your 100th birthday in Ireland, you will receive the Centenarian bounty which is a congratulations letter from the president and a $2500.00 check. If you live to 100 in America, you can request a personalized birthday card from the White house.

A few centenarians in Ireland include Martin McEvilly from Galway, he lived until he was 108. He credited faith as a big part of his long life. Mairin Hughes was born in Belfast but grew up in Kerry, she graduated from UCC with a science degree, passed at 109. Nell Hynes was born in Offaly in 1916. She passed at 109. Singer Daniel O'Donnell visited her in her home.

Mark Twain said, "age is a matter over mind. If you don't mind it doesn't matter." A few things that are 100 years old: Band-Aids, Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade & frozen food mass production.

Some tips on living a long time maintain a positive mind set, walk, nurture your relationships, have purpose each day, moderation, quality sleep, laugh, manage stress, be generous, only eat to 80% full, love & most of all forgive.

"I don't want to get to the end of my life and find that I lived just the length of it. I want to have lived the width of it as well. ***Diane Ackerman*** "

"Eat your vegetables, have a positive outlook, be kind to people, and smile - ***Kam Nakasato***, 102, Okinawa"

— Dan Buettner

The Orland Park Library hosts a monthly Memory Café First Wednesday of every month 10:30 am - 11:30am A lovely Book Club member, Pat Griffin's mother-in-law turned 100 Sept.,11. Her name is Phyllis Griffin, a former teacher from Edgewater, North side of Chicago. Phyllis emphasizes patience in all things.

SMIDIN GAEILGE

100-cead, milestone - clock mhile

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Ireland - If You Are Lucky - Is Not a One Time Visit!

It was my 15th trip to Ireland. My first pilgrimage was in 2009 with my wife and twin sons, both 29 then, as we set the tone for future trips by starting at Fitzpatrick Castle in Killiney.

I went with Skinny Sheahan in 2013 and got the bug. We went every year for 12 years, sometimes just me and Denny Kearns, sometimes The Magnificent Seven and other times a full bus of Liam Durkin family and friends.

It's always a total blast. If you're going to spend an entire pilgrimage to Ireland with somebody they better be cool. And we really got lucky this October in Galway!

Let's start with the stalwarts, they've been with us for past trips and know the routine, they are always happy as we all rediscover the Emerald Isle together. This year we welcomed back Mimi & Tom Dillon, Dave and Rita Durkin, Patricia and Tom Doyle, and newbies from Skinny's Breakfast Club Jack and Sharon Byrne. Skinny sez, "Sharon taught at Ignatius for 53 years!" Also happy to meet Alan and Janine Low.



We assembled in the Dublin airport upon arrival and were commandeered by our bus driver Philip Duffy. He was our Seanchai for the entire week and a was a knowledgeable and witty guide t. He is the best, and we were lucky to have him. Skinny and I have been guests of Philip a couple times before and we knew to request the Master for this adventure.

Because it was early, our first stop was Sean's Bar, the oldest pub in Ireland, where we renewed friendship with our guests Dan McLaughlin, former Mayor of Orland Park and his wife Patricia.

Driving thru Dublin, Philip dropped us off on Nassau Street to explore. I was totally out of gas and tagged along with old friends and vets of many other Irish excursions: Maureen Casey and her sister Denise, aka Neesy.

Afterwards I sat alone outside of O'Brien's on the street and gathered my thoughts of Ireland. This would be my first trip to Ireland without drinking and I wasn't sure how it would go.

So just sittin' on the patio outside O'Brien's, and watchin' Dublin walk by. Lots of young folks, hipsters, pretty girls, as I listened to Van Morrison on my iPod. "I've been doin' some soul searchin'" Yeah, now I get the vibe, I'm a poet here in Dublin. Just "traveling with strangers." according to the Celtic Nightingale Catherine O'Connell.

We were blessed with a younger gaggle of friends of Brendan O'Brien as we celebrated the spirit of his late dad. Sy Hickey, Boz's trusted Lieutenant for many years, Carmela Dizeo and Carla Savino, Skinny's daughter Nora and her pal Amy Liss, along with Ireland alumni Mary Ellen Duffy, and the inimitable Froggie McGuire, cheerful shopaholic Carol McCallum and Sally and Barry O'Connell.

Sunday we all went to Galway Cathedral for mass and blended into the Galway Catholics congregation. The priest even gave us a shout-out, "Welcome to our new friends here from Chicago."

The people are this story of Ireland.

There was plenty of Galway night life with the younger kids. Texas pals Darren Kosmak and his honey Tai Lei donned full costumes as Willie Wonka and Oompa Loompa for the big Macnas parade! We met up for MACNAS with Denny and the Hasbrouck Sisters, Nancy and Marilyn. We go way back and they were with us in the crowd at Macnas. My old pal Deirdre Burke arrived. Her sister Maeve is our old friend, tends bar in Chicago, and we've had many laughs together.

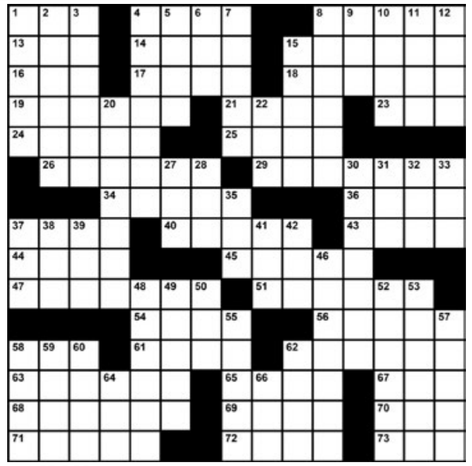
We all met up back at our hotel and many partied into the night.

I'm home now, but I miss Ireland already.

Never say never. Hope to return next year!







ACROSS
1. Curved trajectory
4. Irish singer who was the lead vocalist for the Boomtown Rats, ___ Lynott
8. Irish novelist and playwright, ____ Binchy
13. Horror writer, Edgar Allan
14. Famous sitarist
15. Colorado river rider
16. Publication chiefs, abbr.
17. Arena shouts
18. Awards
19. Place to go to take it easy
21. Heroine of Tennessee Williams's "Summer & Smoke"
23. Perched
24. Iconic Irish long-distance runner, ____ O'Sullivan
25. Notary stamp
26. Put (away)
29. Disgruntled, 3 words
34. Joined edges
36. ___ no good, 2 words
37. Cookbook abbr.
40. Answers, abbr.
43. Black-feathered scavenger bird
44. TV actor, Scott
45. Speak
47. Procedures
51. Arizona tourist locale
54. Japanese soup
56. Writer Asimov
58. Infomercials, e.g.
61. German novelist "Thomas ___"
62. Foul smell
63 For the time being, 2 words
65. Polynesian carving
67. Everyday article
68. Gauguin's paradise
69. Spiced stew
70. Shoe specification
71. Brown ermine
72. Pennsylvania founder Sir William __
73. Elder, abbr.

DOWN 1. Mimics
2. Texas fair events
3. Big name in small planes
4. Apportion
5. Adjourn
6. ___ an interesting offer for you.....
7. Kudrow and Bonet
8 Garam ___(Indian spice mix)
9. Patriots' grp., abbr.
10. Timetable guesses, abbr.
11. "Psycho" actress Miles
12. Aforetime
15. Marc Antony, e.g.
20 Garage floor blemish, 2 words
22. Muumuu accessory
27. Sound processing unit
28. Old German money, abbr.
30. Sweetening agent
31. "Morning Edition" airer
32. OJ judge
33. Service station offering
35. A Law and Order version
37. Atlanta-based channel
38. San Francisco/Oakland separator
39. Bro's kin
41. Abbr. for points or pints
42. Fr. holy woman, abbr.
46. Version
48. Irish actor who played bad boy villainous characters, _____ Scanlan
49. Dolphins' home
50. ID theft data, perhaps
52. Port on the Loire
53. German city
55. In first place, 2 words
57. Spirit
58. Rental units, abbr.
59. Annoyance word
60. Area in Manhattan
62. Hot milk drink formation
64. ___ Maria liqueur
66. Land in la mer (French word)

ANSWERS PAGE 33

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

Did Santa babysit the baby Jesus? Why were the Three Wise Men so lost? What are some of your favorite holiday movies? The answers to these and other humorous questions are answered in the hit holiday comedy CHRISTMAS BINGO: IT'S A HO-HO-HOLY NIGHT.

CHRISTMAS BINGO, part of the Nuns4Fun, Late Nite Catechism series, will run one night only, Thursday, December 17, at The Skokie, 7924 Lincoln Ave., Skokie.

Written by Vicki Quade, one of the creators of the hit comedy Late Nite Catechism, CHRISTMAS BINGO brings together two of the best things about being Catholic: Christmas and Bingo. The show features the character of Mrs. Mary Margaret O'Brien, a former nun and head of the archdiocese's bingo fundraising department.

Recommended by the Chicago Reader, the show was selected as one of 10 holiday shows highlighted by Chris Jones, the Chicago Tribune's theater critic.



In this interactive comedy, audience members play bingo while also answering questions about Christmas traditions, the origin of St. Nick, where do candy canes come from, miracles in the Bible, and a clever re-creation of the Annunciation, complete with audience members in angel wings and halos.

Today's Fan, an online review site, calls Christmas Bingo, "delightful."

"You will be engaged by the show's uniquely interactive approach that involves a bingo game with real prizes. Its entertaining aspect comes from the hilarity that ensues as Quade tackles offbeat myths and outrageous facts about Christmas."

Tickets are $25, plus nominal processing fees.

Doors open at 6:30 p.m., with the performance at 7pm

For more information, or to order tickets, call The Skokie box office at (847) 448-1337, or go online to https://www.theskokie.com

You can also call the Nuns4Fun office at (773) 388-0730.

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CHICAGO GAELIC PARK

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A Chàirde:

We're ready for the holidays, thanks to our volunteers and decorators, and we're looking forward to spending one more month of 2026 with you. Our Mingle & Jingle holiday party will be held on December 10th. That night is great for small groups (offices, neighbors, clubs...) to come together with others for one big celebration with dinner, dancing and open bar. We're also celebrating on December 18th with "Christmastime in Ireland", featuring Paddy Homan, Laurence Nugent, Marta Cook, Brendan Bulger, Tadgh Spillane, Johnny B. Connolly and Sean Gavin. What a lineup!

Father Paul Henson will be the celebrant for our December 13th Irish Mass and Breakfast. All are welcome and the cost for an adult is only $15. That evening, we'll draw the winners of our Super Fundraiser, which may be sold out by the time you read this.

Your family and friend groups are very welcome at the Carraig Pub. In addition to our regular no-cover live music schedule, we'll be welcoming Early to Rise to the pub on Sunday the 6th at 2:30. On the 31st, we'll ring in the New Year in Ireland at 6PM local time.

On behalf of the volunteers, staff and board of Gaelic Park, thank you for your ongoing support and for being part of this vibrant, expanding community. We wish you and your families a Happy Christmas. Speaking for myself, I'm very much looking forward to celebrating my grandson Cian's first Christmas.

Nollaig shona duit,
Bill O'Sullivan, one of many volunteers





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Little Christmas

BOOTS AND BLING, JANUARY 8TH
A Dolly-Inspired Nollaig na mBan

In Ireland Little Christmas is traditionally celebrated on the Feast of the Epiphany. This is a day which marks the end of the Christmas festivities. Women historically took on the responsibilities of the household year round as well as during the busy holiday season. They were (and many still are) solely responsible for creating the Christmas magic their families enjoyed each year. Little Christmas was considered a "day off" for women; Women gathered at the neighbors or at the pub and the men stayed home to tend to the household and take decorations down.

Although the division of household labor looks a bit different today, we never pass up an opportunity to learn from history and celebrate the women in our community!

Join us and the girls on Friday, January 8th for a night of fun! **Get ready for a night of big hair, big laughs, and big Dolly energy.** The night includes comedy, disco bingo, karaoke, Dolly Parton look-alike contest, and more.

Secure your tickets online at our Box Office.

'Tis the Season!

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The holidays are a time when all you love gather near and sharing life's special moments with those you love is extra cause for celebration!

Chicago Gaelic Park offers many excellent spaces for indoor and outdoor wedding ceremonies and receptions. Our beautiful surroundings make the perfect backdrops for portraits with your spouse and wedding party! End the best day ever dancing the night away and top the night off at The Carraig for afters.

Visit for a venue tour! A few prime 2027 dates remain for your perfect day.



Nora & Kevin by Luved Photography

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.

December 9 -	MAHJONG 101
December 10 -	MINGLE & JINGLE HOLIDAY PARTY
December 13 -	MONTHLY MASS & BREAKFAST
December 13 -	SUPER FUNDRAISER DRAWING
December 16 -	MAHJONG 102
December 18 -	CHRISTMASTIME IN IRELAND
January 8 -	NOLLAIG NA MBAN - LITTLE CHRISTMAS
January 10 -	MONTHLY MASS & BREAKFAST

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- 3X the points Tues-Thurs
- Free dessert on your birthday

Music in The Carraig

No cover charge for music at The Carraig Beer Garden

December 3 -	TRAD THURSDAY
December 4 -	O'LEARY'S LANTERN
December 5 -	EVIN O'RIORDAN
December 6 -	EARLY TO RISE
December 10 -	IRISH CHRISTMAS SINGING NIGHT
December 11 -	JOE MCSHANE
December 12 -	MULLIGAN STEW
December 13 -	CELTIC ROVERS
December 16 -	IRISH SINGING CIRCLE
December 17 -	TRAD THURSDAY
December 18 -	THE CHANCERS
December 19 -	GERRY HAUGHEY
December 20 -	BERNIE GLIM
December 26 -	LIAM DURKIN
December 27 -	KIERAN BYRNE
December 31 -	JOHN STAUNTON
January 2 -	KATIE SULLIVAN
January 8 -	VISION IN THE RHYTHM
January 9 -	DECLAN MCSHANE
January 14 -	TRADITIONAL SINGING NIGHT
January 15 -	JAMES STAUNTON
January 16 -	BRENDAN L
January 20 -	IRISH SINGING CIRCLE
January 22 -	LIAM DURKIN
January 23 -	GERRY HAUGHEY
January 29 -	KIERAN BYRNE

CHRISTMASTIME IN IRELAND



Paddy Homan & The Noble Call

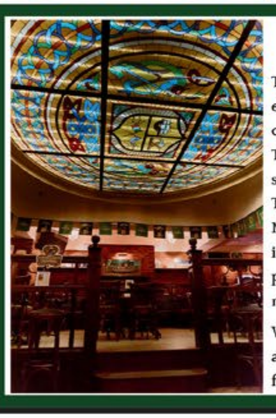
Friday, December 18

The Noble Call Christmas show takes audiences back to the 'hearth' of an Irish Christmas, filled with songs, stories, rousing music and traditional Irish dancing. The Noble Call is that age-old Irish tradition, where, in the 'wee' small hours of the morning everyone gets a chance to sing a song or tell a story. The Noble Call tradition is very popular at Christmastime in Ireland, as families gather to welcome home their children from distant shores and to share in the festivities. And no better way to do that than through music! The show is led by one of Ireland's foremost traditional Irish Tenors- Paddy Homan, star of the hugely successful I AM IRELAND SHOW. The Noble Call also features Larry Nugent (Flute) and Brendan Bulger (Fiddle), along with a host of other musical guests who deliver an incredible night of music, song and dance.



Our Mingle & Jingle Holiday Party is perfect for small businesses, community groups, and friend groups that want to celebrate with more people. We'll have a DJ to keep the dance floor moving, so get ready to make memories and make friends!

Party goers will enjoy a 4-hour open bar and a chef-prepared dinner buffet! Get tickets by December 3rd.



The Carraig

The Carraig features live music on Friday and Saturday evenings. The New Island Singers host a social singing cirlce on the third Wednesday of each month. Trad Thursday with Jimmy Keane is a traditional music session on the first and third Thursday of each month. The Chicago Irish Singers host a Traditional Irish Singing Night on the second Thursday of each month beginning in December. All are welcome to join in on the fun at the pub! There is never a cover charge. No experience needed to join in a music or singing session.

Whether you're having a quick bite, meeting a friend for a pint, or stopping by to join in the music, you'll always feel at home at The Carraig!

LOVED ONES HONORED THROUGH DONATIONS TO GAELIC PARK PLANNED GIVING ENDOWMENT

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a n-anamacha dílse

Joe Begley ◦ Kathleen Brick ◦ Pat Carr
Hugh Doyle ◦ Hugh McLaughlin
Joe McNally ◦ Con Twomey

Several donations have been received in memory of loved ones. We thank all who have donated and encourage others to give the gift of Irish heritage to succeeding generations.

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

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.

For more information or to discuss your plans, please contact Michael Bennett - General Manager by phone 708-687-9323 or email endowment@chicagogaelicpark.org.

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- Children's Irish Cultural Camp
- The Carraig Pub & Beer Garden
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SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 2027

2027
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www.chicagostpatricksdayparade.org

Dan O'Brien & Lily Keogh on Leading the Omaha Irish Cultural Center: It's all About Community



Dan O'Brien and Lily Keogh each have distinctive life stories, hailing from different parts of the country and exploring different personal and professional journeys. And yet, the two leaders who took the helm of the Omaha Irish Cultural Center earlier this year share many commonalities, not the least of which is a commitment to building the organization with a renewed focus to bring together the Irish community in Omaha.

Dan is a proud fifth generation Irish-American, his ancestors hailing from County Wexford, and his family has been settled in Omaha for the better part of a century. For his part, Dan spent time living in Texas and California, where he worked in a high-end restaurant, before embarking on a corporate career at companies First Data, TD Ameritrade, and Pitney Bowes. In 2018, putting his hospitality and corporate



experience to use, he opened Acadian Grill, a Cajun restaurant in Omaha that landed with rave reviews and continues to serve the Omaha community.

"I always wanted to open a restaurant," Dan reflects. "In my office roles, I managed corporate vendors & relationships, and knew the restaurant business from my time in San Francisco, so starting Acadian Grill wasn't intimidating to me. It's been wonderful."

Lily - a second-generation Irish American whose grandparents grew up in Dublin before emigrating in the 1950s - fondly recalls growing up in a proud Irish family before matriculating at Creighton University, where she studied pre-med based on her grandfather's recommendation.

"My grandparents showed me and my extended family what it meant to be Irish, from listening to their stories or enjoying the Irish food in the kitchen. We never left hungry! I'll never forget when my grandparents took all of us grandkids to Ireland and showed us the sights, even where they got engaged in Cork," she recollects.

Armed with her degree from Creighton, Lily now works as a project manager for a data science practice within a data consulting company.

Early in 2026, Dan and Lily's paths as proud Irish Americans became entwined through the Omaha Irish Cultural Center, an organization that seeks to advance a sustainable community connecting all the Irish in Omaha. They both volunteered at the Cultural Center's annual St. Patrick's Day Irish American Awards Brunch, when they honored Archbishop Michael McGovern, himself a Chicago native who previously served as Pastor of St. Mary's Church in Lake Forest.

Around the time of this brunch, the Cultural Center's Board was exploring ways to expand the organization to grow its impact. With the backing of the Irish Government's Emigrant Support Program, the organization was able to bring Dan and Lily as staffers; Dan as Executive Director and Lily as Director of Promotions and Communications.

Dan and Lily wasted little time in getting to work in their new roles. As part of their onboarding, the two of them traveled to Chicago to meet with staff from the Irish Consulate as well as leaders from prominent organizations like Irish Community Services, Irish Culture in Chicago, the Irish American Heritage Center, the Chicago Irish Film Festival, and Chicago Gaelic Park.

"Our trip meeting the wonderful people in Chicago was impressive and overwhelming," Lily admits. "We have such respect for the people who run these organizations like the Irish American Heritage Center and Chicago Gaelic Park… it's daunting, but it also makes us wonder, why isn't this possible in Omaha? There's a need and desire for it, so now it's our turn to make it happen."

Drawing on the Irish Government's updated diaspora strategy and feedback from the local Omaha community, Dan and Lily are positioning the Omaha Irish Cultural Center to expand its programming, strengthen its partnerships with other organizations, dance schools, and businesses, and ultimately open a brick-and-mortar presence to house a full calendar of activities and events.

Dan is quick to point out that he and Lily are not starting the organization from scratch, and they are not working alone in a vacuum.

"The Board of the Center is a very talented group of people with deep roots in Irish culture," he recognizes. "We see our role as a partnership to bring us to the next level, updating our structure, technology, and operations to grow organically in the modern world."

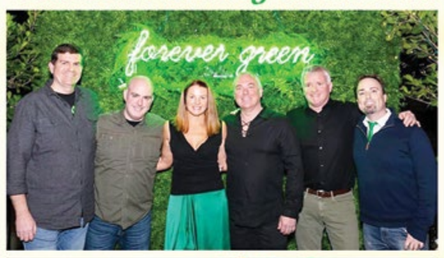
One such talented Board member is Jim Cavanaugh, who is well-known in the vibrant Omaha Irish community and was the one who originally invited Dan to volunteer with the organization.

Looking back on what motivated them to take on these roles in the midst of their busy lives, Dan and Lily return to similar themes that harken back to their ancestors from the distant shores of Ireland.

As Dan shares, "At this stage of my life, i's my time to embrace the real part of our Irish heritage. I want to explore our shared Irish history, explore what used to be, and engage our young people and future generations to come."

Lily draws a straight line between her grandparents' influence and her current role.

"My grandparents were always my inspiration to be an educated Irish American citizen I want to make them proud, and I know that they're both looking down saying, wow, she's helping to keep that heritage alive."

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Derek Warfield 'The Dawn's Early Light' out 11-25

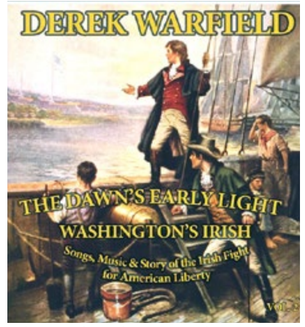
Musical Story of Ireland's Fight and Defense of American Liberty and American Support for Ireland's Freedom and Independence

"The Dream and aspiration of the American revolutionaries was fulfilled and the principal architect of its success were 'The Patriots of Ireland' champions of Liberty in all lands", **George Washington, Mount Vernon, Virginia**

The largest single group to arrive in the 13 American English colonies in the seventy five years leading up to the Revolution were Irish. Research has uncovered that up to 35% were Irish born and up to 66% of the colonial forces during the American War of Independence were of Irish background.

Legendary Irish musician Derek Warfield decided to record this album after researching the history, story, music and literary contributions of the Irish emigrants to England's American colonies. 'The Dawn's Early Light' highlights in song and poem the love, commitment, dedication and courage of Irish exiles of all faiths, as Washington repeated many times through the eight years of war you can be any religion or none and vote for who you want to govern. These rights were not available in any other European country.

The Irish were the only Europeans who knew the reality of England Colonial rule as Benjamin Franklin observed when he visited Dublin in Sept 1771 six months after the Boston Massacre. He talked to the Irish Patriot politicians and he saw a commonality of grievances. Franklin, also seeing the destitution of the peasantry, commented, "Is there any wonder," he wrote, "that many Irish would want a better way of life and seek to get to the New World."



"I've decided to release this album on Evacuation Day, November 25th, when the last remaining British troops departed Manhattan, ending a seven-year military occupation that began in 1776. General George Washington led a triumphal parade into the city, and American forces replaced a greased British flag with the Stars and Stripes at Fort George. For one hundred and twenty years Americans celebrated the day with parades, fireworks and public banquets. However, the holiday's popularity faded in the late 20th century as Thanksgiving grew and England after 130 years made peace with America and accepted that the Colonies were now a free country with the settlement of the Border with British America now Canada," Derek Warfield.

This album in CD form contains a multipage bibliography of 20 songs, their origins, stories of the Revolutionary War. For information on Derek Warfield go to: https://www.theyoungwolfetones.com/


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nmls id 137649
708-905-5296
steve@fnbb.com


Mark Zator
nmls id 197261
708-905-5023 X 168
mark@fnbb.com


Amy Weinert
nmls id 572123
708-485-2770 X 139
weinerta@fnbb.com


Nile Lane
nmls id 1925277
305-972-9234
kyle@fnbb.com


Katie Hickey Asst VP
Credit Analyst
708-2770 x 149
hickeyK@fnbb.com


Matt Jones
nmls id 2323395
708-485-2770 X 152
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Nollaig Shona agus
Athbhliain faoi mhaise dhaoibh!



Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year to You!


Dan Starzyk
nmls id 1893761
224-216-9369
starzykd@fnbb.com


Ray Burzic VP
NMLS ID 2709461
708-485-2770 X165
ray@fnbb.com


Phil Richard
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NMLS ID 445920
708-90505256
mary@fnbb.com


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irish-american.org

Winter is Coming at the Irish American Heritage Center! The most wonderful time of the year is almost here, and we're ready to celebrate! From festive holiday gatherings and cherished Christmas traditions to creative workshops, live entertainment, cultural programs, and plenty of seasonal cheer, there's so much to look forward to at the Irish American Heritage Center! As the winter season settles in, we can't wait to welcome friends, families, and neighbors through our doors to make memories, share traditions, and celebrate the magic of the season together. **Details & tickets: irish-american.org | 773-282-7035 (Ext. 10).**



CHRISTMAS BAZAAR & FULL IRISH BREAKFAST

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6 | BAZAAR STARTS AT 9 AM & BREAKFAST STARTS AT 11 AM

Celebrate the magic of the holiday season at the Irish American Heritage Center's annual Christmas Bazaar! The Center will be filled with Christmas cheer from top to bottom, offering a full day of festive shopping, delicious food, family activities, live entertainment, and plenty of Irish holiday spirit! Explore vendors throughout the building featuring handmade crafts, jewelry, artwork, specialty foods, unique gifts, and more, perfect for finding something special while supporting local artisans and small businesses. Start your morning with Mass followed by our traditional Full Irish Breakfast Buffet in the fourth-floor Erin Room.

TICKETS: Christmas Bazaar is a FREE EVENT
BREAKFAST TICKETS: Adults $30 | Seniors $25 | Children (12 & under) $15



ECHOES OF KINDNESS: OFFICIAL EXHIBITION OPENING CEREMONY

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1 | 6:00 - 8:30 PM

Join us at the Irish American Heritage Center Art Gallery for the official opening reception of Echoes of Kindness, a moving photographic exhibition by Chicago-based Irish photographer Stephanie Murray. Through powerful portraits and storytelling, the exhibition explores an extraordinary legacy of compassion connecting Ireland with the Choctaw, Navajo, and Hopi Nations, beginning with the Choctaw Nation's remarkable donation to Ireland during the Great Famine of 1847 and continuing through the generosity returned by the Irish people during the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing on six years of research and collaboration, Murray celebrates the enduring bonds of kindness, solidarity, and cultural connection across generations. Guests will have the opportunity to meet the artist, explore the exhibition, hear the stories behind her work, and enjoy light bites and refreshments. Unable to attend the opening? The exhibition is also available for public viewing Monday through Friday, 10:00 AM–5:00 PM.

FREE EVENT | REGISTRATION REQUIRED



A CHRISTMAS CAROL - A LIVE RADIO PERFORMANCE BY THE SAG-AFTRA CHICAGO

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5 | 2:00 PM

Celebrate the magic of Christmas on Saturday, December 5, at 2:00 PM, as the Irish American Heritage Center welcomes the SAG-AFTRA Chicago Radio Players to the Mayfair Theatre for a special FREE live performance of Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol! Step back into the Golden Age of Radio as professional actors bring Ebenezer Scrooge's timeless journey to life through captivating storytelling, live music, and sound effects. Inspired by the classic 1938 radio adaptation, this festive performance offers a unique behind-the-scenes glimpse into the magic of traditional radio theatre. Doors open at 1:30 PM and the performance is suggested for ages 8 and up. Join us for an afternoon of holiday nostalgia, heartwarming storytelling, and Christmas cheer!

FREE EVENT | REGISTRATION REQUIRED



PAUL BYROM CHRISTMAS CONCERT

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9 | 7:00 PM

Celebrate the magic of the holiday season as the IAHC welcomes Paul Byrom, one of Ireland's favorite crossover tenors and an original member of Celtic Thunder, for a festive evening of Christmas classics and beloved holiday favorites! Enjoy beautiful renditions of songs like O Holy Night, White Christmas, Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, and more, along with fan favorites from Paul's celebrated career. Filled with heartwarming music, holiday nostalgia, and opportunities to sing along, this family-friendly concert is the perfect way to get into the Christmas spirit! Join us for an unforgettable evening of Christmas cheer!

TICKETS: IAHC Members $30 | General Admission $40 | Meet-And-Greet $55



STORY TIME WITH MRS. CLAUS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20 | 11:00 - 1:00 PM

Celebrate the magic of Christmas as the IAHC welcomes a very special guest for Story Time with Mrs. Claus! While Santa prepares for his big night, Mrs. Claus is bringing the warmth and wonder of the North Pole to the IAHC for a cozy morning of festive storytelling, sweet treats, and family fun! Little ones and their families can enjoy beloved holiday tales alongside a delicious assortment of cookies, donuts, candy, hot chocolate, coffee, juice, and more, all included with admission. Space is limited, so advance reservations are encouraged. Gather the family, put on your favorite Christmas sweaters, and make magical holiday memories with Mrs. Claus!

TICKETS: $15 per Person for Adults & Children | Children under 2 FREE



ST. STEPHEN'S DAY CELEBRATION & WREN COSTUME COMPETITION

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 26 | DOORS OPEN AT 2:00 PM

Celebrate one of Ireland's most unique holiday traditions as the IAHC's Wren Costume Competition returns for St. Stephen's Day! Following last year's incredible turnout, we're inviting everyone to get creative with straw, greenery, ribbons, masks, and colorful costumes inspired by the centuries-old Irish tradition of Wren Day, or Lá an Dreoilín. Compete for prizes while enjoying an afternoon of live traditional Irish music, singalongs, storytelling, a mini parade through the Fifth Province Pub, and plenty of festive craic! All ages and genders are welcome to participate, whether individually, with friends, or as a family. Start planning your costumes now and join us for a lively celebration of Irish folklore, creativity, and community spirit!

FREE EVENT | RSVP'S OPTIONAL BUT APPRECIATED



IRISH NEW YEARS EVE PARTY

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31 | DOORS OPEN AT 3:00 PM | NYE TOAST AT 6:00 PM & MIDNIGHT

Why celebrate the New Year just once when you can celebrate TWICE? Join us at the IAHC on for a festive New Year's Eve celebration as we ring in 2027 on Irish time at 6:00 PM Chicago time, then keep the party going all the way to midnight in Chicago! Enjoy an evening of live music, dancing, festive New Year's accessories, and plenty of Irish craic, complete with a champagne toast at 6:00 PM to celebrate midnight in Ireland! A cash bar will also be available as the festivities continue into the night, leading up to our second countdown at midnight to welcome the New Year here in Chicago! Gather your friends and family, raise a glass, and enjoy TWO New Year's celebrations in ONE unforgettable night! Ticket pricing and availability will be announced soon. Sláinte to 2027!

TICKETS: Adults $50 | Children (5–12) $20 | Little Ones (under 5) FREE



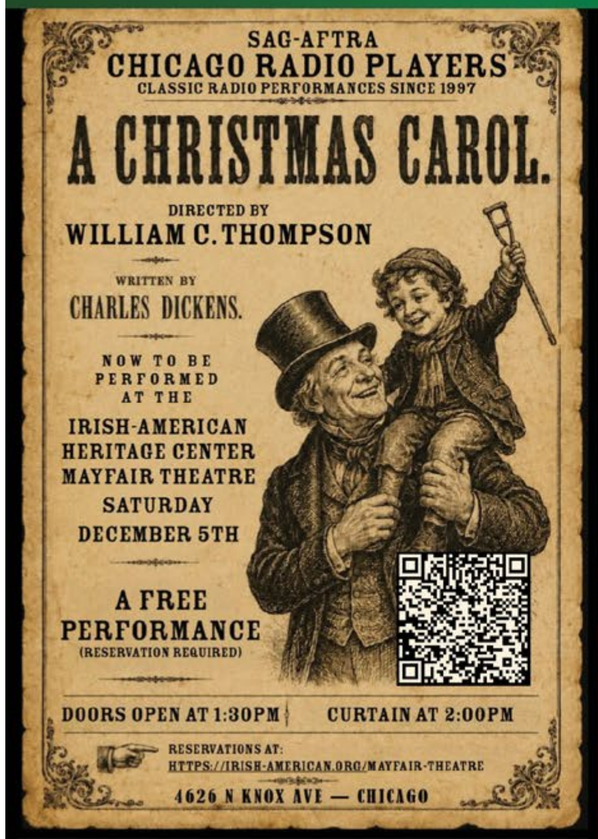
WOMEN'S CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION - NOLLAIG NA MBAN

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6 | 5:00 - 10:00 PM

Celebrate the final days of the Christmas season as the IAHC welcomes you to our annual Women's Christmas celebration, or Nollaig na mBan! This cherished Irish tradition honors the women in our lives and brings friends, families, and communities together for an evening of friendship, laughter, and celebration. Gather your mothers, daughters, sisters, and friends for a wonderful evening of live music, delicious food, great company, and plenty of Irish craic! We'll also be announcing the lucky winner of our annual Aer Lingus Raffle, who will receive two round-trip tickets to Dublin, Ireland!

FREE EVENT | RSVP'S STRONGLY ENCOURAGED AS LIMITED SPACE

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Driving in Ireland

Normally, I wrie for IAN about books, but this column is about driving in Ireland!

It is one of the clichés about Ireland that driving across the Emerald Isle can be dangerous. (The other cliché is that the Irish really do have a drinking problem, but that's another article.) Certainly, when driving in Ireland, all basic operating assumptions for Americans cease. The Irish drive on the left side, not the right, and the steering wheel is on the opposite side. One is always getting in on the wrong side, or looking the wrong way. One tends to hug either the divider line or the shoulder, if there is one, because of the different perspective

An American golfer in Galway's Jurys Inn warned me about bad roads; what the Irish called a major road Americans would call a narrow two-lane highway—if one was lucky enough to get a two-lane paved road. The back roads were more like cow paths, with grassy fields on either side. A driver could easily slide off the road and roll over. The turns were often blind and sharp. Roads often weren't repaired or repaved due to the ongoing search for artifacts from Ireland's past.

"It's worth it for the golf," my fellow Yank insisted. "The courses aren't groomed, of course."

While in Galway, I rented a car to visit two second cousins living in Ballaghaderreen in County Roscommon. My grandfather listed this small quaint town as his residence before leaving for America in 1907. We enjoyed traveling by train, but there is no way to get to Ballaghaderreen except by driving. (It is pronounced "bally-dreen" and means "the place of the oaks" though the great oaks disappeared long ago.) One takes the highway out of Galway toward Charlestown and then drives east toward the small town of bars, shops, residences and an impressive cathedral.

In the car rental office, the gentleman seemed puzzled when I asked what numbered roads to take.

"Don't bother with numbers. Just ask for the town."

"The map has numbered roads."

"Sure, we don't drive by numbers, here."

Driving on the left side of the road takes some practice, and sitting on the right side is also strange. The road to Charlestown wasn't bad, but there was a great deal of construction along the way. After lunch in Charlestown, we took a narrower road to Ballaghaderreen, stopping at a place called Durkins, a bar-restaurant with rooms for rent. We took one above the pub.

With my two elderly cousins, Mary and Anne, we visited an overgrown graveyard with many Celtic crosses and familiar family names. It was a moving experience to find the weathered headstone of my great grandparents, John and Mary Corrigan, who died in 1919 and 1921. We had the luxury of a professional driver, a tall older gentleman who knew the back roads. The next afternoon, however, we drove ourselves to find Doocastle where my grandmother lived. The owner of Durkins gave us directions, smiling.

"Doocastle in Sligo? Just turn right at Davy's Pub. Sure, you'll find it."

We drove through the Irish countryside and soon got lost. We stopped and asked directions of an English woman working in a garden and she guaranteed we would probably get lost again. She mentioned a crossroads. Some Irish farmers were curious.

"Why do you want to go there?"

One of the men could have been my grandfather by his rugged appearance.

All along the Irish back roads were signs that read "Stop the carnage" or "45 people killed in the county this year." In Doocastle—a crossroads—we found Kennedy's pub which was ironic since my grandmother's maiden name was Kennedy. The closed bar had warning signs about driving in the spacious parking lot. Was the lot more dangerous than the winding narrow unlit roads? What happened when two vehicles met? Who backed down? If an accident occurred, how easy was it for rescue vehicles to reach and navigate the area?

After leaving the bar, finding the church where my grandmother was baptized in 1891 proved impossible. (The car didn't have a GPS.) The green wet countryside with its narrow roads provided a lovely bucolic scene after a light rain, but it was also a labyrinth. I did not want to be driving at night. The next morning, we said good-bye to my cousins and drove back to Galway to drop off the car, listen to the street buskers, have a few pints if so inclined, and in the morning—take the train to Dublin and the airport.

There is a basic suggestion, here. If one plans to visit Ireland, rent a car for the major roads but use a professional driver for the back country. Actor Spalding Gray never completely recovered from an automobile accident in Ireland. The terrible reputation of Irish citizen drivers and their many traffic fatalities is a cliché backed by evidence.

Michael Corrigan taught speech and English at Idaho State Univ. & is the author of ***Confessions of a Shanty Irishman, These Precious Hours, and Mulligan****.*

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A New Way to Cheers: How Two Sisters-in-Law are Redefining Wine, Wellness, and Celebration

From Dublin to Chicago, immigration attorney Fiona McEntee and entrepreneur Faith Anderson are building an award-winning de-alcoholized wine brand inspired by their shared love of wine and a desire for more mindful choices.

What began as a search for a better non-alcoholic wine has grown into an award-winning beverage company gaining national recognition and making its mark on Chicago's hospitality scene.

For sisters-in-law Fiona McEntee and Faith Anderson, the inspiration behind Nouvie came when Fiona, a Dublin-born immigration attorney, wanted to celebrate her birthday with a great non-alcoholic wine. But as wine lovers themselves, they struggled to find one they really enjoyed.

Many of the alternatives they tried were overly sweet, high in sugar and calories, or lacked the complexity of traditional wine. They wanted something that delivered an authentic wine experience while aligning with a more mindful approach to drinking.

Having worked in marketing for the fine dining industry, Faith understood the importance of quality, presentation, and an exceptional wine experience. She believed consumers shouldn't have to sacrifice taste or sophistication simply because they wanted to skip the alcohol.

Recognizing a gap in the market, the sisters-in-law set out to create a premium de-alcoholized wine that balanced quality, taste, and wellness. Faith also developed a broader vision for Nouvie as a lifestyle brand that could become a natural part of how people dine, socialize, and celebrate.

Together, they founded Nouvie, a Chicago-based, women- and immigrant-owned wine company built around their shared love of wine and the belief that everyone deserves something exceptional in their glass.



Founders of Nouvie, Faith Anderson and Fiona McEntee

Two Entrepreneurs, One Shared Vision

Originally from Dublin, Ireland, Fiona is the founder of McEntee Law Group, a Chicago-based immigration law firm. Throughout her career, she has advocated for immigrants, helping individuals, families, and businesses navigate the complexities of the U.S. immigration system.

As COO and Co-Founder, Fiona brings her legal, operational, and entrepreneurial expertise to Nouvie, expanding her business experience into an entirely new industry.

Faith, as CEO and Co-Founder, leads the company's brand strategy, positioning, partnerships, and growth. Drawing on her experience in marketing for the fine dining industry, she has focused on establishing Nouvie as a premium wine brand that appeals to both traditional wine lovers and consumers seeking more mindful drinking options.

Their complementary backgrounds have helped transform a personal frustration into a growing business with ambitions beyond Chicago.

Creating a New Way to Cheers

Nouvie's philosophy is simple: choosing not to drink alcohol shouldn't mean compromising on taste, quality, or the experience of enjoying great wine.

Unlike non-alcoholic alternatives made from juice or botanical blends, Nouvie begins with traditionally produced wine before carefully removing the alcohol through vacuum distillation. The result is a sparkling wine with less than 0.5% alcohol by volume, crafted to preserve the character and complexity of traditional wine.

Its Sparkling Verdejo, produced in La Mancha, Spain, offers notes of elderflower, citrus, stone fruit, and gooseberry, complemented by a refreshing mineral finish. The Sparkling Viognier, sourced from Mendocino County, California, features white peach, apricot, and citrus blossom and is available in a convenient 250ml can.

With no added sugar, just two to three grams of sugar per serving, and a low-calorie profile, Nouvie offers a more wellness-conscious option without sacrificing the qualities wine lovers appreciate.

For the founders, the goal was never to be anti-alcohol. Instead, they want to offer more choices for people who enjoy wine but may not always want the alcohol, whether for health, lifestyle, or personal reasons.

Bringing Nouvie Beyond the Wine Glass

Today, Nouvie is available in more than 80 accounts, including celebrated Chicago restaurants such as Monteverde, The Dearborn, and The Gage, alongside prominent hotels and cultural institutions throughout the city. Nouvie is sold at select independent retailers, and a new retail-ready option should be available at Binny's soon (ask for it at your local store). Nouvie is also available online at www.drinknouvie.com, with shipping to most states.

The brand has also made appearances at major sporting events and wellness experiences, including the Indianapolis 500, events with the Chicago Hounds of Major League Rugby, and the Faces of Fitness Festival.

These partnerships reflect Nouvie's broader strategy to introduce premium non-alcoholic wine into spaces where consumers may not traditionally expect to find it. From fine dining and hospitality to sports and wellness, Nouvie is creating new opportunities for people to enjoy wine on their own terms.

From Chicago Startup to National Television

Nouvie's entrepreneurial journey recently reached a national audience when the company was featured on Season 14 of the PBS television series Start Up.

The episode, which premiered in November 2026, follows Faith and Fiona as they share the inspiration behind Nouvie, the challenges of entering the competitive beverage industry, and their plans for the company's future.

The series highlights entrepreneurs across America and the determination required to build businesses from the ground up.

The episode also aired locally on Chicago's WTTW, introducing the founders' story to an even wider audience in their hometown.

Recognition at Home and Abroad

Nouvie's commitment to quality has earned recognition on both the international and local stage.

In 2026, its Sparkling Viognier received Gold medals at the World Sparkling Wine Awards in London and the International Non-Alcoholic Awards. Its Sparkling Verdejo has also earned recognition at international non-alcoholic wine competitions.

Closer to home, Nouvie was named among the Chicago Innovation Top 100 in both 2025 and 2026, recognizing the company's contributions to Chicago's entrepreneurial and innovation community.

In November 2026, Nouvie also received the Chicago Star Award from the Office of the Chicago City Treasurer, adding another milestone to its growing list of achievements.

Building Something Bigger Than Wine

For Faith and Fiona, the journey is just beginning. With a shared passion for wine and entrepreneurship, the sisters-in-law are working to establish Nouvie as a globally recognized brand known for its quality, sophistication, and approachability.

The company is developing additional varietals, including still white, rosé, and red wine, while exploring new packaging formats and expanding into additional markets.

As interest in mindful drinking continues to grow, the founders see an opportunity to redefine what non-alcoholic wine can be, not simply as an alternative to traditional wine, but as a premium experience in its own right.

What began as two wine lovers searching for something better has become a business built on the belief that great taste, thoughtful ingredients, and memorable celebrations can go hand in hand.

For Faith and Fiona, Nouvie is more than a non-alcoholic alternative. It's a love letter to wine and a new way to cheers.

Learn more about Nouvie at WWW.DRINKNOUVIE.COM and watch Faith and Fiona's story on **PBS Start Up https://startupt-elevision.com/episode/1407-nouvie/**



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President of Sinn Fein, Mary Lou McDonald, Delivers Positive Message to American Irish

By Cliff Carlson

The President of Sinn Fein, Mary Lou McDonald, was in Chicago after visiting Notre Dame in Indiana recently.

She hit the ground running and over the course of two days, she visited Chicago Gaelic Park, and appeared on Irish radio shows She ended her visit at the Irish American Heritage Center, delivering an inspiring message of a unified Ireland to a large and supportive crowd in the building's Mayfair Theatre.

I was honored to spend a little time with her:

IAN: *A recent poll by the Belfast Telegraph found that the gap between those who support continued division between the North of Ireland and the Republic has narrowed - is this a reason to be hopeful?*

M.M. Absolutely. That poll that you are referring to is just the latest that indicates the gap is closing, and now there are only 4 points between those wishing to retain union with Britain, and those who would vote for a united Ireland. The significance of that can't be overstated - especially when you consider this is at a time where there has been no formal announcement by the government in Dublin of their intention to hold a referendum. We are still in the phase where a lot of preparatory work need to be done and I am absolutely convinced that as the work deepens, and as people have the opportunity to assess the economic opportunity, the political opportunity, that unity will provide, I think interest will grow and grow.

Also in those figures when you look to the younger age groups the support for reunification is huge.

So it's unmissable now. The Unionist majority North of the border has been gone for a number of election cycles - it's not coming back. Michelle O'Neill became the First Republican and Nationalist Minister in 2020 and 2024, and in many ways that's one of the most dramatic symbols of just how much has changed North of the border. It's a changed place, and we are on a tipping point, is a reason to be hopeful. It's a reason to be confident, to be optimistic, to be generous, to be ambitious, and above all else, to be determined that we are finishing this.

IAN: *What are some of the objections to a united Ireland?*

M.M. I suppose, for Unionism, they cherish the Union and they're going to argue and make their politics around the value of remaining in a union with Britain. Butbut I have to say to you honestly, since Brexit which was 10 years ago, I think more and more people who may not have not paid much attention to partition or the border - all of a sudden they were faced with a scenario where things looked very vulnerable, where decisions were taken in London against the wishes of people living in the North who voted against Brexit, and that their views didn't matter. As we are speaking now we are in negotiations with the British government around the budget for the North because they have not funded public services like health and education, and so on, correctly, This is happening every couple of years, and we are back to where we started holding out a "begging bowl" to the British government looking for them to fund things correctly. We don't have to do that. We can govern ourselves. We can run our economy.



Tim Egan, Rosland Hospital, Mary Lou McDonald, President of Sinn Fein, and Nina Aliprandi, Maryville Academy

And bear in mind the British Secretary of State comes to the North, gives us all a pep talk or whatever, gets on a plane and goes home.

So you ask me what are the objections to Irish Unity, Unionism has to make it's own case, but they have to make a case as to why the Union is good and they are really going to struggle with that because partition has been a disaster, and Westminster doesn't care about Ireland. As a matter of fact Westminster and the British government really care about England, and England only.

IAN: *As the largest party on the Island both North and South, Sinn Fein has most vigorously campaigned for reunification-- does this put you in the best position to lead the government in the next election with you as the Taoiseach?*

M.M. I want to lead Sinn Fein in government for lots of reasons. I mean at the core of it is Irish reunification, and it is also about correcting huge mistakes that have been made that have led to a crisis. For example in housing provisions and accommodation I want to be in government, and maybe most of all because our young people deserve that. I want them to live in a country that is free and peaceful, and that is full of opportunity, and so Sinn Fein is at the vanguard - at the cutting edge of the politics of Irish reunification. We are the party of Irish Unity.



Bagpiper, Vincent Casey, introduced Sinn Fein President Mary Lou McDonald to the audience in the Mayfair Theater

Every political party and every person needs to be involved. It's not just about Sinn Fein - far from it. It's also not just about the political parties, although all of us need to be involved. Every sector, every community, every person in Ireland and amongst the Irish International family, including here in the United States needs to have their say, have their view and make their contribution.

IAN: *Does it surprise you that all major parties in the Republic accept the principle of consent as provided for in the 1998 Good Friday Agreement and the Irish Constitution?*

M.M. Not Really. I think as a point in time because our country was partitioned more than a century ago down the barrel of British guns - nobody consented to that, the issue of consent had been hugely contentious and hugely problematic for Nationalists and for Republicans, but I think very intelligently and with great integrity and honor Republicans - and I don't just mean our political leaders = but people understood that you sometimes make a pragmatic compromise, a strategic compromise, and I think that we have all accepted just as a matter of practicality that reunification will require the Democratic implementer and vote of the people. It's a good and healthy thing because it makes it participatory for the population.

IAN: *What are the upsides to a united Ireland after so many years? Economically or culturally?*

M.M. The economy of the six counties of the North is hugely, hugely hampered, and limited by the fact that it's cut off by a border from it's natural economic hinterland. Ireland is Ireland. It's not Australia. It's not the U.S. We are a small island nation. A brilliant island nation with loads of resources and potential, but we will only actually see our full economic blossoming when we are united, and here is an interesting thing. After Brexit, they say every cloud has a silver lining - even Brexit - and what has been interesting is the disruption of Brexit forced a greater pace of the economic integration of the island wide economy, and island wide trade has boomed, and really grown significantly in the last ten years. I think that is only a glimpse of what your seeing that is possible, plus the fact we have a very young population of well educated people. It's a good place for people to come and live and work and invest. We are innovative, we work hard so I think that all the ingredients are there to make a huge economic success, and by that I mean not just making a small group of people rich. I mean making a success economically and make sure people have a decent standard of living, and living a good quality of life.

IAN: *When I'm in the North of Ireland now, if feels very different from my first trip in 1997, before the peace agreement. Now, there is a whole new generation that haven't had to experience the 'Troubles,' and it seems that the older generation is starting to see the advantages of uniting?*

M.M. Yes. For sure. I mentioned to you earlier the polling data as regard to young people, and their appetite for reunification. They are on for it, they want it, and certainly the place is transformed, but sure Ireland is transformed totally since those times, and what a great story.

We can be very critical of ourselves, correctly, of Irish people when we get things wrong. I think we need to be able to give credit to each other and ourselves when we get something right, and in 1998 risks were taken, decisions were made, it caused some ripples, it had to be managed politically and very carefully, but in the end the right calls were made and as we are approaching the 30th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement we need that same sense of purpose, of having an ambitious horizon, and working together. When I say working together, we need the United States. Remember, the Good Friday Agreement was not happening but for the intervention of America, of the politics of the United States, and politicians of the United States weren't moving except for the Irish here in America, the activism here, and the fact that the Irish in America always kept faith with Ireland.

IAN: *One objection I've heard about uniting is the cost, but is seems to me the British government might be exaggerating the costs. Would Ireland do better economically if all 32 counties were involved together?*

M.M. Yes. The answer to that is yes. It's absolutely in our economic interest. And by the way, on the issue of costs and costing. Of course we have to run the numbers. Of course we do. People need to know that their quality of life and standard of living will be protected. I'm well, well aware of that. I can tell you we can afford this. I can also tell you that some of the figures that are floating out there are wildly inflated, wildly inaccurate. What will sort this out is proper transparency from the treasury in London, who will not give us figures around tax receipts from the North, corporate tax receipts and so on, but let's have that discussion, and let's have that information in the public domain. Fianna Gael, and Fianna Fáil, the parties of the government now are moving on this. That's so exciting. Let's see their actions be as good as their words, and let's start making that preparation, having those discussions, and then internationally, I mean everybody up to and including the President of this country has said recently that unity is the way forward.



Bill O'Sullivan; President Gaelic Park, Mary Lou McDonald, President Sinn Fein, & John Griffin, former President of Gaelic Park.



Patrick Cullinane & Mary Lou McDonald in the Founders Room at the Irish American Heritage Center, Chicago

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* To promote Irish culture in America and to preserve Irish-American Heritage
* To promote education, friendship, understanding and cooperation among members, and the community in general.
* To promote and cooperate in the general welfare work of the community.

Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year
to our members and all IAN readers.



Terry From Derry

by Terry Boyle



Some of Entertained Angels

https://www.youtube.com/@Derrypoet

Ah, breathe. The world has become stranger than we think. I'm constantly amused by how the contradictions of human nature play out on every plane of existence. Just when you think you know something, it becomes something else.

Anyone familiar with quantum mechanics will appreciate how infinitesimal our knowledge is when it comes to understanding the world around us. The more we scrutinise the very fabric of the material universe, the more we find ourselves questioning our assumptions about who we are and what our reality might be. For those of us who believe in some form of spirituality, these discoveries need not pose a threat to our beliefs. Indeed, the very idea of uncertainty is considered by many to be a cornerstone of faith. There are countless stories and myths that point us towards a deeper understanding of goodness.

A major tradition in most religious faiths is hospitality. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, welcoming the stranger is considered a virtue. In Genesis, Lot welcomes strangers into his home, only to discover that they are angels. In Greek mythology, Zeus and Hermes disguise themselves as travellers seeking somewhere to rest. When Baucis and Philemon, an elderly couple, welcome them into their humble home, their generosity stands in stark contrast to the inhospitable behaviour of their neighbours. The gods eventually destroy the community but spare the elderly couple. They are granted their wish to die together and are transformed into intertwined trees. In the biblical account, Lot and his family are also spared the destruction that follows, although his wife does not escape her fate.

These are morality tales, intended to encourage us to be mindful of others. Angels and gods reveal themselves to people who are good-natured, reminding us not to forget the importance of kindness. In Hebrews 13:2, we're told: "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for some have entertained angels unawares."

I was recently at a meeting when someone retold the myth of Baucis and Philemon. For some reason, the story burrowed its way into my mind. It reminded me of my father and his love of helping others. He would stop and give hitchhikers a lift. He was generous to a fault. Yes, he was sometimes taken advantage of and considered a fool, but he believed that people were fundamentally good. It takes a lot of faith to believe that.

There were times when his kindness was misconstrued as weakness, but there were other occasions when it helped change someone's life. A recovered alcoholic himself, he was always on the lookout for others struggling to overcome their addiction. He scoured the streets of Derry looking for those considered lost or beyond redemption. Drunks who had been marginalised and written off by society were of particular interest to him. They had lost their families and homes. Living on the streets, they were accustomed to being treated as worthless. He never saw them in that light. Having recovered himself, he believed that anyone could come back from chronic addiction.

When I think of these stories about entertaining angels, I remember his acts of mercy. The people he sought to help might not have been thought of as angels. They were society's outcasts. His attitude towards those in need had a lasting effect on me. He's been dead for almost two decades, but his actions as a good person live on in my memory.

When I was in Derry recently, I found myself in a situation where my actions were influenced by his sense of mission. I was out walking early one morning and decided to stop for a cup of coffee in a local café. As soon as I entered, I was greeted by a loud "Boyle!" The man responsible was already seriously inebriated, and it was only eight o'clock in the morning.

My initial reaction was to get a coffee to go and leave the drunk to his own devices, but I couldn't bring myself to do it. I could almost hear my father's voice. So, I sat down with the man, let him rave on about all sorts of things, and repeated what my father had often told others like him: "You're allergic to alcohol. It's a sickness. Alcohol isn't your friend; it will destroy your life."

I don't know whether anything I said had an impact on his thinking, but it felt worthwhile trying. By the time I left, he was saying all the right things. "Today is a new day… a blank slate," and so on. To mark his new beginning, he was going to buy himself a white shirt. Whether he ever bought that shirt, I'll never know.

I hadn't given the encounter much thought until I heard the story of Baucis and Philemon. It's not as if I'd given this man very much. There was nothing heroic in what I did or said. Nothing more than my time and some borrowed advice. My only real inconvenience was having to listen to him talk about his many accolades. He was quite a smart man. But all his education, money-making and achievements had been traded away for his need to drink. The beautiful things in his life had been overshadowed by his addiction.

I hope he finds a way to turn things around. Perhaps sharing some of my father's hard-earned wisdom will eventually bear fruit.

The following poem is the result of my reflections on entertaining angels.

Some Have Entertained Angels

I entertained a couple of angels the other day.
There was nothing remarkable about them.
They were just grateful for a casual hello.
Their interest in me equaled my curiosity about them.
The ordinariness of our exchanges was sublime;
kindness politely revealing itself through deference.
I live with people who like to be treated as gods.
They feel everyone owes them something.
Money affords them the right to be indifferent.
Wealth insulates them against compassion,
and pity is a weakness they can't afford to share.
The heavens are populated with their wanton greed.



I may only see angels once in a lifetime,
but what an impression they've made.
No buzzing or ringing of cell phones,
no intrusions, nothing to erode their humanity.
News of worldwide catastrophes flood
the newsfeed, just as they're about to leave.
I may never see them again, but I am reminded
what it is to be divinely human.



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ATLANTIC EDGE
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Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Remembered in Her Ancestral Home of Limerick

The Kennedy family remains arguably the most recognized and hallowed clan in the global Irish Diaspora. Over 60 years after the Presidency of the US of John F Kennedy, the Kennedy name retains a magnetic power that the passing decades and generations have not dimmed.

In terms of the Kennedy Irish roots, historically they have been seen as lying in Wexford. And that is true, as they are - on the father's side. But what about the female side? It turns out that is a Limerick story. About four years ago, Tim O'Connor, a former Consul General of Ireland in New York, who grew up in West Limerick, discovered from Bruff native, Declan Hehir, that three of the four grandparents of Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy, the mother of JFK, were from the Bruff/Lough Gur area of Co Limerick. Astonished at this close connection that he knew nothing about, Tim said to Declan "you develop a project around this, and I will try to get you some funding from Limerick Council". And with that the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Autumn School was founded Oct., 2022.

October 2026 saw the fifth holding of the Autumn School in Bruff and Lough Gur, County Limerick. Our Festival has grown into a well established event in October each year, marking and celebrating the deep connection of the famed Fitzgerald Kennedy clan to that beautiful part of County Limerick.

Back to the Roots

Around 1850, 3 natives of the Bruff/Lough Gur area - Thomas Fitzgerald, Mary Fitzgerald and Michael Hannon - left there to seek a new life in Boston. In doing so, they were following a path well trodden by their fellow country-people. For instance, in 1848, Patrick Kennedy left the New Ross area of County Wexford for Boston. Fate was to bring the families together two generations later in their new world. Thomas Fitzgerald married Cavan native Rosanna Cox in Boston, and their son was John Fitzgerald, the famous Boston politician better known as Honey Fitz. Mary Fitzgerald and Michael Hannon married in the Greater Boston area and their daughter was Josephine (Josie), who married Honey Fitz and their eldest daughter was Rose. As we all know, Rose married Joe Kennedy, the grandson of Patrick who had left New Ross in 1848 and the rest is history. Joe and Rose's nine children included the future President Kennedy (JFK or Jack), Attorney General and Senator Bobby Kennedy, Senator Ted Kennedy, Joe Kennedy, who was tragically killed in World War 2, and five daughters, who included Jean, the future US Ambassador to Ireland and Eunice, who went on to found the famed Special Olympics.

Honey Fitz, though only one generation removed from Ireland and Co. Limerick, had gone on to political prominence in Massachusetts - serving twice in the US Congress and two terms as a legendary Mayor of Boston. It is said that he was the biggest political influence on his young grandson, Jack (called after him) and certainly we like to claim that in Limerick! He was also very close to the youngest member of the Kennedy clan, Teddy, later a distinguished politician in his own right. Honey Fitz, accompanied by his 18-year-old daughter Rose, visited Ireland in 1908 as part of a wider European tour and when asked what his favorite part of the tour was, he replied "coming home to Bruff"!

That is the broad background to the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Autumn School. Our Festival has two main themes - the Irish Emigration Story more broadly, but with particular focus on the female leadership and participation. That is because our Autumn School is inspired by the story of Rose Fitzgerald, just two generations removed from Bruff/Lough Gur, Limerick and Ireland, and the huge impact she had on her large family, and the contribution they in turn went on to make to the US and the world.

So our program is designed around topics connected in some way to those themes. Here was our exciting program for the 2026 holding of our Autumn School, from 23-25 October just past: https://www.rosefitzgeraldkennedyschool.ie/

We were thrilled with the success of this year's Festival - overflowing crowds for all sessions, great speakers and a brilliant atmosphere throughout. Most of all, we were encouraged that we are on to something interesting in shining an additional light on this relationship between Ireland as the Home Place - in this case County Limerick - and our great Irish Diaspora around the world, who we are so proud of.

We were delighted to be joined by several American friends who travelled over for the Festival. These included three members of the next generation of Kennedys - sisters Mariah, Cara and Michaela Kennedy Cuomo, the daughters of Kerry Kennedy and Andrew Cuomo, and therefore the grand-daughters of Bobby Kennedy (and Mario Cuomo!). They took our Autumn School by storm with their kindness, grace and charm. It was their first time in Bruff/Lough Gur and it felt special to have them among us five generations after their three ancestors had left the area for Boston. Their presence continues a tradition whereby each generation since the original ancestors left Bruff/Lough Gur has returned to visit Limerick. Last year, we were honored to have with us as a leading speaker, Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, the eldest of the children of Bobby and Ethel Kennedy, who made a big impact on us all, as did her nieces this year.

We are particularly grateful to Professor Barbara Perry of the Miller Center at the University of Virginia. A top US Presidential scholar, and acclaimed expert on the Kennedy legacy, this was her second year in succession joining us, accompanied by her dear friends from North Carolina, Debra and Clayton DeCamillis. Barbara recently published a highly rated book on the political relationship between President Kennedy and Eleanor Roosevelt, called "Reconcilable Differences" and she gave us a fascinating presentation on it during our Autumn School. The book recounts how initially there were tensions between the Kennedys and Roosevelts, going back to Joe Kennedy's fractious relationship with President Franklin D Roosevelt, but how eventually JFK and Eleanor, by then the most prominent female in the Democratic Party, made their peace in 1960. For the remaining, sadly short period left in both their lives (Eleanor died in November 1962 and JFK in 1963), they worked closely together on Civil Rights, including women's rights, with President Kennedy establishing a Commission on the Status of Women and appointing Eleanor as its Chair. Barbara Perry is currently working on a new book on President Kennedy's final European Tour in 1963, including his Visit to Ireland, and she used her trip to join us to do some research on that famed 1963 Visit.

Other themes covered in this year's Autumn School included Fashion (a big factor in how Rose presented herself and her family to the world), Education, the Irish Language, and of course in the run up to the Mid Term Elections, US politics.

We want to tell you about two other sessions we think would be of particular interest to the readers of Irish American News.



Mariah with Michaela and Cara Kennedy Cuomo and Tim O'Connor, a former Consul General of Ireland in New York at the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Autumn School at Thomas Fitzgerald Centre, Bruff. pic Declan Hehir

Following welcome remarks by the Mayor of Limerick, John Moran, and on behalf of the Irish Government by Kieran O'Donnell, a member of the Irish Parliament for Limerick, we had a fascinating presentation on the Opening Night by Belfast-based academics Elaine Farrell and Leanne McCormick on "Bad Bridget", their book exploring the stories of Irish women who fell on hard times in emigration. Most of the stories came from the experience of Irish emigrant women in the US in the 19th and early 20th century. In explaining why they chose this subject for their book, Professors Farrell and McCormick said that they wanted to bring this part of the history of Irish emigration into the light also, and that these people too deserve to have their story told - "everybody can't be angels or saints". They also told us that discussions are underway with Netflix about a possible series.

The second session we wanted to highlight involved another piece of living history being presented before our eyes. Retired Irish Defence Forces Lieutenant Colonel, Peter McMahon, recalled how he was one of the Cadets of the Irish Army who performed the ceremonial drill at the Funeral of President Kennedy on 25 November 1963 at Arlington Cemetery. Peter recounted the extraordinary few days in his life as a young Irish soldier who found himself, together with his colleagues, cast into a central role in one of the most poignant and famous moments in American history.

We see our Autumn School as another example of the profound bonds which bind Ireland and our Diaspora together. We also see it as an example of what we the Home Place can bring to the relationship by seeking to be what we call "conscious custodians" of the heritage, identity and origins of those who left. We view it as noble work and we look forward to continuing it with our partners, Limerick City and County Council, Failte Ireland, Tourism Ireland and various Irish Government Departments, in the years ahead.

And, of course, next September, the Ryder Cup will be in Adare in County Limerick. Adare is only about 15 miles from Bruff. So any readers of Irish American News coming over to Adare for the golf, please know that during your trip you are most welcome to visit Bruff/Lough Gur and experience for yourself this lovely part of County Limerick and its deep connections to an iconic Irish American family!

Co-Authors:

Declan Hehir, Director Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Autumn School

Tim O'Connor, former Consul General of Ireland to New York and Committee Member

Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Autumn School For further info contact: events@rosefitzgeraldschool.ie



Michaela Kennedy Cuomo (left) meets with participants at the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Autumn School, held at the Thomas Fitzgerald Centre in Bruff, County Limerick

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Ultimately "being a good sport," was the era's of my childhood's trump card. It was about embracing a moral imperative. Reaching for a star. Is this not the challenge of Bethlehem's stable?

"Be a good sport." Words that echoed through my childhood as a moral challenge. When uttered by a parent, no higher sacrifice. No greater call to gentlemanly behavior. Upon hearing this mannerly imperative, the course was always clear. The expectation was a call for action with honor. Dignity. Low on drama and high on behavior that was courteous, self-effacing and good humored. Like your list for Santa.

It meant you took a deep breath. Swallowed your pride. And acted with a resource of fervent discipline. In other words, "Do what is hard." Share. Forgive. Understand. Suck it up. Keep your composure. Above all, don't be a jerk. It was humanity in a can.

Those were words that always came in handy in adolescence. In times of teen age trouble. In moments of mid-life outrage. In cold flashes of adult hatred. Or in hot episodes of mature rage. "Be a good sport," was always the reminder of what was expected. Above and beyond the call of duty.

When a moment proved to be unjust. Or the actions of another were an obvious betrayal. It was about disappointment. Hushed judgment. And not obliterating an opponent. It was always about keeping balance on the moral high ground. And never the easy way out of some difficulty at another's expense or saving face. In our home it was always about preserving the "esprit de corps," my mother liked to say.

Ultimately "being a good sport," was about embracing a moral high-ground. A serious life lesson. Taking the hard way out. Doing the right thing instinctively. For reward always in the future. For a payoff not immediate. Deferred. It meant commitment to some ideal of life bigger than yourself. Not always clear or certain. But a life choice shared with those who loved you. A code of tribal, family, honor that connected to your heart. Words that shape an important moral roadmap. Helping us find our direction. A way to get back home. A discovery caused by our openness to embrace a sense of character and courage. The ultimate Yuletide discovery.

When you don't know the way, you are just stumbling around with no plan. It's always dangerous to be without a roadmap for a safe return to stable living. Without it we are merely bumping around in the dark. Or at least life's oblique half-truths where people of shadowed-living always seem to be crowding around us, I'm sorry to say. They rarely help us reset our moral geography. They seldom identify the sources of light that further endures in our life. That has never been more important than in this present state of world fragmentation. And large-scale Chicago upheaval. We are kidding ourselves if we think some hot cocoa and sugar cookies that look like Christmas trees can bring the change we need. Nothing wrong with cocoa and cookies. They just don't carry the power we currently need.

Have you uncovered any new-found passage ways out of the prophetically false deceptions of the world fiascoes? Have you discovered any clarity in your life during the heretical abuse of the false prophets? Have you come up with any formulas for deepening meaning and purpose in your life?Especially while faced with the challenges of betrayal, isolation, separation, and loss during the totemic to war?

Many people have spoken to me of their new found understanding of what's really of value in their lives? After months of life-altering changes in predictable living. Don't forget the realities of everyday life. Maybe we have been rescued by people we never knew as a friend. By their courtesy. Kindness. And attention to our needs.Maybe someone has reached out to us for assistance and we have become a part of their struggle for survival. Helping keep someone's kitchen grocery-filled during the panic of restless living, for example, might have been the very thread that has given you the most hope.

Chicagoans have always been people of great survival. In the primitive wilderness of the Prairie we have faced great physical storms and challenges. Like warfare with our neighbors. Or shameful dismissal of the Bishop of Rome, or when the stockade of Fort Dearborn was burned and the residents slaughtered. Or catastrophes on the seascape of Lake Michigan. Or epidemics in times of primitive medicine as when we lost one-fifth of the city's population during the plagues of Cholera during the1840s. Or when three-fifths of the city burnt to the ground in the fire of 1871. While improvements of technologies often made recovery more certain, it was really the sprit of Chicago's people that led us to recovery and new directions.The wonderment of human sacrifice identifies the mystery of Christmas nearer than we think.And perhaps different than we think.

We never stopped being the fastest growing city in the nation for the last half of the 19th century. We could always boast, in truth, about Chicago's great contributions to the growth of the American ideal. And the growth of fresh identity and dynamics making our urban trajectory the envy of the world.

Just look at the hope, today, that local commerce has produced by its ability to heal and sustain local commercial enterprise and whole neighborhoods. Nowhere has that been truer than in the Gold Coast Triangle where the Gibson Group, Carmines, and Tavern on Rush where creative and unbroken commitment to sustain local commerce is protecting workers' livelihood and liberty. Literally feeding those most in need is now a heroic new chapter of how Chicago history reads.

The wise and sensitive management of Chicago institutions not only provides great vittles to neighborhood customers, but it keeps local residents' spirits elevated leading to an all time high. Chicago has abided the cosmic hope for creating worthy living to be proud of for labor unions. Careful to expand the protection of all employees. Ensuring their well being and survival out of a crushing period of hard times. All the details and humanity of everyday living shape the successful formula for Chicago's achievement for survival as much as the development of any vaccine ever has. Or the full inoculation of the urban population.

It's enough to shine the light we need to find the path toward home. For a way out of the confinement. Misplaced suspicions and career fears do more to shape the picture of everyday Chicago politics than clear thinking about local needs.

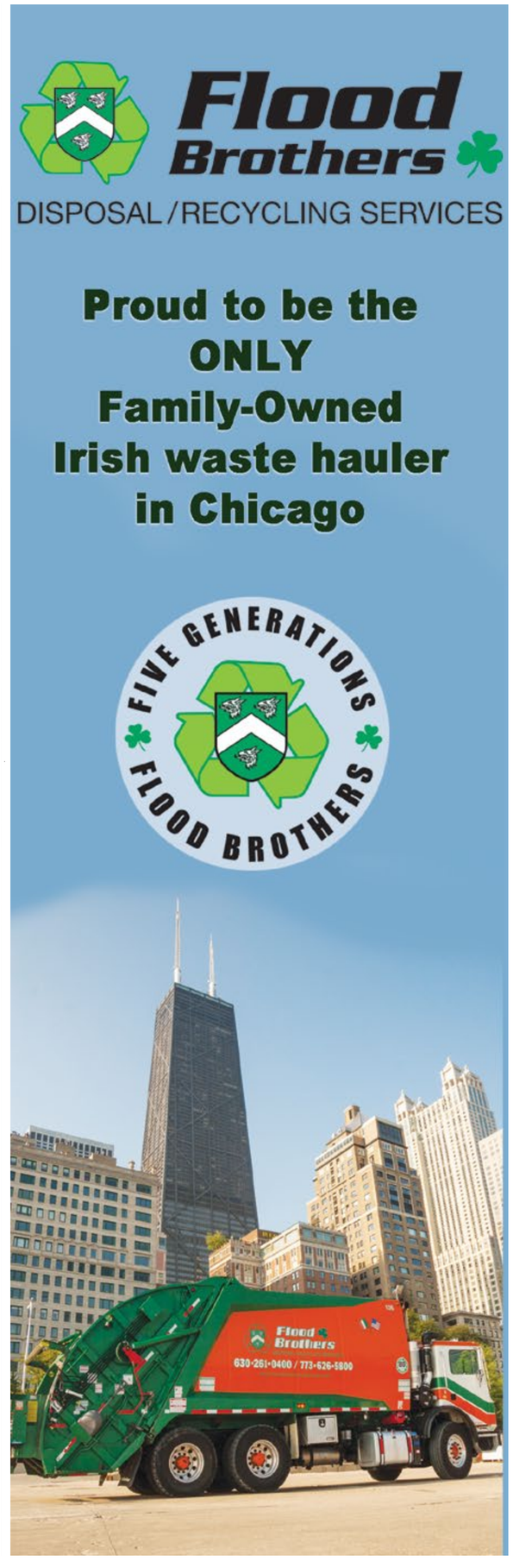
Perhaps all is not lost.Maybe the time is ripe for us "to be a good sport." Maybe there is still some moral high ground for us to achieve by our courage and behavior.

Perhaps Chicago's Mayoral leadership can still salvage the tumbling failure of a squandered time in office. Perhaps the mayor can find a way out of the latest armed assaults of Lake Shore Drive high rises by gang bangers intent on civil unrest. Perhaps there is still time to undue failed perceptions by Chicago police to respect and sustain their daily sacrifices. Maybe there still is time to stop the shambles that is unfolding in Chicago's public schools. Though hardly time to become their friend. It's hard to imagine there is any way out of the economic disaster of failed businesses and mass exodus of Chicago employers from the Gold Coast and City Center communities.

We can hang the holly and the ivy, and sing the carols of our childhood. There's even time for fruit cake, hot cider, snowmen and Midnight Mass. The Christmas culture can carry us back into the journey of shepherds and Magi. Then ultimately in our kindness discover the sweet cry of the babe, transforming the humble flesh of you and me. Because we're good sports.

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Clan na Gael Member Murdered In Chicago





BUTTEVANT

The Market Town of Buttevant in North Cork boasts of its history which sketches back over many centuries. Its name is often credited with the French phrase Boutez-en-Avent, commonly translated as "Push forward." When the Normans invaded Ireland they established the town as an important centre of fortification, trade and administration. The British authorities continued these roles during their time of occupation. During the War of Independence because of its large British Army Barracks it was an important staging point due to its access to the road network and railway station. North Cork was a very active Republican and Nationalist area with many attacks on British Forces. Today the town continues as a market town with its medieval layout of Castle ruins with many religious foundations and Abbey ruins dating back to the 1200 hundreds.

WHITEBOYS - LEVELLERS

Whiteboys so called for the white cloaks or shirts they wore when on raids and maneuvers A secret society established as an agrarian resistance movement in Ireland during the mid-eighteenth century. At its core they resisted high rents, evictions being imposed by ruthless colonial landlords and their local agents. They resisted the closing off of common land with grazing rights to local farmers. They achieved this by removing and levelling any fencing or walls constructed by the landlords agents. They were not afraid of intimidating anyone who wished to dilute farmers rights.

By acting mostly at night they made it almost impossible for the authorities to identify individual members of any of their group. Their biggest fear was being identified by informers employed by the landlords, especially spies that were previously members of the group. The fear was that an informer could expose members to arrest, imprisonment or execution. It's been reported that if you were suspected of being an informer then you were executed to deter others. Their aims were focused on economics rather than campaigning for national independence. They were particularly active in counties Tipperary, Waterford, and Cork which included Buttevant impacting on the Cronin family and their neighbours.

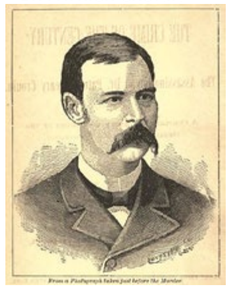
Focus on Republican aims came later in the century with The United Irishmen whose aim was to achieve political reform and an independent Irish Republic culminating in the 1798 and1803 Rebellions. It was into this environment of Penal Laws of restricting Irish Catholics in every aspect of their lives that influenced future generations yet unborn.

The failure of the potato crop generally referred to as the Famine, in reality it was a Genocide, overseen by the Colonian powers of 1845 would compound the problems of tenant farmers and their large families

ESCAPING TO AMERICA

Patrick Cronin born in Buttevant in1846 during the time of the famine has developed, son of a labourer was one such person. Similar to thousands of large Irish families seeking a brighter future, the Cronin family emigrated and sought refuge in America. Unlike Ireland, as a result of the British Penal Laws during this period, America allowed young Patrick access to formal education at which he excelled. (Today since Independence, Ireland is a vibrant well educated society which many American Corporations have found to their benefit when looking to access European markets)

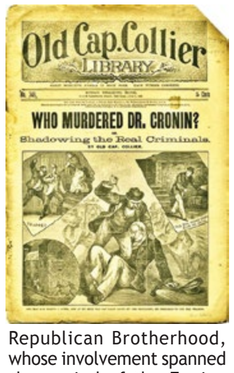
DR PATRICK CRONIN



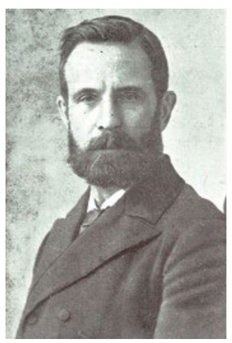
During his short lifetime Cronin achieved many qualifications and commercial achievements : a Schoolteacher in Pennsylvania, a Pharmacist and shopowner, in St Louis he helped to establish a free medical dispensary, in Missouri he studied medicine before qualifying as a doctor. He also became an editor of the ***Celto-American***, a publication that supported Irish-American causes (similar to today's ***Irish American News***) It was in this role that he formed a trusted friendship with John Devoy (prominent Irish revolutionary and Fenian leader) that later would stand him in good stead within Clan na Gael.

CLAN NA GAEL - JOHN DEVOY

The Clan was founded by Irish-Americans in 1867 as a result of divisions within the Irish Fenian movement. Its aims were to build an organization to help in any way possible to gain Irish independence from British rule. It funded and organised the escape of Fenian prisoners from as far away as Fremantle in Australia. This escape occurred 150 years ago known as the "Catalpa" rescue. Today that escape continues to be reported on a worldwide basis as one of the most daring prison breaks ever undertaken. It continued to provide significant financial and political support up to and including the1916 Easter Rising and The War of Independence. One of its most influential figures was John Devoy, one of the leaders of the Irish



Republican Brotherhood, whose involvement spanned the period of the Fenian Rising to the Anglo-Irish Treaty. When he was released from prison he was sent into exile and arrived in New York and worked as a journalist for the ***New York Herald***, which promoted Irish Nationalism. After it closed he became editor of ***The Gaelic American*** where he continued to support the fight for Irish Freedom. He was an admirer of Patrick Cronin whom he trusted. The Clan members associated with Devoy came to an end after the formation of the Irish Free State, (a historic military barracks and road in Naas are now called after him). A further section continued



John Devoy, Fenian

under Joseph McGarrity. The split reflected the Treaty and Anti-Treaty sides of the bitter Civil War.

CHICAGO



Alexander O'Sullivan

When Cronin arrived in Chicago to take up a position at Cook County Hospital, he continued his active role within Clan na Gael. He supported many charities and the Catholic Church, becoming a prominent and respected member of the Irish American community. When Cronin believed that Clan monies were being misappropriated under the control of Alexander O'Sullivan, the dominant Clan figure in Chicago. Funds had been raised in order to support the families of the jailed and killed during the Irish Dynamite Campaign in Britain. Some of the major campaign incidents occurred in1885 when explosions struck the Westminster Houses of Parliament, Tower of London and Westminster Hall. O'Sullivan (picturedabove) in turn accused Cronin of being a spy. This led to a bitter internal conflict with accusations on both sides. O'Sullivan accused Cronin of treason and of being a British spy. He assembled a panel of five men he trusted to try him, which included Henri Le Caron (who later admitted to being a British spy) and his close associate Daniel Coughlan, a senior detective of the City force. The trial was brief, finding Cronin guilty and expelled him from the Clan. This led to a split as many members sided with Cronin. The split caused a lot of damage to the Clan's reputation. After much deliberation and rancor, a compromise was agreed to. Part of it was that Cronin would provide medical services to O'Sullivans employees at his successful icehouse business.

This arrangement would later prove fatal for Cronin.

GRIEVOUS MURDER

On the night of May 4th a man called to Cronin's home advising there was an employee injured and that he had a coach to bring him to the accident scene. He was never again seen alive by family or friends. When a blood-stained trunk was found some time later with strands of hair matching the colour of Cronins, his friends believed he was murdered. A cover up was then orchestrated. Reports that he was seen on the night of the 4th on a streetcar, newspapers received dispatches from Toronto that he was in Canada, (he spent some of his early years there) admitting he was a spy and fleeing to Britain.

On the 22nd of May in Lake View his naked remains were found in a jammed sewer. He had scalp wounds to his head that were probably inflicted by an ice pick. Neighbours to the icehouse told the police that a nearby cottage had been rented but no one had moved in. Only ever seen lights on at night. On investigation they found blood stains in a number of the rooms, and the floors were painted to cover bloodstains. They discovered the furniture was purchased at Revel's store as was the trunk, and suspected that it was a friend of O'Sullivan, and Detective Coughlin, a man named Pat Cooney 'The Fox' that had murdered Cronin. The Police also discovered the horse and carriage had been rented on the 4th by Coughlin and driven by his friend John Kunze.

O'Sullivan, Coughlin, Kunze, Frank Woodruff, and John Beggs were all close members of Camp 20. Camp 20 was the Clan's headquarters as a secret society. It was also known as the Columbia Club, and or the Columbia Literary Society

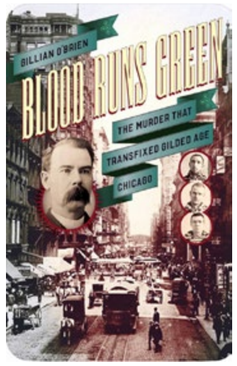
ARRESTS AND TRIAL

The trial of those arrested began in October 1889 which attracted enormous attention. The case had been covered extensively by the newspapers of the day, resulting in finding impartial jurors difficult. The prosecution argued that Cronin was murdered as a result of the dispute within the Clan, and that those on trial all played a role in his gruesome murder. Those on trial for Cronin's murder were, Patrick O'Sullivan, Daniel Coughlan, Martin Burke, John F Beggs and John Kunze.



How Dr. Cronin was found. Chicago's mystery solved at last ass laborers cleaning the sewer basins in Lakeview, a Chicago neighborhood on the near Northside.

The evidence did not establish that O'Sullivan had ordered the killing, despite never being indicted, he did however suffer enormous reputational damage. Coughlan was found guilty but released after a retrial. The trial is well documented in the book, ***Blood Runs Green***, by Gillan O'Brien. It also provides great insight of Chicago at this time.



Over time, with the support of John Devoy, Dr Patrick Cronin's good name was restored, clearing him of being a spy of the British authorities.

A Note of Remembrance

It is worth nothing that Constable James Quinn, a native of Windgap, County Kilkenny, Ireland, became the first Chicago police officer recognised as having been killed in the line of duty. He died on the 5th of December,1885, following an assault while carrying out his duties in an early rough area of Chicago known as The Sands. His story is a reminder that, behind the badge there have always been men and families who served at great personal cost. His Irish origins are a small but significant part of Chicago's history, and a poignant reminder of the Irish men & women whose lives helped shape the city



Jim Hegarty & relative of John Devoy, Sara Devoy.

jimhegartyauthor@gmail com
www Hegartycollection ie
@hegartyjim Youtube film **The Hegartys of The Laurels**

We Get Letters

Cliff, I'm Tom McGuire. Mary Pat Kelly is my cousin. I told her about my trip to Ireland with Skinny Sheahan & Mike Houlihan. She suggested I contact you about an aspect of the trip she found interesting.

In Praise of the Irish Tour Bus Driver

In October, I traveled to Ireland with the Skinny and Houli tour for the 6th time. Houlihan has been putting tours of Ireland together since 2013. Every tour I've been on has been great. As Houli would say 'the craic was mighty".

The glue that holds the tours together are the bus drivers.

The tour bus drivers have been terrific. They can all drive these huge busses as easily as if they were driving a golf cart. And they are all walking (or rather driving) encyclopedias of Irish history, culture, and mythology.

On our latest trip, the driver was a gentleman named Phil Duffy. This was the third time Phil has escorted the Skinny and Houli group around Ireland. One day, severe storms hit the west coast of Ireland and Phil had to call an audible on our plans for the day as several roads were closed due to flooding. Undeterred, he made a quick call to Pat Cohan's pub in Cong, Co. Mayo to see if they could handle a busload of Chicagoans for lunch. So we ate in the pub featured in the movie The Quiet Man.

Phil told us that due to low corporate tax rates and a highly educated workforce that speaks English, almost 1k U.S companies operate businesses and have a major presence in Ireland. The downside to this is that young people no longer seek jobs in the trades. They covet positions in the business world. Consequently, a shortage of electricians, plumbers, and carpenters exists in Ireland. This shortage includes tour bus drivers. Phil explained that currently the average age of an Irish tour bus driver is almost 60 years old.

Working weekends and being away from home for several days driving a bus load of tourists around does not appeal to young people. But as Phil points out, despite those drawbacks, the job has lots of perks. The money is good, you meet and befriend people from all over the world, you stay at nice hotels, and you eat good meals. And you occasionally meet some famous people.

Phil met President Bill Clinton and drove the crew from Air Force One for several days while Clinton was helping to broker the peace in Northern Ireland during "The Troubles". The pilot even gave him a tour of Air Force One.

Sadly, Phil feels the Irish tour bus driver is an endangered species. I hope that is not true. It would be a tremendous loss to the tourism industry in Ireland.

Thank you. Tom McGuire



Connemara, Ireland; Cross Plains, Texas; & Christmas, 2026

Swimming Upstream



By Charles Brady

There was always going to be plenty of time to get around to it. At least, until there wasn't. That's the way things felt earlier this year. I was finally going to make my way to the Howard Days Festival in Cross Plains, Callahan County, Texas. I'd been meaning to head there for...well, decades, really. But you know yourselves... 'when God made Time he made plenty of it' and all that. It's a great excuse to put things on the long finger; except that way you don't notice the years passing.

It was funny; not funny ha-ha, just...funny. It had hit me sometime in the previous year that I had first read Robert E. Howard's work when I was about thirteen/fourteen. Back then - the seventies - you would have been laughed out of it if you had suggested that he be taken seriously, not simply as a fantasy pulp writer. Fast forward half a century and these days, he is quite rightly acknowledged as a member of a great pantheon of hard-boiled American geniuses who include Raymond Chandler and that fearless, inspirational maverick Dashiel Hammett, & rightly so.

Ninety years since Robert Howard's death in 1936 - yes, it seemed a good time to finally meet all those like-minded souls who congregate in Cross Plains every June.

And then I got news that an appointment had been made for me to undergo some surgery; and the way things are here right now you just don't turn that down. So, I reluctantly waved Callahan County farewell before ever setting foot in it.

One thing led to another and I ended up going in for more than one 'procedure' (I love that - sounds so strangely cozy) and more than one biopsy. And months of wondering if I was due to check into that hopefully friendly dimension next door.

For the first time in forever I thought of a folk tale that I first heard when hitchhiking around Ireland as a teenager in the seventies. It was apparently a Connemara belief that your death comes out of the womb with you at the moment of your birth. It was a strange image that as a young man I found oddly comforting - although it might just be that I was a strange young man.

I wondered for a long time if it was just the locals pulling my leg and then some years later came across the same belief in John Donoghue's book 'Anam Cara: Spiritual Wisdom from the Celtic World'.

As it turns out it seems that I've got a few more Christmases in front of me yet. And I'll say a big thank you to my surgeon Professor Aisling Hogan and her Galway team. It's great to meet someone who isn't going to pussyfoot around you. I was comfortable with her from the start.

Exploring the Inner Landscape for those months of waiting, though...that was interesting. I discovered that even at three in the morning, when I found myself staring into the Abyss of that grumpy 'ould German philosopher fella, that I really didn't mind the Abyss staring back. I found that in accepting that this might be my roll call, that I was curious as to what would come next. I had lived a pretty interesting life; travelled a fair bit; and while I had very few friends, the ones I had were the real deal. In fact, when a young nurse remarked that I was a very positive person (something that I don't hear... ever) I quoted Peter Pan to her, that 'Death will be an awfully big adventure'.

At which point - from the look on her face - I worked out that being positive is one thing, being just plain weird is something best kept to yourself.

"To be dead is to stop believing in/ the masterpieces we will begin tomorrow" wrote Patrick Kavanagh.

"And you perhaps, take up religion bitterly
Which you laughed at in your youth,
Well not actually laughed
But it wasn't your kind of truth."

Ah, not bitterly in my case; but for sure my life - as with the life of everyone - has been a work in progress, leading to the not always comfortable accommodation with things spiritual I find myself with now. It's a hodgepodge of beliefs and lessons learned over a lifetime that works for me, probably wouldn't do so for anyone else. And when someone throws at me that 'you've changed your tune since I first met you'...well, I should hope so. If you're not changing then you've stopped growing; in fact, you're dead already, in many of the ways that count.

Let's be honest, though, we're none of us really in a hurry to meet the Boss; so, when I got the reasonably all clear - a bit of a change in lifestyle, but that's OK - it was like the sun coming up on me. And I find myself looking forward to this Christmas and maybe a few more to come.

May I wish each and everyone of you a wonderful Christmas. Unless you identify yourself as an 'eco activist' or - worse - a politician. Then I wish you nothing but misery. Joking. Well, most politicians. As with everything else there are honourable exceptions.

Forget the insanity of the world for a moment.

Forget the two members of staff in the S. Dublin school who thought it was a great idea to force their ideology on students by wearing their attention-seeking, cosplaying keffiyeh scarves to work-and then were surprised when it escalated.

Or the fact that we have parents who take it on themselves to diagnose their kids with Attention Deficit Disorder by looking at Google. And maybe not taking into account that the brats are uncontrollable because no one ever said 'no' to them. Maybe they have no attention spans because they're on Thick Tok all day and it's nothing to do with ADD.

Forget trigger warnings on nursery rhymes, thinking about that will just make you want to punch something; forget that recent convention in a Cork hotel which was held for people who identify as furry animals; forget all these things.

Because I'm going to whisper something to you: for the first time in many years, I'm optimistic about the future of this planet. Despite all the evidence to the contrary I'm hoping that the craziness we're going through -like having entire countries run by power-mad men in their dotage - has just been teething pains.

Maybe it's because I see myself as having gotten an unexpected reprieve this year, that Santa Claus already visited me; maybe I'm thinking of all the extra books I'll get a chance to read, movies I'll be able to watch; maybe it's facing into my fourth sober Christmas.

Perhaps it's because of some of that or all of that, but I'm encouraged for the future. Sure, I may be back to normal come the New Year. But maybe not. And you never know: I might even get to see Cross Plains, Texas yet.

Have a great Christmas yourselves & a wonderful 2027!

charleybrady@gmail.com

Gaelic Park's Super Fundraiser Raffle Offers $100,000 Grand Prize

Featuring a $100,000 Grand Prize and additional cash prizes, the Annual Super Fundraiser Raffle offers participants an opportunity to win big while supporting Gaelic Park's cultural and community events. Only 3k tickets will be sold at $100 each.

The Early Bird Drawing was Sunday, 11-22, 2026,

Early Bird prizes included:

- $5,000, with a $2,500 seller bonus
- $2,500, with a $1,000 seller bonus

Tickets had to be purchased on or before November 22 to qualify for the Early Bird Drawing.

The Grand Drawing will be held Sunday, Dec. 13, 2026, at 70pm in the Tara Room. Prizes include:

- **Grand Prize: $100,000; seller bonus $10,000**
- **Second Prize: $10,000; seller bonus $2,500**
- **Third Prize: $7,500; seller bonus $1,500**
- **Fourth Prize: $3,500**
- **Fifth Prize: $2,500**
- **Sixth Prize: $1,500**

All tickets are eligible for the Grand Drawing. winners need not be present, and the Grand Prize will be drawn first.

Tickets are available at the Chicago Gaelic Park Front Office and Carraig Pub, located at 6119 W. 147th Street, Oak Forest, Illinois, or by calling 708-687-9323.

www.chicagogaelicpark.com for more information.

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"We have insurance down Pat"

Thank You From Mary Pat Kelly

As I accepted the Eugene O'Neill Lifetime Achievement Award from the Irish American Writers & Artists on October 20th, I felt honored and a bit awed to join a lineup that included Judy Collins, Patricia Harty, Peter Quinn, Joanie Madden, Brian Dennehy, Charlotte Moore, Ciaran O'Reilly, Phil Donahue and many others. And I thought too, with great gratitude, of my Chicago roots and how what seems to be my harvest season began when IBAM chose me as their Person of the Year in 2023.

AMAZING!

And then this September I had my first ever artist residency at Aras Eanna Arts Centre on Inis Oirr (Inisheer, the smallest of the Aran islands). Wonderful to be officially an artist and especially fun because everyone I met who lived on the island had relatives in Chicago.

The O'Neill celebration, and it was spectacular, was held at Joe's Pub, part of The Public Theatre named for its



founder, Joe Papp. As I took the stage, I remembered that Hair had debuted here and then was taken to Broadway and the world by Michael Butler of Chicago. (Oh well Oak Brook close enough). So many New York/Chicago partnerships. I worked at Saturday Night Live born from the creativity of Second City. Every speaker mentioned my Chicago roots and of course the trilogy of Irish American historical fiction I wrote, beginning with Galway Bay, draws on my family story.

We began with Dolores Keane singing the traditional song Galway Bay where a young man "came to Illinois". Trent Kowliak and Sadi Weir of Darrah Carr Dance brought the story alive with their innovative choreography. They set the tone for an evening that was later described as "brimming with joy."

Patricia Harty, Co-Founder and Editor-in-Chief of Irish America Magazine, spoke of my great great grandmother, Honora, star of the novels as an embodiment of the strong Irish women who saved their families. Honora escaped against all odds from The Great Starvation and her grandson, Ed Kelly, would become Mayor of Chicago. My family, my four sisters and brother, all of us alive because of her, came to New York to be part of this special night. For 40 years Trish has told the stories of Irish America (like ours) and I am proud to have been part of that achievement.

President of the IAWA, Liza Engresser, spoke of the trip 10 members of the group made to Chicago for the American Literature Association Conference at the Palmer House and how they were happy to stay at Polo Inn and get to know Bridgeport. She spoke of expanding the organization's regular salons to Chicago and steps have already been made in that direction.

When it was my turn, I talked about how essential the arts are for our survival at this fraught moment. We have to nourish our souls. We have to feed our souls.

I spent a lot of time in Derry during The Troubles. There were 34 choirs. Always music in the Derry air. And dramatic productions. Bishop Edward Daly, world famous now for the way he waved a white handkerchief trying to save a young man during the Bloody Sunday massacre, directed a parish drama group as a young priest.

If I had started listing writers, I'd still be up there on the stage. But you understand what I mean. In Chicago, this paper, the Irish American Heritage Center, Gaelic Park, Chief O'Neill's, the many places people gather in community to sing, to play to immerse themselves in the visual arts are centers of joy and resistance. I have experienced that same connection



in New York and in Ireland North and South.

LUCKY ENOUGH

Two examples of my work were highlighted. One was a scene from the movie, Proud, starring Ossie Davis, Stephen Rea and Albert Jones with a very special cameo from our own Aidan Quinn which I wrote and directed. Albert was there and not only is he an acclaimed actor but he also played football for Notre Dame. Need I say more?

The other was a scene from the musical version I've written, Special Intentions, which tells the story of my time in the Sisters of Providence during the tumultuous year 1967/1968 I spent teaching at Providence High School on the West Side now the flourishing Providence - St Mel. Beverly Thiele, (as pictured) who appeared in many Siamsa na nGael played my mother with James Gregory as my father and Annalisa Chamberlin as me. Conor Bagley whose work off Broadway, on Broadway and in regional theater has made him a rising star particularly at the Irish Repertoire Theater in New York.

Ellen McCourt introduced the piece with an inspiring meditation on Providence. She nailed the theme of my life. I'm very grateful and happy to share this moment with the Chicago Irish community.

The world we live in allowed me to facetime with my cousin, Tom McGuire, Mary Ellen Duffy, Dan McLaughlin and other members of the legendary Skinny & Houli Tour of Ireland who were in Galway this past week. They stood in Bearna on the shores of Galway Bay. Tommy was in our homeplace.

So much to be grateful for. Slainte.

In 2027 IAN Will Feature all 32 Counties

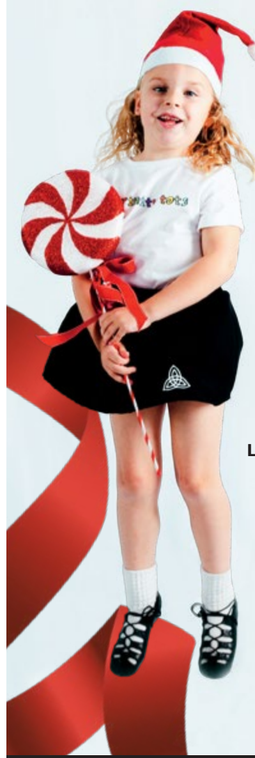
If you have a good photo representing any of the counties, please send to **cathy@irishamericannews.com**

The plan is to feature them in this order, but that could change depending on interest from those counties, as we will be speaking to as many County Councils as possible.



January- Clare and Galway, **February- Donegal, Dublin and Sligo**, March-Longford, Mayo and Roscommon. **April- Cavan, Louth and Monahan**, May- Waterford, Wexford and Wicklow, **June- Kerry, Leitrim and Limerick,** July- Cork, Kilkenny and Tipperary, **August- Carlow, Kildare and Laois,** September- Meath, Offaly and Westmeath, **October- Armagh and Down**, November- Antrim and Derry, **December- Fermanagh and Tyrone.**

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Stephanie Garrity: Bringing Hope to Children Facing Life's Hardest Challenges

As Executive Director of Rainbows for All Children, the nonprofit leader is carrying forward a remarkable mission of helping children navigate grief, loss and adversity

By Bridget Spillane

When children experience loss, trauma or major changes in their lives, they don't always have the words to explain what they are feeling. Sometimes they withdraw. Sometimes they struggle at school or act out. And sometimes they simply believe they are the only ones experiencing such pain.

Stephanie Garrity (pictured) believes no child should have to face those feelings alone.

As Executive Director of Rainbows for All Children, Garrity leads a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping children, teenagers and young adults navigate grief, loss and other difficult life experiences. Through peer-support programs, trained volunteer facilitators and partnerships with schools and community organizations, Rainbows provides young people with something essential: a safe place to be heard, understood and supported.

Based in Evanston, Rainbows has grown from a small grassroots effort into an internationally recognized organization. Its mission is straightforward but powerful: to ensure that children experiencing difficult circumstances have the emotional support and tools they need to move forward.

For Garrity, this work is more than a professional responsibility. It is a deeply personal commitment, shaped by her own childhood experiences, her understanding of the importance of community and her belief that every child deserves the opportunity to heal.

The story of Rainbows for All Children began in 1983 with a mother who wanted to help her own children. Founder Suzy Yehl Marta was searching for a support group for her three sons following her divorce. She discovered that while adults had access to resources to help them through difficult transitions, there were very few programs designed specifically for children. Rather than accept that gap, Marta took action.

Working with other parents and mental health professionals, she developed a structured program that would allow children to express their feelings, share experiences and connect with others facing similar circumstances.

Three Chicago-area private schools piloted the Rainbows curriculum in 1983. What began as a local effort quickly grew, eventually reaching communities throughout the United States and 16 countries.

Over the decades, the organization has helped hundreds of thousands of children and young people find support during some of the most challenging periods of their lives. Marta's vision continued until her death from cancer in 2013. Her legacy lives on through Rainbows and its commitment to making sure that no child feels isolated because of grief or family circumstances.

Today, Garrity has the responsibility and privilege of carrying that vision into the future. Garrity joined Rainbows in 2017, bringing more than two decades of nonprofit leadership experience to the organization.



Her professional background includes work with the Zacharias Sexual Abuse Center, Willow House and Regina Dominican High School. She is a graduate of Houghton College in New York.

Her understanding of Rainbows' mission is also rooted in personal experience. Having grown up with divorced parents, Garrity understands that family changes can have a profound effect on children and that young people often experience circumstances differently from the adults around them.

Children may not know how to communicate their sadness, anger, confusion or fear. They may not even recognize that what they are experiencing is grief. Garrity understands the importance of creating an environment where those feelings can be acknowledged without judgment.

Her leadership reflects a fundamental belief: children should not have to wait until their struggles become overwhelming before receiving support. Under her direction, Rainbows continues to strengthen its programs, expand its reach and raise awareness about childhood grief and adversity.

As Executive Director, Garrity oversees organizational strategy, staff leadership, fundraising, donor relationships, community partnerships and program development. She also works to ensure that the organization has the resources and trained facilitators necessary to serve more children.

One of the most important aspects of Rainbows' work is its understanding that grief is not limited to death. Children experience loss in many different ways. Divorce and separation can change the entire structure of a family. The incarceration or deportation of a parent can create uncertainty and fear. Military deployment, abandonment, serious illness and other traumatic circumstances can leave children struggling to understand what has happened.

Even when adults believe children are too young to understand a situation, the emotional effects can be significant. Rainbows recognizes that children need opportunities to express their feelings and learn healthy ways to cope. Its programs are designed around the developmental needs of different age groups, providing structured peer-support experiences that help young people realize they are not alone.

The organization does not attempt to rush children through grief or tell them how they should feel. Instead, it gives them the tools and encouragement to work through their experiences at their own pace. The programs also emphasize communication, emotional awareness, problem-solving, mindfulness and healthy relationships. Participation is free to families.

A child's behavior may be misunderstood when the underlying issue is emotional pain. By helping parents, educators and caregivers recognize the signs of grief and adversity, Rainbows hopes to encourage earlier intervention and more compassionate responses.

Garrity is also helping Rainbows expand its educational outreach through its podcast, ACE-ing Grief. As host, she brings together experts and individuals with firsthand experience to explore childhood grief, adversity and the challenges facing today's families.

While her work with Rainbows is the defining focus of her professional life, Garrity's own family story provides another perspective on the values she brings to the organization.

Her family's roots trace back to Ireland's historic province of Munster, near Waterford.

Around 1860, her ancestors immigrated, settling in Newfane, Niagara County, in Western New York.

Like many Irish families who made the journey across the Atlantic during the nineteenth century, they established new roots while preserving a connection to their homeland and the generations who would follow.

That tradition of family, perseverance and community continues in Garrity's life today. She and her husband, Tom, have raised their two sons in the Highland Park area. Collin, 31, graduated from Highland Park High School and Marquette University. Sean, 27, also graduated from Highland Park High School. Both are fourth-generation graduates of HPHS, a distinction that reflects the family's longstanding ties to the community.

Stephanie and Tom also own The Toadstool Pub in neighboring Highwood, which opened on November 11, 2011. The pub has become a local gathering place and a reflection of their commitment to community.

Yet it is through Rainbows that Garrity has found an opportunity to extend that sense of community to families far beyond her own neighborhood.

The need for Rainbows' services remains significant.

Children today face a wide range of challenges, from family disruption and bereavement to community violence, displacement and other traumatic experiences. The emotional effects can influence their relationships, education, confidence and overall well-being.

Garrity's leadership is focused on ensuring that Rainbows continues to evolve to meet those needs. That includes expanding the organization's reach, building relationships with more schools and community partners, increasing awareness of childhood grief and ensuring that trained facilitators are available to support children wherever they may live. It also means continuing to advocate for a change in how society views childhood grief.

Rainbows offers a practical way for communities to respond.

Its message is ultimately one of hope: difficult experiences do not have to define a child's future. With understanding, encouragement and the right support, children can develop resilience and move forward.

Garrity's Irish-American family history tells a story of generations who crossed an ocean to build a better future for their children. Her work is dedicated to helping ensure that children facing some of life's hardest circumstances have the support they need to build their own futures. It is a fitting continuation of a family tradition rooted in perseverance, compassion and community. And it is the promise at the heart of Rainbows for All Children: No child should have to navigate grief and loss alone.

To learn more about Rainbows for All Children, explore its programs, volunteer as a facilitator or support its mission, **visit www.rainbows.org**



Making Room to Support Our Neighbors

By Colleen Kennedy

What would the world look like if we made a little more room at the table?

Room for Steve, who is struggling to make ends meet since his wife lost her job.

Or Courtney, who's already stretched thin but continues to take on more to support her family.

Or Angela, who's piecing her life back together after grief tore it apart.

Right now, thousands of our neighbors like Steve, Courtney, and Angela come to Catholic Charities every day for help. They all deserve room at the table — a place to find nourishment, be heard, receive compassion, and feel hope.

As we have for more than a century, Catholic Charities has answered this call, providing help for as long as our neighbors need it. But these days, we're being asked to do more. More people are struggling to feed their families, get to work, and afford a safe place to live.

Our commitment to making room at our table isn't an empty slogan. It's core to what we do. When you give today, you will be supporting Catholic Charities programs that have deep impact:

- Community centers open to all, providing food, diapers, and other basic needs, plus caring staff ready to provide more assistance.
- Shelter for survivors of domestic violence and mental health support for the entire family.
- Integrated programs to help moms provide strong futures for their children.
- Meals that offer nourishment and connection.
- A local phone number answered by real people ready to listen and offer guidance.

For generations, our work has been sustained by neighbors who share their resources, time, and good fortune with those who need it the most … will you join them?

Your first-time gift or any increase in your giving received by Dec. 31 will be matched dollar for dollar, up to a combined total of $100,000.

In this season of gratitude and celebration, we are all called to pull out a chair, set a place, and offer warmth and care to our neighbors — especially the weary, the lonely, and those who are overlooked and forgotten.

With your support, they can trust we will have room for them.

Colleen Kennedy is the Chief Development Officer for Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago. Donations to fund our mission can be made at **catholiccharities.net/makingroom**











December 2026 YIFC Spotlight

By: YIFC Culture Committee (Katie, Hannah, Robby, Dani, & Fiona G.)

YIFC Spotlight: Forever Green

The Young Irish Fellowship Club of Chicago (YIFC) is excited to announce the return of Forever Green on Friday, March 5, 2027, at Theater on the Lake! Join us as we kick off Chicago's St. Patrick's Day festivities with one of the city's largest and longest-running Irish celebrations. Forever Green is the club's signature fundraising event, bringing people together for a memorable evening turning great times into good works.

For more than 50 years, Forever Green has brought together generations of Chicagoans to celebrate Irish heritage, reconnect with old friends, and make new ones, all while supporting great causes. This year's event promises another unforgettable evening of Irish music, dancing, and plenty of craic at one of Chicago's most beautiful lakefront venues. We will have live bands, a DJ, a live auction, an open bar with tickets, and bites throughout the evening.

This year, Forever Green is proud to support two outstanding charitable organizations: the 100 Club of Illinois and Mercy Home for Boys & Girls. The 100 Club provides support to the families of fallen first responders, while Mercy Home offers care, guidance, and opportunities for young people facing difficult circumstances.

Whether you're a longtime YIFC supporter or attending for the first time, we invite you to wear your green, gather your friends, and join us for another incredible celebration! Visit www.youngirish.com for ticket information, sponsorship opportunities, and event updates.

November In Review

Our First Thursday Happy Hour for November was packed. Thank you to Corcoran's Grill & Pub for hosting and to Vaughan's Hospitality for their continuous support. It was great to see everyone come out in their County Colors. Our November event was Turtle Racing at Tin Lizzie's! It was such a great way to end our calendar of events. The board of YIFC held their President and Treasurer elections at the November board meeting. Thank you to Patrick Headley for his great year as treasurer. Congratulations to our new treasurer Seamus Ryan! Thank you to outgoing President Maura McTighe on a fantastic year. Congratulations to the incoming YIFC President Grace Moriarty!

Save the Dates!

Our holiday season will kick off with a December First Thursday at Chief O'Neill's on Thursday, December 3rd! Yes, they will be decked out in all the holiday decorations. We cannot wait to see everyone to celebrate the season and fantastic year we've had at the last 2026 happy hour. The YIFC board of directors will celebrate the year on our annual Christmas Trolley through the city. Thank you to all the bars hosting us. Please save the date for Forever Green on Friday, March 5th. Please reach out to YIFC if you are interested in sponsoring FG52!

Cultural Corner - IFC Partnership

The partnership between the Irish Fellowship Club (IFC) of Chicago and the Young Irish Fellowship Club (YIFC) represents a longstanding tradition of mentorship, community, and Irish-American pride. Established in 1901, the IFC has played an important role in preserving Chicago's Irish heritage through civic engagement, philanthropy, and cultural celebrations.

In 1980, recognizing the need to engage the next generation, Dick LeFevour and his wife envisioned a club specifically for young Irish-American professionals. With the support of IFC liaisons Don Ryan and Arthur Dunne, the YIFC was founded on St. Patrick's Day in 1980, with Terry and Roseann (Finnegan) LeFevour serving as its founding presidents.

Originally established to provide younger members with opportunities to participate in IFC events while developing their own professional and social connections, the YIFC has grown into a thriving young professionals organization. Today, it is best known for its annual **Forever Green party**, a beloved Chicago tradition that kicks off the city's St. Patrick's Day celebrations.

The relationship between the two clubs remains rooted in mentorship and a shared commitment to giving back. Many YIFC members eventually transition into the IFC, continuing a legacy of leadership, friendship, and service. Through collaborative events, charitable fundraising, and a dedication to preserving Irish traditions, the IFC and YIFC continue to connect generations and ensure Chicago's Irish-American community flourishes for years to come.

Get Involved!

Please join us at one of our great events! If you are interested in sponsoring YIFC or partnering with us, please email us at youngirishfellowship@gmail.com. To follow along with all YIFC activities, find us on our Instagram @youngirishfc, Facebook, or website www.youngirish.com















Hibernian Hooligan Ball Returns for 9th Year

By Izzy Cusack

Visionary founder, writer, producer, radio host, actor, director & authentic Irish American genius Mike Houlihan is returning with his 9th Annual Hibernian Hooligan Ball on his 78th birthday December 16th at a new location. Houlihan founded his family public charity Hibernian Media back in 2013 and has since produced over a 1000 radio shows, films, TV shows, books, festivals, essays, newspaper columns, pilgrimages, & just plain craic for an ever-growing audience of folks who keep falling in love with their Irish culture.



Houli started his public charity with his twin sons Bill and Paddy and gorgeous wife Mary Carney over a decade ago and this year they will



celebrate a third-generation creative artist taking the stage with them. Charlotte Houlihan, also known as ***LOTTIE***, (pictured) has taken up the torch with an explosive solo-singing debut last June and continuing today performing with SCHOOL OF ROCK and her own band and last month making her theatrical stage debut as Madame Thénardier in Les Misérables at Trinity High School.

The Houlihan family and Hibernian Media continue celebrating Irish and Irish American culture on the radio with Hibernian Radio and The Houli's Hooley on Global Irish Radio each weekend & podcast at https://www.**hiberniaradio.org** They wrapped up the 12th Annual Irish American Movie Hooley film festival in late September at the Wilmette Theatre and finished up their 2026 Pilgrimage to Ireland with 35 Irish American Hibernophiles at the Galway MACNAS Festival in October. They also continue honoring their heritage and their hearts with Mike's "Chicago Calling" column and local personality profiles in the Irish Echo newspaper.

Joining the Houli family on Wednesday Dec. 16th is ***Liam Durkin***, (pictured left) the Chicago-based multi-instrumentalist, singer, and songwriter known for performing country, rock, folk, Americana, blues, and Irish ballads across the Chicagoland area. He's an old friend of the Houlihan family and traveled to Ireland with Houli and over 40 members of the Durkin family for their own pilgrimage just a few years ago. A tradition was born with Liam and the Houlihan's celebrating each year for the Hooligan Ball.



Please join them along with the ***Bag Pipes and Drums of the Emerald Society Chicago Police Department*** performing on Wednesday night at 7PM at Robert's Westside 7321 W. Madison St in Forest Park, Il. It's their only fundraiser of the year.

In addition to the music & magic there will be a Free Whiseky Raffle, Split the Pot, and a variety of amusing shenanigans to celebrate our Irish culture. Also featured will be many of the 400+ past radio guests, First Responders, Firefighters, Police, Paramedics and Nurses who have appeared on Hibernian Radio. There are rumors that this columnist, Izzy Cusack, will be in attendance with his retired adult film star wife Tammy Salami.

Purchase tix at **robertswestside.com**, or donate online at **https://www.hibernianmedia.org**

Hibernian Media NFP is a 501c3 public charity and all donations are tax-deductible.

Yes, it's going to be a Hooley!

And you're invited!

Jackson Square Collective: A New Chapter in Shopping Small

For more than 25 years, Jackson Square Mall was a beloved shopping destination in downtown La Grange, Illinois. Following the closure of its original location in the spring of 2026, husband-and-wife team Therese O'Sullivan and Joseph Evola saw an opportunity not simply to continue its legacy, but to evolve. With the purchase of the building that was the former home to the La Grange Park Antique Mall, they set out to create Jackson Square Collective.





Jackson Square shop owners Joe Evola, Therese O'Sullivan, and their son Killian, with Mr. and Mrs. Claus!

Entrepreneurship has long been a part of Therese's life, inspired by her father, Ulick O'Sullivan, who has been a driving influence in her entrepreneurial journey. From shipping containers to Ireland to providing UPS and freight shipping solutions to small businesses nationwide through Unishippers, her business ventures have always revolved around recognizing opportunities, building relationships and helping others succeed.

Today, Therese and Joe are channeling that entrepreneurial spirit into giving microbusinesses a brick-and-mortar retail presence without the financial burden of operating their own storefront. By providing retail infrastructure, technology, marketing and customer service support, Jackson Square Collective creates an environment where independent entrepreneurs can grow and thrive and the possibility of opening their own store one day.

Drawing on Therese's Irish roots, genuine hospitality is at the heart of the Jackson Square Collective experience. A warm welcome, friendly conversation and exceptional customer service are just as important as the merchandise itself. Whether you're stopping in for a quick visit or spending an afternoon browsing, the goal is to make everyone feel welcome and right at home.

Home to more than 40 independently owned small businesses, Jackson Square Collective is a thoughtfully curated marketplace where old meets new. Shoppers will discover an ever-changing selection of vintage finds, antiques, furniture, home décor, artwork, collectibles, Chicago sports memorabilia and unique gifts. The Collective is also home to Peony Lane Boutique, featuring women's apparel, thoughtful gifts and gourmet foods.

For those looking to downsize, redecorate or simply give a treasured piece a new life, Jackson Square Collective offers consignment services for quality furniture, artwork and lighting, giving beautiful pieces a second chapter while embracing a more sustainable approach to furnishing our homes.

With fresh merchandise arriving daily, no two visits are quite the same. Customers can also shop online 24/7, take advantage of nationwide shipping and arrange local or nationwide furniture delivery.

More than just a shopping destination, Jackson Square Collective is a community of creative and passionate entrepreneurs. Every purchase supports an independent small business and helps strengthen our local economy.

Our vision is simple: to create a welcoming destination where people genuinely enjoy shopping, small businesses a chance to succeed, and customers never have to compromise on selection, quality, hospitality or customer service.

Discover something different. Shop small. Support local.

Visit Jackson Square Collective
800 E. 31st St, La Grange Park, IL 60526
Open 7 Days
708-352-1184
www.shopjacksonsquare.com

Christmas in Chicago With an Irish Twist



If you seek an Irish-flavored Christmas, there are an abundance of performances to choose from this holiday season. Some focus on dance, others on song, and some on traditional Irish music from our finest musicians. While we are Blessed with outstanding local talent, Chicago will also be visited by several important international stars, sharing Irish Christmas joy.

Kicking off Chicagoland's Irish Christmas on November 28 in Joliet, Illinois will be international singing sensation Celtic Woman, when they present their "Silver Bells Christmas Concert." This show features the groups renowned female vocal harmonies, set to striking orchestral arrangements. Their press kit states, "you will be treated to timeless favorites such as "Silver Bells," "O Holy Night," "Carol of the Bells" and "Joy to the World, "

alongside Celtic Woman classics, and traditional Irish tunes reimagined with a festive symphonic twist." You cannot go wrong with this one folks. In fact, I will be attending myself!

Although not necessarily Christmas oriented, the "Irish Folk Legends Tribute" from Kieran Byrne and the Larkin and Moran Brothers on November 29 at Chicago Gaelic Park will celebrate the songs of those artists who "feel like family", as we have all grown up listening to and enjoying them. Think Christie Moore, Ronni Drew, Luke, Kelly, Shane McGowan, Phil Coulter, and The Clancy Brothers. These fine musicians are sure to represent these legends admirably. And in case you have not heard, Phil Coulter himself is coming to Gaelic Park February of 2027.

International touring group Taste of Ireland will present a Celtic Christmas at two Chicago area locations. This program features a star studied roster of world champion Irish dancers, including the stars of Riverdance and Lord of the Dance (Mary Conway and Claire Shepherd, and six-time world champion Barry Teague). They will be at the North Shore Center for the performing arts in Skokie on December 1, 2026 at 7:30 PM and in Batavia on Wednesday, December 2 at 7:30 PM. They describe their program as "the curtain rises on a cozy Irish pub at Christmas where a band strikes up, and from the 1st pint, the audience becomes part of the party. The dance floor explodes as world champion dancers tear through reels and jigs in an All-Star ensemble. Crooners give voice to the great Irish pub ballads, and the lighthearted comedy gives way to an Irish sing-along."

On Saturday, December 5th, 630-830pm, those who managed to secure one of the hottest tickets in town will be treated to a brand-new production from The Chicago Irish Singers at Holy Name Cathedral. The Chicago Irish Singers, under the executive direction of Dr. Christine Lawless, and choral directors Luke McLoughlin and Liz Vasiljevic, have only been performing together for 2 years, but have carved out quite a unique position in the Irish music scene in Chicago, through their original harmonies, diverse programming, and commitment to the groups mission. As their mission is to promote and perform Irish song in ALL its beautiful forms-their repertoire includes Traditional Irish Singing and Sean-Nos by champion soloists; choral arrangements of the poetry of Yeats, Joyce, Cavanaugh and Plunkett by the newly formed Chicago Irish Chamber Choir; and soft ballads along with rousing pub songs as sung by the Chicago Irish Singers. The Chicago Irish Singers will be joined by Sean Cleland and the Kilgubbin Project (a collection of some of the finest Irish traditional musicians in the Midwest) and by Ben Headon Vice Consul General of Ireland in Chicago. This concert SOLD OUT quickly, but you can catch other performances by the Chicago Irish Singers on Thursday Dec 10th 7-9pm "Traditional Irish Singing Night- Christmas Edition" at Gaelic Park Carraig Pub; and on Thursday Dec 17th 7-9pm "Have Yourself a Merry Irish Christmas "at Mystic Rogue. These performances are great for families.

On Dec 26th from 400-800pm The Chicago Irish Singers Mummer Team (Chicago's only) plans a "pub crawl' in costume. Schedule: 400pm at Mrs. Murphy's on Lincoln Ave, 500pm at Mystic Rogue on Northwest Highway, 600pm at Chief O'Neill's on Elston, and 700pm 5th Province Pub at IAHC. The Mummers will present an ancient Irish tradition through a skit, song, music and dance. Most unusual FUN.

Probably the busiest performer out there this month is well- known and acclaimed Irish tenor Paddy "the Showman" Homan Paddy has a packed schedule with his main collaborator Rich Daniels and the City Lights Orchestra. They will be at Holy Family Church in Chicago on Dec 6th for "The Cardinal's Christmas Concert," at Holy Name Cathedral on Dec 11th for "The Rector's Christmas Concert, "at St Barnabus Catholic Church on Dec 13th in Beverly for "Christmas in Beverly," and at Most Holy Redeemer Catholic Church Evergreen Park on Dec 20th for" NOEL Christmas Concert." Paddy also appears at Chicago Gealic Park on Dec 18th with Noble Call for "Christmastime in Ireland." Whew! That's a lot of performances Paddy!

I asked Paddy if he gets tired of so many gigs, to which he replied," As a musician, and like you, being in the helping profession, we should never get tired of bringing joy(musical) to others, and particularly at Christmas. I think it very much ties into the emigrant experience." As to his favorite Christmas Carols, Paddy offered, "A Christmas Childhood "by Paddy Kavanagh, and "The Wexford Carol." He plans to sing "O Holy Night," as a dedication to the memory of his late sister Abina, who passed away this past September in Ireland. It was her favorite hymn.

No strangers to the Irish Christmas theme is Bohola, the dynamic duo of Pat Broaders and Jimmy Keane. They plan performances on Friday, December 18th at the Beverley Unitarian Church (Givins Castle) on Longwood Drive in Chicago. The set list includes little known Kilmore Carols of Wexford, and Irish- American songs of the Vaudeville stage. They explore the Christian and pagan tradition surrounding the Winter Solstice in a mixture of songs and instrumental pieces. The program will be repeated a Chief O'Neill's on Saturday, December 19 at 3 pm. However, this performance is already SOLD OUT.

Moral of the story here folks are that for these hot performers and hot tickets, GET THEM EARLY OR YOU WILL MISS OUT. I'm hoping that you find something in this list of Christmas events that you can attend, perhaps with your family and your friends. Wishing you a Happy and Holy Holiday Season. See you next year!

christine.lawless@yahoo.com

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Chicago Irish Singers December Events

A lovely variety of performances planned for this Season. We sure hope you come on out and enjoy! All shows are FREE - our Christmas gift to Chicago.

DEC 5th 630-930 pm -"An Irish Christmas at Holy Name Cathedral"
Honoring Irish contributions to the Cathedral. Did you know a native-born Irishman designed the present Cathedral building in 1871?
Tickets are FREE but you do need to register as this will surely sell out.
Features: Chicago Irish Singers Pub Choir and Chamber Choir
Sean Cleland and the Kilgubbin Project
Remarks by the Consulate and special appearance by Santa Claus!
LINK TO REGISTER An Irish Christmas at Holy Name Cathedral
DEC 6 1245-200pm "Sing for Santa" at IAHC Christmas Bazaar
A beloved annual tradition. FREE
DEC 10 7-9pm "Traditional Irish Singing - Christmas Edition" at Gaelic Park
Features Christine Lawless and friends, Chicago Irish Singers, and up-and-coming talent. FREE
12/17 7-9pm "Have Yourself a Merry Irish Christmas" at Mystic Rogue Pub
Features Chicago Irish Singers Pub Choir Great for families and anyone who loves to sing Irish favorites, Christmas caroling, and special appearance by Santa Claus FREE
12/26 4-8pm Mummer Pub Crawl FREE
Features Chicago's only Mummer Team (Wren Boys), honoring an old Irish tradition on St Stephen's Day. Our schedule:
4-430pm Mrs Murphys on Lincoln Ave
5-530pm Mystic Rogue on Northwest Highway
6-630pm Chief O'Neill's on Elston
700-730pm 5th Province Pub at Irish American Heritage Center

FREE IRISH MUSIC SESSIONS



Brendan Byrne's Wolfhound Restaurant and Pub Session on Tuesdays



By Cliff Carlson Chicagoland offers free traditional Irish music sessions where you can go to listen to the music, or even join in.

Many welcome Irish music players and singers to join them. If you play bodhran, fiddle. tin whistle, guitar, or you like to sing, some sessions will welcome you to join in.

So if you would like to visit any of the places listed below, tell them you saw them in ***Irish American News!***

SUNDAY

Mrs Murphy & Sons Irish Bistro
1:30 pm -3:30pm
Irish Music School of Chicago
https://irishbistro.com

Clancy's Pizza Pub 2:30 - 4:30
Murphy Roche School of Music
4624 W 103rd St Chgo 60453
https://www.clancyspizzapub.com
Sunday 1-3pm

Guinness Open Gate Brewery 1-3pm
Jimmy Keane
901 W Kinzie St, Chicago, IL 60607
https://guinnessbrewerychicago.com

Celtic Knot Public Hse 3-5pm
John Williams Katie Grennan
2022 Central Evanston, 60201
https://celticknotpub.com

Chief O'Neill's 5-7pm
3471 N Elston Chicago 60618
https://www.chiefoneillspub.com

Galway Arms 8-10pm
John Williams Katie Grennan
2442 N Clark St Chicago
https://galwayarms.com

The Kerryman 5-7pm
Kavan Donohue and Jimmy Keane
661 N Clark St Chicago
https://thekerrymanchicago.com

MONDAY

Fiddler's Hearth 7-9pm
127 N Main South Bend IN 46601
https://fiddlershearth.com

TUESDAY

The Wolfhound 7:30pm
Brendan Byrne and Friends
3188 N Elston Ave Chgo 60618
https://wolfhoundchicago.com
Galway Bay 8-10pm
500 W Diversey Pkwy Chgo 60614
https://www.facebook.com/galwaybay
Sketchbook Brewery 7:30pm
821 Chicago Ave Evanston IL
https://www.sketchbookbrewing.

WEDNESDAY

Galway Arms 8-10pm
John Williams Katie Grennan
2442 N Clark St Chicago
https://galwayarms.com
Mrs Murphy and
Sons Irish Bistro 7:30pm
Larry Nugent & Frank Quinn
3905 N Lincoln Ave Chgo 60613
https://irishbistro.com
Clancys Pizza Pub 7pm
Murphy Roche School of Music
4624 W 103rd Oak Lawn 60453

THURSDAY

Irish American
Heritage Center 7-9pm
Jim Conway and the Boils
4626 N Knox Ave Chgo 60630
Https://www.irish-american.org
Chicago Gaelic Park 7-9pm
6119 W. 147th Street,
Oak Forest, IL 60452
https://chicagogaelicpark.com
Harp and Fiddle 8-10pm
110 Main St Park Ridge 60068
https://theharpandfiddle.com

FRIDAY

Clancys Pizza Pub 8pm
John Williams or Jimmy Keane
4624 W 103rd Oak Lawn 60453
https://www.clancyspizzapub.com

PUB OWNERS IN THE CHICAGOLAND AREA

If you have a session in the area we distribute our papers, send us the info and a pic or two. Area includes Southeast Mi, IN, So WI, and All of Chicagoland. Send to **Cliff@irishamericannews.com**



at the Kerryman: Kavan Donohoe and Jimmy Keane



Pauline Ronan and friends at Chief O'Neills

We Get Letters

Cliff, a chara. It was a great surprise to see an article in the Irish language in the November issue of the Irish American News.

I'm writing on behalf of the hundreds in Chicago who read Irish, many of whom will be picking up an issue of the IAN for the first time in order to read it.

I'll be personally encouraging my Irish language students to read your paper, and I'll be encouraging my fellow instructors at Na Gaeil Chicago to do the same.

Thank you for dedicating valuable space in your paper for the language. Even for those who don't know the language, it provides much-needed visibility for it -- and may encourage others to start their learning journey.

Go raibh míle míle maith agat, **Pat Duffy**



Katie Grennan and John Williams

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CLANCY'S 103rd GAMING NOW 7AM
HIT THE JACKPOT!
$5 FREE PLAY

• Irish Tourism •

Ireland Beyond The Bucket List,' 8 Reasons 2027 Is The Year To Visit

There are so many reasons to visit the island of Ireland next year. Of course there is the stunning scenery, the famous warmth of the Irish people—the 'Céad Míle Fáilte,' or the 'Hundred Thousand Welcomes' as we like to call it, and an abundance of vibrant, fun-filled festivals which run year round from coast to coast. 2027 is also the year that Adare Manor in County Limerick welcomes golf's biggest international competition, the Ryder Cup. Belfast will again host Ireland's nation traditional music festival, the Fleadh Cheoil na h'Eireann, which attracted a record breaking 1.6 million attendees to the northern capital this summer. The Aer Lingus College Football Classic will open the American College Football Season at the Aviva Stadium in Dublin on August 28th, with the Pitt Panthers and the Wisconsin Badgers battling it out for the honors.

But, there are also many ways to step outside the mainstream vacation experience, go off the beaten track as it were. If you're looking to go "beyond the bucket list" here are some ideas to inspire you to use you time in Ireland to really connect with the people, the culture, the traitions and the history of the island.

Sheepdog demonstrations in Connemara

Few experiences offer a more authentic glimpse into traditional Irish country life than watching a skilled sheepdog at work. In Connemara, County Galway, visitors can witness the remarkable partnership between farmer and dog, as highly trained border collies respond to whistles and commands to guide flocks across rugged mountain pastures.

At Killary Sheep Farm overlooking Killary Fjord, demonstrations offer an insight into generations of hill-farming tradition. Visitors can also see sheep shearing, traditional turf cutting and, during spring and summer, feed orphan lambs. Nearby, Joyce Country Sheepdogs showcases the dogs herding Blackface Connemara sheep on a family hill farm.

Also in Connemara, Glengowla Mines and Family Farm offers sheepdog demonstrations alongside its historic mining experience which includes a guided descent into a 19th-century lead-and-silver mine.

Elsewhere sheepdog demonstrations can be seen all along the Atlantic Way, in Malinbeg, County Donegal, in Sligo, and in Dingle and Kenmare to mention a few locations. In County Clare, Caherconnell Stone Fort combines traditional sheepdog displays with the dramatic setting of an ancient stone fort in the Burren, a UNESCO Global Geopark.

Seaweed foraging

Discover another side of Ireland's coastline with a seaweed foraging experience, where the shoreline becomes a natural larder rich in flavors, traditions and history. Guided by local experts, visitors can explore rocky beaches and tidal pools, learning to identify edible seaweeds and discover how they have been harvested and enjoyed in Ireland for generations.

In County Kerry, Atlantic Irish Seaweed offers discovery walks around Derrynane Harbour, where visitors can sample varieties such as dulse and nori while learning about their culinary uses and sustainable harvesting. Further north, Streedagh Strand in County Sligo is another popular destination, with expert-led walks introducing visitors to the remarkable diversity of edible sea plants. In County Clare, the Wild Kitchen in the Burren combines coastal foraging with food tasting and cooking experiences.

On Ireland's Eastern seaboard, The Sea Gardener is hosted by Marie Power who leads foraging walks, beach picnics and cookery workshops along County Waterford's spectacular Copper Coast. Visitors learn about the different varieties of seaweed, sustainable harvesting and their traditional culinary uses, with opportunities to sample delicious treats made from wild ingredients. Power also shares her knowledge of the coastline's ecology and the historical uses of seaweed in food, gardening and skincare.

Island hopping

With its rugged Atlantic coastline, scattered offshore communities and beautiful inland waterways, Ireland offers wonderful opportunities for island hopping. A short ferry journey can transport visitors into a different world of spectacular scenery, traditional music, fascinating history and a slower pace of life.

Along the Wild Atlantic Way, the three Aran Islands—Inis Mór, Inis Meáin and Inis Oírr—are celebrated for their Irish-speaking communities, ancient stone forts, winding lanes and distinctive dry-stone walls. Further south, the Blasket Islands off the Dingle Peninsula offer a glimpse into a vanished way of life, while Skellig Michael, a UNESCO World Heritage Site off County Kerry, boasts an extraordinary sixth-century monastic settlement.

Further north, Rathlin Island in County Antrim is renowned for its seabird colonies and dramatic coastal walks, while Donegal's Tory Island retains a rich tradition of music and storytelling.

Forest bathing

Escape the pace of modern life and reconnect with nature through forest bathing, a mindful experience that invites visitors to slow down, breathe deeply and immerse themselves in the sights, sounds and scents of Ireland's woodlands. Known in Japan as Shinrin-yoku, the practice involves spending time among trees, taking in the natural surroundings and finding a sense of calm away from everyday distractions.

One of the most beautiful settings is the 350-acre Killeavy Castle Estate at the foot of Slieve Gullion in County Armagh, where guided experiences led by local practitioners introduce visitors to the restorative qualities of the forest. Nearby, the Ring of Gullion offers ancient woodland, mountain scenery and opportunities for meditation and mindful walks. Further afield, visitors can enjoy the oak woodlands of Glengarriff Nature Reserve in County Cork and the peaceful trails of Courtown Woods in County Wexford.



A sheepdog demonstration at Caherconnell, County Clare.



Forest bathing at the Killeavy Castle Estate in County Armagh.



A trad session at Taaffes Bar in Galway City.



A basket of edible seaweeds in Streedagh, County Sligo.

Sauna culture by the sea

Combining the restorative warmth of a traditional sauna with the invigorating waters of the Atlantic, Ireland's emerging seaside sauna culture offers a memorable way to experience the country's spectacular coastline. From wooden saunas overlooking crashing waves to invigorating cold-water swims, the experience has become an increasingly popular way to unwind and reconnect with nature.

Along the Wild Atlantic Way, visitors can enjoy sea-view sauna experiences in some of Ireland's most beautiful coastal settings. In County Clare, the coastline around Lahinch and Liscannor offers opportunities to combine a sauna session with a refreshing Atlantic dip. Further north, County Sligo's Enniscrone is renowned for its seaside bathing traditions, including the historic Kilcullen Seaweed Baths. In County Cork, mobile sauna and bathing experiences make the most of the rugged West Cork shoreline.

Dark sky experiences

Away from the glare of city lights, Ireland offers some of Europe's most spectacular opportunities for stargazing. With its remote Atlantic coastline, open landscapes and remarkably dark skies, the island provides a wonderful setting to discover the magic of the night sky, from dazzling constellations to the Milky Way and, occasionally, the Northern Lights.

In County Mayo, the Mayo International Dark Sky Park, located in the wilds of Ballycroy National Park beneath the Nephin Mountains, offers guided night walks where visitors can learn to identify stars, planets and galaxies. Further south, the Kerry International Dark Sky Reserve on the Iveragh Peninsula provides extraordinary views of the cosmos against an Atlantic backdrop.

In Northern Ireland, OM Dark Sky Park and Observatory in County Tyrone combines astronomy with ancient history. Visitors can join the Stars and Stones experience, exploring the mysterious Beaghmore Stone Circles beneath the star-filled skies.

Whether guided by an expert or simply gazing upwards, Ireland's dark skies offer an unforgettable experience.

Food trails across Ireland

Discover the flavors of Ireland by following its growing network of food trails, where local produce, traditional recipes and passionate artisan producers offer a delicious insight into the country's culinary heritage. From guided walking tours to self-guided rural adventures, these experiences bring visitors closer to the people and places behind Ireland's food culture.

In the Boyne Valley, food trails combine visits to local farms, cheesemakers and cider producers with seasonal markets and food festivals. In County Clare, the Burren Food Trail showcases farmhouse cheeses, artisan chocolate and locally harvested sea vegetables. Further west, Sligo's food trail celebrates the Atlantic coastline with seafood tastings, seaweed cookery and freshly harvested mussels. In Belfast, guided food tours introduce visitors to local specialities including boxty and dulse, while Cork's historic English Market is a treasure trove of traditional Irish produce.

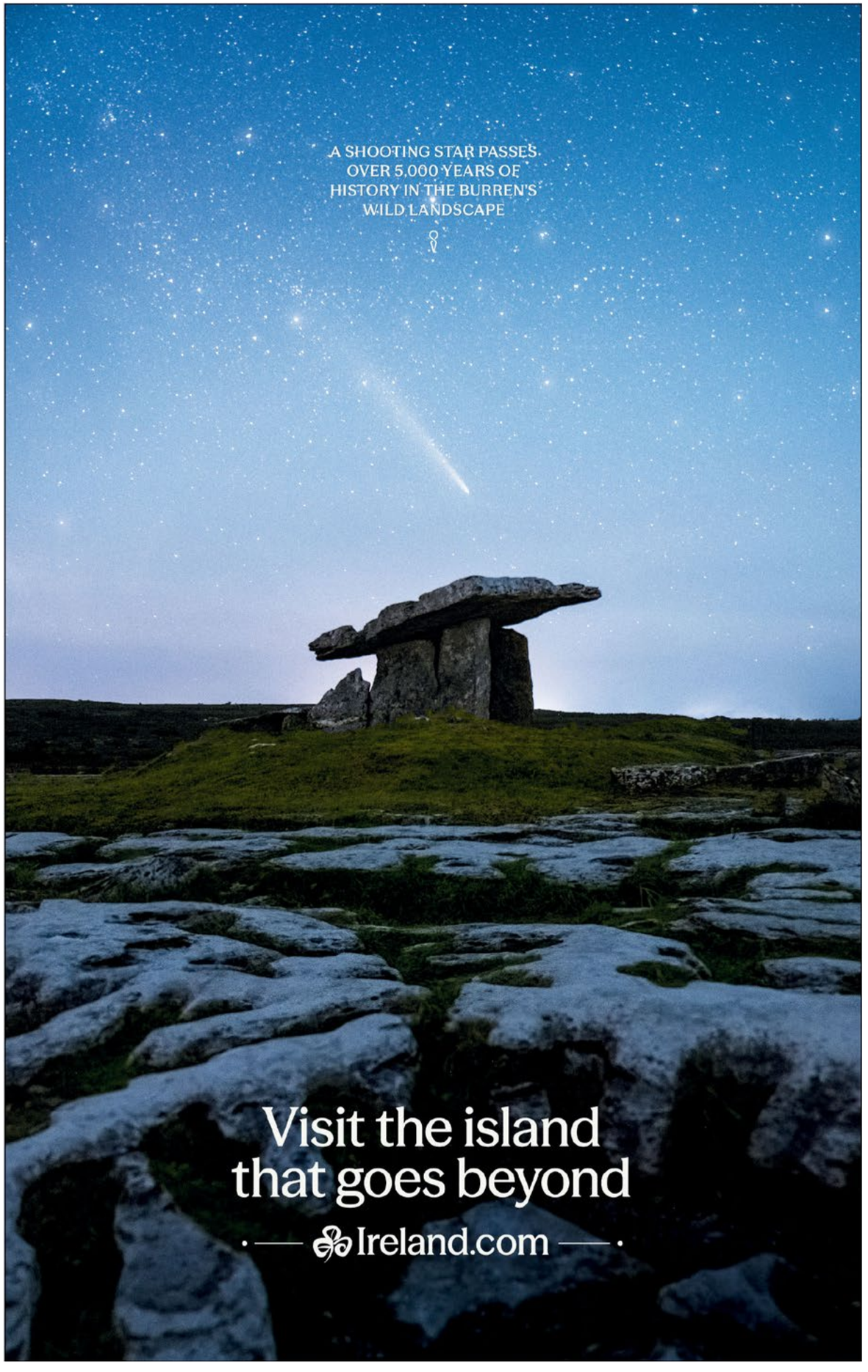
Traditional music sessions in Ireland

Few experiences capture the spirit of Ireland quite like an evening spent enjoying a traditional music session in a local pub. Known as trad sessions, these informal gatherings bring musicians together to play lively jigs, reels and haunting ballads, often with little more than a fiddle, tin whistle, accordion, bodhrán and uilleann pipes.

Across the country, visitors can discover music in atmospheric pubs where generations of musicians have kept the tradition alive. In Dublin, O'Donoghue's on Merrion Row is legendary as a former haunt of The Dubliners, while The Cobblestone in Smithfield welcomes both established performers and emerging talent. In Galway, Tigh Neachtain is a favorite gathering place, while County Clare's Doolin and Feakle are renowned for their vibrant sessions. Further north, the historic Crosskeys Inn in County Antrim offers an intimate musical experience beneath its traditional thatched roof.

On the island of Ireland, taking the road less traveled, both figuratively and literally, can lead to an unforgettable vacation experience. Centuries old traditions and unsurpassed natural beauty are around every corner. Take a look and take a chance, you'll be glad you did!

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Christmas in Ireland and a Taste of TraditionYou may be surprised to find that celebrating Christmas in Ireland is not that different fromhow we celebrate Christmas here.In Ireland, traditionally, the Christmas season starts on December 8th, the Feast of theImmaculate Conception, and runs until January 6th, the Feast of the Epiphany, or LittleChristmas, the day when no household chores are done by women.Some familiar traditions include decorating the house with holly. The holly plant flourishesaround Christmas and gave the poor ample means to decorate their homes.Placing a lighted candle in the window on Christmas Eve is another tradition. It is a symbolof welcoming strangers and remembering those who are far away from home.Midnight Mass. Most churches are packed to the rafters with friends, family, andneighbors, some of whom you may not have seen all year.Christmas markets are also very popular, just as they are here. Meeting Santa or Santy. The Mountains of Mourne are Santa's official residence in Ireland.You can visit him in his cottage and see his elves working away in the toy shop. Tins of biscuits. Every household would have a tin of good biscuits saved for specialguests and company. These are multilayered tins filled with pink wafers, bourbon creams,and shortbread. We used to sell tons of them in our Irish shop at this time of year, alongwith mince pies and Cadbury's selection boxes filled with an assortment of your favoriteCadbury's chocolates.And, of course, Christmas dinner. Traditionally, this consists of roast turkey, potatoes,Brussels sprouts, and other vegetables, followed by Christmas pudding and cake.Another Irish tradition is the Christmas Day swim, similar to our Polar Plunge. People canbe seen jumping off Forty Foot Rock, just south of Dublin, into the Irish Sea. The watertemperature is usually about 50°F/10°C, and the outside temperature is usually about halfof that. Certainly not for the faint of heart, but a proven cure for a hangover!Similar to the US, Christmas in Ireland has become pretty commercial, considering it is oneof the holiest days of the year. All in all, it is a holiday celebrated with family and closefriends, where the Catholic Church still plays a major role in the celebrations andtraditions.Turkey is king! Approximately 1 million turkeys are eaten during the holiday season inIreland, with another 300,000 eaten in Northern Ireland. That's a lot of turkey for acombined population of about 7.3 million people. Down Cork way, you may find spiced beef as the main dish. This could be silverside, round,topside, rump, or brisket, dry-rubbed with spices for seven days, then simmered or boiledand served with root vegetables and Guinness. It is allowed to cool and then sliced thinlyand served with brown bread, chutneys, beetroot, and horseradish cream. Similar to theway we prepare corned beef.With the diverse population of the United States, culinary traditions are influenced by everyethnic group and culture.No matter what background you come from, I am going to show you a very posh soup thatis perfect for festive occasions and incredibly easy to make. And the kicker is that the maningredient is something you would throw in the trash without giving it a second thought. I'mtalking about shrimp bisque, and the disposable ingredient is shrimp shells!Every time I cook shrimp, I save the shells, put them in a Ziploc bag, and store them in thefreezer. When I collect enough shells, I always make this soup. You can easily substitutelobster in this recipe, but it will be a little dearer to make.



SHRIMP BISQUE INGREDIENTS:

- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 4 cups shrimp shells
- 2 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 2 celery stalks, chopped
- 1 medium onion, peeled and chopped
- 1pound medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 4 tablespoons flour • ½ cup brandy
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 3 sprigs parsley
- 3 sprigs fresh thyme
- 2 Bay leaves
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- Kosher salt and white pepper to taste
- ½ cup heavy cream • Pinch of nutmeg
- 2 tablespoons chopped chives

INSTRUCTIONS

Melt the butter in a stockpot. Add the shrimp shells and sauté until they start to turn brown. If using, add the shrimp and cook until opaque. Remove the shrimp and reserve.Add the carrots, celery, and onion. Cook for 15 minutes until soft, but do not brown. Addthe flour and cook for 5 minutes. Add the brandy and stir. Add the tomato paste, bay leaf, 8cups of water, parsley, and thyme.Simmer for 25 minutes. Remove the bay leaf, thyme, and parsley. Blend in batches untilsmooth. Strain through a fine-mesh strainer. Discard the solids and return the soup to aclean pot.Stir in the cream. Season with salt, pepper, nutmeg, and cayenne.Reserve 6 shrimp for garnish. Finely chop the remaining shrimp and divide among 6 wide-rimmed soup bowls. Ladle in the soup and garnish with butterflied cooked shrimp andchopped chives.This is an elegant and really simple soup. Don't be put off by the number of steps. If youread the entire recipe, you will see that it's relatively simple to prepare and will blow yourfriends and family away, and perhaps become a holiday tradition. Nollaig Shona Duit

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Given that we are coming up to Thanksgiving I thought we could do an update on what's going on within our indigenous communities around the States (sadly mirrors what's going on back home right now)

There is a massive, historic shift happening for Indigenous people across the United States. For generations, Native communities have been fighting for justice, recognition, and the right to care for their own homelands and families. Today, two major movements are taking center stage: the push to get ancestral lands returned to tribal nations, and the ongoing, heartbreaking effort to find and bring home the children who died at government and church-run boarding schools. Both issues are deeply connected to healing from the past and building a stronger future.

When it comes to the land, the "Land Back" movement has gained incredible momentum across different states. This isn't just a slogan anymore; it is actually happening in real time. Across the country, state governments, conservation groups, and even private landowners and religious orders are transferring thousands of acres of land back into tribal hands. California has been one of the biggest leaders in this effort, having already returned over 100,000 acres to Native tribes and pledging to return millions more. For example, the Washoe Tribe has been working with state conservation grants to reacquire over 10,000 acres of their ancestral homeland near Lake Tahoe.

It is not just happening on the West Coast, either. In the Midwest, a congregation of Catholic nuns in Wisconsin recently sold a parcel of land back to the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa for a heavily reduced price as an act of atonement for the church's role in abusive boarding schools. In North Dakota, the federal government returned hundreds of acres within the White Horse Hill National Game Preserve to the Spirit Lake Nation, and in South Dakota, the site of the Wounded Knee Massacre was finally secured in Native hands after 135 years. Even in New York's Adirondack Mountains, hundreds of acres have been bought and handed back to Indigenous stewards to use as a place for traditional ecological knowledge and habitat restoration. While tribes are still fighting hard against new mining and drilling projects that threaten sacred sites in places like Alaska, Arizona, and New Mexico, seeing actual deeds and management rights handed back to Native nations is a huge step forward.

At the exact same time, Indigenous communities are dealing with the painful reality of what happened to their children in the past. Over the last few years, and continuing right through today, there has been a massive effort to investigate the hundreds of federal and church-run Indian boarding schools that operated across the country. These schools were designed to strip Native children of their language, culture, and identity, and thousands of children never made it home.

People often ask if bodies are actually being dug up at these school sites. The answer is complicated, because every tribe handles this differently, and it is a very delicate, sacred process. First, researchers and archaeologists are using non-invasive tools like ground-penetrating radar and old archival maps to locate unmarked graves without disturbing the soil. Just recently, new unmarked graves of students have been uncovered in places like Milwaukee and southern Utah, adding to the dozens of marked and unmarked burial sites already identified by federal investigations.

In many cases, tribes choose not to dig up the remains, preferring instead to protect the burial grounds, hold ceremonies, and build memorials where the children lie. However, when families and tribal nations explicitly request it, excavations and repatriations are taking place so those children can finally be laid to rest in their own homelands. A major focus of this work has been at the former Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania. Over the past year, the remains of children from the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Comanche, and Fort Peck tribes have been carefully exhumed from the post cemetery and returned to their families. Tribal members travel to bring these children home, holding traditional ceremonies and giving them the proper burials they were denied over a century ago.

Looking at everything happening right now, it is clear that Indigenous people are in a powerful period of reclamation. Whether it is reclaiming the physical earth that their ancestors walked on for thousands of years, or reclaiming the lost children who were taken from their families, the focus is on truth, sovereignty, and healing. There are still plenty of battles being fought in courtrooms and legislatures over water rights, sacred lands, and federal protections. Still, watching tribes take back control of their forests, manage their own wildlife, and bring their ancestors home shows a resilience that refuses to be erased.

To finish off, I would like to say there is a deep undeniable connection between the struggles of the indigenous people and the history of our Irish people because both went through the brutal reality of British colonization.

The Irish had their ancestral lands stolen, their native Gaelic language,religion, which was outlawed under harsh penal laws. Both groups watched their people starve to death amongst other atrocities.

Even though we are separated by an ocean, both cultures share a fierce unbroken spirit of survival, and are still trying to reclaim what was taken from us. Please bless our indigenous tribes this Thanksgiving if it was not for them and their kindness in helping the early settlers, none of us would be here today. God bless the USA .

Until next time stay warm. Winter is definitely upon us.





Sharice Davids (L) and Debra Haaland, (above) are the first two Native-Americans elected to Congress



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"Ceithre fhéile Nollag in Éirinn agus a dtraidisiúin"

Tá saibhreas ag baint le traidisiúin saoire na hÉireann agus meascán de thionchair réamh-Chríostaí agus Chríostaí ar cheiliúradh comhaimseartha. Seo gnéithe de cheithre thraidisiún féile atá le fáil fós i gcodanna d'Éirinn sa lá atá inniu ann.

Nollaig (Oíche Nollag: 24ú Nollag / Lá Nollag: 25ú Nollag)

Bhí an chuileann faoi mheas mór in Éirinn ó ré roimh an gCríostaíocht agus breathnaíodh air mar shiombail de na séasúir atá ag athrú. Bíonn sé ag a chuid is gile i lár an gheimhridh, le linn na tréimhse ina mbíonn na laethanta is giorra. Creideadh go dtabharfadh cuileann dea-ádh agus go gcoimeádfadh sé spioraid olca ar shiúl ón teach.

Bítear á chrochadh i ndoirse agus á úsáid ó am go chéile chun tithe a mhaisiú in Éirinn ó sheanam. Bhí sé coitianta fleasca a chrochadh ar dhoirse um na Nollag mar nach raibh crainn ghiúise tipiciúil mar chrainn Nollag in Éirinn de ghnáth, cé go bhfuil flúirse cuilinn agus eidhneáin ann. Thugtaí fleasca beaga déanta as plandaí síorghlasa iúr, nó cuileann, mar shampla, go dtí reiligí go minic ar Oíche Nollag nó ar Lá Nollag, agus chuirtí ar uaigheanna teaghlaigh iad, go háirithe i gcás na ndaoine sin a fuair bás le linn na bliana céanna. De ghnáth, déantar é seo go siombalach chun fáilte a chur roimh an Teaghlach Naofa, nach bhfuair aon áit san ósta, nó do thaistealaithe tuirseach.

Creidtear gur thosaigh an nós seo sa 16ú haois, le linn na nDlíthe Péinalta, tréimhse inar cuireadh srian leis an gCaitliceachas agus inar chleacht go leor daoine a gcreideamh faoi rún. Tá Aifreann an Mheán Oíche ina thraidisiún coitianta in Éirinn le fada an lá agus i measc roinnt de dhiaspóra na hÉireann. Tá Aifreann an Mheán Oíche ina thraidisiún coitianta in Éirinn le fada an lá agus i measc roinnt de dhiaspóra na hÉireann.

De réir an traidisiúin, ag meán oíche Oíche Nollag, théadh ba agus asail ar a nglúine chun an Leanbh Íosa a adhradh, agus go raibh bua na cainte ag ainmhithe ag an nóiméad speisialta seo, díreach cosúil le daoine, agus gur cheart bia breise agus cineáltas a thabhairt dóibh le linn na féile; is minic freisin a mhaisigh daoine stáblaí na n-ainmhithe.

Ba é dinnéar Lá Nollag an béile ba mhó agus ba ilchasta den bhliain de ghnáth.

Lá an Dreoilín / Lá Fhéile Stiofáin (26ú Nollaig)

Inscríobhadh Lá an Dreoilín ar Fhardal Náisiúnta na hÉireann maidir le hOidhreacht Chultúir Dholáimhsithe. "Déanann pobail agus grúpaí an oidhreacht chultúir dholáimhsithe seo, a thugtar ar aghaidh ó ghlúin go glúin, a athchruthú i gcónaí mar fhreagairt ar an timpeallacht, ar an idirghníomhaíocht leis an dúlra agus ar an stair, agus tugann sé sin féiniúlacht agus leanúnachas dóibh, rud a chuireann meas ar éagsúlacht chultúrtha agus ar chruthaitheacht an duine chun cinn."

Aimsítear gnéithe ag baint leis an saoire seo a rianaítear siar go dtí an réamh-Chríostaíocht. Mar sin féin, tá sé deacair a bhunús cruinn a chinneadh mar gur tugadh síos ó ghlúin go glúin é. Tugtar lucht an Dreoilín ar na rannpháirtithe agus déanann siad iarracht mhór lena gcuid éadaí. Chaithfí culaith a bhí cosúil le capall ar an gceannaire, agus chaithfí cultacha maisithe le tuí nó maisc, nó d'iomprófaí uirlisí ceoil.

Leanann an traidisiún seo ar aghaidh sa lá atá inniu ann trí ghrúpaí a rinne cleachtadh don ócáid agus a thaistealaíonn ar bhusanna chuig imeachtaí atá eagraithe roimh ré i bparóistí agus i dtithe tábhairne, d'fhonn páirt a ghlacadh i gceiliúradh ina bhfuil fáilte roimh chách, idir óg agus scothaosta, a bheith páirteach sa spraoi. Is minic a bhailítear airgead ag na himeachtaí seo chun tacú le carthanais. Uaireanta, eagraítear "Bál an Dreoilín" tar éis Lá Fhéile Stiofáin chun ómós a thabhairt dóibh siúd a ghlac páirt sa léiriú.

An Bhliain Nua (Oíche Chinn Bhliana: 31ú Nollaig, Lá Cinn Bliana: 1ú Eanáir)

Go traidisiúnta, ní raibh an 31ú lá de mhí na Nollag ná an chéad lá d'Eanáir ina laethanta féile ná ceiliúrtha in Éirinn mar nár athraigh Sasana, agus a cuid coilíneachtaí, ón tsean-Fhéilire lúil go dtí an féilire nua, an Féilire Gréagóireach, go dtí an bhliain 1752. Is minic a tugadh "Oíche na Coda Móire" ar Oíche Chinn Bliana, mar gheall ar an gcreideamh go gcinnteodh béile mór go mbeadh neart bia ann sa bhliain nua.

Creideadh go forleathan, de réir nós ar a dtugtar an chéad chuairteoir nó "First-Footing" i mBearla, dá mbeadh fear le gruaig dhorcha, nó fiú cat a mbeadh fionnadh dubh air, ar an gcéad duine (nó ar an gcéad chréatúr) a thiocfadh isteach sa teach tar éis mheán oíche, go dtabharfaí dea-ádh leis.

Ba thréimhse í freisin a bhain le cleachtais fháidhiúla, le léirmhíniú piseog, agus le tuar a dhéanamh faoin mbliain a bhí romhainn. De ghnáth, d'fhantaí i ndúiseacht go dtí meán oíche, agus ansin d'osclaítí na doirse chun ligean don aer ón mbliain a bhí ag imeacht amach agus don bhliain nua teacht isteach, sula dtéiti a luí.

Nollaig na mBan / Sollúntas na hEipeafáine (6ú Eanáir)

Ceiliúrtar Sollúntacht na hEipeafáine ar an 6 Eanáir. Traidisiún uathúil na hÉireann, a cheiliúrtar ar an lá seo freisin, is ea "Nollaig na mBan." Cé go raibh an traidisiún imithe i léig i gcodanna áirithe d'Éirinn, tá sé ag teacht ar ais go mall. Ar Nollaig na mBan, léiríonn na fir a mbuíochas do mhná an tí as an obair chrua agus as an iarracht ar fad a rinne siad le linn cheiliúradh na Nollag; déanann na fir na cúraimí tí a bhíonn de ghnáth ar na mná, chun deis a thabhairt dóibh sos a ghlacadh, scíth a ligean, am a chaitheamh le cairde, nó b'fhéidir dul go dtí an teach tábhairne.

With many people enrolling in Irish classes at the Irish American Heritage Center, Na Gaeil Chicago, Gaeilago (Southside & Oak Park), & West Suburban Irish, it seems appropriate that we print something in Irish monthly. Let us know your thoughts.

'Traditions of 4 Irish Christmastime Holidays'

There is a richness in Irish holiday traditions; a co-mingling of pre-Christian and Christan influences on the contemporary. Here are elements of four Irish holiday traditions that can still be found in parts of Ireland.

Christmas (Christmas Eve: 24th of December / Christmas Day: 25th of December)

Holly was revered by the pre-Christian Irish who saw it symbolic of the changing seasons; it becomes vibrant in midwinter during the time when the days are at their shortest. It was believed that holly would bring good luck and keep and keep evil spirts away from the home and it has been hung on doors, and used since ancient times to decorate homes in Ireland. The displaying of wreaths on doors at Christmastime in was common because Ireland did not traditionally have the fur trees typical for Christmas trees, although it is abundant in holly and ivy. Small wreaths of evergreens, yew or holly were often brought to the cemeteries on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day and placed on family graves especially for those who had passed away that same year.

A tradition that has been observed throughout Ireland for hundreds of years, and by many descendants of Irish immigrants all over the world is to put a candle in the window on Christmas Eve. This was usually done symbolically to welcome the Holy Family, who found no room at the inn, or for weary travelers. This custom is believed to have begun in the 16th century during the Penal Laws in which Catholicism was restricted and many practiced their faith in secret. Attending Midnight Mass is a popular tradition among Catholics in Ireland, similar to many other countries around the world.

It was believed by many that at Midnight on Christmas Eve cows and donkeys would kneel to adore the Christ Child, and that at this special moment animals had the gift of speech like humans. Animals were also be treated with extra food and kindness during the holidays and people often decorated their animal's stables as well.

Dinner on Christmas Day was traditionally the most elaborate and the largest meal of the year.

St. Stephen's Day / Wren's Day (on the 26th of December)

Wren's Day is inscribed in the Ireland National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage as a part of Ireland's intangible culture that is "transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity."

This holiday has aspects that date back to pre-Christianity and have been passed down across so many generations that it is difficult to determine its exact origin. However, the participants are referred to as "wren boys" and put great effort into their costumes. The leader is dressed in a costume representing a horse and the other members wear costumes decorated with straw, or masks or carry instruments.

In the present day this tradition has been continued by groups of participants who have also practiced songs and sometimes travel together by bus to preorganized events at parishes and pubs and perform in a celebration in which everyone, young and old are welcome to join in. Money is often collected by the "wren boys" to support charities. Sometimes a Wren Ball" is organized later on to honor the participants and those involved.

The New Year (New Year's Eve: 31st of December / New Year's Day: 1st of January)

The 31st of December and the 1st of January were not traditionally days of festival or celebration in Ireland, because England, and her colonies did not change from the Old Julian Calendar to the New Gregorian Calendar until 1752. New Year's Eve was often called "Oíche na Coda Móire" (the night of the big meal) from the belief that having a large dinner would ensure plenty of food in the new year. "First-Footing" was a custom widely believed, that if a male with dark hair, or even a black-haired cat was the first to enter the house after midnight that they would bring good luck with them. It was also a time of divinations, interpreting superstitions and making predictions about the coming year. People usually stayed up until midnight and then opened the doors to let the air from the past year out and the new year in before going to bed.

Solemnity of the Epiphany / Women's Christmas (6th of January)

The Solemnity of the Epiphany takes place on the 6th of January. It is also a day on which a uniquely Irish tradition is also celebrated known as "Women's Christmas" in which the women of a home are honored and thanked by the men of the home for all their effort and contributions during the holiday celebrations. This tradition continues to evolve from generation to generation but the males generally show their appreciation by doing the chores traditionally done by women to give them a break and a chance to relax, socialize with friends, or go to the pub.

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BOOKS BOOKS

Welcome back to the enchanting land of Tir na nOg for books. The exciting news I bring to you this month is about our 8th Laureate na nOg who is Chris Haughton. He will serve for 3 years, and just as the other Laureates have done before him, he will develop a plan to bring Irish children's literature to more children (and adults!). Chris has sold more than 3 million books, and his books have been translated into many languages. He has a huge and varied body of work, and I would encourage you to go to his website (chrishaughton.com) to get a broader sense of this work. On this website, you will also find interviews, read-alouds, and a fascinating feature called "making of" that shows how several of his books came to be. This month we will look at two of Chris' books.

Shh! We Have a Plan

By Chris Haughton

You wouldn't really expect a picture book that has almost no words and is aimed at the



preschool set to be an advocate for peace, but that is exactly the theme of Shh! We Have a Plan by Chris Haughton.

The book begins with a quote from Albert Einstein which says, "Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding." This will tip off grown-ups to the underlying serious topic of the book, but little kids will just love the book because of its wacky humor and engaging illustrations.

The plot has three hunters chasing a bird they wish to catch. A tag-along child keeps wanting to say hello to the bird, but is silenced by the three hunters who "have a plan". The plan isn't very good, however, and the bird routinely escapes capture while leading the hunters into comical pratfalls.

The illustrations are vintage Chris Haughton. The humans are all rather abstract figures in black with big round eyes, and the birds are brightly colored, also with big round eyes. If you read Haughton's book, A Bit Lost, which I talked about in my March, 2024 column, you will recognize Haughton's distinctive style. Whether the young readers of this book pick up on the theme of peace won't matter because they are certain to love this engaging and humorous book. As with many of the best picture books, there is something here for old and young.

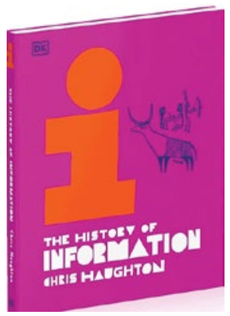
The History of Information

By Chris Haughton

You would certainly be able to recognize this as a Chris Haughton book with its oversized format, stylized drawing of people with large black and white eyes, and intermittent splashes of vibrant colors. In many ways, this book is classic Haughton.

In other ways, though, The History of Information seems to be a complete departure from Haughton's earlier work. It is a non-fiction book based upon a course taught at UC Berkeley. Instead of the sparse text usually found in Haughton's work, this book has lots of text. It also contains charts and graphs and timelines necessary to bring the very difficult topic of the history of information down to a middle-grade audience.

The scope of the book is



absolutely vast. It begins in 50,000 BCE and continues right up to AI. It moves all over the world highlighting early writing from Egypt to Easter Island and everywhere in between. It considers such topics as oral communication, drawing, alphabets, newspapers, networks and computers. Individual sections are packed with information, but this is presented in small, heavily illustrated paragraphs to maintain the interest and understanding of children (and grown-ups!).

Besides all the information presented, each section begins with a date in history, the population at that time and the largest cities. It was fascinating to read just those parts and watch our world evolve. In addition, lots of specialized topics like copyright laws, the rise of literacy and the use of propaganda keep the book interesting.

As with all nonfiction titles, kids will tend to dip in and out of the book depending on their interests. As for me, I kept forgetting I was supposed to be reading the book for review purposes and kept being enthralled with the content. I ended up reading the whole book start-to-finish. As we celebrate the naming of Chris Haughton as Ireland's latest Laureate na nOg, The History of Information is a great book by this (mostly) picture book author that is designed for older kids.

That's it for this month. Keep enjoying those Irish children's books! Maybe including a few of the best Irish children's books under your Christmas tree would be a fine way to keep Ireland alive for your kids all year long.

Maria the Pappas

Maria the Pappasis an autobiographical portrait of Maria Pappas that explains not simply what she has done, but why she became the person she is. The memoir presents Pappas as a collection of apparent contradictions: a hard-driving politician and deeply emotional helper; a government reformer and flamboyant public personality; a Cretan Greek from West Virginia who became a fixture of Chicago politics; and a woman comfortable confronting powerful politicians while also spending enormous amounts of time with ordinary taxpayers, immigrants, clergy, community activists and people experiencing hardship. Pappas describes herself as bold, direct and authentic, but says the fundamental values underneath that personality are faith, honesty, loyalty and service.



The central message:

Maria Pappas believes her life has been a lifelong search for the person who needs help—and that her childhood, psychology, politics, government reform, cultural outreach and faith are all different expressions of that same calling.

That's what makes this more than a conventional political memoir. Politics provides the backdrop, but service is really the subject.

The book begins with a child confronted by suffering who wants to fix something. It ends with an older woman standing in an enormous cathedral realizing that she is still essentially doing the same thing. And there is another important theme underneath it: Pappas never assimilates by erasing herself. The Greek identity, West Virginia upbringing, accent of the immigrant household, Orthodox faith, music, flamboyant clothes, bluntness and unconventional personality aren't obstacles she overcame to become successful. The manuscript argues that these are precisely the things that made her successful.

That gives the title Maria the Pappas particular meaning. The book isn't merely asking, "Who is Maria Pappas?" It is explaining how Maria became MARIA.

www.MariaThePappas.com

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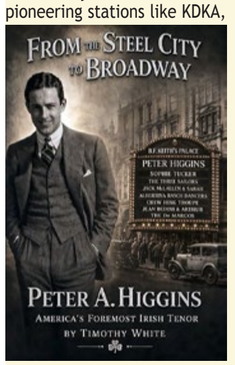


BOOKS BOOKS

From the Steel City to Broadway: Peter A. Higgins: 'America's foremost Irish Tenor'

In an era when live performance ruled and radio was just beginning to shape a nation, Peter A. Higgins rose from Pittsburgh's Steel City to the bright lights of Broadway—becoming one of America's foremost Irish tenors.

An early star of radio on pioneering stations like KDKA,



he went on to perform for millions on NBC and across the vaudeville circuit, sharing the stage with the greats of his time and moving within New York's cultural and political circles including with Al Smith, the flamboyant Mayor Walker and future President, FDR. Peter and his brothers were very involved in founding several prominent charities including Variety International, the Children's Charity.

Available on Amazon

As a teenager, the author's grandfather dropped out of high school and went on the road with his famous brother during the roaring twenties. The author shares many family stories and anecdotes of Peter's



performances with many of the comedic legends of those times including Milton Berle, Jack Benny, Bob Hope, Jackie Gleason and others.

Despite more than 10,000 performances across North America and Europe, his voice has largely faded from memory-lost to an era before recordings could fully preserve its stars.

Blending family lore, historical research, and a touch of Irish "blarney," From the Steel City to Broadway is both a tribute and a rediscovery-a heartfelt effort to bring a forgotten Irish American voice home again.

Available on Amazon.com

Author Bio:

Timothy F. White is the author of *From the Steel City to Broadway*, a biography of his great-uncle Peter A. Higgins, a Pittsburgh-born Irish tenor whose remarkable career spanned vaudeville, early radio, and Broadway.

Inspired by family stories and a desire to preserve an overlooked chapter of entertainment history, White spent years researching Higgins's life and career. Drawing on historical newspapers, archival records, photographs, and family history, he brings to life the story of a performer who rose from Pittsburgh's industrial neighborhoods to the national stage, appearing alongside some of the most celebrated entertainers of his era.

White has spent his professional career at the intersection of technology, entrepreneurship, and economic development. Since 2011, he has worked at the Regional Industrial Development Corporation of Southwestern Pennsylvania (RIDC), where he serves as Senior Vice President of Business Development and Strategy. His work focuses on transforming former industrial properties into places for new businesses, advanced manufacturing, and innovation.

A graduate of West Virginia University, White also studied management at Carnegie Mellon University and participated in the 16th Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange. He lives in the Pittsburgh area with his family and continues to explore the stories that connect the region's industrial heritage, Irish-American communities, and entertainment history.

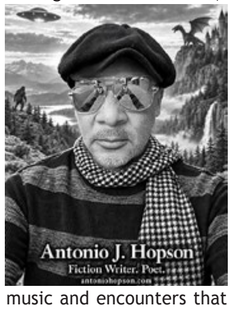
Explores Friendship, Race and Belonging in Leap of the Dog

SEATTLE — In Leap of the Dog, novelist, poet and educator Antonio J. Hopson follows two longtime friends across Ireland and Northern Ireland. When Paradise quits



his job and heads for Ireland, his friend comes along for the pubs, music and promise of adventure. What begins as a journey together becomes an encounter with the histories and identities each man carries.

Based on Hopson's travels in Ireland in 1999, the novel brings humor and cultural observation to questions of ancestry, race, sectarian identity and belonging. Its friendship story unfolds through conversations,



music and encounters that complicate the travelers' assumptions about the island and themselves.

Published by Wildboy Concepts Publishing, Leap of the Dog is available in paperback and as a Kindle eBook. Paperback ISBN: 9798234224439. Readers can find it through Amazon, Barnes & Noble and IngramSpark. Review copies, interviews, bookstore readings and book-group conversations can be arranged by contacting antoniofiction@gmail.com.

Author Bio

Antonio J. Hopson is a Seattle-based novelist, poet and educator. His writing crosses literary fiction, speculative fiction, poetry and short stories, with an eye for humor, cultural observation and the complicated lives behind familiar labels. His books include Global Warming: A Love Story, Nefarious: Sailboat Racing in the Salish Sea, and the poetry collection Seven.

Leap of the Dog: Amazon paperback · Kindle · Barnes & Noble · IngramSpark

ISBN 9798234224439.

https://www.antoniohopson.com/

antoniofiction@gmail.com

Rising Voices: Organizing Cork's Workers, 1820-1926



Two new history books by law student Tadgh Quill-Manley/Ó Cuill-Maonlaí) tell the human story of the a place that so many Irish-Americans left behind — and the conditions that drove them out.

'Rising Voices tells the story of men and women trapped in low wages, insecure employment, and harsh industrial conditions. Agricultural labourers, factory workers, and craftspeople organised, struck, and fought for dignity against poverty that left many with no choice but to emigrate. The book captures



the world their children and grandchildren fled — a city and county where economic survival often meant packing a bag for Boston, New York, or Chicago.

Breaking Ground: Homes for Cork City, 1958-1982

explores overlapping themes into the latter part of the last century. It continues the chronological documentation in 'Homes by the Lee: Housing a Free State City, 1922-1942' and 'Building a New City: Cork's Public Works, 1920-1940' (2025). Overcrowded tenements, condemned houses, endless waiting lists, and the bitter experience of returnees from abroad who found no home waiting for them form the backdrop. The ambitious building of new estates, though flawed, was an attempt to stem the tide of emigration driven by housing shortage and economic insecurity. For many, it came too late.

These books show the conditions that lead so many individuals to cross the Atlantic. They give readers a clear, human picture of the economic pressures — poor wages, precarious work, and the simple lack of a decent roof — that shaped family members' decisions to leave.

The books are free online on the Internet Archive, and are coming to select libraries. Copies can be obtained directly from the author at cost-price, by contacting tadghquillmanley@yahoo.com

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The end of the year means that the annual race (though it's more like a marathon) for awards like the Golden Globes, the Oscars and many others is underway. Happily, that should mean the movie theaters - and streamers - will be full of great award bait movies for the next few months.

Talking of awards, Irish-American actor Jack Reynor has been announced as the first honoree of the Oscar Wilde Awards, which will be held on 11 March 2027 at The Ebell of Los Angeles.

The second is Northern Irish actress Thaddea Graham, who is making a name for herself after her turns in Sex Education, Bad Sisters and Margo's Got Money Troubles - she also appeared alongside George Clooney and Adam Sandler in Jay Kelly.

Graham was discovered as a baby on the steps of a building in Changsha, China, and adopted at 13 months and brought by her parents to County Down as one of the first Chinese-born children adopted in Northern Ireland.

Reynor, who lives in Dublin and whose father is Irish, recently starred in Lee Cronin's The Mummy, the second season of Amazon Prime's spy drama Citadel, and alongside Nick Jonas and Paul Rudd in Irish filmmaker John Carney's musical comedy Power Ballad.

He'll be on screens again soon in the second season of Apple TV+'s Presumed Innocent, opposite Rachel Brosnahan, and recently finished shooting Gareth Evans' A Colt Is My Passport, a reimagining of Nikkatsu's 1960s Yakuza hitman thriller that's set in 1978 Detroit. Perhaps most famously, he was played the character drugged and burned alive in a bear skin in Midsommar.

Looking again to the future, and Irish actors Jack Gleeson and James Nesbitt have both been cast in the BBC's forthcoming adaptation Hercule, which is currently shooting in Liverpool, and looks at the early life of the famous Belgian detective, who is played by Edward Bluemel.

Drawing on three of Christie's early stories, the six-part series will also follow his first encounters with several future friends and allies, as well as one of his longstanding adversaries. First introduced in 1920, Poirot became known for solving mysteries through his "little grey cells", as well as for his distinctive moustache.

The character has previously been portrayed by David Suchet, John Moffatt, Peter Ustinov and Belfast-born Kenneth Branagh, the latter to mixed reviews. We'll see it here in the USA on BritBox next year.

We'll stay with the Ballymena-born Nesbitt for a moment, because it was also announced recently that he is going to be starring alongside Ruth Jones, Minnie Driver and Alfred Enoch in the Netflix thriller series Run Away, which bows on Netflix on New Year's Day next year.

Another adaptation of a Harlan Coben thriller, it tells the story of Simon (Nesbitt) who seems to have the perfect life and family - until his eldest daughter Paige runs away from home and everything begins to fall apart.

After a frantic search he finds her strung out on drugs - but she's not alone, and an argument escalates into shocking violence. Now Simon faces losing his daughter once again as he steps into a dangerous underworld and finds some terrible secrets. The novel was set in the USA, but this story relocated to the UK, and filming took place in the North West of England.

Since we're almost in 2027, let's go into the future: Wexford writer Eoin Colfer's Artemis Fowl books are heading to television, with an animated adaptation in development for Disney Channel & Disney+.

Colfer revealed the project at New York Comic Con recently, during a panel marking the first novel's 25th anniversary, and he will be one of the show's executive producers. The series centers on 13-year-old genius Artemis Fowl, who finds a secret civilization of technologically advanced fairies. Hoping to save his family, he devises a plan to capture a fairy and steal its magic.

Since the first book's publication in 2001, the series has sold more than 35 million copies and been translated into 48 languages - but there's no word yet on a release date, or the voice cast.

That's all for this month - Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year!

Misericordia Opens Expanded Heartstrings Gift Shop

Misericordia Heart of Mercy today announced that the Heartstrings Gift Shop will officially reopen on Tuesday, November 10, at 10 a.m. Following an extensive renovation, the expanded shop has more than doubled in size to over 2,000 square feet, offering curated retail space designed to support resident vocational training and programming.

Staffed by dedicated volunteers alongside Misericordia residents, Heartstrings provides meaningful employment for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Residents assist guests, manage inventory, and develop valuable workplace skills, independence, and pride.

"Meaningful work and a paycheck are important to us all," said Father Jack Clair, President and Executive Director at Misericordia Home. "We are so grateful to provide these opportunities for our residents. They earn their spending money while learning a trade that will make them more marketable in the community."



Under the direction of Buyer Laura Finnegan—who brings over 40 years of luxury retail experience including Saks and Bunny and Babe Boutique in Wilmette—the shop offers an elevated experience featuring new fitting rooms and dedicated departments:

Curated Apparel: Designer fashion and accessories from Frances Valentine and Sara Campbell.

The Irish Cottage: A new shop-in-shop featuring authentic Irish apparel, imports, and gifts.

Holiday & Misericordia Items: Exclusive ornaments by Julie Whitehead, children's items, Mis Wear, and resident-created artwork and items.

"We are excited to welcome everyone to a fun shopping experience that directly supports Misericordia's mission," said Laura Finnegan.

Misericordia Campus, 6300 N. Ridge Ave., Chicago, IL (Free parking).

Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. | Sunday, 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. (Closed Sat/Mon).

About Misericordia Heart of Mercy

Misericordia Heart of Mercy provides a continuum of care and network of services for 650+ children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Founded in 1921, Misericordia offers exceptional residential options, vocational opportunities, and creative programming. Misericordia supports individuals from diverse backgrounds, empowering residents to live full, meaningful, and dignified lives. Through on-campus social enterprises like Heartstrings Gift Shop, residents develop valuable workplace skills, achieve greater independence, and build lifelong community connections within a loving environment.

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