Irish American News

Irish

April • 2006

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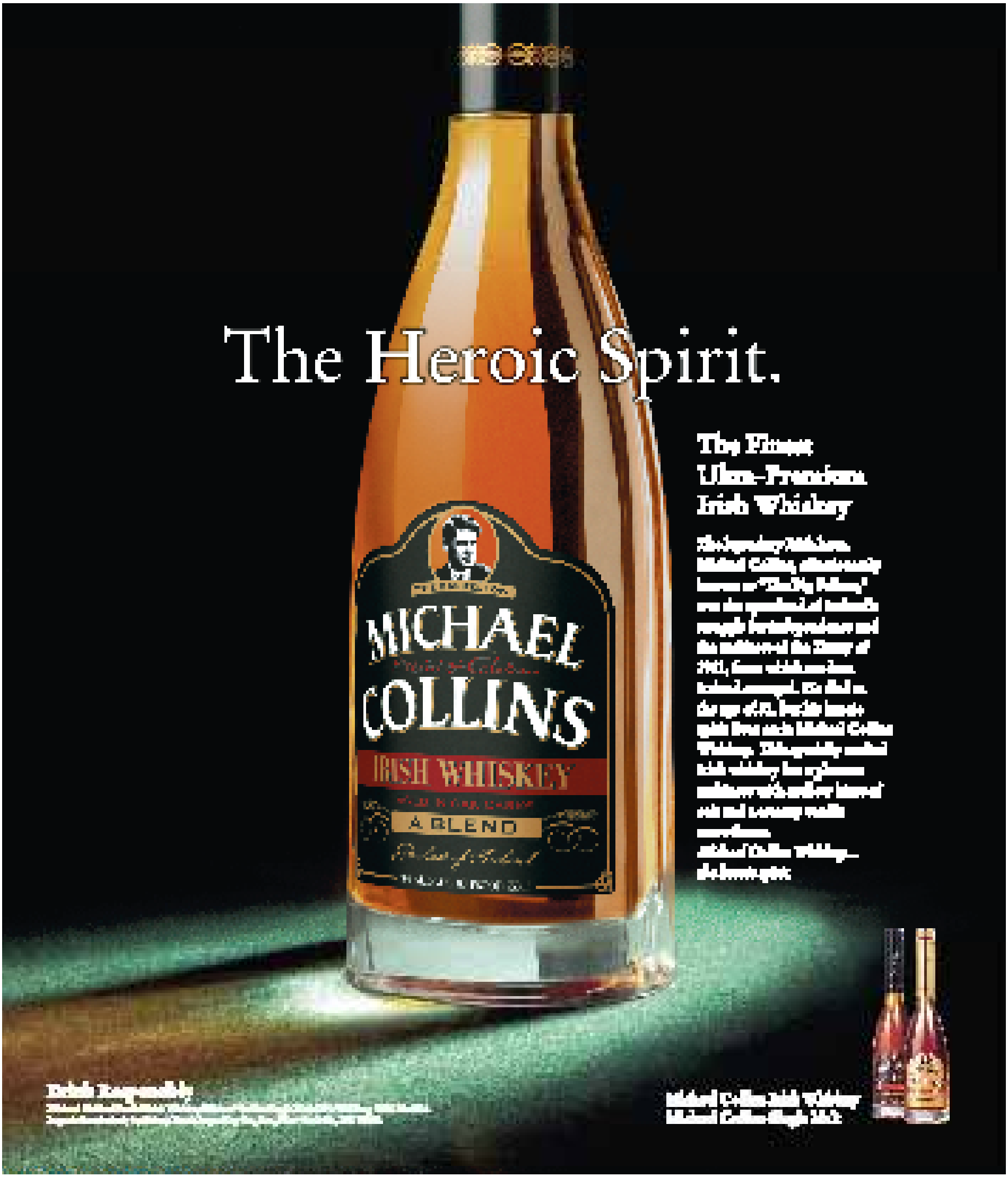
The Heroic Spirit.
MICHAEL COLLINS
IRISH WHISKEY
A BLEND

Ahern believes British colluded in Finucane murder

Irish premier Bertie Ahern said that the British government intends going ahead with a restricted inquiry into the murder of Belfast attorney Pat Finucane despite the opposition of the Irish Government.

Mr. Ahern said that no matter what findings the inquiry came up with, they would not be believed, as the judge chairing it would not have full independence. He said he had repeatedly told the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, that the proposed inquiry would not be full, independent, or public and that if Mr. Blair proceeded with it, he would be doing so in the face of opposition from the Irish Government, the parties in the Oireachtas and all the interest groups involved.

Mr. Ahern went on to say he has always believed that there was collusion between British security forces and loyalist paramilitaries in the planning of Mr. Finucane's murder. The question was how deep the collusion ran.

Hartman elected IFC President

Jack Hartman was elected as the 105th President of the Irish Fellowship Club of Chicago at the Christmas luncheon, having served as last year's First Vice President.

Hartman most recently served as the Executive Director of the Illinois Tollway. During his tenure, he oversaw significant improvements to the Tollway System, including, increased use of the I-Pass and a $5.3 billion renovation plan. Previously he was the Executive Vice President of Construction, Engineering & Facilities for the CTA and Deputy Commissioner for terminal and landside facilities at O'Hare International Airport.

Named "2005 Citizen of the Year" by the City Club of Chicago, Hartman has a law degree, MBA and BBA from Loyola University. He has been a board member for the International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association, Loyola University, Catholic Charities of Chicago and Mercy Home for Boys and Girls. He is also a member of the Economic Club of Chicago and a past president of the Young Irish Fellowship Club.

He resides in Edgebrook with his wife and two children.

Also at the luncheon, 2005 IFC President Daniel McLaughlin was elected Chairman of the Board, while the following individuals were elected to serve as officers: Kathy Taylor will serve as First Vice President; Hon. Thomas R. Allen, Hon. James M. Bailey, Thomas J. Boyle, J. Cashman, Francis J. Harmon, Denis J. Healy, Brian Hickey, Hon. Daniel W. Hynes, Austin Kelly, Christopher J. Kozicki, Lollie McKeon, J. Patrick O'Brien, Lawrence J. O'Brien, William Quinlan Jr., Hon. Phillip J. Rock, Hon. Virginia Rugai, Gerald M. Sullivan and Patrick Thompson were elected as Vice Presidents. Jack Kane will also continue to serve as Treasurer. The Chaplains will be Rev. John Pollard and Rev. John J. Wall. Thomas J. O'Gorman will serve as Club Historian.

The following people were newly elected to the Board of Directors: Kevin Coleman, John Fitzpatrick, Patrick Lynch and John Wrenn.

Enjoying the breakfast held recently by the Irish American Partnership are (l to r): Jim Durkin, Michael Cunningham, Blackie Kieran Gavin; Mayor of Castlebar, Dan McLaughlin, Mayor of Orland Park, Michael Garvey and Jack Hartman; presidend of the Irish Fellowship Club.

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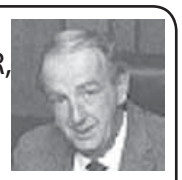

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Ahern requests public inquiry into Finucane murder

The following is a statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Dermot Ahern, T.D., on an All Party Dail motion, Wednesday, March 8, 2006, supporting a full public inquiry into the murder of Pat Finucane.

"I welcome the opportunity to introduce to the House this all party motion calling for an independent public inquiry into the murder of Belfast Solicitor Patrick Finucane. On behalf of the Government, I would like to warmly welcome Mrs. Geraldine Finucane and her son, Michael, who are in the public gallery this evening to listen to our debate.

"The House is aware of the consistent and very strong support which the Government has given to the Finucane family in their quest for an independent inquiry into this murder. The Government continues to regularly meet with the family; the Taoiseach met Mrs. Finucane most recently on 27 February and will meet her again next week in Washington.

"The Finucane family has been campaigning for over seventeen years to obtain the full truth behind the brutal murder which took place in their home. Many of the facts surrounding the murder are well known, in particular through the three investigations undertaken by the former head of the Metropolitan Police, Lord John Stevens. He was asked by the British Government to look at allegations of collusion on three separate occasions, and his reports have led to one prosecution, that of Ken Barrett, and over 20 recommendations that are being considered by the Public Prosecution Service of Northern Ireland.

"The Government has consistently supported the Finucane family in their efforts to ascertain the full extent of the collusion behind Pat Finucane's murder; in other words, to learn who was behind the perpetrators, and to reveal the involvement of the British security forces in this case.

"The Honorable Judge Peter Cory was appointed by both Governments following intensive negotiations at Weston Park in the summer of 2001 to examine six cases where collusion was suspected. Although heavily redacted, the Cory Collusion Inquiry Report on the Pat Finucane case was published by the British Government on 1 April 2004. I would like to remind the House of Judge Cory's concluding paragraph:

"Some of the acts summarized above are, in and of themselves, capable of constituting acts of collusion. Further the documents and statements I have referred to in the review have a cumulative effect. Considered together, they clearly indicate to me that there is strong evidence that collusive acts were committed by the Army (Force Research Unit), the RUC Special Branch and the Security Service. I am satisfied that there is a need for a public inquiry."

"Judge Cory, therefore, categorically found sufficient evidence of collusion to warrant a public inquiry into Pat Finucane's murder. He further recommended that a public inquiry should take place without delay. And very importantly, he also set out clearly the type of public inquiry required – that provided for in the 1921 Tribunal of Inquiries Act.

"Regrettably the British Government has failed to set up the type of public inquiry recommended by Judge Cory. Instead the UK Inquires Act 2005 was passed by the British Parliament last April. The British Government insists that the Finucane inquiry will be held under this Act – and this Act alone – and are preparing arrangements accordingly.

"This is not acceptable to the family, to this Government, to the Committee of Ministers in Strasbourg, nor to the many international human rights groups who support the Finucane case. Rarely has a case received such widespread domestic and international support. Mrs. Finucane will appear again next week before US Congressional hearings in Washington, and my Department is privileged to be able to assist her in arranging meetings on Capitol Hill.

"As the Taoiseach has made very clear, the Inquiries Act does not meet the standard set by Judge Cory, nor the understanding reached at Weston Park. There are many difficulties with the new legislation. An inquiry held under it will simply not be regarded as sufficiently independent, nor transparent, given the potential use of Restriction Notices and the potential degree of Ministerial control. Judge Cory himself repeated these concerns two weeks ago in Belfast. I would like to remind the House that, in the sole case in this jurisdiction where Judge Cory recommended a public inquiry, it is being held under the 1921 Act, namely the Breen & Buchanan Inquiry chaired by Justice Peter Smithwick.

"The Government has made clear our opposition to the British proposals, both bilaterally and through international fora. We will continue to do so, in London, in Washington, in Belfast and elsewhere. I have consistently raised this case with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Peter Hain, who met with the Finucane family last month. I regret to say that, in his recent reply to the family, the Secretary of State again failed to address the family's fundamental concerns.

"The position of the Government remains firm and emphatic – we wish the British Government to establish a full, independent and public judicial inquiry into the murder of Patrick Finucane, and nothing less.

I commend this motion to the House."

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Irish Newspaper Archives Launch

Irish Newspaper Archives has launched the most ambitious digital archive project ever undertaken in this country. It involves the complete digitisation of Ireland's newspaper heritage. Titles such as the Irish Independent (1905 – current), Sunday Independent, The Freeman's Journal (1763 – 1924), the Nation and many more of Ireland's leading regional newspapers will be rendered fully word searchable.

The information will be stored and viewed in the exact format of the original newspaper - every page, article, word and picture as it was originally published. Researchers will now be able to view history as it happened in an instant, from the Wolf Tone Rebellion of 1798 as reported in the "Freeman's Journal" and more recent seminal moments in Irish history as reported in the "Irish Independent". Professional researchers, students and amateur historians, alike are now able to examine Irelands local past through the regional papers and how national and international historical events were perceived in the established national papers of the day.

This database will be an invaluable resource for all organisations with an interest in Irish studies and Anglo-Irish relations. It will also have great significance for those with an interest in the history of journalism, as it will illustrate the development of Irelands newspaper heritage from the 1760's up to the present. The archive consists of over 2 million pages of Ireland's newspaper heritage, with additional content and titles will be added over the next few months.

For further details please contact Andrew Martin at Irish Newspaper Archives andrew.martin@irishnewspaperarchives.com, (353) 294-2173, http://www.irishnewspaperarchives.com

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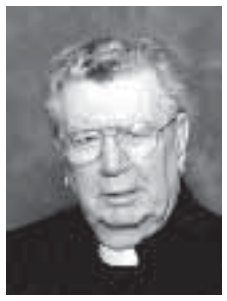
Tinker's Dam

by Fr. Kevin O'Neill Shanley



How the Irish fought bigotry in America

A little over a century and three-quarters ago, the great "Irish Liberator" Daniel O'Connell won freedom for his fellow Irish in Ireland with the Catholic Emancipation Bill of 1829 in the British Parliament. Up to that time his fellow Irish Catholics had lived under the dreaded Penal Laws which denied them almost all political and religious rights. Not only the right to worship as they wished, but also to own property, vote, or even to educate their chi1dren.

Through what he dubbed as the "Catholic Association," O'Connell not only won rights for his fellow Irish but also taught them the art of politics, which stood them in good stead not long afterwards in America and the other nations to which they emigrated.

O'Connell was personally devastated by the injustices of the Penal Laws and their expression of prejudice against his people. He fought such prejudice most of his life, not only for the Irish but also for other minority groups.

"Bigotry," he said, "has no head and cannot think, no heart and cannot feel. When she moves it is in wrath; when she pauses it is amid ruin. Her prayers are curses, her god is a demon, her communion is death, her vengeance is eternity, her decalogue is written in the blood of her victims, and if she stops for a moment in her infernal flights, it is upon a kindred rock to whet her vulture fang for more sanguinary desolation."

And noted Harvard University historian Arthur Schesinger, Sr., once noted that the prejudice against the Irish and other Catholics is "the deepest held bias in the history of the American people." Both friends and foes of the Irish in America and elsewhere are more than liable to agree, even though some thought that the election of the late President John F. Kennedy was a death knell of such prejudice. The announcement of its demise, however, was quite premature.

Irish in America

Early Irish settlers in America, both Scots Irish and Catholic Irish, often bore a heavy burden of suspicion and prejudice in employment, politics, education, religion and ordinary life. The original Scots Irish, who left Ulster because they were discriminated against by the British Government, were resented by the Puritans of Boston and New England and moved to Pennsylvania and the Southern colonies.

The Irish, along with many German immigrants bore the great brunt of this bigotry when they fled their native lands to find freedom in America. However, they soon discovered, for example, that the school system was actually a Protestant system. Their children were sometimes physically punished for refusing to attend Protestant prayer services or Bible readings. And when they sent their children to parochial schools, they were still forced to pay for the public system.

Over the decades since then, the Irish and other immigrant groups attempted to enter the mainstream of American culture through a process of assimilation while still retaining their cultural and religious differences. Especially after World War II and the benefits of the G.I. Bill in the U.S. Congress, literally hundreds of thousands of returning veterans were able to obtain a college education and enter fields of new opportunity that were previously denied to them.

Acceptance of Others

The Irish also helped Catholic philosophy and theology to become more accepted in America as witnessed by the greatly popular TV series "Life is Worth Living" by the late Bishop Fulton J. Sheen one of the most well-known Irish Americans. The Irish also entered politics and the professions in ever increasing numbers and paved the way for others, too. Their ability to "share the political pie" with others gave hope to many.

The efforts of the Irish did sustain a set—back in 1928 when Irishman Gov. Al Smith of New York ran for the presidency on the Democratic ticket and raised much anti—Irish and anti—Catholic bigotry. However, it turned out to be a blessing in disguise when the Stock Market "crash" the following year ushered in the Great Depression of the 1930s, which was then blamed on Republican Herbert Hoover.

Following the election, Al Smith said, "In this spirit I join with fellow Americans of all creeds in a fervent prayer that never again in this land will any public servant be challenged because of the faith in which he has tried to walk humbly with God."

President Franklin Roosevelt dubbed Al Smith "The Happy Warrior" but it was not until the election of President John F. Kennedy that the Irish could truly feel as though they were finally accepted in America.

They also felt, to a large extent, that they wanted to participate in the Civil Rights Movement to obtain what they considered the rights of all Americans to share in the many benefits available in our land.

The struggle continues to this day but the lessons taught to the Irish so many years ago by Daniel O'Connell still aid in the struggle for equality.

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Below: The Irish Heritage Singers performed for the Irish Festival held at the Meridian Banquet Hall in Rolling Meadows on March 19, 2006. The event is a benefit for Avenue to Independence, an agency that provides for 267 adult handicapped people.

Trinity Irish Dancers Compete in World Championships

by Katie Hamilton

Nineteen dancers from the Trinity Academy of Irish Dance will be traveling to Belfast, Ireland, in April to compete in the 2006 Oireachtas Rince na Cruinne, the World Championships of Irish Dance. Trinity Academy, which was founded more than 25 years ago by Director Mark Howard, boasts an unprecedented 24 world titles and remains the only American school to ever win team gold medals at the Worlds.

More than 39 dancers placed within the top 11 in their respective age groups at the Midwest Regional Championships in November. Maggie Doyle received her fifth Midwest Regional Championship and Mackenzie Holland won first place in the 10 and under competition for the second year in a row. The 19 dancers heading overseas in a few short weeks are between the ages of 10 and 20 years old and include: Erin Aquino, Barrington; Megan Condon, Clarendon Hills; Kathleen Marie Darling, Arlington Heights; Maggie Doyle and Mairi Doyle, Elmhurst; Jake Farrell, Richton Park; Kendall Gaspari and Sydney Wippman, Palatine; Kelly Langtim and Natalie Tommey, Elgin; Danae Luetkeham, LaGrange; Kelly McNulty, Oakbrook Terrace; Jillian Oury, Downers Grove; Sinead Cross, Billy Donahue, Mackenzie Holland, Alicia Sbertoli, Brandon Segovia and Kelly O'Neill, Chicago.

Sixteen-year old Jillian Oury has danced for ten years and is currently ranked second in the world.

"I just hope to do the best I can," Oury said. "I've always dreamed about winning the Worlds, but I won't be disappointed if I don't."

Oury said she has class three to four times a week at the Irish American Heritage Center in Chicago. The days she doesn't have class, Oury practices on her own for two hours.

"There's always pressure," she said. "But it's mostly from myself. My teacher and parents are good about not putting any pressure on me. But it's a good motivator."

Oury is not just a talented dancer. She has played the fiddle for 11 years and is enrolled in honors classes at Downers Grove South High School. She hopes to be a high school math teacher someday.

"Competition has its fun points," Oury said. "It's time to get down and focus. This is what you've been practicing for so long."

The Trinity Academy has locations in Chicago, Arlington Heights, Western Springs, Evanston, Downers Grove and Northfield. For more information call 773.774.5961 or visit their website at www.trinityirishdancers.com.

Fun on the dance floor

The ceili workshop at the University of Chicago Folk Festival in February was held in the beautiful social hall upstairs in Noyes Hall. Everyone had a great time dancing to the Murphy Roche Irish Music Club. The dances were led by Ed Heffernan from the Francis O'Neill Club. Other Francis O'Neill Club dancers included Walt Bauman, Cheryl Arvio, Lee & Stephi Williams, Marie Scatena, Judy Kenning, Janice Heffernan.

Both clubs warmly welcome new members. For more information, please call Ed Heffernan (Francis O'Neill Club) at (847) 682-0166 or Kell Chole (Murphy Roche Club) at 630-662-8611.

Gaelic Park DVD for sale

The DVD Chicago Gaelic Park – Celebrating 25 years 1980-2005 is available in the Gaelic Park office for $15.00. The DVD begins simply, showing the bare land prior to any work and continues on to show the various stages of construction. You will be amazed at the different people in this film (and see faces of some who have passed away over the years). The DVD also shows the many women who were there to feed the men and help everyone along the way. It continues through the years as the buildings were changed, showing the Dedication celebration and various other events held at Gaelic Park. Manager Marian Ryan compiled all of the information, film and pictures that she obtained from Kathleen Twomey, Mickey Rahilly, Margaret Conway, Mary O'Connor, Eamon Malone, Tom Boylem, Neil Gallagher and others. Chicago Gaelic Park, 6119 West 147th St, Oak Forest, (708) 687-9323 www.cgp-chicago.org.

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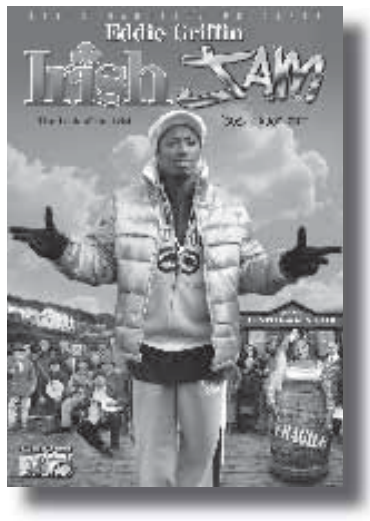
Raise a glass, or a pint, to Visual Entertainment's DVD release of Irish Jam, an urban comedy featuring Eddie Griffin (Deuce Bigalow: Male Gigolo, Undercover Brother) and Mo'Nique (Domino, Oxygen's Mo'Nique's Fat Chance). In Irish Jam, Jimmy "The Jam" McDevitt is a Los Angeles conman getting into all sorts of trouble. He is on the run from his ex-fiancé who he stood up at the altar and is dodging his landlord because he can't pay his rent. Jimmy enters a poetry contest sponsored by a town in Ireland with the hopes of escaping his troubles. Two worlds instantaneously collide as Jimmy lands in Ireland to take over a pub he won. What follows is a hilarious fish-out-of-water



comedy with romance, adventure and a great message about acceptance. Irish Jam is a broad based film perfect for families and urbanites. DVD bonus materials include an interview with Eddie Griffin. To win a free copy of Irish Jam go to www.irishamericannews.com. The winner will be drawn April 15th.

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Profiling Boxer John Duddy

By John Mooney

"Ireland's" John Duddy, already rated No.15 by the World Boxing Association, is one of the fastest rising stars in pro boxing. The combination of his exciting, classic Irish blood-and-guts style of fighting and matinee idol looks have helped the unbeaten Irish Middleweight sensation capture the hearts and minds of boxing fans in his native Ireland and United States, particularly on the East Coast.

John Duddy

John was born to box. Following in his father Mickey's footsteps, Duddy started training in his Derry hometown at the age of 5, boxing in his first amateur match at 7. Mickey was a former club fighter who was 3-4 as a pro and sparred with several world champions such as Barry "The Clones Cyclone" McGuigan and Ken Buchanan, as well as ex-European title-holder Charlie Nash.

John won his first National title at 15 as a light middleweight in the Junior Division, later adding the Irish title as an Intermediate and Senior. He posted an amateur record of 100-30 and on the advice of his amateur coaches, Mickey and Nash in Ireland, as well as Neil Ferrara in New York City, he turned pro in 2003 and relocated to NYC.

His pro debut was Sept 9 2003 in the Bronx against (1-0) Tarek Rached, who John knocked out in the first round. Duddy followed that effort with 2 more first-round knockouts in 2003 against (1-1) Jesse Gomez and (3-5) Leo Laudat. John visited the canvas for the first time as a pro against Laudet, suffering a "flash" knockdown in the first round that Duddy ended moments after he got back up.

In his most significant fight (Mar 18) to date, Duddy stopped previously unbeaten Leonord Pierre (16-0,11 KOs), rated No19 by the World Boxing Council, at 1:23 of the opening round on ESPN2. He became an instant ESPN favourite.

Duddy followed (Jun 11) with an 8th round decision against Patrick Thompson (9-4-1) in historic Madison Square Garden. By going the full 8 rounds, John doubled the total amount of rounds he had fought as a pro going into a bout, and won all 8 rounds on all 3 of the judges' scorecards (80-72).

On Jul 22, John stopped veteran Patrick Coleman (29-11) with a perfect one-two combination in the 8 round of their fight outside of Chicago on ESPN2 Friday Night Fights. Duddy followed with a 1st round stoppage (1:01) of Joseph Brady (13-4-1) last Sept 17 in Mansfield, Massachusetts.

Back in NYC, John beat Canadian middleweight Bryon Mackie (25-11) by 4th round TKO in their Nov 4 main event. In his last fight, Wilmer Mejia (15-4-2) made it to the 4th round before being stopped on a PPV show in Dec 15 in Florida.

In his last fight, John went 10 rounds for the first time, nearly pitching a shutout against veteran Julio Jean (7-6-1) in Boston, winning by scores of 100-90 twice and 99-91. Through his first 15 fights, Duddy's opponents had an aggregate record of 144-56-6/70% winning percentage, when they entered the ring against him.

John now lives with his girlfriend Grainne, in Queens. He is promoted by Irish Ropes, managed by McLaughlin Brothers, and trained by Harry Keitt.

Come play soccer

Chicago Celtic soccer club is looking for experienced players for their Under 30 and Over 30's Saturday teams. They also need reliable, players for their Major Division Sunday morning team. The clubs season runs from April to November. For more info go to the website www.Chicagocelticsoccerclub.com or call John O'Sullivan 773 736-5391.

Boxing on the Southside of Chicago featured Terry McEldowney singing "God Bless America" at the Leo High School Boxing Night, March 15th at 115 Bourbon Street Restaurant and Bar.
Terry is the fellow that penned the famous "South Side Irish" song.

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Remembering the Hunger Strike: the Criminalizing of Irish Republican Politics

by Bill Chambers

"Sands, Bobby, Anti-H-Block-Armagh, Political Prisoner: 30,492… West, Harry, Ulster Unionist Party: 29,046" – Fermanagh/South Tyrone Election Official

"Bhi An Bua Againn (Victory is Ours)" – H5 Prisoners on hearing of Bobby Sands' victory

Before the 1981 hunger strike, Sinn Fein, the primary political voice of Irish Republicans, had little impact in the political sphere in Ireland. In 1975, while Gerry Adams, Bobby Sands and Brendan Hughes were in Cage 11 in Long Kesh, discussions had begun among the Republican prisoners of an alternative political strategy beyond passively abstaining from elections – which was current Sinn Fein policy. As Denis O'Hearn points out in his biography of Bobby Sands (reviewed elsewhere in this issue), "[The prisoners] could not affect policies directly because they had to be physically present to vote on motions at the party's annual ard fheis (conference). So they built a relationship with a sympathetic Belfast cumann (branch) of the party and sent out policy papers and proposals for them to introduce." This was the beginning of Republican prisoners being the vanguard of invigorating the political side of Irish Republican resistance, which would eventually peak in the election of Bobby Sands as an MP to Westminster.

Bobby Sands' election as MP representing the National H-Block Committee was a stunning defeat to the British criminalization policy; the British had hoped to use this policy to separate the Irish Republicans from the support of their community. Two months later, the British response to this defeat was to publish proposals to change the Representation of the People Act making it impossible for prisoners to stand as candidates for election to Parliament. This was the consistent British approach to any effort of Irish Republicans to participate in "democratic" politics: to provide the opportunity for Irish in the north to express their views in a purely political sphere, but then to undermine that vote when it wasn't to their liking.

At this same time, the Dublin government also was shocked when out of the nine prisoners in the general election; Paddy Agnew and Kieran Doherty (who later died on the hunger strike), were elected to the Dail, the Dublin Parliament. These first Sinn Fein TDs in the south were a harbinger of Sinn Fein's southern growth. But like the British, Dublin from this point onwards would try to prevent Irish Republicans from making this transition from military to political resistance.

In October, 1982, election to the new assembly took place across the north. The hunger strike the previous year had increased active support for both the IRA and Sinn Fein. This was the first election contested by Sinn Fein and the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) together. Sinn Fein won ten percent of the votes and secured five seats. The SDLP performance was poor and it obtained only eighteen percent and fourteen seats. The analysis of many media commentators at the time supported the British government's fear that Sinn Fein would overtake the SDLP as the main representative of the Catholic population in the north.

In addition to the criminalization of any expression of Irish Republican politics, propping up more acceptable political parties like the SDLP as representatives of the Catholic population in the north became a familiar pattern. Dublin's version of this theme occurred in March of 1983, when it announced the establishment of the New Ireland Forum – a forum proposed by the SDLP to generate new solutions to the conflict in the north. All the nationalist parties were invited – except for Sinn Fein. In November of the following year, the British provided their own answer to the efforts of the New Ireland Forum. During a press conference following Margaret Thatcher's summit meeting with Garret FitzGerald, then Taoiseach of the Dublin government, she dismissed the three options proposed in the Report of the New Ireland Forum, stating: "... a united Ireland was one solution. That is out. A second solution was confederation of the two states. That is out. A third solution was joint authority. That is out." Clearly even if Irish Republicans had been invited to this exclusive forum, so far as the British were concerned the result would be the same.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement was signed in November, 1985, despite Thatcher's contemptuous dismissal of the options in the New Ireland Forum report. (Many Irish Republicans believed that the British signing was an effort to counter the rise of Sinn Fein.) It established the Inter-Governmental Conference that, for the first time, gave Dublin a consultative role in northern matters related to security, legal affairs, politics, and cross-border co-operation. The Agreement also stated that the two governments would support any future wish by the people of the north to enter into a united Ireland. In this case, the British did not need to undermine this potential political solution; they left that to their representatives in the north – the Unionist parties, loyalist paramilitary groups, and anti-Catholic demagogues like Ian Paisley, leader of the "Democratic" Unionist Party (DUP). Four months after a general strike and loyalist-organized intimidation, the Unionists were successful in ending the agreement and the Assembly was officially dissolved.

In 1988, John Hume, the SDLP leader, and Gerry Adams began the talks that eventually led to the inclusive negotiations of the Good Friday Agreement (GFA). During this period of time, the British government was busy manipulating the public image of Sinn Fein leaders into one of criminals who deserved neither media attention nor coverage. The British government enacted broadcasting restrictions on not only Sinn Fein leaders but also their supporters – echoing actions taken by the Dublin government years earlier. Bans by both governments would not end until 1994.

Between 1988 and the signing of the GFA in 1999, there were abortive efforts to have talks between the political parties and the two governments – once again, banning Sinn Fein from participation. Not surprisingly, these talks failed to resolve the conflict.

One such effort occurred in June of 1996, after Sinn Fein achieved a record vote in the elections in the north the month before. The British and Dublin governments announced "all-party" negotiations – which referred to everyone except Sinn Fein. This continuing effort to "criminalize" Sinn Fein had little effect on the local elections the following year, when Sinn Fein's vote totals actually increased.

Legitimate "all-party" talks commenced in September, 1997. This time Sinn Fein was included – but only in theory, as it turned out. The British government once again demonstrated its endless capacity for creating new and improved methods for casting Irish Republicans as political pariahs: whenever actual progress was being made, the British (with Dublin's acquiescence) found a way to have the Irish Republicans physically ejected from the proceedings. The excuse for the expulsion always was allegations by British or Northern Ireland security forces of criminal activity on the part of the Irish Republicans. One such allegation, in February, 1998, (which was never confirmed) was of IRA involvement in two killings in Belfast.

The all-Ireland referendum on the GFA took place in May of 1998. There was a huge turnout (81%), with majorities in the north (71%) and south (94%) supporting the agreement. Although the GFA had been approved and the new Assembly elections held, political progress would once again be forestalled by the Unionist parties until the end of 1999. They refused to form an Executive until weapons were decommissioned; decommissioning the weapons had not been stipulated in the GFA as a condition of forming the Executive. The issue, of course, was not decommissioning of loyalist paramilitary weapons (which were being used on the streets of the north with increasing frequency), but the weapons of the IRA, who currently were maintaining a ceasefire. One might be justified in wondering how all these machinations constituted a democracy.

The longest period of Assembly operation came to an end in 2002 with a publicly orchestrated raid by the RUC/PSNI of Sinn Fein offices at Stormont – the RUC/PSNI claiming they had broken an "IRA spy ring," whose alleged leadership featured Sinn Fein's head of administration, Denis Donaldson, his son-in-law Ciaran Kearney, and civil servant William Mackessy. Unionists seized on this raid, saying they no longer had confidence in the Assembly. The British took advantage of the situation by dissolving the Assembly and re-enacting direct rule over the north, once again employing their favorite formula of criminalizing Sinn Fein through unfounded accusations of spying – despite substantiated incidents of British security forces bugging Sinn Fein offices and homes both during and after the GFA negotiations. Three years later the case against the "IRA Stormont spy ring" ended in a Belfast court where all charges against Donaldson, Kearney, and Mackessy were inexplicably dropped. Even more astonishing was that a few months after that, Denis Donaldson was unmasked as a British agent who had played a key role in the Stormont raid. The tragic reality was that the democratically-elected government of the north was overthrown by British security forces with the help of a former comrade of Bobby Sands: Denis Donaldson.

In a July, 2005 announcement that many around the world called a pivotal event in Irish history, the IRA said they were ending the military struggle and dedicating their members solely to political activity. This announcement that promised so much hope for the resurrection of the Assembly and self-government in the north would be used once again as an opportunity for the British and Dublin governments to undermine political progress. The Independent Monitoring Committee (IMC) had been set up by the British and Dublin governments in 2004 as part of a campaign to shore up David Trimble, leader of the UUP, who needed the support of his party to share power with Sinn Fein. The IMC was a structure outside of the GFA designed by British security forces to "monitor" the progress of paramilitary group decommissioning and general "criminal" activity. Its primary purpose was to gather (unsubstantiated) allegations (Sound familiar?) from "unnamed" security sources who would say the IRA was engaging in criminal activity.

In its most recent report in January, 2006, the IMC makes allegations about IRA involvement in "criminality," yet offers no evidence to support its accusations. Despite repeated requests, from a wide variety of groups, for evidence to substantiate these findings, none has been forthcoming from either the British or Dublin governments. The report also alleges the IRA has retained weapons. This finding was quickly disputed by the man chosen to oversee the previous year's destruction of IRA weapons, General De Chastelain, head of the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning.

From our current perspective, here in 2006, Bobby Sands was prescient in his firm belief that Republicans, whether on the political or military side, were not criminals, needed to gain control of media spin, should never have looked for support from the British or Dublin governments, but were wise to have relied on the support of the nationalist communities. Times have changed little since the hunger strike. The British and Dublin governments still work overtime to criminalize the Irish Republican movement – even though the IRA decommissioned their weapons and has joined Sinn Fein in their dedication to political activism as the only viable vehicle for change. The British maintain their public wringing of hands about why these two tribes in the north, represented by the two largest parties – Sinn Fein and the DUP – just can't get along and share power. In the meantime,

British security forces still are busy undermining nationalists by using the IMC to find new and creative ways to criminalize Sinn Fein and the voters they represent.

The approach in Dublin is the same, but the motivation is fear of Sinn Fein's growing political power: do little to challenge the British and continually suggest, in a way that only an Ian Paisley could love, that Sinn Fein is not "fit" to serve in government anywhere in Ireland. Dublin did little to support the hunger strikers in 1981 and felt threatened by the election to the Dail of Paddy Agnew and Kieran Doherty. Disgustingly, the same holds true twenty-five years later.

So what is the legacy of the hunger strike on Irish politics? Whatever the continuing efforts made by the British or Dublin governments to criminalize Irish Republicans who resist the occupation of their country – either through military or political means – they will be doomed to failure so long as the Irish nationalist community remains united, rejects these efforts, and makes their voices heard just as they did when they elected Bobby Sands.

Hunger Strike Commemorations in the U.S. and Ireland

The following are only some of the many hunger strike commemorations planned in the U.S. and in Ireland.

Chicago

May 7 – from 1PM-4PM, Commemoration of Bobby Sands death, Six Penny Pub, 5800 W. Montrose, Sponsored by Chicago Irish Northern Aid. All proceeds going to Coiste na n-Iarchimí, the ex-Republican prisoner support organization in Belfast.

October 1 - from 2-8PM, at a location to be determined, Citywide Hunger Strike Commemoration, Sponsored by multiple Irish-American groups and activists; planned speakers include members of the Finucane family and Mary Nellis from Derry.

New York

April 29 - Irish Northern Aid and Clan na Gael will be having a commemorative dinner at the Astoria Manor

May 6 - Memorial demonstration at the British Consulate

Ireland

Hundreds of anniversary vigils, lectures and social, theatrical and sporting events are being planned by the National 1981 Hunger Strike Commemoration Committee (http://www.hungerstrike81.com/) which will take place across the north over the coming months. Here are just a few:

April 11 - Third annual James Connolly Memorial Lecture on theme of the hunger strike, Wynn's Hotel, Dublin

April 30 - Commemoration at Ford's Cross hunger strike memorial, south Armagh

May 5 - Candelit vigil to mark death of Bobby Sands – vigils will also be held on anniversary of every hunger striker's death in various areas

May 5 - Bobby Sands lecture with international guest speaker at Devenish complex, west Belfast. Also parade in Kilcoo, Co Down and unveiling of mural and vigil at Market Square, Castlebar

May 11 - Unveiling of mural to commemorate death of hunger striker Sean McGaughey at Brompton Park, north Belfast

May 18-20 - Camlough, south Armagh, weekend of events in memory of hunger strike

June 10-11 - Weekend of events to mark election of Kieran Doherty as TD

July 7 - Launch of commemorative blanket designed by Eilish Reilly, sister of Joe O'Donnell and the Tar Annall 50+ group

July 29 - Launch of Kevin Lynch book by author Aidan Hegarty at St Canice's GAA club, Dungiven, Co Derry

August 9 - Launch of North Belfast Hunger Strike DVD

August 13 - The centerpiece will be a national commemoration rally featuring singer Frances Black at Dunville Park in west Belfast.

October 3 - Vigil at Long Kesh. Former hunger strikers will read concluding statement of 1981 strike. Torchlit processions to mark end of strike at Bellaghy and Derry

Setanta sports April Line-up

Here are the top international football and rugby games for April that will be shown on Setanta Sports. The network is available on DIRECTV (Channel 615) as a premium channel and with GlobeCast WorldTV DTH. Check www.setanta.com/usa for updated schedules. Additionally, Setanta is available PPV in many pubs and clubs nationwide.

Football (soccer)

Scottish Premiere League (Special Pub Event only - LIVE) (Same day coverage on Setanta Sports - check setanta.com/usa for schedule.) The Scottish Premier League (SPL) is the top division in Scottish Soccer. Glasgow Celtic and Glasgow Rangers collectively known as "The Old Firm" are the usual contenders for the SPL title, but both Hearts (Heart of Midlothian), and Hibs (Hibernian) have been making claims to the title of their own this year. With Celtic looking to be in an unbeatable position at the summit of the SPL, the contest now is between Rangers, Hibs, Hearts and Kilmarnock for second place and the final automatic Champion's League place. Can either of the Edinburgh sides beat the soon to be dethroned Rangers to the lucrative runners-up spot?

April 8 at 10:00am - Rangers v Motherwell

Rangers are desperate to continue their challenge for second place and the automatic U.E.F.A Champions League qualifying place while Motherwell are lingering in mid-table obscurity with little to fight for expect for former Rangers captain and now Motherwell manager Terry Butcher's pride.

April 9 at 9:00am - Kilmarnock v Celtic

Champions League hopefuls Kilmarnock, host SPL champions elect Celtic at Fir Park. Will former Rangers captain and now Motherwell manager attempt to scupper early championships celebrations for the Bhoys?

The U.E.F.A. Champions League (LIVE) is the primary club cup competition in Europe. It is open only to professional Soccer Clubs throughout Europe who have earned their position through qualifying by winning their domestic leagues or finishing highly enough to qualify within their respective leagues. Here we will see the crème de la crème of The Premiership, Serie A, Ligue 1, The Bundesliga and La Liga amongst others pitting their wits against each other for the ultimate trophy in European club soccer. We are now finalizing the quarter-final stage. Among the remaining teams in this year's competition are Internazionale, Juventus, Barcelona, AC Milan, Villarreal, Benfica, Lyon and Arsenal. March features the semi final 1st and 2nd legs of the competition.

Semi final match-ups:

Arsenal/Juventus V Internazionale/Villarreal
Lyon/Milan V Benfica/Barcelona

April 5 - Teams TBD 2:30pm (kick off 2:45pm) (Quarter Finals, 2nd leg)

April 19 - Teams TBD - 2:30pm (kick off 2:45pm) (Semi Finals, 1st leg)

April 26 -Teams TBD - 2:30pm (kick off 2:45pm) (Semi Finals, 2nd leg)

Rugby

The Heineken Cup (LIVE) started in 1995 as a stepping stone between domestic rugby and the international stage. The Heineken Cup involves club rugby teams from Ireland, Wales, Scotland, England, France and Italy. The format is as follows: The six Pool winners and two best placed runners-up will qualify for the Quarter-Finals and will be decided by the following criteria: Four points for a win, two points for a draw (match points). A bonus point will be earned by a team scoring four or more tries and by a team losing by seven or less points. The Pool winner will be the Club with the highest number of match points earned in each Pool. The runners up will be the two second placed Clubs from all six Pools with the next highest number of points. For the Quarter-Final round, the Pool winners will be ranked 1 - 6 in terms of the number of points earned. The runners-up will be ranked 7 and 8. The reigning champions are Toulouse, who are incidentally the only 3 time winners of this competition.

April 2 at 12:30pm - Biarritz v Sale Sharks (Quarter Finals)

April 22 at 11:30am - Teams TBD (Semi-Final 1)

April 23 at 9:00am - Teams TBD (Semi-Final 2)

Under 19 World Cup 2006 (LIVE) - The young guns of world rugby pit their mental and physical whits against one another in a battle for not only national pride but also mini-world dominance. Tune in to find out who will become the next household names in world rugby.

April 5 at 10:00am - South Africa vs. France

April 5 at Noon - Ireland vs. England

April 9 at Noon - Scotland vs. Wales

April 13 at Noon - South Africa vs. England

April 21 at 10:00am - Teams TBD (3rd/4th place play-off)

April 21 at Noon - Teams TBD (FINAL)

Beyond the Abbey

BY SEAN CALLAN

Carney Brothers in "Whistle in the Dark."

Whistle in the Dark at Seanachai Theatre

In the pub, we drank the sub,
We drank it with good cheer.
Now we're on the road again –
God damn and F*** the beer.
Irish navvy ditty 1950s.

As readers who are familiar with Tom Murphy's masterpiece A Whistle in the Dark know, there is not much cheer to accompany the drinking in this piece of realistic theater. Now nearly 50 years old, this extraordinary play-noire still hits in the gut with the force of a steam shovel. It is a pile driver that never stops pounding for its entire duration. Without any let up, there is a continuous feeling that violent fist fights may erupt at any time. Those who like tension love the play because it keeps them on the edge of their seats. Those who desire comic-relief find little to laugh about in its bleak portrayal of Post-World War II life for the Irish in England.

A revival of A Whistle in the Dark is currently underway. It is being staged by the Seanachai Theatre at Victory Gardens, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave as this year's annual production. Directed by Jeff Christian, the play will run on Thursdays through Sundays until May 14.

"We thought about doing this for several years and finally are. There's a very fine cast including three of our own ensemble" said Jacquelyn Flaherty, Seanachai's artistic director. "At its core the play is about the bonds of family. The question is, is there ever a time when these bonds should be broken?" she asked.

A Whistle in the Dark is an intense drama about a rough and tumble expatriate Irish community in Coventry, England in the 1950s. These are economic emigrants. In those days, Ireland could not support its citizenry and many, like the four Carney brothers in the play, had to go abroad. They are living in the home of the eldest Michael and all are experiencing problems. The three younger brothers' difficulties are not with their jobs or even living in England as might be expected. Instead, they are having trouble with another Irish family, the Mulryans. The Carneys and Mulryans are competing for common turf and things have come to a head.

Michael's problems, as things turn out, are not with the rival Mulryans. Instead, they are within his own family. Michael has married Betty a young English girl and tried to distance himself from the brutish activities of his brothers. A pacifist and intellectual, he has little stomach for a pending showdown his brothers are planning with the Mulryans. He barely stands up for his wife whom his brothers terrorize. But, as Michael learns, remaining aloof and remote from family is not easy.

Into this bubbling cauldron come the brothers' father and another brother from Ireland. They arrive in preparation for the fight. As a result, Michael is forced to face his fears, family, frustrations and sense of morality. Following the set-to with the Mulryans, the Carneys then turn on themselves like rabid wolves tearing each other apart.

"Ultimately, the play is more about hope than despair. Unlike most people, the Carneys are clear in what they want. They find their hope in fighting for their family name at any cost" said Flaherty.

Playwright Tom Murphy was born in Tuam, Co. Galway in 1935. He has written more than two dozen produced plays including The Gigli Concert, Bailegangaire, Famine and The Sanctuary Lamp. The overriding theme of his plays parallels the work of philosopher Viktor Frankl as "man's search for soul in a soulless world" and "a search for redemption." Murphy has been compared with Brian Friel, Ireland's other major living playwright. Many conclude that if Friel speaks for Ireland's heart, Murphy speaks for its soul. Murphy's protagonists often must resolve moral dilemmas

A Whistle in the Dark is widely viewed at the archetype for Harold Pinter's play The Homecoming which appeared on the scene three year's later. Pinter's play, though not nearly as violent, resembles the Murphy work. A Whistle in the Dark is Tom Murphy's earliest produced play. It was written when he was only 25 and he submitted it to The Abbey Theatre in Dublin. The Abbey promptly turned its nose up at the work "for all the wrong reasons." The play then premiered at the Theatre Royal, Stratford East, London. There, it was widely acclaimed also "for the wrong reasons." The Irish-as-hooligans was a popular theme in England at that time. Since then, Murphy's work has been staged at The Abbey which produced a festival of his work a decade ago. He now works closely with Ireland's National Theatre. Information and Tickets for the Seanachai Theatre's production may be obtained by calling 773 871 3000.

Discover Ireland the Irish Way

Applications are now being accepted for this summer's study abroad program offered by the Irish Way, a nationally renowned program of the Irish American Cultural Institute that has educated over 3,000 American high school students since 1975. Each summer the IACI sends approximately 100 American students to Ireland for a unique cultural and educational experience. The five-week program is divided into three parts: Education, Home Stay, and Touring. This year the program will take place June 28- July 27, 2006.

The IACI founded the program on the belief that fostering an appreciation of other cultures is an important part of an individual's development. Students will grow to understand the rich heritage and tradition of Ireland, while also experiencing the country's distinct culture face-to-face. The Irish Way is a personal discovery and an experience of a lifetime. It's a lesson in international citizenship.

For detailed information about program dates, prices, and itineraries, please visit www.iaci-usa.org.

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The Chicago area's ranking power duo, Switchback defies easy categorization. Their music's been described as rockabilly, roots, Americana, Celtic, Cajun, blues and bluegrass. Whatever rollicking tunes Marty McCormack and Brian FitzGerald play, Switchback "is a great band who can make two guys sound like eight."

Liz Carroll and John Doyle

FRIDAY APRIL 21
8:00 PM – TICKETS $25

Irish fiddle legend Liz Carroll and guitarist/singer John Doyle return to World Folk Music Company after sold-out concerts last season. Since she astounded the Celtic music world by beating Ireland's best and winning the Senior All-Ireland championship at age 18, Chicago-born Carroll has been enthralling audiences around the globe, and critics have exhausted superlatives: "Brilliant" (New York Times), "Extraordinary" (Washington Post), "Pure magic" (Irish Times). Liz will perform with her favorite musical partner, John Doyle.

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Frankfort Welcomes The Galway Tribes

By Elizabeth Kelly

In early 2005, Niall and his wife, Dorothy O'Neill Freyne, purchased a piece of land and oversaw the design and development of what is now known as The Galway Tribes Restaurant and Pub in Frankfort, Illinois. Their big dream was realized quickly as The Galway Tribes opened its doors to the surrounding community in November 2005.

The restaurant is named after the fourteen tribes of Galway, Ireland. In the late 12th century, these tribes, of Anglo-Norman descent, swept into Galway and managed the merchant trade and eventually gained full control of the city for well over 200 years. (Visit your local library for more details on this story.)

Niall was born in Ireland but raised in New Jersey. Originally, Niall and Dorothy moved here from the East for career opportunities. Now, Chicagoland is home to the Freyne's, and their small piece of the pie has the aura of harmony, community, and family tradition woven into its day-to-day fabric.

The Freyne's pondered long and hard before taking the leap into owning a business where they could follow their gut instincts rather than a corporate guidebook.

Tell us about yourself?

I was born in Salthill, County Galway, just a couple of kilometers west of Galway City. I moved to the States with my family when I was quite young, between seven and eight years of age. I consider the U.S. to be home, but I travel back to Ireland now and then. Dorothy and I went there on our honeymoon.

Tell us about your parents?

My parents are Kieran and Teresa Freyne. They have been married for the past 45 years. My father is from Ballyhaunis, County Mayo and my mother is from Louisburgh, County Mayo.

I must admit, I don't know all of the fine-tuned facts, but I understand that my parents met at some type of social function, a dance. They started dating right away and on a steady basis for almost three to four years. They married in County Mayo then moved to County Galway shortly thereafter, as Dad was accepted into medical school there. I was born in Salthill, just outside the City of Galway.

What brought your family to the U.S.?

Well, Dad was in the process of finishing medical school at National University of Ireland, Galway. He applied to various hospitals to complete his residency, including an U.S. hospital, St. Vincent Catholic Medical Center in New York City. His application was accepted, so we moved to the U.S.

While working to complete his residency in radiology, Dad also eked out a living working as a deckhand for the Circle Line Ferry. When he completed his residency, we moved to New Jersey. This is where I spent the majority of my childhood.

Do you have siblings?

Yes. I am the oldest. My sister, Siobhra (pronounced She-fra), which is Gaelic for princess, was also born in Ireland. My brother Ronan, who is the youngest, was born in New York. Today, Siobhra lives in New Jersey and Ronan lives in Washington D.C.

Where are your parents now?

My father is now a retired physician, which makes it doable for he and my mother to reside part of the year in New Jersey and the other part in Oranmore, County Galway.

Growing up, our parents were quite strict with us and they always hoped I would become a physician like Dad, but I just didn't feel called to that type of work and somehow I ended up in the food and beverage industry!

How did you and your wife Dorothy meet?

Well, after college I moved to Washington D.C. for a job with Meristar/Interstate Hotels & Resorts, as Corporate Director of Food & Beverage Operations. After relocating there, I went out with a group of friends and acquaintances, the day before New Year's Eve. It just so happened that Dorothy was in that group. We met and spoke exclusively with one another throughout the majority of the evening. We formally started dating a week later. We became engaged about a year later.

Ironically enough, we became engaged on St. Patrick's Day, here in Chicago. Dorothy was in Chicago on business and I flew in to be with her. We decided to have dinner at the Everest in downtown Chicago and became engaged. It just happened. It was a mutual marriage proposal. Later that evening, we spent our time calling family and friends to relate the big news, rather than partaking in the St. Patrick's Day holiday festivities. All this happened about five years ago.

Tell us more about your business partner and wife?

Dorothy is originally from the East Coast. Her parents and siblings still reside there. Presently, she is a corporate tax specialist for Ernest & Young and has been with them for nearly 12 years. Amazingly, she manages a part-time position with them as well as all of the accounting and payroll for the restaurant.

Dorothy is American born; yet she has a deep love for all things Irish, all things of her Irish heritage. She is well versed in the music, song and culture of Ireland.

What inspired you to start the restaurant, Galway Tribes?

From a business perspective, growth in the marketplace coupled with the absence of a great Irish restaurant in the immediate area, led us to purchase land and build Galway Tribes in Frankfort.

From a more personal viewpoint, when Dorothy and I first moved to the Lincoln Way community a few years ago, we were working with a relocation specialist, to find a home that was a reasonable commute to downtown Chicago as well as to Northwest Indiana. That's how we first came to discover and make our home within Chicago's southern region. Then on the day of our house closing, which was coincidentally on St. Patrick's Day, we were impacted by the amazing influence of Irish culture and pride of heritage, everywhere. Eventually we started to seriously think about how great it would be to open an elegant Irish restaurant & pub, one in our own community.

Well, a couple of years later, here we are.

I could not have done this project without Dorothy. Her confidence, support, guidance and never ending patience guided my own inspiration to make this happen.

What unique elements does Galway Tribes have to offer the Irish American community?

We pride ourselves on having a restaurant that is not a stereotypical Irish pub. While the design is uniquely Irish, we wanted to stay away from the "Disneyland" designs that seem to have become prevalent over the last few years. We feel that the Tribes has a warm welcoming atmosphere, which caters to a mature clientele, who take pride in their heritage, a clientele who enjoys Irish music, great food and some of the finest Guinness served in the south suburbs. We offer a full circle hospitable atmosphere of dinner, drinks and musical entertainment, as we look to accommodate all gatherings of people, including: families, elders, the lunch hour business folk, as well as the happy hour and late night weekend crowds.

I imagine that you lead by example with this philosophy amongst your staff?

Yes. Frankly, we went through a lot of applications during the initial hiring process, looking for people with a friendly manner about them. I believe you can always train a skill but not a smile or personality.

What I wish to make a solid tradition here, is our manner of "opening the door" for guests when they arrive and depart. In the home environment, it is typical for the host to open the door to greet his/her guest, as a form of warm hospitality. So, why not extend this form of welcome in a restaurant atmosphere? I believe it to be good Irish hospitality. The staff hereunderstands the necessity of this treatment, which I believe is important to the success of Galway Tribes.

> I appreciate being in charge of my own destiny and making my own decisions rather than sending an inquiry for a decision up the corporate flagpole. It really is success or flames.
>
> — Niall Freyne

On that note, my employees are the most important people I have. I take a special interest in who they are. I believe myself to be a tough boss, but I joke as well.

They all are the heart and soul of the restaurant and I appreciate what they do. I take the time to partake in the tasks that I ask of staff, including tending bar and working in the kitchen a few days a week.

How did you come to choose your career field?

I was simply drawn to it. I enjoy the challenge of maintaining constant balance. I love all elements of this work. Now, running my own business, I appreciate being in charge of my own destiny and making my own decisions rather than sending an inquiry for a decision up the corporate flagpole. It really is success or flames.

Hospitality is what I know. I enjoy the fine craic of being in a restaurant. I enjoy the meeting and servicing of the customers, checking-in to make sure the are having a good time. If the customer leaves happy, they will be inclined to return. If I can accomplish this and make a living at the same time, what could be better?

What do you most enjoy doing, in terms of leisure?

I most enjoy spending time with my family, my wife, and my two children.

James is the oldest; he is two and a half years old. Mary Katherine is one and a half years old. Any time spent with them, no matter the activity, is truly great.

As far as leisure activities are concerned, I enjoy billiards and golf; I've been playing them since I was a young boy. I really enjoy golf because it brings on the leisure of laughing out in the fresh air and I get some exercise to boot. Yes, golf makes me laugh. I'm really not that proficient, so I try not to take it too seriously and just have fun with it.

What leisure Irish activities do you most enjoy?

My wife Dorothy and I are very into Irish music and dance. Presently though, we truly don't have the time to go out and see a performance or show, but all in good time.

Interior view of Galway Tribes.

What is your favorite Irish dish?

In terms of the "staples" on Irish menus, I suppose my favorite would be shepherd's pie and fish-n-chips. However, at the Tribes, I enjoy the menu selections that are more in keeping with traditional Irish cooking like the Salthill Sautee, which consists of salmon, cod, shrimp, and scallop, prepared in a cider crème sauce and served with a side of breaded potato cake.

How divine that sounds.

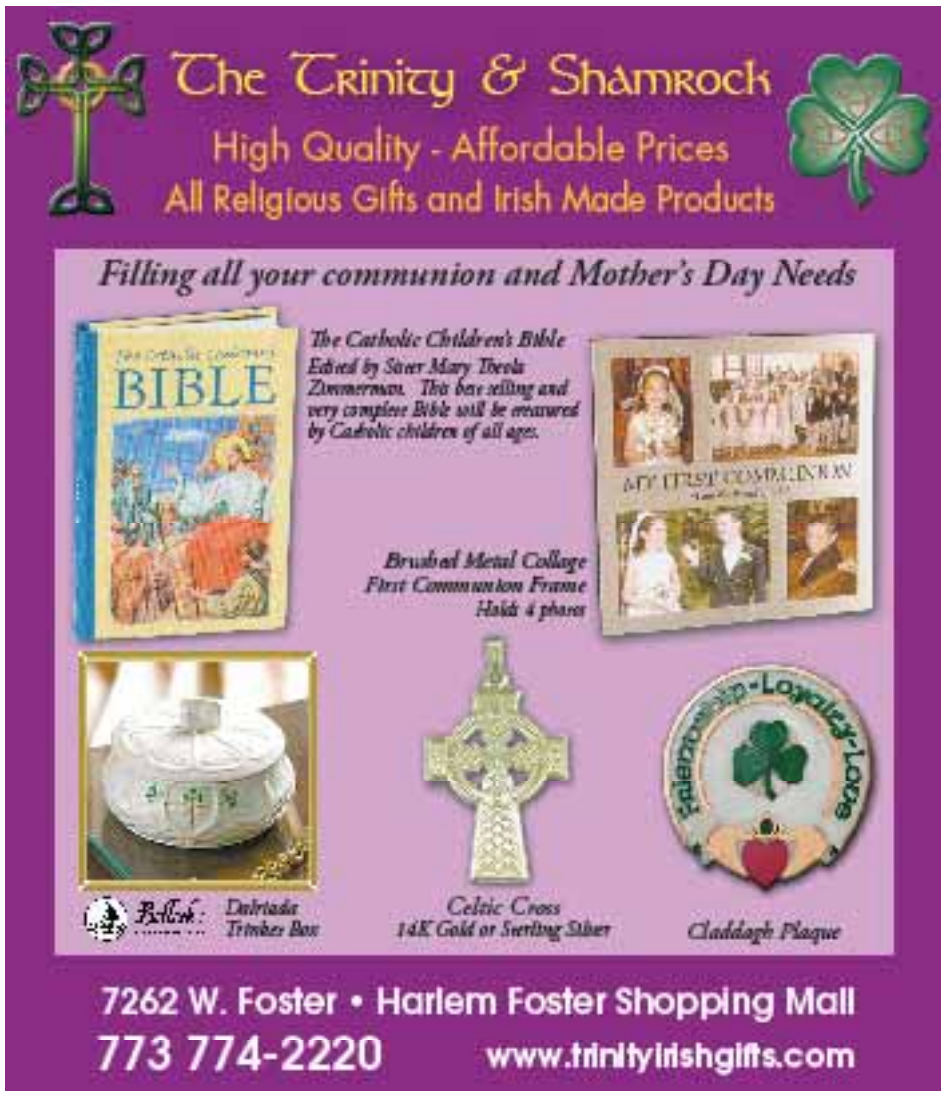
What do you find remarkable about the Irish culture?

I appreciate the love the Irish have for their music and song. Of course music and song are a significant part of any culture.

With regards to Irish music, I do enjoy the flair of Celtic rock, yet for the most part I'm a traditionalist. I enjoy hearing the box accordion and the bodhran drum. Personally, I play the piano a little bit, but I don't play often.

Based on my own experiences, I view Irish music and song as the peaceful powerful force, which brings everyone together. Someone, who might not be in the mood to smile or laugh, suddenly desires to. Irish music and song are the common bond, no matter where in Ireland or in America you might be from. Irish music and song naturally bring us together under the umbrella of our common Celtic heritage.

Galway Tribes is located at 9680 Lincolnway Lane, Frankfort, IL. Phone: 815.464.9881.



Hooliganism

Mike Houlihan

I met Mary Margaret McArdell Carney the day before I married her daughter. Maybe I figured it would be too late at that point for her to talk my bride out of the wedding. I imagined her mom pulling my Mary aside at the rehearsal dinner and saying, "Are you insane?"

Well maybe just a little bit. Lots of folks would opine that the woman who married me must've had something wrong with her noodle. But her mother was as solid as the Rock of Gibraltar.

My dad's pal Al Bayer asked her to dance at the wedding. She was a classy woman in her fifties at the time. We thought it was funny watching Al flirt with her. Al had a few pops and told me it was a good sign for the future bride when the mother is still looking hot.

Margaret was widowed at the age of 43 when her husband, Dr. Ted Carney, died and left her with nine kids to raise. The oldest girl Bridget was just out of high school, just ahead of Kathy, Mary, Patrick, Roberta, Aileen, Erin, seven year old Sean and baby Teddy who was three.

Margaret Carney carried on. She was a nurse and got right to work teaching those kids right from wrong and sending them out into the world. They grew up, got diplomas and jobs and started their own families. They were the Carneys from Ilion, a little town in the foothills of the Mohawk valley in upstate New York. Most of them still live there and visiting them is like paying a visit to the fictional city of Grover's Corners, New Hampshire in the classic play, "Our Town."

I spent years of summer vacations visiting Margaret and the rest of the Carney clan with my wife and then my kids. She warmed up to me over the years and so did the rest of the Carneys eventually. My sons called her Grandma but I just called her Margaret.

Jeff Ollnau, his daughters Jenna and Gillian, and his niece Leah Petrakovitz enjoy part of St. Patrick's Day listening to Velvet Green at Hackney's downtown Chicago location.

She never asked me if I had a job, which I especially liked because most of the time I didn't.

Margaret came to New York City and stayed with us for a couple weeks to help out when my twins were born. She cooked and cleaned and one day I came home and found her scrubbing the grout in the tile of the bathroom floor with an old toothbrush. I asked her if she would put on her nurse's uniform so I could invite people over and they would think I had a maid. She laughed and kept right on scrubbin'.

When I moved my family from New York it meant taking her daughter and grandsons away to the windy city. We knew the distance would be tough but she never beefed about it, just encouraged me to go where the work was. I felt bad about putting so many miles between them even though we continued to visit every summer. We were leaving for the airport one August and the kids and Mary said teary goodbyes while Grandma and I were stoic. For the first time I hugged her and said I love you Margaret.

She blushed and looked at me as if to say, "Of course" and said, "I love you."

I never forgot that moment, like finding a new mother with unconditional love. Margaret shattered all the clichés about mother in laws. Over the years I marveled at her indomitable spirit as she continued to carry on through life's ups and downs.

Every Christmas a huge box would be delivered to our house with all of grandma's presents for the kids and hand made ornaments for our tree.

She became an old lady and lost her oldest son to cancer but never missed mass or her rosary or her nightly wine. She still sent us a check for 75 bucks every Christmas. I'm embarrassed to say I cashed 'em.

Margaret broke her hip a few months ago and joined her husband Ted in heaven on the night before St. Patrick's Day. They must've had a date.

All her kids were around her as she died. It wasn't easy for any of them. My sons drove to upstate New York with me in the Caddy, non-stop to Syracuse, road trip. Once again we were headed to Grandma Carney's. At the wake were dozens of firemen in uniform, friends of Margaret's son Sean, Deputy Chief of the Ilion Fire Department. The ladies of the Court of St. Bridget, the local chapter of the Catholic Daughters, also came to pray with the family. Friends brought bushels of food to Aunt Aileen's house that night and we toasted Margaret and her memory.

After the funeral luncheon we had to get back on the road so we said our goodbyes. Mary's brothers and sisters felt like mine now, closer than we'd ever been before. I guess we have Margaret to thank for that too. This wonderful woman left a legacy of spirit for all of us, an example of how the Carneys carry on.

Irish Repertory of Chicago receives support

Fred and Kay Krehbiel have made a sizeable donation in support of the efforts of Irish Repertory of Chicago. Thanks all around to the Krehbiels and to the efforts of Julie Shea and the fundraising committee. The gift is the largest individual contribution the Irish Rep has ever been given.

Boyle the Kettle

By Tom Boyle

We'll Have A Sup Of Tea

email: boylekettle@yahoo.com

Sex Abuse

102 Dublin priests are "suspected"! 350 victims? Round and round she goes. Where she stops nobody knows.

Irish Government Smear

A secret Irish government report smeared victims of sex abuse at Catholic Church–run orphanages, by branding them dysfunctional and potential pedophiles. The report was submitted in April 1999 to then Minister of Education Michael Martin, Tánaiste Mary Harney, and an adviser to the Attorney General. The report was generated in response to the demand from victims for full public inquiry into their treatment in various institutions. So now, we victimize the victims.

Cardinal George

The Cardinal spoke out against the immigration bill written by James Sensenbrenner (Republican, Wisconsin). He directed his remarks to Senator Richard Durbin. This took place at Old St. Patrick's Church during the Mass on March 11, the 150th St. Patrick's Day Mass since the church was dedicated on Christmas Day, 1856. Catherine O'Connell was sorely missed, no pun intended. Thank God! Catherine is recovering and was able to perform at Symphony Hall on March 17. Her performance as usual was stellar. Cathy Cowan did a great job singing at Old St. Patrick's Church in Catherine's absence. Our Queen Kelly Green and her court, the Parade Committee, and the Shannon Rovers Bagpipe Band added to the high spirits and pageantry. Father Jack Wall delivered an inspirational homily. The traditional breakfast followed.

The Parade

The Irish converged on Columbus Drive at Balboa. The marching units and floats were positioned to step out at the signal. It's an election year, so we had more politicians than usual, a few extra Republicans in the mix. The weather cooperated; 65 degrees with bright sunshine. It must have been a record crowd. Wall to wall people, everywhere you looked.

I was fortunate enough to ride in a new Lincoln Zephyr with our own Olympic Champion, Annette Rodgers Kelly, who won the Olympic Gold in 1932 and 1936.

IAHC

Following the parade, it was off to the Irish American Heritage Center to greet some special visitors from County Kerry, Ireland. The Mayor of Kerry, Theresa Ferris, the daughter of Martin Ferris, Sinn Fein T.D. from North Kerry , Patrick Lynch , John Flynn and his wife Marguerite from Castlegregory where my cousin Patricia and her husband Noel Fitzgerald live . The Kerrymans Association invited them to Chicago .

Ambassador Sheridan

I recently learned that our former consul general, Frank Sheridan, is now Ambassador to Mozambique, in East Africa. Frank and his wife, Rita, were very popular during their stay in Chicago. Dan Casey and Dolores Connolly recently visited the Sheridans in Mozambique.90th Anniversary 1916.

The Rising in 1916 touched the lives of everybody in Ireland. As told to me, the story was that my father, only 17 years old, carried ammunition from Driscoll's Farm to the caves at Clashmealcon near the mouth of the Shannon River, where the IRA men were fighting for their very lives against the Free State Army. He made it in and out under the cover of darkness. The men in the caves were ultimately captured and executed. A monument stands today in the middle of a pasture where almost nobody will ever see it.

In that same era, my father's cousin, Captain Jack Lawlor, of the Ballyheigue unit, IRA, was executed by the Free-Staters in Ballyheigue. The story was that he was stopped on his way home from the village late at night by a Free-State soldier who was very drunk.

Jack took the rifle away from the Free-Stater and knocked him unconscious. The next morning Jack was arrested and executed in the old graveyard, his body thrown into the road in front of the church and left there. You can find this story, although it is told somewhat differently, in a book called The Tragedies of Kerry. My uncle, Terence Boyle--a small, quiet man--was awarded a 1921 Survivors Medal.

They used to dig trenches across the roads to stop the armored cars and trucks from getting through and traveled through the fields at night to harass the Free-Staters. My uncle, Patrick Boyle, gave me Uncle Terry's medal after he passed away on Christmas Day, 1974. I had the medal engraved with his name, and I still have it to this day.

1981 Hunger Strike

I was in Ireland in 1981, I arrived on August 21 and departed September 7. One of my old friends, Dan Grace, who was living with his family in Waterloo, Belguim, met me in Ireland that year. I picked Dan up at the ferry in Dun Laoghaire and we set out to visit many of my relatives. Bobby Sands had died on May 5 in the Maze Prison. Frances Hughes on May 12, Patsy O'Hara on May 21, Ray McCreesh also on May 21,

Joe McDonnell on July 8, Martin Hurson on July 13, Kevin Lynch on August 1, Keiran Doherty on August 2, Thomas McElwee on August 8, and Mickey Devine on August 20, the day before I arrived. Trouble in the North had reached an impasse. The Hunger Strikers would change things forever; they would focus the world's attention on Northern Ireland.

While I was in Waterford City there were Republicans handing out literature. That was the first time I saw the poster showing Margaret Thatcher with vampire fangs. How appropriate!

On Sunday nights at Dick Keane's Public House in Causeway, Co. Kerry, a Republican would come in to sell An Phoblact, the Republican News. I have copies from August 22, August 29, and September 5, 1981. I was told the paper was illegal and you could be arrested just for having it. I realized for the first time that there was no freedom of the press, and the Brits controlled the media. Nobody openly discussed their politics then, but North Kerry was and still is a hotbed of IRA men.

Let's hope by remembering these brave men, we can again focus the world's attention on the Good Friday Agreement and the right of the Irish people to self-determination.

Update - Catherine O'Connell

Catherine has suffered a setback, and by the time you read this she will have had serious neck surgery. At this writing she is in traction. Surgery is scheduled for Tuesday, March 28th. Say a prayer for full recovery.

The Glengarry Bhoys drew big crowds to T.J. Maloney's at the Radisson Hotel in Merrilville, Indiana on St. Patrick's Day weekend.

Appearances

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Cook County Treasurer Maria Pappas (center) presents award for excellence to Bridget Looney (left), host of the Mike O'Connor radio show, and Siobhainn O'Connor, producer of the Irish-audience show. The award was made at a celebration of International Women's Day in Treasurer Pappas' downtown Chicago office. Pappas praised Looney and O'Connor for their work in strengthening the Irish community over the radio.

Irish Books in Review

BY FRANK WEST

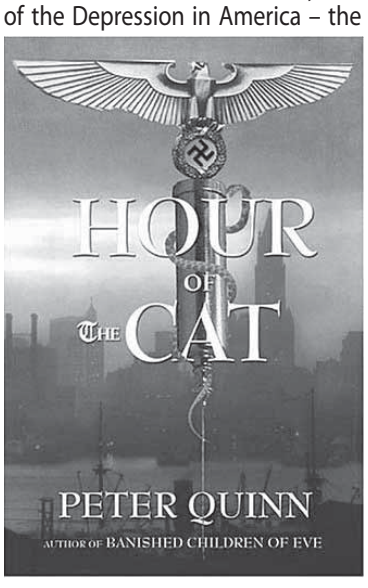
Hour of the Cat

by Peter Quinn. The Overlook Press/212-673-2526, www.overlookpress.com;Woodstock, N.Y., 2005,448 pages, $25.95.

What a pleasure to read this book, its use of language is thrilling. Words are used for their beauty and power.

Do you like an engrossing mystery? Are you intrigued by modern American and European history? Then you'll love reading Hour of the Cat by Peter Quinn.

The book focuses on the years of the Depression in America – the 1930s – and the period of World War II. A fascinating mystery takes place in New York City, and it is strongly influenced by events taking place in Nazi Germany.



The detective is Fintan Dunne. He is a veteran of World War I and a former detective with the NYPD. Dunne is an Irish American who, in my imagination, looks like Jimmy Cagney. Dunne is a highly ethical man who, as a detective, earned a reputation for honesty. This is the main reason he resigned from the police force. He wouldn't adjust his values to the politics of the police force or of the city. He resigned, and became a private investigator. As a private investigator, Dunne's personal bravery, honesty, curiosity, assertiveness and street smarts earn him success. This is during the extremely difficult years of the Depression. The detective is an honest man working in a political and social system that is not always honest.

When thinking of the Irish American detective, think Sam Spade in The Maltese Falcon. Only instead of Humphrey Bogart, Jimmy Cagney is playing the part. I talk about he fictional characters in Hour of the Cat as if they are real persons. The authors skill as a writer makes that possible. Even Frank McCourt recognizes that superb quality when, on the cover, he praises Hour of the Cat: "It's a magic carpet of a book... where you meet a cast of characters so vividly drawn you'll never forget them... settings and characters are so crisply drawn, so detailed, you are drawn inside the book...Peter Quinn's writing [is] spare but passionate, wry but loving. This is a thriller on the highest level... settle back, in a page or two you'll be on the magic carpet."

An example of that vivid writing occurs when Dunne meets a character for the first time. He is keenly aware of her hard beauty. He is intrigued by her, but observant and wary. Behind her on the wall of her apartment: "Above her head, an elaborately framed painting of a beach at night, silver moon penetrating the clouds, shining across sand and angry sea, a pathway of light, looked like a candidate for the wall of some museum or movie lobby, except there was something foreboding about it, threatening, as though a body were to bob to the surface."

There are many historical persons that interact with the fictional characters in Peter Quinn's book: William Donovan, Thomas Dewey, John Foster Dulles, Franklin Roosevelt, Adolph Hitler, Reinhard Heydrich, Admiral Canaris, Albert Speer and Heinrick Himmler. Peter Quinn makes this interaction seamless and quite plausible.

This is some biographical information about Peter Quinn, the author of Hour of the Cat. He is 58 years old and a third generation Irish American. He is the author of the superb, award-winning Banished Children of Eve (1994), about the Irish famine. He was a speech writer for two New York governors and is editorial director for Time Warner. He lives in Hastings, New York, with his wife and teenage son and daughter. His articles have been published in many newspapers, including The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times and The Philadelphia Inquirer. He has appeared in many TV documentaries.

He must have been raised in the same Irish tradition I was. Words were what was important at family gatherings. When the adults told stories, they used vibrant words to show characters or to describe an event. Words were used with arrow-like accuracy. This book is so rich in detail that there are several approaches that could be used for a book review. I chose the approach of words and powerful language to develop characters and scenes.

Hour of the Cat is about life. Life in all its forms, complexity and beauty. The Nazis said there were forms of life that were unworthy to exist. Peter Quinn uses the detective to express his view of life. As he walked on a street in New York City: "He kept looking at the faces...a typical mix-delivery boy, mechanic heading home, swarthy sailor with a plump blonde on his arm, Jew at his newsstand, traffic cop with the red, scoured face, a woman with shapely gams – they passed in anonymous pursuit of ordinary ambitions, sex, food, sleep, fun, the need to bake a buck.

"Life in the ceaseless hustle of a New York evening.

"Busy. Noisy. Horny. Unequal. Unfair. Unfinished.

"Life worthy of life."

These are examples of Quinn's use of memorable language. The quotes in this review are from Hour of the Cat but this powerful quote from his Banished Children of Eve about Lincoln's Civil War crusade to end slavery, has stayed in my mind all these years: "though the Yankees wept and ranted over the sin of slavery, what tears had they shed over Ireland's oppression, the exodus and mass starvation of her children, the destitute women and children left to die in ditches...?" What abolitionist had offered them a single crust of bread? What true friend of humanity had extended them a hand? Or had anything in his heart for them save derision, ridicule, distain? Let nobody lecture him about the negro or the war."

Quinn describes the despair and dismay of the stock market crash and the depression that followed. "The temporary cloud became a permanent gloom. Week after week, it invaded the flickering illusions of the movie house. Amid newsreels of starlets and athletes, statesmen and royalty...the mounting presence of the unemployed and homeless spun into an epic of disasters. It was as though nature and the stock market were controlled by the same hand. [Newsreels showed people's]... bewilderment in a shrug of shoulders, a pathetic smile, eyes water-filled,... the illusion of security washed away... One way or another... the ruin spread, biblical style, across the country."

The carefully observant detective in Hour of the Cat describes a suspicious character: [She] "...appeared fashionably attractive, the way half-a-hundred women on the street did; in the flesh, she was striking. Her face was older... and there was nothing virginal or innocent about it. But her slate-blue eyes were bright, clear, wide. She had soft waves running through her auburn hair which, though perhaps tinted or dyed, was thick and lustrous. Hers was a hard beauty, polished, like marble or jade."

Peter Quinn's Hour of the Cat, is hopeful and optimistic. The book shows us that in life there is beauty to observe. And it clearly shows us that it should be lived fully and beautifully.

Upcoming Irish theater events

Chicago's Irish Americans will enjoy choosing from the many events to be presented in the next few weeks. Here are ten events, and there are probably more.

A Whistle in the Dark by Tom Murphy. Seanachai Theatre Company will present "...this overlooked masterpiece by one of Ireland's greatest living playwrights." I have seen several plays performed by Seanachai, and I also saw this play in Dublin. I strongly recommend it. March 25 to May 14 at Victory Gardens Theater, 2257 N Lincoln Ave, 773-871-3000.

The Devil's Disciple by George Bernard Shaw. Shaw Chicago presents this from March 25 to May 14 at the Ruth Page Center for the Performing Arts, 1016 N Dearborn, 312-409-5605.

The Clearing by Helen Edmundson. An outstanding review of this play was printed in the March issue of IAN. It was written by fellow columnist Sean Callan. It is presented at the Gift Theatre, 4802 N Milwaukee Ave, 773-283-7071.

Love in the Title by Hugh Leonard. Irish Repertory will present this play. "The natural balance between mothers and daughters is turned topsy-turvy... and Hugh Leonard exploits [this] to its full comedic potential." Irish Repertory presents this from May 24 to July 2 at Victory Gardens Theater, 2257 N Lincoln Ave, 773-871-3000.

A Wake in the West by Michael Joe Ginnelly. The play will be presented by St. Patrick's Drama Group from Co. Mayo. "For the laugh of your life...don't miss this hilarious smash hit comedy." April 7 & 8 at the Irish American Heritage Center, 4626 N Knox, 773-282-7035 x30.

Celebrate the centenary of Samuel Beckett's birth. Krapp's Last Tape by Samuel Beckett will be presented by Shapeshifters Theatre Ensemble. This will be on April 14 and 15 at the Irish American Heritage Center, 772-383-7035x30.

Another part of this interesting celebration is Lunch with Gogot. While eating lunch, enjoy a reading of Waiting for Godot. The location is the same but the time is 12:00 pm, 773-282-7035x30.

On Friday, June 16 "...the life and works of James Joyce" will be celebrated with a Bloomsday Dinner called "Rattlin' of the Joists." This will be at the Irish American Heritage Center, 4626 N Knox.

At the same location, but on Saturday, June 17 at 8:00pm The movie Bloom by Sean Walsh will be shown. The movie stars Angeline Ball and Steven Rea, and will be followed by a discussion.

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An Immigrant's Musings

Fr. Michael Leonard

On the first of March the City council of Chicago backed a resolution proposed by Alderman Patrick J. O'Connor and co-sponsored by Aldermen Ed. Burke, Billy Ocasio and George Cardenas. The resolution was passed by a vote of 48 to 0. This was an historic occasion. Chicago has sent an important message to the rest of the nation and for their leadership on this important issue the Mayor and the Council members are to be congratulated.

The Chicago Celts for Immigration Reform led by Chairperson, Billy Lawless worked together with Alderman O'Connor to have this strongly worded motion brought before the City Council. The Irish community is indeed very grateful for their efforts on behalf of the undocumented in this great City.

Following is the text of the resolution passed by the City Council of Chicago on March 1st 2006.

Resolution

Whereas, Historically, Chicago has attracted immigrants from all over the world, making Chicago on of the most ethnically, racially and religiously diverse cities in the world; and

Whereas, Undocumented immigrants contribute to the vitality of the City by filling key roles in its economy, paying taxes, and contributing to its schools, neighborhoods, churches and communities; and

Whereas, On December 16, 2005, the United States House of Representatives passed "The Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005" (H.R 4437). Introduced by Representative F. James Sensenbrenner, H.R. 4438 is a harsh anti-immigration law that would have drastic consequences for immigrants to this country; and

Whereas, H.R. 4437 requires mandatory detention of all immigrants without status; makes "unlawful presence" a crime and an aggravated felony for immigration purposes; denies basic due process protection to legal immigrants, refugees and asylum-seekers; and imposes a burdensome bureaucratic procedure for employment verification on employers; and

Whereas, In contrast, United States Senators Edward Kennedy and John McCain and United States Representatives Jim Kolbe and Luis Gutierrez introduced " The Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005" (S1033 and HR2330) which establishes a more humane and comprehensive plan for immigration reform; and

Whereas, While providing for better security at the U.S border and realistic law enforcement policies, the Kennedy-McCain bill also creates opportunities for immigrants currently living and working in the United States to gain legal status, and permits 400,000 guest workers in low-skill jobs; and

Whereas, The passage of the Kennedy-McCain bill would modernize the national immigration system with a realistic plan for immigration, while still protecting our borders; now, therefore,

Be it resolved, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this 1st day of March, 2006, do hereby urge the United States Senate to defeat The Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005(H.R 4437) when that body considers the legislation later this year, and do hereby urge the President of the United States to veto such Legislation if it is in fact approved by the Senate; and

Be it further resolved, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago do hereby urge the President of the United States and the United States Congress to pass and sign into law The Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005, sponsored by Senators Kennedy and McCain and Representatives Kolbe and Gutierrez; and

Be it further resolved, That copies of this resolution be delivered to the President of the United States, the President pro tempore of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives and each member of the Illinois congressional delegation.

Patrick J.O'Connor, Alderman, 40th Ward

Marches

The weekend of March 10th -12th could prove to have been one of the most memorable and influential in the whole immigration debate to date. Friday saw the largest rally since the anti-Vietnam marches in the 1970's. Over 100,000 people marched peacefully from Ashland/Division to the Daly plaza. It was a wonderful show of support for the undocumented with Irish, Hispanics, Polish and other ethnic groups walking shoulder to shoulder in a common cause. The marchers carried placards calling people to support the McCain/Kennedy bill and asking them to voice their opposition to the Sensenbrenner bill. It was great to have the support of top elected representatives such as Governor Blagojevich, Mayor Daly, Senator Durbin and Congressman Gutierrez. Lets hope that other cities and indeed the nation as a whole will follow Chicago's example and in particular that our elected representatives on Capitol Hill will listen and take positive action to deal with this issue which is not going away.

The St.Patrick's day parades down town and on the south side saw floats sponsored by the Chicago Celts For Immigration Reform. They had a lively crowd of supporters on both days and they are to be applauded for their efforts in support of the undocumented.

Just a thought

A lecturer, when explaining stress management to an audience, raised a glass of water and asked, "How heavy is this glass of water?" Answers called out ranged from 20g to 500g. The lecturer replied, "The absolute weight doesn't matter. It depends on how long you try to hold it. If I hold it for a minute, that's not a problem if I hold it for an hour, I'll have an ache in my right arm. If I hold it for a day, you'll have to call an ambulance. In each case, it's the same weight, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes." He continued, "And that's the way it is with stress management. If we carry our burdens all the time, sooner or later, as the burden becomes increasingly heavy, we won't be able to carry on "As with the glass of water you have to put it down for a while and rest before holding it again. When we're refreshed, we can carry on with the burden." "So, before you return home tonight, put the burden of work down. Don't carry it home. You can pick it up tomorrow. Whatever burdens you're carrying now, let them down for a moment if you can."

So, my friend, why not take a while to just simply RELAX.

Put down anything that may be a burden to you right now. Don't pick it up again until after you've rested a while. Life is short. Enjoy it!

Here are some great ways of dealing with the burdens of life:

* Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them.

* It may be that your sole purpose in life is simply to be kind to others.

* Never put both feet in your mouth at the same time, because then you won't have a leg to stand on.

As always should you have any questions, suggestions or comments, please feel free to contact me at: 312-337-8445 or Cell. 773-677-5341 or

E-mail: siochan@catholic.org

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Hot tips from our resident handicapper for all the races. First race at 1:10p.m. Last race is at approximately 4:30p.m.

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For more information contact Ann Bourke, The Turf Club at Hawthorne Race Course, 708 780 3770. turfclub@hawthorneracecourse.com.

Music By the Lake concerts and workshops

On April 28th and 29th, the Celtic Music Club, UWM's Center for Celtic Studies, UWM's Student Association, and the Irish Fest Foundation will be co-sponsoring Ceol Cois Locha (Music By the Lake), a weekend of Irish traditional music concerts and workshops at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The weekend will feature four internationally acclaimed musicians, two from Ireland and two from Chicago.

Ceol Cois Locha will commence with a concert in Curtin Hall 175 on Friday, April 28th by featured performers Emer Mayock and Donal Siggins. Irish music workshops will be held throughout the day on Saturday, April 29th in the UWM Union. Scheduled to appear and teach: Emer Mayock – Flute, Liz Knowles – Fiddle, Donal Siggins - Guitar/Mandola, Jackie Moran – Bodhrán.

Admission for the concert is $10 and the workshops will cost $35. A package deal of $50 will cover admission to the concert, workshops, and a boxed lunch on Saturday. Contact Jeff Ksiazek of the Celtic Music Club for further details: jksiazek@uwm.edu.
www.uwm.edu/StudentOrg/celticmusicclub/ceolcoislocha.html

Old St Pat Church Lenten & Easter Reflection

The Lenten season offers us time to focus on how we are practicing our faith each year. As a season, Lent will take you from the last days of winter to the lengthening sunlight of spring. As a sacred time, Lent will take you from Ash Wednesday to sundown on Holy Thursday. And as a spiritual tool, Lent wants to take you deeper. Throughout this Lenten season, we encourage everyone to dig deeper and ask, "Where is Lent taking me?" Please join us for the celebrations listed below.

Palm Sunday on April 9 will include a procession and blessing of palms and liturgy of the Passion. Liturgies are at 7 a.m., 8:15 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:15 a.m., 12:45 p.m. and 5 p.m. Liturgies in the church hall: 9:30 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. All Masses include a choir and instrumentalists, except the 7 a.m.

Lenten Reconciliation Service on Tuesday, April 11 at 12:40 p.m. (following the 12:10 p.m. Mass).

Holy Thursday on April 13 will include a 7 p.m. Mass in the church with presider, Rev. Thomas J. Hurley. Advanced reservations are required to attend all Holy Thursday Masses and community dinners. Holy Thursday 7 p.m. Mass locations are as follows: Church Hall, 700 W. Adams, Presider: Rev. John C. Cusick; Frances Xavier Warde School Gymnasium, 120 S. Des Plaines, Presider: Rev. John J. Wall; Frances Xavier Warde School Cafeteria, 120 S. Des Plaines, Presider: Rev. Paul E. Novak; Liturgies in the church hall and the Frances Xavier Warde School gymnasium and cafeteria include a community dinner and require reservations. The cost for dinner is $35/person. Please contact Old St. Patrick's Church at 312.648.1021 for a Reservation Form and return it with payment to the church offices.

Good Friday April 14 includes Sacrament of Reconciliation from 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.; Liturgy of the Passion and Death of our Lord from 12 p.m. and 7 p.m., presider: Rev. John C. Cusick; Stations of the Cross, featuring selections from Pergolesi's Stabat Mater at 3 p.m.; presider: Rev. John J. Wall.

Holy Saturday, April 15: Easter Vigil Liturgy at 8 p.m., presider Rev. Thomas J. Hurley.

Easter Sunday, April 16: Liturgies in the church: 7, 8:15, 9:30, 11:15 a.m. and 12:45 p.m. Liturgies in the church hall: 8:30, 9:45 and 11:30 a.m. Liturgies in the Frances Xavier Warde School cafeteria: 9:45 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. There will not be a 5 p.m. Mass on Easter Sunday. All Masses include a choir, cantors and instrumentalists.

Nursery Service is available in the Frances Xavier Warde School building during the 9:30 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Masses.

Luka Bloom at ICHC

Come to the Hallamor Spring Concert Series #3 and hear Luka Bloom on Saturday, April 15th, at the Irish Cultural and Heritage Center of Wisconsin. Luka Bloom is a solo performer, a skilled guitarist and younger brother of the legendary Christy Moore. He was born in County Kildare and has been touring since the age of 14. He has appeared with groups such as the Pogues, the Hothouse Flowers and the Violent Femmes.

Tickets are $19 in advance or $21 the day of concert. The doors will open at 6:45pm for the opening act at 7:00pm. The show will begin at 8pm. ICHC, 2133 W Wisconsin Ave, Milwaukee, (414) 345-8800 www.ichc.net.

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Larry Kirwan and Black 47 still going strong

by Janna Leyde

Larry Kirwan, lead singer and guitarist of Black 47, arrived in the United States in the early 70's, with some Irish buddies on education visas. However, school was the last thing on his mind: he slept on hotel floors and trailed behind Irish punk rockers. Over the next decade he fell in love with New York City and lead a Rent-like life in the East Village, filled with drugs, sex, music and poverty—all of which are chronicled in his memoir, "Green Suede Shoes."

He went on to form bands of his own, Turner and Kirwan of Wexford and The Major Thinkers, and mingled with the likes of rock critic Lester Bangs and Ric Ocasek from The Cars. In 1989, after a boozy night in an Irish pub, Black 47 was born, and now, just in time for St. Patrick's Day, what some fans regard as "New York's house band," is out with a new release.

"Bittersweet Sixteen," is journey back through Black 47's last 16 years, guided by the band's unique blend of Celtic folk music and rock n' roll, laced with hints of reggae, rap and jazz mixed with Kirwan's politically infused lyrics.

Though the band is fueled on pints of Guinness and pub parties, Black 47 extends beyond the Irish ethos. Kirwan's controversial lyrics send a message about human rights and political-social justice.

"Some people are inherently political and I'm one of those," said Kirwan. "I got into politics, not for the fashion of the time, but because I really wanted to understand people like James Connelly and Bobby Sands."

As a result, Kirwan, now sans the ritual black eyeliner and leather of the 80's, could care less about landing a spot on MTV. According to Kirwan, Black 47's role is "to spice things up and get people thinking," to make the billboard charts. Despite his own achievements with the band, his memoir, his upcoming novel, "Rocking the Bronx," and his successful plays, such as "The Poetry of Stone," Kirwan has never been much for fame.

"I told the band, we're not getting 15 minutes of fame," he said, recalling his reaction to Black 47's first hit "Funky Ceili" in the early 90's. "There will be two to three years of it. We rode it and then it was over and it was nice. We didn't have to answer the phone anymore."

In fact, Kirwan rather dislikes the idea of celebrity, and the hold it now has on his native country and the American mainstream media. A recent trip to Ireland to promote "Green Suede Shoes" found him in a pub with friends, turning down interviews with the Irish media, who were apparently only interested in gossip about his A-list music friends in America.

Today, Kirwan has the weathered look left over from the punk scene of the 80's East Village era. He still wears a now fading, Irish red mop and round spectacles, but looks more like a writer than a rock n' roll legacy in his black jeans and t-shirt.

Today he is also an American family man as well as expatriate rocker, writing songs about terrorism and the war in Iraq. As a business strategy, the band now has fewer New York performances, and devotes 150 nights a year to touring up and down the Eastern Seaboard. But, on select Saturday nights Kirwan takes the stage at Connelly's in Times Square and belts out his controversial lyrics. No matter what stage, Kirwan's lyrics taunt the Bush administration. He openly calls them "a crowd of losers" and challenges its actions in Black 47 songs, such as "Down Town Baghdad Blues."

I wish I was in the land of Giuliani - Instead of takin' heat from Ayatollah Sistani - Don't know what I'm doin', but one thing is clear - Twenty years old, I can kill but I can't buy a beer

Though Kirwan does not agree with sending troops to Iraq, he still has his own way of showing support: Black 47's website encourages anyone to send the band's pirated CDs over to the many fans among the soldiers in fighting in Iraq.

"We have a strong following and the message we send is that we all have to look out for one another," said Kirwan. "You are only as good as the next person down. There will always be people on the bottom to help up, so there will always be a gig for Black 47."

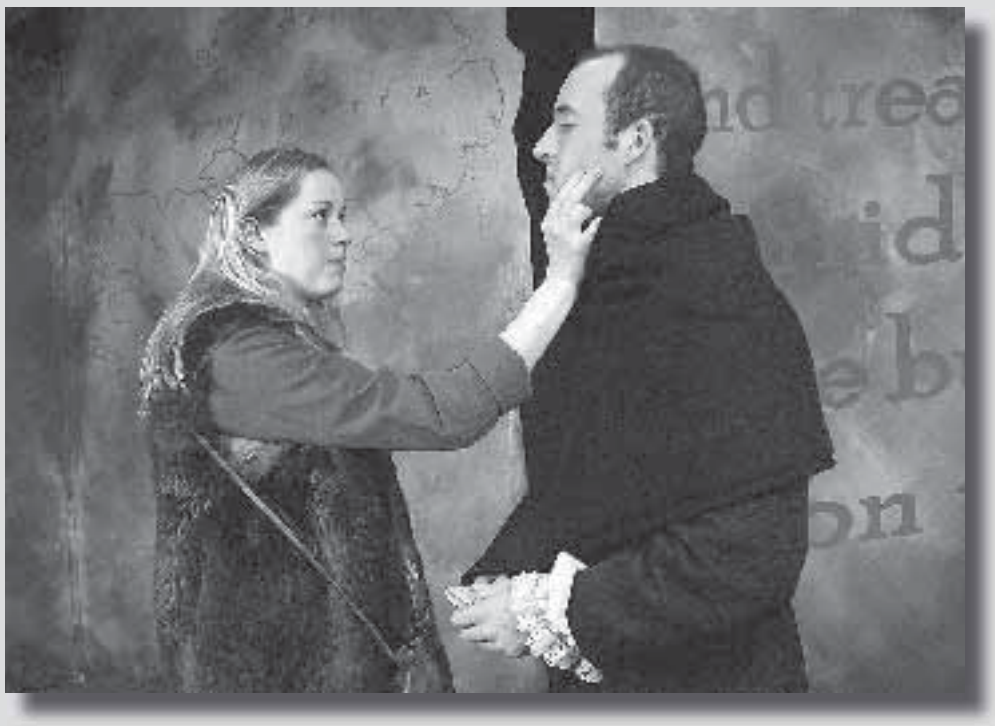
He's proud of Black 47 and proud of every song they have performed. The band never repeats a set, whether at Connelly's or on tour in Ireland, so each show is a new version of the last. Kirwan and the band have no plans to stop entertaining, inspiring and educating the crowds that gather, and they do plan to be home for the Irish holiday—St. Patrick's Day in New York City, where fans can catch two live performances at the Knitting Factory.

Firefighter/EMT exam this spring

The City of Chicago has announced a written entrance exam for the position of Firefighter/EMT this spring, on Thursday, May 25, and Friday, May 26, 2006. Starting salary is $44,838 per year. For applications online go to www.cityofchicago.org/humanresources. Paper applications are available through April 10th at all Chicago Public Library branches. Completed applications must be submitted by April 11th.

Applicants must have reached their 19th birthday by May 31, 2006 and must not be above the age of 35. Applicants must bring a driver's license, have a minimum of a high school diploma (or GED) and be residents in the City of Chicago. There is a $20 application fee. Call (312) 744-4976 to find out about a fee waiver. Applicants who wish to apply for Veteran's Preference must submit a completed request form to the Department of Human Resources by June 2, 2006. Applicants notified for further processing must pass a background investigation, medical examination, drug screen, physical abilities test and other pre-employment procedures.

The Gift Theatre Company presents The Clearing



Madeleine (Lindsay Schmidt) and Robert (Benjamin Montague)

The Gift Theatre Company presents The Clearing by Helen Edmundson and directed by Brendan Donaldson. The cast includes ensemble members Daniel J. Ahlfeld, Alexandra Main, Kenny Mihlfried, Benjamin Montague and John Kelly Connolly and features Lindsay Schmidt, Maria Stevens, and Fredric Stone.

The Clearing is a powerful romance set against the harsh backdrop of Oliver Cromwell's forced relocation and ethnic cleansing of the Irish. An English aristocrat must decide between betraying his English friends and protecting his family or supporting his country and losing his Irish wife and child--forever.

The new Gift Theatre is located at the corner of Lawrence and Milwaukee. The production opened on March 23 and runs through April 30, 2006. Show times are Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays at 8:00pm and Sundays at 3pm. Tickets are $20 on Thursdays, Fridays, and Sundays and $25 on Saturdays.

Call The Gift Theatre Box Office at (773) 283-7071, or go to www.thegifttheatre.org.

Maine man organizes major conference on Northern Ireland Civil Rights

Ben Cote, a young American man from Scarborough, Maine, recently brought together some of the greatest figures of Northern Ireland's Civil Rights Movement at a major conference in Derry, Ireland, entitled "We Shall Overcome: Civil Rights - Past, Present & Future". Ben is a Mitchell scholar and MA candidate in Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Ulster. While studying in Northern Ireland Ben secured a place in the Leadership Office of Mark Durkan of the Nationalist SDLP.

Nobel Peace Prize Laureate John Hume, who brought peace to Northern Ireland, was the keynote speaker. At the special event Mr. Hume highlighted how he was inspired by Martin Luther King and the American Civil Rights Movement.

SDLP Leader Mark Durkan also addressed the packed audience, made up mostly of school students from across the Derry area. Mr Durkan said, "What is most encouraging is the quality of discussion and debate we have heard this morning. Clearly the passion for civil and human rights among Derry's young people is alive and well…It is important that young people today get the opportunity to hear about the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland in the late 60s - the reasons why a civil rights movement was needed and an analysis of its achievements."

(L-R) Northern Ireland's Nobel Peace Prize Laureate John Hume; William Godwin, the student activist who opened the conference. He is an ordained minister and is 20 years old; current Leader of the Nationalist SDLP Mark Durkan.

Blair comment provokes Unionist outrage

British prime minister Tony Blair has provoked unionist fury by comparing Islamist extremists with Protestant killers in Northern Ireland during a speech on global terrorism and religious intolerance. In an impassioned defense of his foreign policy, he insisted Britain's involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan was a clash about civilization rather than between civilizations.

The comparison outraged Ian Paisley Jr, a Democratic Unionist member of the Northern Ireland Assembly who claimed Mr. Blair had ignored decades of republican violence as he focused on one side of Northern Ireland's religious divide. "The Prime Minister's comments singling out Protestantism as a root cause of terrorism is so unbalanced that it not only reveals the true nature of the Prime Minister but also identifies a weakness in his judgments, his character and his understanding," he said.

Gaelic Park Players perform The Able Dealer

The Gaelic Park Players will present The Able Dealer by J MacCarthy, directed by Christina Garrivan. Opening on Friday April 21st, it will run Friday, Saturday and Sunday of the following three weeks. Tickets for the play are $10. Dinner and theatre tickets are available for Sundays only ($20) and prior reservations are required.

The Able Dealer is a heart warming comedy, with a cast of fun and colorful characters. Simon Daley is down on his luck, tired and weary. He is returning home from a spell in the hospital, and is looking forward to the kind generosity of his niece and nephew to see him through the end of his days. To his shock and dismay, Simon discovers his niece and nephew have other plans in mind, but when a whisper that a fortune may be following Simon Daley, everyone suddenly changes their tune! Join us for a night of fun and laughs for all.

The Able Dealer will be performed in the Celtic Room at Gaelic Park, 6119 West 147th St., Oak Forest. Performance Dates: Fridays - Nov 4th, 11th and 18th; Saturdays - Nov 5th, 12th and 19th; Sundays - Nov 6th, 13th and 20th. For reservations and tickets please call Gaelic Park at 708-687-9323.

Additional support and assistance for emigrants

Fine Gael and Labour have published a joint policy document, "Reaching Out: Caring for the Irish Abroad", which commits the alternative government to the implementation of a series of proposals to provide additional support and assistance for Irish emigrants abroad.

Among the key proposals in the document are:

• The establishment of an Agency for the Irish Abroad, along the lines recommended by the Task Force on Policy Regarding Emigrants;

• Support for the principle of emigrant representation in Seanad Eireann for Irish communities;

• The expansion of the remit of RTE to allow it to broadcast to the United Kingdom;

• Early provision of the €34m in official government funding for emigrant services, as recommended by the Task Force;

• The extension to emigrant representative groups of the right to apply for funding from the Dormant Accounts Disbursement Board;

• A negotiated work visa program between Ireland and the U.S., which would be open to undocumented Irish living and working in the United States;

• A political initiative to convey to the U.S. political community and business interests the importance of the Kennedy-McCain Immigration Reform Legislation;

• The provision to all Irish born emigrant pensioners of a right to free travel on public transport in this country;

• Entitlement for returning Irish born emigrant pensioners to full social welfare benefits.

The Labour Party Chief Whip, Emmet Stagg TD said, "There are a number of imaginative and innovative proposals in this document but in many respects the key issue is funding. When the Task Force reported in 2002 it recommended the provision of €34m in official government funding for emigrant services by 2005. In 2006, year after this deadline has passed, the government has allocated just 12m, slightly more than one third of the amount proposed. With sustained economic growth and with tax revenues continuing to exceed expectations, there is no reason why this figure cannot be met."

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Aer Lingus announced 2005 results

Aer Lingus, the National Airline of Ireland announced an operating profit of €72.4 million for 2005 with a total cost increases of €10.8 million despite fuel cost increases of €33.1 million. Passenger numbers were up 15.6% to 8.0 million, 16 new routes were in operation (with another six announced for 2006), and 10 new A320 aircraft were delivered in 2005.

Dermot Mannion, Chief Executive of Aer Lingus commented, "The year under review is one in which the customer has benefited, from significant fare reductions and increased enhancement of our route network. It is telling that these improvements have resulted in an increase of 1 million passengers across our network."

Smell like the country with Green Irish Tweed

Royal perfumer Creed has sent bottles of Creed's renowned Green Irish Tweed fragrance for men to grand marshals of St. Patrick's Day parades in Chicago, New York, Boston, Atlanta and Houston to wear on the special day. They also sent it to Chicago's grand marshal Dan O'Brien, general chairman of the parade committee James T. Sullivan and parade queen Kelly Green.

Inspired by the style of country squires on the emerald isle, Green Irish Tweed was beloved by Cary Grant -- and today's stars of stage, screen, state, sport and commerce. The scent contains sandalwood, ambergris, violet leaves, verbena and iris.

Founded in 1760 and passed from father to son since then, Creed has served more than 10 royal houses and the discerning public for 245 years.

Hizzoner chronicles the life of Richard J. Daley

In celebration of its 25th anniversary, Prop Thtr proudly presents the World Premiere production of Hizzoner, opening March 2 at 3502-4 N. Elston. Penned by founding member Neil Giuntoli, Hizzoner is a personal look at Richard J. Daley - authoritarian politician, family man and dynasty builder, whose life was inextricably bound to Chicago. The show concentrates on the man himself and how he viewed Chicago as his city; how he saw his associates and the population who depended on his leadership. Hizzoner offers up personalities who worked with Daley and some - like Jesse Jackson - with whom he had a crucial crossing of paths. There is also a glimpse into how "Da Mare" may have seen himself.

Prop Thtr Group was established in 1981 by Co-Artistic Director Scott Vehill, Co-Artistic Director Stefan Brun and other Chicago artists, making it the oldest surviving off-loop, non-equity theater in Chicago. Prop Thtr has produced over 100 productions in its history, over 60 of them being world premieres. The theater's focus is on original or newly adapted works taken from literature.

Show times are Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 3 p.m. Tickets are $25 with student and senior discounts available. For tickets call 773-539-7838 or visit www.propthtr.org, www.hizzonertheplay.com or www.ticketweb.com.

Hizzoner, l - r: Gordon Gillespie and Neil Giuntoli. photo: Johnny Knight

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Often times traveling off the beaten track conjures up images of spending your vacation in rustic and uncomfortable surroundings. But on the Shannon Princess II it couldn't be further from the truth. Our luxury barge provides a relaxing and personal way to experience Ireland.

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The Shannon Princess offers cruises from April 22 through October 7. Price per person (double occupancy) is $3500 or an entire boat charter is $33,000. Cruises begin on Sunday and end the following Saturday. Included in the cost is accommodation with private bathroom, all meals, wine, open bar on board, guided sightseeing tours, and transfers to and from meeting point in Dublin.

For additional information on bookings, contact Taylor & O'Neill at 800-653-8808 or visit the Shannon Princess online at www.shannonprincess.com.

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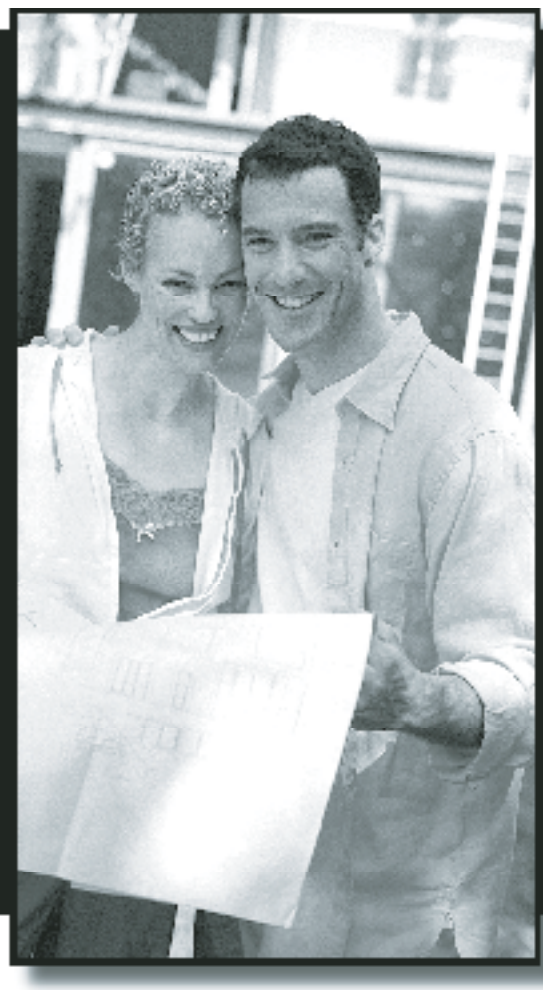

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Tradition In Review

By Bill Margeson

Well, it is time for another CD Slam. Lots for your consideration. Sometimes we go in depth on an album, turn it inside out and have a real listen. Not this time. We are sitting next to a pile of CDs as we write this. We're doin''em all!!

1.) The Essential Chieftains—RCA Victor—This is available everywhere, and you've probably seen the TV ads. It is their best compendium, or retrospective album, by far. Two CDs for the money. The second CD features some of the guest artists over the years---the first is pretty much all Chieftains. The Chieftains are the alpha and omega in the world of Irish trad. Together 40 years, and more. The loss of Derek Bell, and, before him, Martin Fay, is impossible to overcome. This album is all "from the day". It is a treasure, and you should have it. These guys are it. Period. Rating: Four Harps

2.) Raven---John Williams—Compass—We saw John recently at a Chicago-area pub while preparing a major article on him for Irish Music Magazine. This new album is with his musical partner, guitarist Dean Magraw. John is on concertina, button box, low whistles, wooden flute---you name it. The album is not all trad. It is all instrumental, and the trad tracks are standouts---with a couple of the other tunes left up to your taste. John is a brilliant musician---doing the best work of his career after getting out of Solas. A superior musician of taste and style. Rating: 3&1/2 Harps

3.) The Old Simplicity---Niamh Parsons---Green Linnet--- We've been fans of Niamh's singing for years. A great voice. This album has a VERY trad feel. It should. Most of it is! Arrangements very spare, as is the instrumentation. A lot of this is very similar in tempo and ambience. The Niamh fans won't care a bit. It is all about the voice. There are about eight women in Celtic music who cause a buzz with the very fact of a new album, and Niamh is one of them. Really good stuff here. Rating: 3&1/2 Harps

4.) Tobar an Duchais—Brid O'Donohue—Copperplate—This woman is one of the truly great tin whistle players in the world. From Clare, she is a wonder. This album is for the purists among us. All whistle. All solo. Lovely. The album has been out for a while. Never mind. If you are a student of the instrument, this would be a "must have". Best to get it through Alan O'Leary at Copperplate Music out of London. Copperplate is the gold standard for the type of company that cares about the music, and getting it into your hands. A terrific and reliable distributor. Rating: Four Harps

5.) Slide ie—Harmonic Motion—Indie-- Here is why we do these slams, and it is truth time. As the regular reader knows, we get about 500 CDs a year from people wanting us to review them. Impossible of course. Daire Bracken, the fab fiddler from The David Munnelly Band, handed us a copy of this treasure. He also plays with this group. This album is a stunner, and it, too, has been out a while---all in Ireland as far as we know. It is an overpowering piece of work, and is immediately a candidate for Vocal/Instrumental Album of the Year for 2006. VERY, very powerful trad music by superior young musicians. Wow! Just type "Slide Harmonic Motion" or " Slide ie " into Google, and prepare for a discovery. A quartet, we have all the trad instruments you could want on the album, and all the lads lend a hand on the vocals. We found this in the bottom of a neglected drawer, and we have no idea how it got there. Criminal. No matter. We found it, and---now---so have you. This is a brilliant album. Their second. Just get to their web site and get busy! Rating: Four Harps

6.) Inspired—GiveWay---Green Trax--This quartet of very young women is a wonder. This leans a little to the "rocker" end of the trad scale. We don't care. These four are amazing musicians of substance. Out of Scotland. Go to www.greentrax.com. The rest will be easy. As the regular reader knows, we figure Greentrax is the best label in Scotland, and certainly the biggest. Well, now they have a smashing quartet of great talents crankin' 'em out with these four players. If there is a God, this group should be HUGE! The whole package, led by real musicianship. We also hear they are fab in concert. Wow!! What a find!!! Rating: Four Harps

7.) The Unseen Hours—Malinky---Greentrax—Malinky is a VERY talented quintet out of Scotland. Another Greentrax winner. These are Scottish tunes and songs at their best. Very dramatic. Great harmonies---instrumentally and vocally. We love this album. Great mix of tempos, ambiences and instrumental blends. Terrific stuff. Scottish music is really well served here. Lovely. Big Time. Rating 3&1/2 Harps (in this case, McEwans?)

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Alan Lomax: two new releases

The Alan Lomax Archives is proud to announce the release of two more collections taken from the world famous folklorists extensive trove of field recordingsaroundthe world. www.alan-lomax.com

The 1951 Edinburgh People's Festival Ceilidh
Rounder Records ROUN1786
www.rounder.com

The Edinburgh People's Festival Ceilidh was an event that heralded,generated,andvitalized the Scottish Folk Revival of the 1960s. It featured some of the leading lights of the traditional music scene, with the legendary poet, folklorist, and radical Hamish Henderson as master of ceremonies. In August 1951, Alan Lomax was luckily on hand to document this lively and moving concert of Gaelic love songs, piping tunes, and the ballads of Scotland's farmhands and Traveler community.

The jovial, sensual, wicked, romantic lands of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Fielding, Burns, Keats, and Synge sing to us in the Alan Lomax Collection's Folk Songs of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales — classic field recordingsmade from 1939 to 1968. Here are ballads, sea shanties, work songs, love songs, dance tunes, children's songs, and airs from the fighting borderlands that sent so many settlers to the backwoods American South.

Alan Lomax Collection: Gaelic Songs of Scotland: Women at Work in the Western Isles, Rounder Records ROUN1785. www.rounder.com

Work in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland was traditionally gender-based. Women did most of the child-caring, virtually all domestic chores, dairy tasks, carding, spinning and dyeing wool, and waulking (fulling) the cloth after it had been woven. Whatever the chore, it was made lighter by singing. This album illustrates the rich variety of this song, performed with breathtaking beauty and tenderness by women at work.

On a visit to Gaelic Scotland in 1951 Alan Lomax recorded over 250 songs within a few days. Struck by the stark contrast between the Gaels' material poverty and cultural richness, he wrote: "In all my travels, I have never met such genteel, winning, andgenuinely cultured people as these Hebrideans — nor have I heard anywhere folk songs of such fine quality..." His remarkable collection now documents a way of life entirely lost in twenty-first century Scotland.

Raised On Songs and Stories

By Shay Clarke

Well, the mad month of March is over and as usual it was full of parades, corned beef and some amazing Irish festivities. March also marked the beginning of the 2006 Irish festival season for me and I worked festivals in Dallas, West Palm Beach and at our own Irish American Heritage Center.

It's now late March and I am back in Florida for Spring Break with Traci and the kids. Yes, it's good to feel the sun again. I am scribbling by the pool, late for my deadline as usual and looking forward to the Irish festival season that lies ahead……lots more music to come.

It used to be, that because of St. Patrick's Day (which is now a season) everybody was Irish'd out till at least Memorial Day Weekend, but not anymore. The Irish jiggernaut rolls on with some great events and concerts during April and May.

North Texas Irish Festival Dallas March 3-5

The Dallas Irish Festival has been presented each year by the Southwest Celtic Music Association and next year is their 25th anniversary. It is a large festival held at the Fair Park right beside the Cotton Bowl and has both indoor and outdoor entertainment. Seven stages run an amazing array of Celtic bands, national, international, and regional. Headliners this year included Eileen Ivers, The Makem Brothers, Aoife Clancy, Robbie O'Connell, Bohola, Brother and John Williams, along with dozens of talented traditional folk and Celtic bands from the Southwest. Bands like Jiggernaut, The Killdares, Beyond the Pale and Amberhawk were all in top form. Beth Patterson who is an amazing bouzouki player blew me away, but my big discovery at this festival was Sara Dinan. Sara Dinan has the most amazing voice that I have heard in years and I will review her new album in next months column. I will be playing it on Blarney on the Air……Monday nights from 7 – 9 on WDCB, 90.0 FM. If you are outside the Chicagoland listening area you can get it live online at WDCB.org

Anyway, I digress. Somebody must bring Sara Dinan's band to Chicago and Barleyjuice, you remember I told you last year about this amazing Irish band from Philadelphia……. they must also play at some Midwest Irish events. You promoters and festival organizers, take note. These great bands will make their mark. Perhaps I should bring them in myself.

The North Texas Irish Festival in Dallas is a great way to spend the first weekend in March and is a credit to the Southwest Celtic Music Association. Great venue, great music and grand people…..C'mon y'all to their 25th anniversary next year. For more information www.scmatx.org

West Palm Beach Irish Festival March 11-12

I have been returning to the West Palm Beach Irish Festival for nearly 15 years and even though it is a relatively small festival, main stage and pub tent, it is one of the most beautiful festival settings in the USA.

It is held at the Meyer Amphitheater on Flagler in the new downtown West Palm Beach. The park is perfect for this event with palm trees and huge colorful flowerbeds all surrounding the main stage.

Over the years I have seen many of my favorite Irish bands on the main stage and this year was no exception. The Dublin City Ramblers have been around for years, the line up has changed many times but the songs remain the same, they are still true – blues and rank up there among my favorite all time bands.

Noel Kingston, always entertaining also doubled as Master of Ceremonies and Dublin comic Shaun Connors cracked everybody up with his wit. The Prodigals were awesome and Chicago's U2 tribute band Elevation were also there. I never saw their whole show before and I was surprised that I enjoyed them so much. I could close my eyes and pretend I was back in Slane or in Croke Park at the real thing. I have never been a fan of tribute bands but these guys are brilliant.

The tragic and sudden death of Derek Warfield's wife the previous week meant that we had no Wolfe Tones and we send our condolences to Derek and his family. The huge crowd at Sundays Gaelic Mass prayed for her and for the speedy recovery of Hal Roche who took ill in Chicago on Saturday night and could not travel to the West Palm Beach festival.

Black 47 were there and again I always enjoy their performance and my chats with their leader and front man Larry Kirwan, he's a great guy, gifted and brilliant and I will also be reviewing their new album in next months column. I am sure we will be seeing them soon at Chicago's Gaelic Park Festival and at many other events this summer.

Other bands starring were West of Galway, Potato Famine, Celt and Tipsy Laird. I enjoyed myself at the West Palm Beach Irish festival and even though the numbers were down a bit and it has seen better days I am sure it will rise again.

Irish American Heritage Center March 11 - March 17

While I was working West Palm Beach, Traci, the missus and Conor were at the Heritage Center, and I was there myself on St. Patrick's Day. It was great to be back on home turf and I was delighted to see our many friends at the Center. It was my first time at the Center since the new library opened last Fall and I was amazed by it…..it is nothing short of…….words fail me. You must see it for yourself and all credit goes to the hard working volunteers fundraising organizers and the determined leadership of this fine organization which brings me nicely to John Daly, the newly appointed executive director of the Center. We wish John great success in his new position. John is a smart and savvy Cork man, whose vision and direction should make a real difference to the future of the Center. "Yer man on the other page" Bill Margeson tells me that John is also a very talented fiddle player….. and of course, he should know.

Coming up Soon

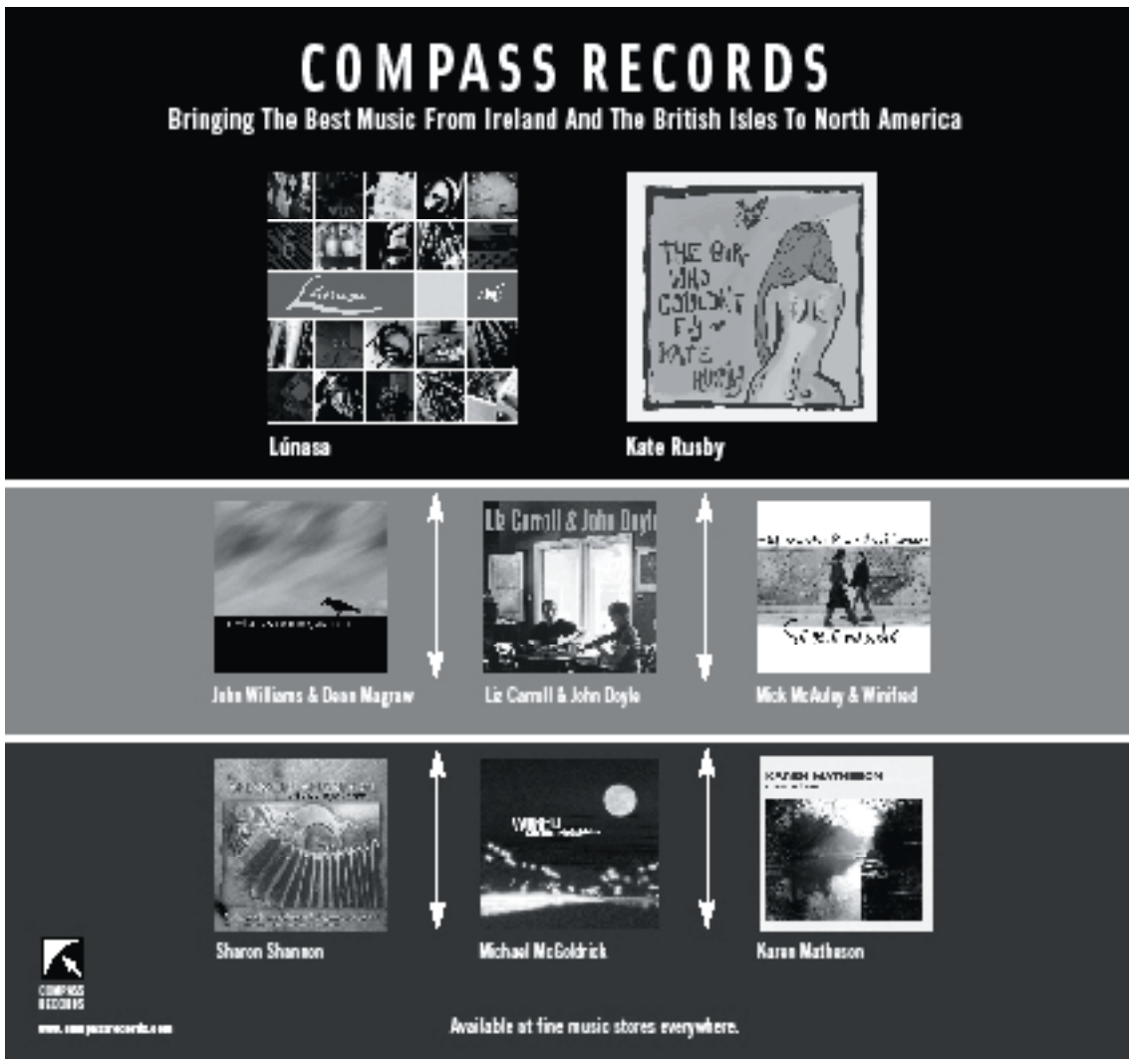
Luka Bloom will be in Chicago's Gunther Murphy's on April 14 to support his new album Innocent. Show starts 8pm tickets $30

Later in the month the Southern Illinois Irish Music Festival takes place in Carbondale, Illinois.

Bittersweet Sixteen by Black 47

www.amazon.com

Bittersweet Sixteen is a 16 track retrospective of Black 47's recording career from early 1990 to the present. Black 47 is recognized as the premier Irish-American rock group who paved the way for the current Irish punk/roots explosion. This CD is full of fan and live favorites previously unavailable including unreleased tracks from their first recording session and two new recordings, and the centerpiece features a Vietnam/Iraq War trilogy that demonstrates Black 47's ongoing political commitment. The CD is capped by six songs from the band's no-longer-available major label albums that were culled from a fabled, long lost live studio recording of K-Rock's Vin Scelsa Show much bootlegged over the years, but now re-mastered and restored to pristine condition. Bittersweet Sixteen is an excellent introduction for the newcomer but also a must-have for the avid Black 47 fan who has appreciated the band's distinct originality and uncompromising political stance down through the last sixteen years.



Chicago Stockyard Kilty Band marks 85th anniversary

After the green dye fades from the Chicago River and south Western Ave has recovered, the Stockyard Kilty Band (S.Y.K.B.) will have just begun to kick off their 2006 celebrations as they prepare for the 85th anniversary of the band's founding this month.

On Saturday, April 8th, 2006, the band's 85th anniversary party will be at the popular entertainment complex 115 Bourbon Street, located at 3359 West 115th St in Merrionette Park, IL, from 5pm to 9pm. Performances include the Ploughboys, the Dennehy Irish Dancers and the Thistle and Heather Highland Dancers. Admission is $20 and $5 for those under the age of 13.

The band was formed in 1921 by brothers Robert and James Sim, natives and veterans of World War I. After arriving in Chicago the brothers decided to organize "the British Legion Pipe Band". The band's performance the following year at the Decoration Day Parade down Michigan Ave was literally the first step of a long march that continues today.

When newly chartered Chicago Stock Yard American Legion Post was seeking a band unit, the Sims' outfit became affiliated in 1926, under the new name of the Chicago Stockyard Kilty Band.

Eventually, the band made its home in the Stock Yard Inn where it was given a dedicated practice hall. Playing there and at the International Amphitheater, historic performances also included the Century of Progress World's Fair in 1933, the 1956 Democratic National Convention, the Chicago Bears vs. Green Bay Packers during the 1958 season, and marching down Michigan Ave to welcome Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip of the Great Britain in 1959.

The proceeds of the 85th anniversary party will benefit the band's upcoming travels to Scotland in August this year. The band boasts over fifty members with a dozen students taking music lessons. Contact Matt McKee, Pipe Major at (708) 229-1253 or pipemajor@sykb.com and visit the band's website www.sykb.com.

Gaelic Park DVD for sale

The DVD Chicago Gaelic Park – Celebrating 25 years 1980-2005 is available in the Gaelic Park office for $15.00. The DVD begins simply, showing the bare land prior to any work and continues on to show the various stages of construction. You will be amazed at the different people in this film (and see faces of some who have passed away over the years). The DVD also shows the many women who were there to feed the men and help everyone along the way. It continues through the years as the buildings were changed, showing the Dedication celebration and various other events held at Gaelic Park. Manager Marian Ryan compiled all of the information, film and pictures that she obtained from Kathleen Twomey, Mickey Rahilly, Margaret Conway, Mary O'Connor, Eamon Malone, Tom Boylem, Neil Gallagher and others. Chicago Gaelic Park, 6119 West 147th St, Oak Forest, (708) 687-9323 www.cgp-chicago.org.

Candlelight bowling dinner party

Come join the Chicago Celtic Youth Gaelic Football Club for a fun night at their 2nd Annual Candlelight Bowl & Dinner, Saturday, April 22, 2006, at Mont Clare Lanes, 2957 N Harlem Ave, Elmwood Park, IL. Check-in is at 6:30pm, the full sit-down dinner at 7:00pm, three games of bowling (shoes included), dancing to a DJ until 1:00am, a silent auction, raffles and more! You must be 18 years or older.

Tickets are $37.50 each. For more information or to get your tickets, please call the Candlelight Bowl & Dinner Co-Chairs Sheila Baker (847) 825-1864 or Norb Kosinski (847) 823-8726. The ticket order form is also available on www.chicagocelticyouth.com.

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IAHC to host Irish Drama Group's A Wake In The West

The Irish American Heritage Center is proud to host The St. Patrick's Drama Group from Westport, Co. Mayo, for a two-night run of its highly acclaimed production of A Wake in the West. The comedy takes place at a wake in a cottage on the shores of Clew Bay, Co. Mayo, in the early 1960s. But this wake is like no other with hilarious comedy created by those in attendance; even the "corpse" gets in on the comedy act with a "performance" that has to be seen to be believed.

Written in 1990 by Mayo playwright, Michael Joe Ginnelly of Mulranny, A Wake In The West has been described as ".....the best laughter-filled two hours you are ever likely to enjoy."

The St. Patrick's Drama Group is excited about their forthcoming week-long visit to Chicago because all 25 of the cast and crew have family relatives or friends in the Chicagoland area.

A Wake In The West runs Friday and Saturday, April 7 and 8 at 8 pm. Tickets are $15 for general admission and $10 for IAHC members and seniors. To purchase tickets, call the IAHC at 773-282-7035, ext. 13.

The Irish American Heritage Center, 4626 North Knox, fosters the practice, study, and celebration of Irish, Celtic, and Irish-American cultural traditions. Membership in the Center is open to anyone with an interest in these traditions. The IAHC houses a 650-seat theatre/concert hall, auditorium, a library, an authentic Irish pub, a Social Center, a museum, dance/music studios and meeting rooms. www.irishamhc.com.

Samuel Beckett Centenary Celebration

Signal Ensemble Theatre's version of Waiting for Godot, which will be performed during IAHC's Beckett festival.

Shapeshifters Theatre at the Irish American Heritage Center is proud to host a series of performances honoring the 100th anniversary of Samuel Beckett's birth. Samuel Beckett (1906-1989) was an Irish playwright, novelist and poet who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1969 and is considered one of the twentieth century's most original and important writers.

On Saturday, April 15 at noon, Signal Ensemble Theater will perform a staged reading of its Jeff Recommended and Chicago Reader Recommended performance of Waiting for Godot. Widely acclaimed as a seminal masterwork of the 20th century, Waiting for Godot is a farce that creates a unique blend of comedy, high wit and sadness in a funny yet heartbreaking image of man's fate. The reading will take place in the Fifth Province Pub and includes lunch. Tickets are $15 for the general public and $10 for Center members and seniors and includes lunch and one beverage.

On Friday, April 14 and Saturday, April 15, both at 8pm, Beckett's most autobiographical work, Krapp's Last Tape will be performed by actor Michael Martin and directed by Beau O'Reilly. Award-winning director O'Reilly is the co-founder of the Curious Theater Branch. As a special treat, there will also be a rare performance of one of Beckett's mimes, Act Without Words II. Tickets are $15 for the general public and $10 for IAHC members and seniors. 773-282-7035, or visit www.irishamhc.com.

Cast of A Wake in the West hosted by IAHC

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Swimming Upstream

By Charles Brady

I have to admit, there's no better way to start the day than by hearing that Bertie Ahern, High King of Ireland, has given us a warning, if you don't mind, that in the wake of President Bush's visit to Shannon Airport, we may now consider ourselves a target for Bin Laden and his mates.

Ireland has changed so much. As actor John Hurt recently pointed out, he has left the country that has been his home for the last twenty years because, where it was once a land in which he could drop into a bar to discuss theatre, cinema, the arts or whatever you're having yourself, we now have discussions about property and which country our second home will be in.

But back to those words of wisdom from our venerated head of Government:

Dear Bertie, did it never dawn on you that it wasn't a great idea to let American Servicemen, God love them, use our country as a stop- over point on the way to Hell? Didn't you ever consider that it just might be inviting retribution from a certain group of lunatics? And the funny thing is, if you had only asked us we would probably have said yes. Certainly, if it's a toss of the coin between a friendly bunch of young Americans (as those I have talked to at Shannon are) wishing you "a nice day" or a humourless crowd of guys with towels wrapped around their heads, I'll always go with the Americans. If there are people in this world who want to kill you because you have drawn a few cartoons while they are permitted to denigrate us as the Great Satan, then we should be laughing at the guys with the towels--- long and hard. But for Heaven's sake, isn't Ireland supposed to be a neutral country?

Still, can any country now claim to be neutral? We are involved in an undeclared war, the parameters for which were set down by the opposing side many years ago. With all due respect to Muslims and the Koran, if you don't like our decadent Western ways, that's too bad. Clear off and live the life of Islam somewhere else. After all, we can't take a bible into most Muslim countries, so perhaps you shouldn't have the gall to tell us how you intend to behave in our country. I am not picking specifically on any group. In my opinion very few on either side of the fence have emerged with any dignity from the ongoing horror of full- scale war being fought in the opening years of the 21st Century.

It would make me a very happy little person if someone would take Bush, Chaney, Rumsfeld, Blair (and his awful wife) and drop them from an extremely high height into the deepest crater in Iraq. I think that it would be very instructive to see what this rag- tag bunch of dangerous clowns, who have never been to war, make of that.

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"Chicago's Best Kept Secret!"

IAHC to host mezzo soprano Jennifer Lennon

The Irish American Heritage Center, along with the University of Illinois at Chicago, is proud to present a free spring recital, Les Printemps, by Mezzo Soprano and Celtic vocalist, Jennifer Lennon on Saturday, April 15 at 4pm at the Irish American Heritage Center. The Irish American Heritage Center is located at 4626 North Knox Avenue, Chicago. Jennifer Lennon, 23, is a Vocal Performance major at UIC. She lives in Jefferson Park.

The free recital will feature traditional Irish airs, works by Bach, Mozart, Tosti, Bizet and more. Special guests include Pléráca, Sydelle Bautista and accompanist, Irena Kadukova. For more information on Les Printemps, call the IAHC at 773-282-7035, ext. 10.

IAHC to host new children's choir

The Irish American Heritage Center is proud to announce the Legacy of Erin Children's Choir.

Boys and girls ages 8-13 (3-8 grade) can join the group, learn and perform Irish music throughout Chicago and make new friends. Rehearsals will take place at the Irish American Heritage Center at 4626 North Knox Avenue. Tuition is $75 per quarter (12 weeks) for year-long program and includes instruction, performances and a tee shirt.

Parents wishing to sign children up for the choir should call Director Chuck Kessell, who is also Director of the Irish Heritage Singers at 773-858-5325 or e-mail: perc55@juno.com or e-mail Assistant Director, Mary Grimes at mgk_88@hotmail.com.

For more information about IAHC, call 773-282-7035, or visit www.irishamhc.com.

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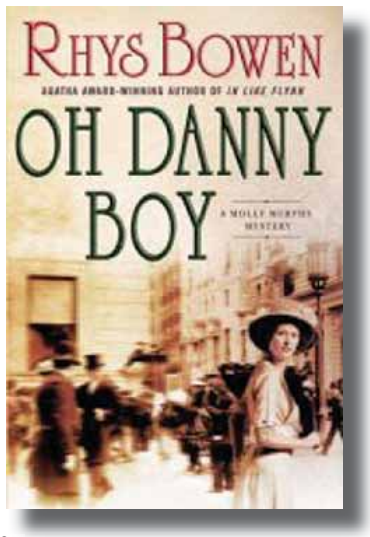
Oh Danny Boy: A Molly Murphy Mystery

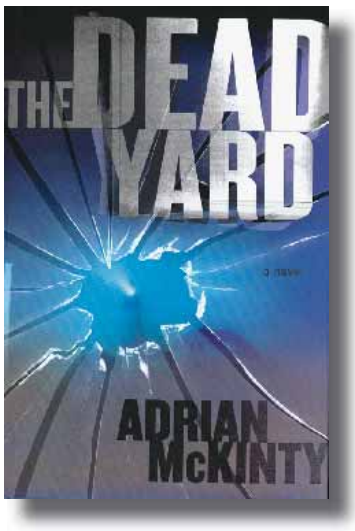
by Rhys Bowen St. Martin's Minotaur; $23.95; ISBN 0-312-32817-6 www.amazon.com



Rhys Bowen brings turn-of-the-centuryNew York City to life as Molly, desperately trying to make ends meet as a private investigator, tries to free her ex-love-interest from felonious charges. While he rots in the Tombs, Molly also finds herself drawn into a case of a serial killer who's murdering prostitutes. Ryhs Bowen's wonderful characters reflect the different ethnicities and social whirlpool of New York City in the early 1900s. Born in England, Rhys Bowen now lives in San Francisco.

The Dead Yard

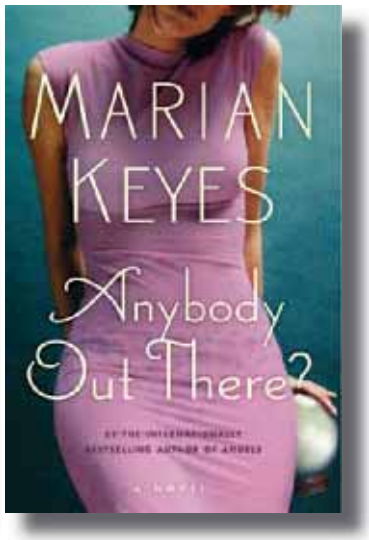
by Adrian McKinty, Scribner; $25.00; ISBN 0-7432-6643-9 www.amazon.com



Michael Forsythe, McKinty's most (in)famous character, istougher, smarter, and more charismatic than ever. Set in Spain, Forsythe finds himself in the middle of huge riots between Dublin's Shamrock Rovers and London's Millwall, is picked up by undercover cops and thrown into jail. In exchange for his freedom Forsythe agrees to infiltrate an IRA sleeper cell in the United States. Full of sex, alcohol, guns, beautiful scenery and cringe-inducing murdersm, Adrian McKinty has yet again crafted a gorgeously written novel about not-so-gorgeous things. Adrian McKinty grew up in Carrickfergus, Northern Ireland, when terrorism in Ulster was at its height. Educated at Oxford University, he then immigrated to New York City. Since then he has played semi-professional rugby in Jerusalem and coached the Jerusalem Lions, and currently teaches English and Civics at a high school in Denver.

Anybody Out There?

by Marian Keyes HarperCollinsPublishers; ISBN 0060731303 www.amazon.com



Embracing the harsh reality of loss and the hopeful possibility of a spiritual world, Anna Walsh finds her self physically and emotionally scarred by the car accident that took her husband's life. Far deeper than the average novella, Anybody Out There? explores the most intense of human emotions throughout a cast of full-bodied characters. It is a heart-rending tale of grief, anger, life and love written with the same dark sensitivity and wit for which Marian is best known.

Marian Keyes began writing in 1993 and is the author of seven international bestselling novels and two essay and short story collections. A household name in the UK, her books are published in 35 countries, translated into over 30 languages and are bestsellers in every country published. Having lived in London for ten years, Keyes returned to her native Ireland where she lives with her husband.

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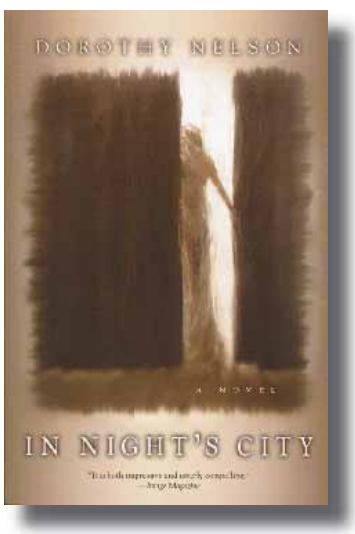
In Night's City

by Dorothy Nelson
Dalkey Archive Press; $11.95; ISBN 1-56478-418-5 www.centerforbookculture.org/dalkey

Beautifully written and remarkably powerful, In Night's City extends the tradition of the lyrical, impressionistic Irish novel, turning it to the hard-edged story of two women's attempt to escape a terrifying past. On the night of a father's death, two women look back at his overwhelming cruelty and ahead to their freedom from him. Will they accept new possibilities or conform to old values?

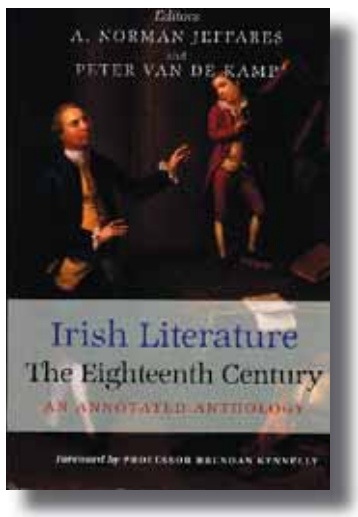


Dorothy Nelson was born in Bray, Co. Wicklow, and now lives in Dun Laoghaire. In Night's City won the Rooney Prize and was awarded an Irish Arts Council Bursary.

Irish Literature in the Eighteenth Century; An Annotated Anthology

Edited by A. Norman Jeffares and Peter Van de Kamp
Irish Academic Press, paperback

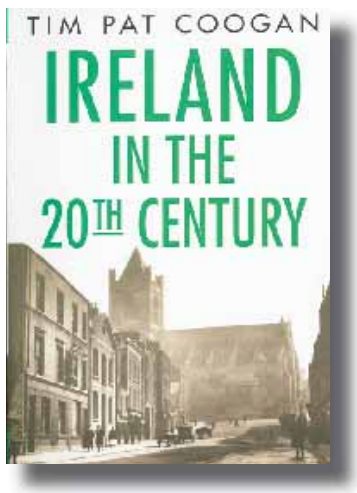
$37.50, ISBN 0-7165-2804-5
http://www.irishacademicusa.com/acatalog/Irish_Literature.html



Irish Literature in the Eighteenth Century is the only publication in print that provides examples of work from the leading literary figures of the eighteenth century. It is a thorough yet accessible anthology that will be essential reading for all students of Irish literature.

Ireland in the 20th Century

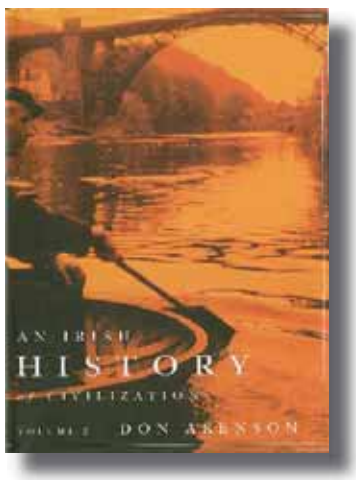
by Tim Pat Coogan
Trade Paperback; $24.95; ISBN 1-4039-6842-X www.amazon.com



Though small in size compared to other countries, Ireland has provided the world with one of the most intriguing and complex historical narratives of our time. And for Ireland, the twentieth century was a time of both its greatest triumphs and some of its greatest tragedies. The country began the century still ravaged by memories of the famine and was hurled into a period racked by revolution, partition and civil conflict. As it struggled for independence from the British crown, Ireland was witness to such towering figures as Michael Collins and Eamon de Valera, a well as events like the Easter Rising of 1916, Collins' assassination, and the growth of the IRA. Through all its troubles and triumphs in the twentieth century, Ireland continues to fascinate and inspire and no one is better equipped to write about it than Tim Pat Coogan. He is one of the best known journalists and historians in Ireland. He lives in Dublin.

An Irish History of Civilization: Volumes 1 & 2

By Don Akenson McGill-Queen's University Press; $34.95 each; 0-7735-2890-3 & 0-7735-2891-1
www.amazon.com



In a daring genre-breaking work, Akenson fuses history and fiction in an iconoclastic chronicle of civilization through Irish eyes. An Irish History of Civilization is about the Irish at home and abroad, the great and the small, the noble and depraved, the wise and the foolish. Akenson follows his people on their odyssey around the globe in a story like no other, the lines between history and fiction lost in the mists of Irish time.

Don Akenson is considered the world's foremost scholar of the Irish diaspora. He is a past recipient of the Grawemeyer Award and the Guggenheim Fellowship. Akenson teaches history at Queen's University in Ontario, Canada and is Honorary Professor of Irish and Scottish Studies at the University of Aberdeen. He currently lives in Kingston, Ontario.

Kevin Murphy Takes on the Father of Lies

by M.J. Smith
$10.95; ISBN 09765066-0-2
Available through Irish Books and Media, Baker & Taylor Books, Amazon.com, BarnsandNoble.com, and local bookstores nationwide.

Kevin Murphy, an adventurous teenage Irish-American lad, set out to explore his family history, but found his life turned topsy-turvy upon his ill-fated encounter with the terrifying leader of the Shadow World, the Father of Lies. Thus begins the coming of age journey for Kevin Murphy, the fictional lead character in a new fantasy series authored by M.J. Smith, himself an Irish-American who was raised on Irish folklore and legend.

As a young boy, Smith was brought up on fanciful Irish tales told by his mother and grandmother, and the intrigue of those stories stayed with him through his life, as did the storytelling itself. The fantasy and adventure are pure entertainment, but what separates the Kevin Murphy books from the rest of the pack are the real legends, geography and characters in each of the countries Kevin Murphy visits.

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How to market your book

The next meeting of the Authors Marketing Group will be on Thursday April 6th at 7:00pm at the Woodridge Public Library. Networking time begins at 6:45pm. Sharon Weber and Marcia Mackenbrock, two local authors, will discuss how to market a non-fiction picture book. Anyone contemplating writing a book, interested in learning about the aspects of marketing a published book or the difficulties encountered once the book is published can attend.

All the group's meetings and parking are free to the general public. The library is located north of 75th Street in Woodridge in the Town Centre, near the U.S. Post Office, police station, and village hall. More information is available at http://www.authorsmarketinggroup.org.

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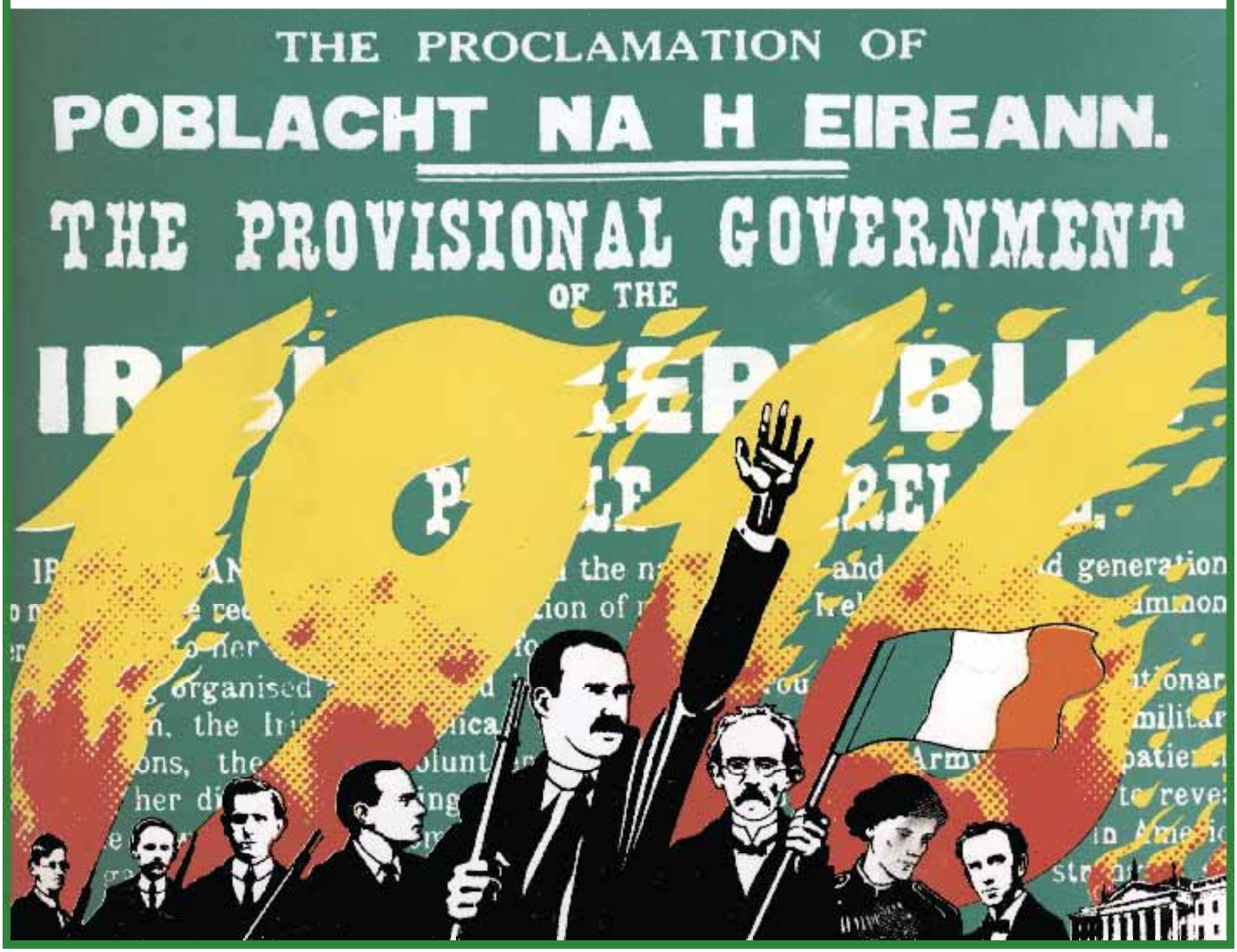

diy Ireland

a planning and resources guide for the perfect Irish vacation

do it yourself – make it your own style and save!

This month The American-Irish Media Group is introducing a brand new feature to its pages, "Do it Yourself Ireland." it is designed to be a friendly resource for our many readers who travel to Ireland for vacations and for business. It contains listings of Bed and Breakfast accommodations, small and large hotels and homes that can be rented. Also included are other useful tidbits, car rentals, websites, travel agents and more. We are very excited about "Do It Yourself Ireland".

Over the next 12 months the section will expand considerably adding to its value as a resource to you, our readers. "Do It Yourself" Ireland will also be published in all six of our sister papers in the Irish American Media Group. They are The Irish Herald (Southern California edition), The Chicago Irish American News, The Boston Irish Emigrant, The New York Irish Emigrant, The Philadelphia Irish Edition and The Minnesota Irish Gazette. Conservatively, the group has a combined monthly readership well in excess of 300,000. So for the first time ever, businesses involved in looking after American visitors to Ireland can showcase their offerings from coast to coast to the entire Irish American Community - a winning situation for everyone.

As we move forward, we will also be supporting these pages with informative and interesting tourism articles. The whole package should enable people to plan their whole trip or part of their trip from the comfort of their own living room. Ireland is a fantastic place to vacation, offering something for everybody. If you want to wander off the beaten path and see some of the beauty not normally on view to tourists, here's the place to plan it. You may want to center your vacation around one of the many festivals that take place year round, from the hills of Kerry to the streets of Derry as the song says, again "Do It Yourself Ireland" will have the answers.

Here's a tip for the first month. If you are a foodie, a connoisseur of the finer things in life, you may want to check out www.routiersireland.com. This traditional French brand was established in Ireland a couple of years ago. It aims to ferret out and market the quality end of the hospitality industry. So if you are looking for a top-notch haute cuisine dinner or a special place to spend a romantic weekend, this site is definitely worth a visit.

As we said, "Do It Yourself Ireland" will get bigger and better as the months progress. Maybe you have a place in Ireland you want to market to Irish America, or maybe you know someone else who does. If you want further information about how to become a part of this unique feature please call one of the following numbers: For businesses based in Munster or Ulster call (415) 665-6653, for businesses based in Leinster or Connaught call (708) 445-0700.

Until May's edition, "May the Road Rise to Meet You."

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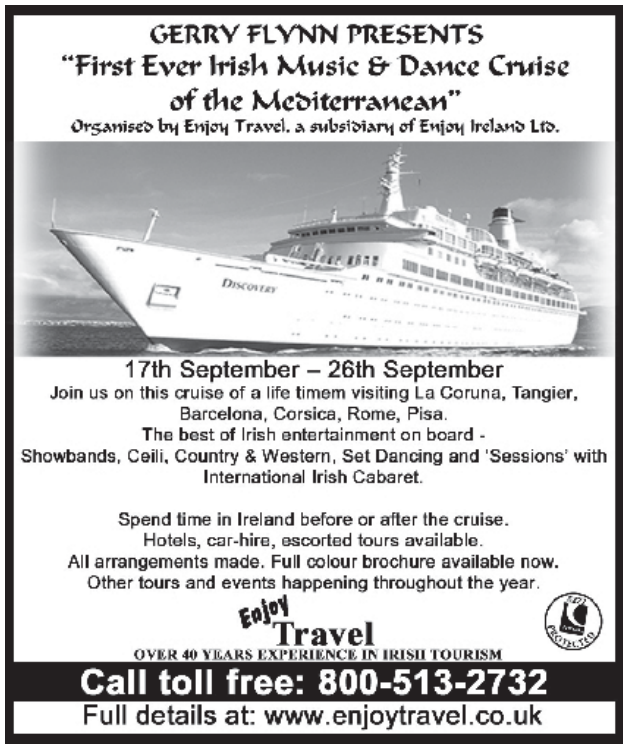

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Dublin, Easter Monday 1916:
1,700 take on the British Empire

by Joseph E. Gannon / TheWildGeese.com

AND I say to my people's masters: Beware,
Beware of the thing that is coming,
Beware of the risen people,
Who shall take what ye would not give.
Did ye think to conquer the people,
Or that Law is stronger than life
and than men's desire to be free?
We will try it out with you,
ye that have harried and held,
Ye that have bullied and bribed ...
tyrants, hypocrites, liars!
– From "The Rebel" by Patrick Pearse

Perhaps on Nov. 10, 1879, at 27 Great Brunswick St., Dublin, as the mother and father gazed down at their newborn son, they had a vision of what his future held. That may explain why they named him Patrick Henry Pearse. Their son would grow to be the very embodiment of the words of the American patriot Patrick Henry, whose name he bore, who uttered in the Virginia Convention on March 23, 1775: "I know not what course others might take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!" Indeed, these words would have formed a very proper epitaph on the gravestone of Pearse, the leader of the Easter Rising of 1916.

Like many other uncompromising Irish rebels, Pearse was not of pure Irish blood; he was the product of a mixed English-Irish marriage. His father was a monumental sculptor and an Englishman, his mother was a native of County Meath. Pearse began his life-long study of the Irish language at age 11; perhaps his strident nationalism was a byproduct of his study of the language that the British had tried so hard to destroy over the centuries.

After graduation from Royal University of Ireland he was called to the Bar, but he never practiced. He joined the Gaelic League in 1895. In 1908, along with friends Thomas MacDonagh, Con Colbert, and his brother William, Pearse founded an Irish language school called St. Enda's at Cullenwood House in Rathmines, outside Dublin. Their school prospered, and in 1910 they moved it to The Hermitage, Rathfarnham, where Robert Emmet had courted Sarah Curran. The school operated until 1935, run eventually by Pearse's mother and sister, but none of the four founders of the school would see that day - all four would be executed within five days of each other in May 1916.

Through these years, Pearse was writing a great deal of prose and poetry, some in Irish and some in English, much of which was published after his death, and contributing articles to Arthur Griffith's newspaper, The United Irishman. He was becoming more and more radical in his outlook on Irish nationalism, evolving from a supporter of Home Rule to a republican. In 1913, he was one of the founders of the Irish Volunteers, a native Irish militia that would evolve into the Irish Republican Army. Later the same year Pearse joined the secretive Irish Republican Brotherhood.

The GPO today

In February 1914, Pearse traveled to the United States seeking money from the Irish-American community for his school and for the Irish Volunteers. He made contact with Joseph McGarrity and former Fenian John Devoy, who helped him on both counts. In July 1914, in the famous Howth gun-running incident, the Irish Volunteers obtained weapons and ammunition. The organization now had the weapons and financial support it needed to consider the military action that many of them, including Pearse, believed necessary to end British rule in Ireland. "There are many things more horrible than bloodshed," Pearse had once written, "and slavery is one of them." In the militants' view, the circumstances were now rife for action, with the republicans possessing organization and weapons. Pearse felt ready to strike for his dream.

In the summer of 1915 the body of Fenian Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa was brought home from New York for burial. At Dublin's Glasnevin cemetery, Pearse delivered one of the most famous graveside orations in the long history of the Irish revolutionary movement. His speech stirred the Irish nation.

"But I hold it a Christian thing, as O'Donovan Rossa held it, to hate evil, to hate oppression, and hating them, to strive to overthrow them," said Pearse. "... Life springs from death; and from the graves of patriot men and women spring living nations." Pearse's clarion call to armed revolt reverberated through the length and breadth of Ireland. On April 24, 1916, words became action.

The Rising

Through the history of Britain's domination of Ireland, Ireland's revolutionary movements have lived by a basic tenet: England's agony is Ireland's opportunity. The Irish Volunteer leadership was split - with many of those in the IRB ready to strike, believing the timing would never be better. England was deep into the most savage war the world had ever seen. Millions had died already, millions more would die yet, many of them Irishmen fighting for Britain. Meanwhile, the British were threatening conscription in Ireland, which was absolutely opposed by the vast majority of the country. But many other IRB members believed that the country was not ready for a rising, especially with so many Irish boys fighting in the trenches of France.

Chief among the Volunteers who opposed the rising was its chief of staff, Eoin MacNeil. In the end, Pearse and the others in the Irish Republican Brotherhood, along with James Connolly and his Citizen Army, planned a rising for April 23, Easter Sunday, using the Volunteers' scheduled maneuvers in Dublin as a cover. These plans were made without MacNeil's knowledge. MacNeil found out on Thursday and at first, after being told of the shipment of German arms that Roger Casement was bringing to the

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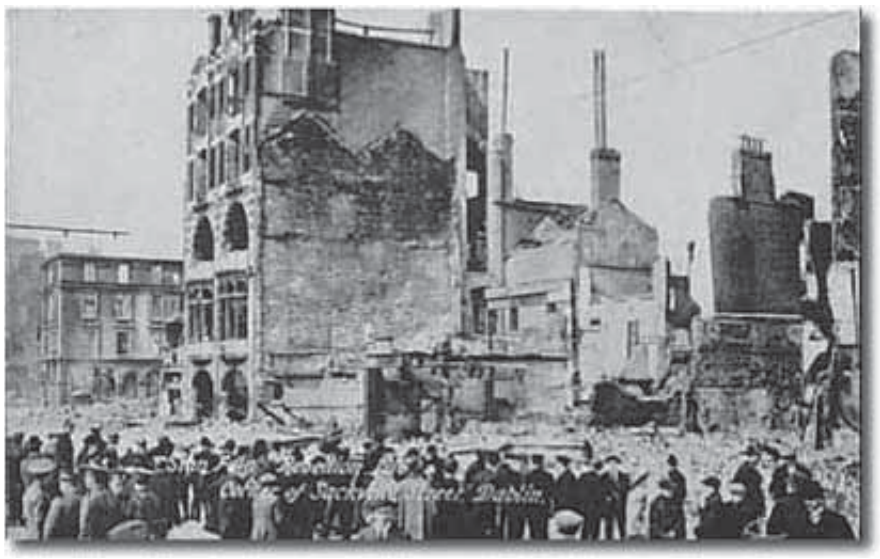
southwest, he agreed to support it. However, when MacNeil found out that Casement had been captured and the weapons lost, he canceled the maneuvers and got word to the countryside that the rising was off. In military terms, there was nothing for Pearse and his cohorts to do but call off the rising, but Pearse was not a military man, he was a visionary. He saw a destiny for himself and his country. Six years earlier he had written in a poem: "I have turned my face to the road before me, to the deed that I see and the death I shall die." With that deed, that near certain death, now staring him in the face, he didn't waver.



1916 Easter Rising: Sackville Street in Dublin

MacNeil tried his best to stop the rising, but on Easter Monday a force of less than 1,700 rose in Dublin, with smaller forces taking the field in Wexford, Galway, and in north County Dublin, where Thomas Ashe's Volunteers captured four police barracks. In Dublin, the rebels quickly captured several key points, including the General Post Office (GPO). There on the steps, Pearse proclaimed the Irish Republic. Pearse and six others has signed the document the day previous. The man given the honor of signing the proclamation first was 59-year-old Tom Clarke. He signed with tears in his eyes, no doubt remembering the 15 years he spent in a British prison under the harsh conditions the English reserved for Irish revolutionaries. Given the situation regarding MacNeil and the rest of the Volunteers around the island, each signer must have realized, as hand and pen moved across the proclamation, that they were very likely signing away their lives.

By early afternoon the tricolor of the Irish Republic and a green flag with a gold harp in the center, the ancient symbol of Ireland that had been carried in so many different forms by Irish military units around the world, flew defiantly above the GPO. Across Dublin the rebels occupied numerous strategic portions, and were awaiting the British response. Among these men and women were names that every Irishman would come to know in the years ahead, including Michael Collins, Eamon de Valera, Cathal Brugha, and Constance Markievicz, who commanded a group of Volunteers who occupied the College of Surgeons at St. Stephen's Green. But in the next few days, as fighting spread across the city, the predictions of those opposed to the rising proved true. The city and the country were not ready to rise up, and the rebels were isolated and surrounded by 20,000 British troops.

Still, the rebels fought on, and fought well. At Mount Street Bridge on Wednesday, 17 of de Valera's men held off two battalions of British troops for 9 hours. On Thursday, the British began an artillery bombardment of the GPO, fire began to spread around the building, and a cordon was thrown around the city center. The end neared. Finally, on Saturday, having been blasted out of the GPO and forced to take up positions in other buildings on nearby Moore Street, the leadership had to face the futility of further bloodshed.

Pearse watched the city he loved blazing around him and the people of that city being killed, some before his eyes. He fully expected to die in this rising and certainly would have preferred dying in battle to the execution he believed awaited him if he surrendered. He turned to Clarke and told him, "For the sake of our fellow citizens and our comrades across the city who are likely to be shot or burned to death, I propose ... we surrender." Clarke, who had struggled for decades to bring about a rising, could not speak - he turned his face to the wall and wept. Pearse surrendered and sent an order to other outposts to surrender also. On Sunday all organized resistance ended. At 5 p.m. April 30, the tricolor was pulled from the top of the remains of the GPO, the dream of the republic seemingly pulled down with it.

The Executions

As the rebels were marched off to jail, they were shocked by the reaction of bystanders. People screamed invective at them and even threw objects at them. The people of Dublin had been unable to work for a week, of course, and were going hungry; others had lost family members or had their homes destroyed and many had sons or brothers fighting in France and considered the rising a betrayal of those men. Perhaps this outpouring of anger toward the rebels gave the British a false sense of the underlying feeling of Irish people. Perhaps they were even foolish enough to think that it constituted some sort of endorsement of British rule over the island. Many of the people in those angry crowds, in fact, agreed completely with the aims of the rising - freedom from English domination. It was only the means and the timing of it they resented.

The British commander, General John Maxwell, court-martialed the rebel leaders. Within days, the leaders faced closed trials before courts made up of three British officers in which the defendants had no lawyers and were allowed to call no witnesses. The British officers found every defendant guilty and condemned them to death.

During the few minutes that his court-martial lasted, Pearse told the court: "You cannot conquer Ireland. You cannot extinguish the Irish passion for freedom. If our deed has not been sufficient to win freedom, then our children will win it by a better deed." Pearse wanted to be remembered with the martyred heroes Robert Emmet and Wolfe Tone. Later at a dinner party, General C.J. Blackader, who was in charge of the trials, told a friend, "I have just performed one of the hardest tasks I ever had to do. Condemned to death one of the finest characters I ever came across. A man named Pearse. Must be something very wrong in the state of things, must there not, that makes a man like that a rebel."

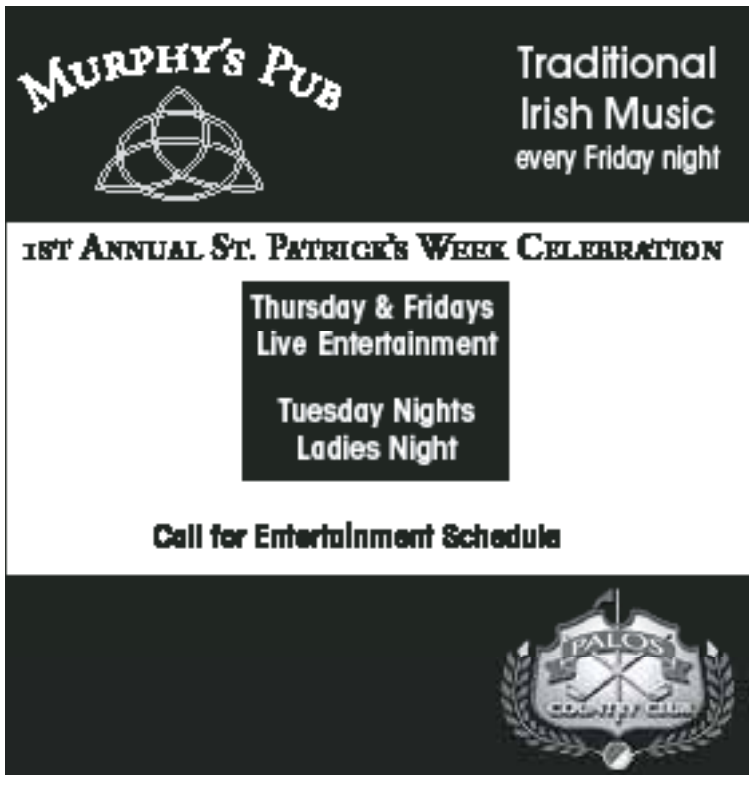
When the sentences of death were later relayed to the men in their cells, Clarke breathed a sigh of relieve, not because he dreamed of martyrdom, but because he feared more time in an English prison much more than death. When Pearse heard the sentence, there in his cell in Kilmainham jail, where Napper Tandy, O'Donovan Rossa and especially Emmet had also been held, he must have realized his destiny had come to pass just as he had envisioned it. His spirit would have sunk though, had he known that his brother William, who was not one of the leaders of the rising, was also condemned to death.

In a last letter home to his mother May 3rd, Pearse wrote, "I will call you in my heart at the last moment." Father Aloysius, who was attending the men, asked to stay with them to the end. He was refused. He gave Pearse a 10-inch crucifix of brass to carry with him. As he walked to his execution, Pearse heard two volleys - Clarke and his old friend MacDonagh had preceded him in death. With a soldier on each side and blindfold already in place, Pearse was hustled to a corner of the prison walls, past the pooled blood of Clarke and MacDonagh. At that moment, his brother Willie was being led to the jail. A British officer had decided to allow them a moment to speak before Patrick died, but he didn't inform Willie where he was being taken, or why, and Willie was sure it was to his own death.

In the northwest corner of the compound, where Pearse stood, the order rang out, "Aim." When one of the soldiers allowed his rifle to dip, the officer in charge ordered, "As you were." Pearse must have anguished as those words, in place of the expected "FIRE," were heard. Now the officer ordered, "Aim," again and then finally, "FIRE!" At the gates of the jail, where Willie was being led in, he heard the sound and a warder turned to his guards and said, "Too late." They turned him around and took him back to Richmond Barracks - no one told him he had just heard the sound of his brother being killed. Willie's turn would come the next day.

In all, 97 participants in the rising were condemned to death; most had those sentences reduced when the British learned how counterproductive the executions were. If one counts Casement, executed in August, 16 were actually killed. These executions by the British would turn a large portion of the Irish from critics of the Rising to supporters and emblazon those slain into the pantheon of Irish revolutionary heroes. Had the British simply jailed those involved, the ripples from their rising may never have grown into the waves that ultimately rocked British rule in Ireland, virtually ending it in 26 of 32 counties by 1922. With decades more strife in store for Ireland, Pearse's last words at the graveside of O'Donovan Rossa in 1915 proved prophetic:

But the fools, the fools, the fools!
They have left us our Fenian dead,
and while Ireland holds these graves,
Ireland unfree will never be at peace!



Healy Law

By Martin P. Healy, Jr.

The Healy Law Firm
Trial Attorneys

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

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

When a Dog Isn't Man's Best Friend

New figures just released from the 2005-2006 National Pet Owners Survey show pet ownership is currently at its highest level. According to the survey, Americans own approximately 73 million dogs. A Center for Disease Control survey estimates that there are 800,000 dog bites every year. Lately we have seen increasing news coverage of brutal dog-on-human attacks. Dog bites are not as infrequent as you might expect. It begs the question: what are a victim's and a dog owner's rights and responsibilities?

Previous Law

The law in Illinois used to presume that domestic animals are inherently harmless. In the past, in order for a person injured by a dog to recover from the owner, he had to prove that the dog had a mischievous propensity to commit such injuries and that the owner had knowledge of the propensity. Courts referred to this as the "one free bite" rule because the owner could always claim, at least for the first bite, that he was unaware of his dog's propensity.

Current Law

The law in Illinois has changed. The Illinois legislature enacted the Animal Control Act (510 ILCS 5/1) to encourage tight control of animals in order to protect the public from harm. The Act broadened the liability of owners and keepers of dogs. It states that "if a dog or other animal, without provocation, attacks or injures any person who is peaceably conducting himself in any place where he may lawfully be, the owner of such dog or other animal is liable in damages to such person for the full amount of the injury sustained" (510 ILCS 5/16). This Act changed the standard. The initial inquiry no longer looks at the owner's awareness of his dog's dangerous propensity (an owner's awareness can be a fact difficult to prove). We now first look at the victim's act and the dog's response to see if the dog was provoked. However, if it is found that the owner was aware of his dog's mischievous propensity prior to a bite then the owner may be held strictly liable.

What is "provocation?" It is any act of the injured person, intentional or unintentional, which would likely cause a normal animal to react the way that it did. The reasonableness of the dog's response determines whether provocation exists. For example, one court found that the act of someone stepping off an elevator and walking toward the apartment door where the dog awaited was not provocation. Another court found that a child's unintentional stepping on a dog's tail, and the dog then scratching the child's eye, was provocation. That court reasoned that the dog's reaction was not out of proportion to the unintentional act involved. On the other hand, a court found a child's screaming at the excited barking of a dog was not sufficient provocation for the violent attack that followed. Another court found that it was not provocation for a mailman to spray "Halt" at a ten pound dog advancing toward him.

Who is an "owner?" An owner is defined as one who owns, keeps or harbors a dog, or takes the dog in his care, or even one who knowingly allows a dog to remain on his property. For example, a dog walker could be liable as a "keeper" if that dog bites another while under the dog walker's care. However, one who agreed to board and care for a friend's dog could not recover when the dog bit her because she herself was considered the "keeper" of the dog. An absentee landlord who merely allowed a tenant to keep a dog was not considered a "harborer," and therefore was not liable.

An "attack" is not limited to an aggressive, violent act by the dog. For example, a court found a dog owner liable when the dog chased a bicyclist and that bicyclist fell causing injury. Another court found an owner liable when his dog excitedly greeted a visitor, knocking the visitor down and causing her injury. However, when a dog is passive, it cannot be said the dog is the cause of an injury. For example, a court denied liability when a person tripped over a dog as it lay on porch steps. A court denied liability when a guest spilled boiling water on herself as she stepped over a dog which had been following her around the kitchen.

Recent Trends in Legislation and Insurance Practice

Currently, there are bills in the Illinois legislature being considered that would ban or severely restrict specific breeds of dogs, including the "pit bull" and Rottweilers. One bill would automatically deem certain breeds as vicious, require those owners to muzzle and leash the dogs whenever outside, and require the owners to maintain liability insurance.

Homeowner's insurance commonly covers dog liability. Some insurance companies are now inquiring what breed the insured keeps at home. If the breed is considered dangerous, some insurers are raising the premium for the added risk or altogether denying insurance for that dog.

Some commentators suggest that "breed specific legislation" will do little to address the root cause of dangerous dog problems--irresponsible owners. They question whether the act of labeling certain breeds dangerous is fair. For example, a few poorly trained Rottweilers should not taint the entire breed. They insist that strongly enforced leash laws and increased public education efforts that promote responsible dog ownership are more reasonable ways to protect communities from future dog attacks.

Conclusion

This general discussion of rights and responsibilities relating to dog bite liability should not be considered a substitute for individual legal advice from an attorney based on the facts of a particular case.

The law has attempted to strike a reasonable balance between a victim's rights and a dog owner's responsibility. However, as discussed, each case's outcome depends on its own unique facts. The hope is that both dog owner and visitor/passerby become more educated on dog-human interaction. Let's not change the old proverb: Dog is Man's Best Friend.

by: Matthew Healy, The Healy Law Firm

Matthew is a new associate attorney with The Healy Law Firm. He lives in Lakeview with his brother and their dog.

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A Word With Father Boland

The Voice of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago Administrator, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago

During the last seven months we have heard much about the devastating results of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita: the tragic loss of lives, homes, churches and way of life for almost two million people. But recently, I was privileged to hear the whole story—from those who lived through it and deal with the rebuilding process every day—of the tremendous response of the Catholic Church in the United States to this unprecedented natural disaster.

From March 3-6, just days after the six-month anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, I traveled through New Orleans with Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago Board member Ronald Laurent and the Board of Trustees of Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA), the national network of 1,400 Catholic Charities social service agencies.

"We have suffered a truly enormous human catastrophe." With these words, the Most Rev. Alfred C. Hughes, Archbishop of New Orleans, summed up the tragic losses inflicted by Katrina. He reported that by last November close to 1.5 million people had been evacuated from Metropolitan New Orleans. There were 1,300 confirmed deaths and hundreds more whose bodies may never be found. It was estimated that anywhere from 50,000 to 200,000 people lost homes and jobs. Damage was sustained by more than 1,000 archdiocesan facilities. Only 25 percent of the residences for religious were inhabitable. Fourteen religious congregations lost their motherhouses.

Even the Ursuline Sisters of New Orleans, who laid the groundwork for the tradition of Catholic health care, the Catholic School system, and the Church's response to the poor in the New World, were forced to evacuate after 279 uninterrupted years of service, and only recently returned.

Yet, in the midst of this incredible human suffering, the Catholic Church in the United States responded immediately and generously to alleviate the suffering of the Gulf Coast hurricane victims who lost everything. Thousands of parishes in dioceses throughout the United States contributed $152 million, the largest collection in the history of the country, which was forwarded by the U.S. Bishops to Catholic Charities USA for distribution to the dioceses hit directly by the hurricanes.

So far, more than 300,000 victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita – including 87,000 children and 10,000 seniors—have received assistance from the Catholic Charities network.

Prior to Katrina, Catholic Charities of New Orleans was a thriving system of social services to 150,000 poor, hungry and vulnerable families, children, and needy persons annually. Yet, when staff themselves were victims of the hurricane, the Catholic Charities national network was able to respond immediately to thousands of evacuees across the country, providing them with food, clothing and shelter.

How is this possible? Because when New Orleans was overwhelmed with disaster, the Catholic Church in the United States responded as it always has. Our universal unity, connectedness and communication enabled parishes and Catholic Charities agencies in dioceses throughout the country to immediately swing into action so that services would be provided to the destitute evacuees.

Here in the Archdiocese of Chicago, Catholic Charities, with the help of scores of volunteers, welcomed, fed, clothed, and temporarily or permanently housed 500 homeless people; 285 families and individuals. Today, 100 families are still with us – without resources and unable or undecided whether to return. We continue to provide them with temporary shelter, assist them to obtain their benefits and offer comprehensive social services until they are settled.

The Archdiocese of New Orleans itself distributed 20 million pounds of food in the first two months to those unable to leave, and now delivers 10 million pounds each month. The Archdiocese has established 10 community centers, distributing $200,000 a week in aid to the needy. Two hundred counselors link needy people to available services, and over 3,000 volunteers clean and gut homes of the elderly and the poor, trying to make them habitable.

Remarkably, no startup groups or new organizations had to be formed for this massive rescue and resettlement effort. The Church's diocesan network; faith in Catholic Charities' history of helping people with competence and efficiency, locally and nationally; and our fiscal ability to devote 92 cents of every dollar to serve the poor and needy, inspired support.

For generations prior to Katrina's landfall, Catholics and non-Catholics alike in the counties of the Archdiocese of New Orleans were very familiar with the Catholic Church's abundant works of education and charity. Catholic schools had educated half the children in the city of New Orleans—half of whom were not Catholic. The Catholic healthcare system, founded two centuries ago by the Ursulines, continued to care for all people regardless of color or ability to pay; and the work of Catholic Charities for poor or troubled families and children, regardless of faith, was well-known.

Today, thanks to the tremendous generosity of American Catholics and their faith in Catholic Charities' efficient national network of thousands of staff and generous volunteers, hope is alive.

With heroic effort and courage, the Archdiocese of New Orleans has now opened more than 75 percent of its parishes and 80 percent of its Catholic schools. In Chicago and all across the country, evacuees are still being housed, fed, clothed, and are receiving case management services, counseling and financial assistance.

I sincerely thank the generous people of Cook and Lake counties for their generosity to Catholic Charities and to their courageous Gulf Coast brothers and sisters. Your Gospel commitment to serving the poor and suffering has resulted in the enlivened faith and determination of the Church and the communities devastated by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita to recover, renew and rebuild their lives, parishes, and communities. May God bless you all!

Judy Barr-Topinka, winner of the Republican Primary for Governor of the state of Illinois, and Kelly Green, 2006 St. Patrick's Day Parade Queen.

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Full Irish Breakfast

by Maureen Callahan

Tie One On at The Celtic Knot in Evanston

"I never serve a pint of Guinness I wouldn't drink myself," owner Patrick Breslin will look you in the eye and tell you quite sincerely. The Guinness is definitely the very best in Evanston, if not the northern suburbs. Test it for yourself at The Celtic Knot in Evanston and you're sure to agree. The Celtic Knot opened in January 2005, bringing a classy Irish Public House to an area definitely in need of one.

After meeting owner Patrick Breslin, truly the Star of the County Down, you'll understand commitment and dedication to providing an enjoyable experience. Breslin and his wife, Liz, along with their partners, Jamie and Debbie Evans have really put their hearts into transforming a site occupied by several other restaurants over the years, into a charming Irish pub. All Evanston locals, Patrick hails originally from County Down. With over 50 years of restaurant experience between them, it's easy to see why this pub is so successful. In an age in which many Irish pubs are no longer Irish owned, the authenticity here is more than evident.

For starters, take a chance on some favorites from more out-of-the-way Celtic destinations, such as the Canadian Maritime Provinces. The fish cakes with roasted red pepper sauce are as tasty as any you'd find in Nova Scotia. The half-pound Prince Edward Island Mussels in white wine with tomato basil sauce and garlic bread are an excellent alternative. The apps. menu also features the typical-chicken wings, chips, calamari, etc, for those searching for the simple but reliable.

The Guinness beef pastry-tenderloin and mushrooms cooked in Guinness and wrapped in a puff pastry, is a good choice for Erin's traditional fare. If not, try on the fish 'n' chips or bangers 'n' mash for size. Or check out the John Powers Whiskey Steak or Boston Corned Beef. Both are very lean. The North Atlantic salmon in teriyaki sauce served atop of basmati rice is another excellent pick. If the choice is too difficult, The Celtic Collection offers a bit of everything-lamb stew, fish 'n' chips, and corned beef and cabbage. There is a rather worldly wine selection available to compliment any taste.

Chef/owner Debbie Evans has created a delectable fusion of Irish favorites with a slightly different twist. There aren't many pubs in the greater Chicago area that offer Scotch Eggs-hardboiled eggs wrapped in sausage meat and served on a salad. Try them, for something different. The Fried Goat Cheese and Lobster Salad with bacon, walnuts and raisins is a delicious choice. In addition to several other salad choices, the Irish Breakfast Salad is a collection of Irish breakfast items-egg and chopped bacon served atop spinach. The Full Monty Irish breakfast-a more traditional version of the old favorite-eggs, bangers, black and white pudding and mushrooms is also available. The delectable selection of sandwiches and burgers will appeal to the lighter appetite.

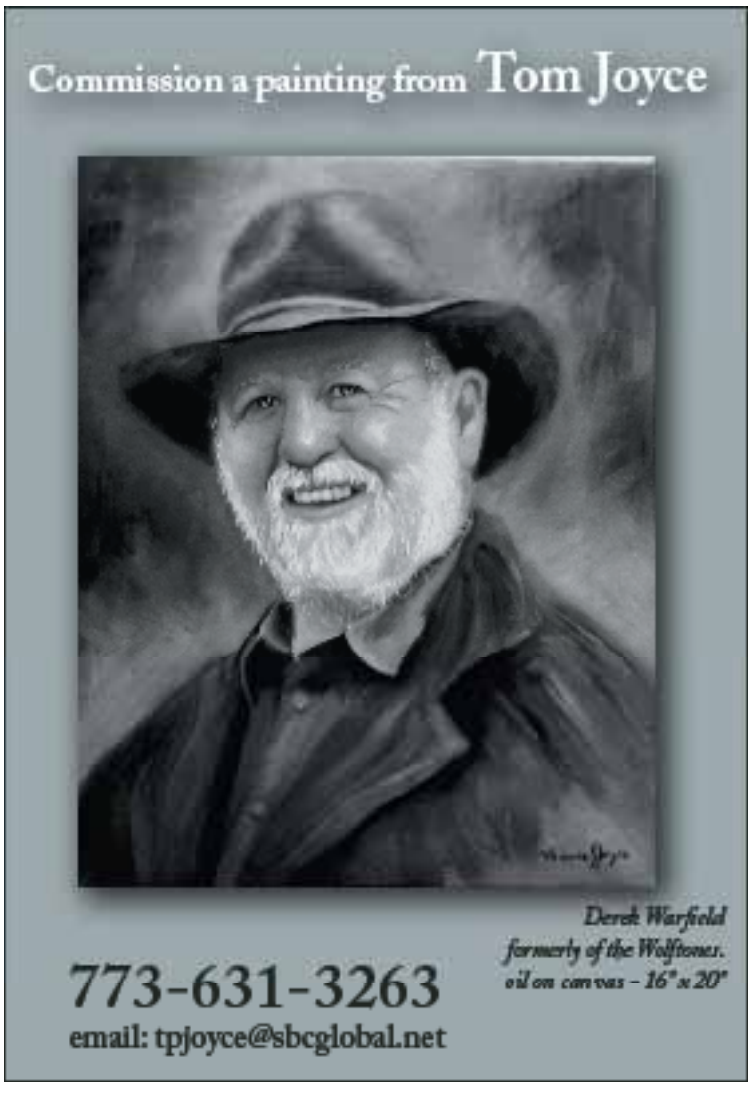
For a memorable ending, Gail's Sticky Toffee Pudding in custard cream sauce or Debbie's Homemade Chocolate Cake are amazing.

Invite your mum or your friends for a tea party on Wednesday or Saturday during Moira's Afternoon Tea from 2-4 p.m. For $14.95 honor a true Irish/English tradition complete with finger sandwiches, pastries, scones and a selection of fine teas at a fraction of the price of afternoon tea anywhere else in the area.

Even if you are just in the neighborhood for a pint, this is the place to go to meet friendly locals and enjoy great music. It's not strictly Irish at the Knot, but rather a wide variety of entertainment on the menu. Monday nights are bluegrass bands (8-12), and Tuesday nights are traditional Celtic music seisiuns (7-10). On weekends, DJ Corey Osborne plays his laid back San Francisco beat. Stop by on a Sunday afternoon for Storytelling in the Snug and you might hear from a nationally recognized author.

Find the Celtic Knot at 626 Church St., Evanston, IL, directly across from the Evanston Public Library, just 2 blocks from the purple line. For more information on music schedules or Storytelling in the Snug, contact the pub directly at 847.864.1679 or www.celticknotpub.com.

"We've been really lucky," owner Liz Breslin says. So are the people who have been fortunate enough to find this great place.



Get Your Irish Up …North !

By James McClure

From the Sand to the Snow

Alaska is known for many things at this time of year, chief among them the Iditarod dogsled race that pits teams racing across the ice and snow.

Yet not far from the starting line of that race in Anchorage are a unique group of men who spent last year at this time heading into a race of their own—a running battle with insurgents in the heat and sands of Iraq. "It's a lot like waking up and walking into a blow-torch in your face every morning," says Marine Sgt. Richard Murphy, who is one of a group of Alaska Marines who were activated from weekend reserve duty to spend six months in Iraq.

I first met Murphy at Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport as he arrived home with one of three flights of returning Marines.

Murphy was the senior enlisted man present when one of the marines in his squad was killed last year. "You just try to go on and do your duty and remember him as best you can," said Murphy as he cleared his throat, visibly moved.

He wasn't the only one. A few minutes earlier, Alaska Governor Frank Murkowski pointed out to me how the mother of the fallen marine was there to accept his remains and how the group had left as a team and came back that way as well. As tears welled up in his eyes Murkowski said, "You see those boys over there? They may have gone over as boys but they came back as men. And they did it together."

And quietly. None of us in the news media knew it at the time but five of the Alaska Marines were returning as recipients of the Purple Heart…recognition for injuries received in battle. I came to know most of the Purple Heart Marines in following months, tracking their progress and recovery, as well as their training to fight again, if called upon. All had been injured by shrapnel and concussion, by IEDs, the Improvised Explosive Devices, which have claimed so many American lives.

"Somebody was looking out to hurt us and somebody was looking out for us at the same time," says Murphy as he looks over the small boats and vehicles his company trains with in the snows of Alaska. "It is pretty weird having been over there and then being back here in the snow and cold traveling over black ice when it's dark much of the winter."

They got back in time for the annual Toys for Tots Campaign, which the Marine Corps Reserve conducts to bring Christmas toys to needy children. In Alaska, that means ferrying sacks by snowmobile (locals prefer the term snow machine) up along frozen rivers into the Yukon and the bush country.

No strangers to danger on active duty, the reconnaissance marines of Echo Company have to prepare for the possibility of falling into and under the ice on their volunteer reserve work.

The training consists of jumping into a hole carved into a 14-inch thick patch of frozen lake near Elmendorf Air Force Base. The air temperature was about 5 degrees as the arctic warriors jumped in wearing a full backpack and then had to pull themselves out, somehow maintaining the presence of mind to state their name and social security number before being allowed to exit. "It's not that bad," said a smiling company commander, Capt. David McElliott, who was one of the more lucid and agile men to emerge from the water. "It's not worse than anything else you'll do in the Marine Corps."

I caught up with Corporal Marty Rhett at the Marine Corps Reserve Center just as he was heading home on Christmas leave. "We have to train the next generation and be ready, just in case we have to be back next year at this time," noted the quiet and reflective marine.

Mass with parents and family was on the next day's agenda along with baking Christmas cookies. It was good to see some of the kid re-emerging in this reflective young man who plans to make a career in the Corps.

The Alaska Marines, quiet and secretive by nature, achieved a degree of national and international notoriety when their stories aired in a series of television stories I reported for the Pentagon Channel, which airs on cable systems across America and on military installations around the world.

But they have gotten their best recognition at home in Alaska. The night of the Marine Corps Birthday Ball I was driving Sgt. Murphy around town, the least I could do to honor warriors who did so much for us. On a downtown Anchorage street corner, Loren Lehman, Alaska's Lt. Governor, spotted Murphy and spent time thanking him…a quiet tribute that no one will ever see or know about.

As we drove off I thought that the Richard Murphys and Dave McElliotts and Marty Rhetts are all around us. We may not know their names or what they've been through, but we are stronger because of their strength, and a better people with their safe return.

James McClure is a television reporter and freelance journalist in Anchorage, Alaska. He grew up in Northbrook, Illinois and can be reached at JimMcClure71@aol.com

April events at Gaelic Park

Gaelic Park, located at 6119 West 147th Street, in Oak Forest, will host many spring events this April.

The Carraig Pub at Gaelic Park offers an entertaining atmosphere everyday. Tuesday nights come to participate in Carraig's Pub Quiz beginning at 8pm. Enter a team for a minimal entry fee. There are daily food and drink specials at the Carraig including mouth-watering BBQ ribs on Wednesdays. On Thursday nights at 7:30pm bring in the whole family to hear the traditional music session given by the Irish Music School instructors Sean Cleland and Pat Finnegan, their students, friends and families. All ages are welcome. And every Friday and Saturday enjoy free music. This month hear The Katie Sullivan Band, Gerard Haughey, After School Special and many more.

Enjoy good food and great dancing music at Chicago Gaelic Park, at the popular Celtic Suppers beginning at 4pm and going until the music stops at 9pm. This month musical guests include Velvet Green, Gerard Haughey and Sean O'Donnell. The Celtic Suppers are the perfect meeting place for large groups, and for only $15, a buffet is served. Children are welcome and for those under 12 years old admission is $8.

Please note that there will be a special Celtic Supper on Easter Sunday, April 16th with music provided by Gerry Gleason and a special appearance by the Easter Bunny bringing along treats for the kids. A holiday buffet will be served from 4pm until 7pm. All of this fun, entertainment and delicious food is included in the $20 ticket price, $10 for children 12 and under. Reservations are required for all Celtic Suppers.

Gaelic Park will host another popular Musical Luncheon on Wednesday, April 5th, beginning at noon for the modest cost of $12. Lunch will be served at 1pm with dancing music provided by Velvet Green until 4pm. Reservations are required.

The Monthly Mass and Breakfast is on Sunday, April 9, 2006 beginning at 10 a.m. A delicious Irish breakfast will be served immediately after Mass for $6.

Remember to listen every Sunday night from 7pm to 9pm to a live broadcast from Gaelic Park by Harry Costelloe, Mary Hackett, and Mary Riordan on WCEV 1450am. Hear all the week's Irish news and sports direct from Ireland, and all the latest events and goings on at Gaelic Park. Call the station at (708) 687-9330 to request a song or dedication or for advertising.
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By Mike Morley

"Bloody Mary" goes global:

I'm taking the opportunity this month to tidy up some old business, as Morley and son will be gombin'around Ireland while this issue is inked. We will be there for the feast of its patron, Patrick: who is renowned in legend for causing a reptile dysfunction all over the island.

If you've been reading this space you will recall that the last couple columns dealt with Sumner Redstone's media giant- Viacom, it's subsidiary Comedy Central, and the show "South Park". We reported Comedy Central ran its season finale episode of South Park on 12/7/05, the eve of the Immaculate Conception. Its highlight is a statue of the Blessed Virgin the show describes as "bleeding outa it's a__." Pope Benedict arrives to see the phenomenon and is drenched full in the face by a long (and loud) emission of blood from the statue's rear end.

Melbourne's Archbishop Denis Hart asked Australia's SBS network not to air the episode, scheduled for March 6. He was told by programming director Matt Campbell, to "Mind your own business". But later, after the worldwide dust-up over the Danish Muslim cartoons, SBS decided to "defer" airing the offensive episode, saying it would have to give "some more thought" to its scheduling, following worldwide protest over Danish cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad.

But in New Zealand, another constitutional monarchy with Herself, QEII, the official head of state, it was a different story. South Park airs there on TV channels owned by Canwest, a Canadian media giant that recently scooped up a large part of Lord Black's former empire. Religious groups including the Catholic Bishops' Conference, and the Council of Christians and Muslims urged CanWest not to air the "Bloody Mary" episode, But Canwest, said it met "all its internal standards of taste and decency."

Issuing what sounds like a high-tone version of the Al Capone defense, Canwest TV Works COO Rick Friesen said: "We don't believe that any group should be dictating the programs we run. Our viewers have a specific idea of what they want to watch. We research that, and if we didn't run it we think we'd be offending those viewers." (In his best Brooklyn accent, Big Al would have been more straightforward: "We gives da people what they want. We're a public soivice.")

Catholic bishops called for a parishioner boycott of Canwest's TV3 and its advertisers. Friesen retorted that if Catholics felt they'd be upset by South Park, then they should simply not watch it. He saw no similarity to the debate over the Muhammad cartoons.

The Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand also protested the episode, saying it was deeply offensive. Javed Kahn, President of the group, wrote to Friesen: "Like Catholics and the wider Christian family, Muslim New Zealanders will be shocked and deeply offended by the portrayal of Mary, mother of Jesus (peace be upon them both) in such a tasteless manner… We consider Mary (peace be upon her) to be an example of a perfect human being, so this cartoon demeans not just her person and the beliefs of those who revere her but also humanity itself," he added. Khan earlier had won an apology from TV Works and other New Zealand media for displaying images of the Danish cartoons.

Says Friesen: "We absolutely expect there are segments of society that would be offended by the program," "We believe the reality is a lot less than the perception… All this is, is a depiction of a statue of the Virgin Mary, commonly seen in churches". (No mention that it was "bleeding outa it's a__" into the face of Pope Benedict.) Friesen then moved up the air date from May to February, acknowledging that most of the public feedback was negative and there was "no benefit" in allowing protests over the broadcast to go on. "We felt it best to end the thing quickly rather than drag it out for three months."

During the broadcast more than 350 people protested outside TV Works' headquarters in Auckland. But Friesen was gratified when news of the controversy led more than six times the normal audience to tune in and watch Pope Benedict being "anointed".

Kahn said the decision to air the episode meant New Zealand's Muslims were "in grave doubt about the sincerity of ... TV Works' commitment" to "the importance of freedom of the media and that this freedom comes with responsibilities, including sensitivity to diverse cultures and beliefs." Bishop Denis Browne, President of the New Zealand's Roman Catholic Bishops Conference, said the church was "bitterly disappointed" and promised to mount "a campaign" against Canwest TV Works and its youth channel, C4.

Last summer, New Zealand's Catholic Church had called for a boycott of C4 for airing another cartoon series: the BBC-produced "Popetown", a "satire" on life in the Vatican. One of the episodes reportedly depicts a priest being aroused by animal pornography. Another has the pope painting a portrait with his own feces. Canwest is broadcasting the series, despite the fact that Britain's BBC, which developed the program, decided it was too offensive even for its far-out BBC3 channel.

Canwest is run by The Asper family of Winnipeg, who recently acquired most of the assets of Lord Black's Hollinger Corp, giving them a vertical control of media properties similar to Viacom's: CanWest's Global television network is now linked with a new powerhouse of newspapers and internet properties. Heading up the company is Leonard Asper, son of Israel, (Izzy) Asper, the controversial Canadian tax lawyer and media baron who knew how to handle tough cookies like Black. After buying into New Zealand's TV3, Izzy called 200 employees to the cafeteria. He called on a journalist: "You. What business do you think you're in?" The newsman replied that "the business we're in is to make sure our audience gets the most carefully researched news and information possible." Asper asked the same question of the drama and entertainment departments, with similar results. "You're all wrong," he told them. "You're in the business of selling soap." Another Izzy quote: "Never forget the system is based on greed."

CanWest Global in 2001 announced plans to insert a corporate editorial, written at company headquarters, into all its daily newspapers once a week. Local editorials could not contradict views expressed by the national ones. Press Campaign reports that Reuters (ironically) is complaining CanWest Global "routinely and inappropriately" inserts the word "terrorist" into newswire copy, changing the meaning of stories. (No one complained that Reuters routinely does the same when "reporting" on Sinn Fein or the IRA.) The global managing editor for Reuters, David Schlesinger, told the Canadian Broadcasting Corp that such changes are unacceptable and that CanWest had crossed the line from editing for style, to slanting the news from the Middle East.

Muslims, roused to anger over a simple print cartoon depicting Mohammed wearing a bomb-like turban, are granted instant respect from Anglo-Christian nations. But Catholic leaders and interest groups (as opposed to a laid-back laity) protesting a half-hour network animated display mocking Catholic beliefs and devotions, are dismissed as annoying morons: "Mind your own business".

There has always been a deep amount of anti-Catholicism just under the surface of American society. It rears itself up periodically from the liberal secular muck, clothed in mock righteousness, and fueled by media lords who find there are huge profits in mooning those whom, their own deep prejudices assure them, are less enlightened mortals. They ridicule folks who dare to protest "comedy" that defiles icons of the Catholic religion on national TV. But they rise in indignant outrage when its rumored that an unseen, unnamed American soldier in an obscure POW camp in Cuba may or may not have defiled a page of the Holy Koran by flushing it down a toilet there.

The Mockers

They play to a large group of unsettled Americans in the 18 to 34 year-old age group, many of whom who are just fledging their wings, leaving home, entering the job market, and feathering their nests with new-found income. This audience, newly unshackled from parental control, and ripe for exploitation, enjoys the illusion of freedom derived from flouting convention. Mockery is chic, and hugely profitable. But the "culture" is narrow and urban. Mount the average mocker on a horse, and he will surely look the horse's ass.

Take Howard Stern (please). In his latest feature for Esquire, he didn't have five short sentences written before he was compelled

tell us about his wee-wee (little). He is also thrilled about his satellite radio debut, worth half a billion dollars (big). Sez he: "I'm finally going to get to do what I want to do. I don't need a daddy supervising me. I've got my own boundaries. I've got my own rules." The man's 52 years old and still rhapsodizing about having his own apartment. But he knows his audience. They may be Mensa material, but they haven't graduated from the thrilling "freedom" of wagging their wee-wees out the window when mamma's not home. It hasn't yet dawned in their enlightened brains that the Menses would hit the fan in an Islamic state.

On the other side of the world is yet another swelling mass of 18 to 34 year-olds ripe for harvesting. They don't have the shekels, but they do have the sack. And the mullahs sponsoring them are raking in the moolah. But the dream prizes advertised are just that - dreams. No need to lay out a yard of cash to sponsor a music festival. And what's that compared to a tentful of eager virgins to lads willing to trade a boring, hardscrabble existence for paradise. I wonder if the volunteer martyrs ever stop to think that the virgins in the sky may be a bit shopworn at this point; or if they've considered why their own mullahs fail to take advantage of such a marvelous opportunity.

A la carte TV

This addresses a long-time gripe I've had with subscription television. With a la carte pricing, subscribers could select individual channels to include in their TV service, instead of being forced to buy the packages of channels chosen for them by cable providers.

Currently, providers offer "packages" of programs scaled from "Basic" (about $30 per month) up to "Everything" (close to $100/m). If you choose to watch, say, Movie Classics, BBC or the Independent Film Channel, you have to pay about $10 more per month for the package, along with channels you may never watch- say, more sports channels, game shows, cartoons, and a slew of background music. If you want to watch Biography, Discovery Times or History International, you will pay even more and get VH1 music videos, "love" channels and Soap Net besides. Of course, if you happen to be a soap opera fan, you'll be paying for news and "educational" programming you may not give a hoot about.

When addressing this issue of "choice" for their customers, network spokespeople switch from "corporate" to "public servant" mode. The National Cable and Telecommunications Association, a front for Comcast, Time Warner Cable and other providers, says a la carte would lead to even higher prices and less "diversity". They claim their packages "cater to underserved audiences". I guess that means if you are an "underserved" type who can't do without soaps or game shows, the public-spirited carriers are catering to your needs by offering those channels- but in higher-priced packages. Meanwhile, these public servants provide subscribers with all the shopping channels in every package.

In November, the Federal Communications Commission changed its mind about "pay per channel" or "a la carte" pricing. FCC Chairman Kevin Martin, testifying before the Senate Commerce Committee, said it might be in the best interest of consumers. Charles Dolan, CEO of Cablevision, supported the FCC, saying: "Like Chairman Martin, we do not believe in the long term that selling programming a la carte will be detrimental to either programmers or cable operators." Dolan said it would offer customers cheaper service with added programming options. It is estimated that a la carte choice would mean reductions of up to 13% in subscriber fees.

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If you got down this far, you're eligible for a prize! Just figure out who is the handsome lad pictured on the column head, and e-mail your answer to editor@irishamericannews.com, with a CC to Irisht@ameritech.net

Correct answers will be entered in a drawing for a $50 gift certificate for dinner at Molly Malone's in Forest Park, and second and third prizes of a fine Irish CD.

Watch Irish TV Journal

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E-mail: IrishTV@ameritech.net

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New Location for Cedarburg Irish Set Dancing

Set dancing in Cedarburg has grown to a larger venue on a new night. Since Monday, March 20th, Irish Set Dancing Classes are held at the American Legion Post, W57 N481 Hilbert Avenue in Cedarburg, Wisconsin. The Legion Post has a spectacular wood floor, which will accommodate up to eight sets and the bar will be open for the Monday evening class.

Each eight-session set is $45, and runs from 7:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. each Monday. The current set is called either the Cashel or Castle Set, and originates from County Tipperary. The name Tipperary is taken from the Irish 'Tiobraid Arann', which means 'the well of Era', referring to the River Ara. County Tipperary is the largest inland county in Ireland. The Cashel Set is danced to slides, polkas and the hornpipe.

In addition, a special four-session course on Steps for the Hornpipe will be taught from April 24th – May 15th, 6:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. The four-week special sessions are only $10.

No partner is required and beginners are welcome to attend. Pre-registration is suggested. Registration materials are available at the Sets in the 'Burg website http://sets.sulliassociates.com or by calling 262.302.7854.

The Chieftains invite Murphy Roche students onstage

The Chieftains bring a warmth to the stage that embraces their audiences in the traditions of Ireland. At Chicago's Symphony Center on March 3, 2006, they let two young musicians help make their magic - Molly Griffin on fiddle (age 13) and Laura Romaine (14) on tin whistle. Both are with the Murphy Roche School of Irish Music, students of Kell and Mike Chole.

Just hours before, they learned something surprising about the Chieftains' offer for Chicago musicians to join them on stage for the closing number. Each guest performer would not only accompany the Chieftains but also take their turns soloing. The students and the audience alike felt the legendary "lift" that makes Irish music and the Chieftains so special.

Afterwards, Molly said, "I was shivering, my knees were knocking and I kept switching which foot I was standing on so I wouldn't fall over. The light was shining in my eyes so I couldn't see the audience at all, I think that helped. The Chieftains were pretty cool, they made me feel very comfortable and they were friendly. Looking back at it, I am really proud of how I played, I was afraid I would make a major mistake, but I didn't. I know this was a wonderful opportunity. They were the best Irish musicians I have ever heard and I would love to be able to play like them."

Laura's words also glowed, "A once in a lifetime experience. I had never played in front of that many people before, but it was great to have Paddy Moloney cheering me through and having Matt Molloy (the Matt Molloy!) smiling behind me. I felt right at home up there. Nervousness left me when I put the whistle to my lips, and I sort of forgot everything until I was done. My Dad tells me that the crowd roared but I was so caught up in the thrill of the moment that I didn't hear it. Molly did wonderfully, too; she is one talented fiddle player. I followed the Chieftains off stage, and they signed a CD for me. The Cottars did, too, and congratulated me on how well I did. As I came back upstairs and was walking to the door, people were complimenting me right and left. Someone even asked for my autograph! I could get used to that!"

Forever, future generations will study and admire the Chieftains' genius for bringing people fellowship and joy through music.

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For The Republic

By Chris Fogarty

Why Ireland Is Unfree; Continued

The following article by John Hanley is crucial to understanding the forces arrayed against our US republic and that of Ireland. It documents MI5/FBI crimes in Ireland and shows that the pattern of crimes they perpetrated here in Chicago were duplicated later in Ireland by the self-same agents. To learn whether FBI agents of your acquaintance honor their oaths to uphold the US Constitution give them photocopies of this and see what actions they take. Ditto re politicians. Above all, this applies to members of the news media. Don't let them get away with covering up MI5/FBI mass murders. Don't let them get away with framing innocents for them as MI5/FBI did here in Chicago and later in Ireland. Make copies of this and put them into the hands of FBI agents, politicians and news reporters. Their actions (or lack thereof) will define them. If they fail to act they are siding with the criminals and are traitors. Here is the article (the footnotes are mine):

MI5 and Omagh – the bomb to end all bombs? (by John Hanley; www.newrepublicanforum.ie)

IN 1996 MI5 assigned agent David Rupert to infiltrate dissident republican circles in Ireland. Rupert's priceless intelligence gave MI5 an indispensable insight into the membership and modus operandi of both dissident groups on either side of the border. Throughout his stay in Ireland Rupert forwarded all of the relevant intel he had acquired to MI5 via encrypted e-mails. Between 1997 and 2001 Rupert posted 2,166 e-mails to his paymasters in British Intel .

On 11 April 1998 Rupert dispatched his most controversial e-mail to MI5 HQ. It was almost five months before the now infamous maroon Vauxhall Cavalier would destroy the centre of Omagh town and kill 29 people. The e-mail is all the more startling because in it Rupert informed MI5 that a dissident republican group was planning a car bomb attack in Omagh (E-mail 104, 11Apr98). The April car bomb attack was eventually frustrated by gardaí south of the border. However, MI5 management knew the threat was only postponed, not ended. Within days MI5 e-mailed Rupert; "We disrupted the intention to use the car bomb, but maybe not for long" (MI5 to Rupert, E-mail 126A, 17Apr98). MI5 obviously foresaw the strong likelihood of a renewed attempt to bomb Omagh. Thus, MI5 now held the advantage over the would-be bombers by possessing knowledge that Omagh was a likely target for the latters' car bomb.

Rupert's e-mails were not the only pre-August 15th information in MI5's possession which pointed toward a dissident republican car bomb in Omagh. A second key piece of evidence came to light on Aug 4 when an anonymous phone-caller warned British intel of a planned dissident republican gun and bomb attack in Omagh on August 15. MI5 subsequently claimed that it dismissed this warning as that of a rogue RUC Special Branch caller. This, however, was a poor attempt to distract. The importance in all of this is that whereas Rupert provided specific details as to the location of the planned bombing, this phone-warning supplemented his e-mail intel by not only confirming the location but also providing the all-important precise date of the planned attack.

The windfall of dissident republican intel did not end there. MI5 possessed a third piece of high-grade information which indicated that a car bomb attack was scheduled for mid-August. Two days before the Omagh bombing, FRU agent Kevin Fulton met with a Real IRA informant whose clothing, according to Fulton, was covered with dust particles of home-made explosives. Fulton correctly deduced that a car bomb attack was in an advanced stage of planning. Fulton provided Brit Intel with the agent's name and car registration number. Yet once again this vital piece of intel was ignored.

A most startling disclosure of MI5's foreknowledge of Omagh came during the inquest into the bombing. Leading British barrister Michael Mansfield QC, acting for Lawrence Rush, cross-examined several RUC witnesses. It emerged that a warning pinpointing the location of the bomb had not been passed on to the local officers in time to clear the area .

"After that, we started getting threatening calls. The RUC told us our names were on a death-list," Solicitor Des Doherty said. The RUC also confirmed to Doherty the veracity of a newspaper report that a spy satellite was tracking the bomb-car. Doherty said; "It is understood that when the RUC contacted the FBI in America the latter produced that satellite information." This suggests that the maroon Vauxhall Cavalier contained a tracking device which enabled a US Global Positioning Satellite to not only follow the car's movements but to pinpoint its precise location on the day of the bombing. At RUC request, US intel would have monitored the car as a priority and would have conveyed this surveillance data to MI5 without delay. Yet MI5 chose to not relay this information to the RUC officers on the ground on August 15. Furthermore, the presence of the tracking device on the maroon Vauxhall Cavalier indicates the involvement of an MI5 agent, at least at some point between the unlawful procurement of that car and the detonation of its load of explosives on August 15. After the blast MI5 promptly ordered Rupert out of Ireland. An August 16 MI5 e-mail instructed Rupert to "insulate yourself from gardai" (MI5 to David Rupert, E-mail 305, 16Aug98). Later that night Rupert was ordered to "Collect tickets at Belfast City Airport…You'll be here (London) for two nights. We need to talk. It's extremely important." (MI5 to Rupert, E-mail 329, 17Aug98). Rupert's MI5 handlers obviously feared that their agent might be gripped as part of a massive cross-border investigation and that – if placed under sufficient pressure – Rupert might disclose the prior bomb warning he had conveyed to MI5 in early April regarding Omagh. Indeed, all of Rupert's MI5 e-mails on Omagh were subsequently withheld from Nuala O'Loan during her official investigation into the intel background of that atrocity. By late August, 1998 there were a number of skeletons in MI5's closet.

We now know that MI5 possessed four pieces of high-grade intel that constituted abundant warning of the dissident republican car-bombing of Omagh. The earliest was dated April 11. This was followed by the August 4 phone call, by Fulton's August 13 intel report, and finally the satellite monitoring of the bomb car by means of the tracking device planted by a British agent involved in the Omagh bombing. Yet, despite this avalanche of intel MI5 made no attempt to intercept the bombing. How can this operational decision be rationally explained? What was the motivation of MI5 management? Did British intel want to protect the identity of its agent at all costs? Or was this yet another "securocrat" plot to subvert the peace?

MI5 management did not want to scupper (sic) the peace process, but it did want to protect the identity of its agent and, at the same time, drive – what it hoped would be – the final nail into physical force republicanism at an exceptionally sensitive time in the peace process.

By August, 1998 the Provisionals were well on their way to exchanging the armalite for British ministerial portfolios. Articles 2 and 3 were deleted from Ireland's Constitution . British rule in the Six Counties had been preserved. PIRA engagement with the IICD and future acts of decommissioning lay only months away. But from the perspective of British intel a black cloud loomed on the horizon. By the summer of 1998 MI5 was seriously concerned about allegiance shifting away from the Provisionals and the possibility of large-scale defections from the PIRA to dissident republican paramilitaries. In the nine months between its formation in late November, 1997 and August, 1998, the Real IRA had planted large car bombs in Banbridge, Portadown and Markethill. The RUC barracks in Armagh and Moira were the targets of audacious mortar attacks . In early April, 1998 gardai intercepted a BMW 318 series at the Dublin port of Dun Laoghaire. The BMW was destined for central London and was packed with 1,200 lbs of explosives. Once again massive bombings in the heart of London seemed a distinct possibility. In May two cars containing 500 lb bombs were intercepted on the border. Two dissidents were arrested. In July a three-man unit was captured in London with a semtex-based device and a number of incendiaries. By August, 1998 the Real IRA campaign was gathering momentum at a time when the Belfast Agreement had yet to be firmly rooted and the Adams/McGuinness leadership was confronted by the specter of large-scale defections.

Brit intel agencies were facing an extremely volatile political situation. For two decades it had infiltrated both the military and political wings of the provisional movement. By 1994 a large number of senior PIRA members had been compromised and the organization was rendered incapable of sustaining an effective armed campaign. The reformist Sinn Fein leadership had been nurtured, protected and surrounded by MI5 agents who influenced the trajectory of the movement over a period of two decades. Was MI5's twenty-year project about to be jeopardized at its moment of triumph by the emergence of another IRA and widespread provo defections? No. MI5 would allow nothing to destabilize the provos' transition from armalite to ballot box. Drastic solutions were required to ensure that British rule would prevail in Ireland.

At this critical time FBI/MI5 agent Rupert, at the heart of the dissident republican group, first mentioned Omagh as a potential target for a car bomb attack. Was the carnage of August 15 the product of his labor? From MI5's perspective Omagh was the ideal target for a number of reasons. It was the only town in Ireland that retained an elected dissident republican. Thus, a catastrophic car-bomb attack would permanently discredit the emergent political opposition to Sinn Fein not only in Omagh but throughout the island. Furthermore, the resultant death toll would also serve to dissuade disaffected provisionals from crossing the Rubicon into the realm of dissident republican activity. At one foul stroke MI5 could deal a decisive blow to both the political and military wings of dissident republicanism.

Indeed, within days of the bombing the Adams/McGuinness leadership regained the initiative. Amid a torrent of anti-republican hysteria they were now in a position to publicly condemn a republican attack and visit the scene of the explosion. It seemed that dissident republicanism had committed political suicide. Only a few weeks previously it seemed unimaginable that the provisional leadership could countenance a move towards arms decommissioning and a formal end to its campaign. However, the Omagh atrocity now made this a distinct possibility. MI5 had four instances of high-grade intel concerning Omagh which, when placed together, indicated that the town would be bombed by dissident republicans on August 15. Yet, MI5 deliberately allowed the bombing to proceed to protect the identity of a key informant and to deliver a decisive blow against republican recalcitrants. After Omagh the Belfast Agreement drifted in and out of political crises, but British control was reinforced. So was Omagh MI5's bomb to end all bombs?

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[i] It was under Chicago MI5/FBI agent Patrick "Ed" Buckley's auspices that Rupert was sent to Ireland. Rupert is a four-time fraudulent bankrupt. He was described in court by a State police affidavit from his Upstate New York hometown as "a lifelong criminal." Buckley "ran" Rupert in Ireland and eventually got him onto MI5's payroll. Buckley had been subverted by MI5 prior to 1991 and was perpetrating "dirty tricks" crimes against Chicago's Irish community ever since. His crimes were numerous. For five months Buckley covered for David Biro who, using FBI agent Lewis' 357 Magnum, had murdered the Langert family. Meantime, Buckley, acting for MI5, got the news media to blame that atrocity on the IRA, and eventually framed me for it (establishing a pattern he and his MI5 handlers successfully repeated in Omagh against the RIRA and Michael McKevitt). Buckley conducted five terrorist, drawn-gun raids upon us, incarcerated us in the Federal Correctional Facility at Clark and VanBuren. We (my wife Mary and I and two others) were facing prison for perhaps the rest of our lives; but after fifteen months of

pre-trial hearings, all charges against us were dropped when we proved that the main evidence against us (an audiotape) had been criminally fabricated by the FBI. But Buckley and his gang were never charged with their crimes and were thus free to repeat those crimes in Ireland; successfully.

[ii]Rupert was also being paid by the FBI.

[iii]The Omagh RUC/PSNI have not produced the tape of the warnings or the log book into which they were transcribed.

[iv]Ireland thus rescinded its claim to the entire island of Ireland and its surrounding islands and seas. It confirms Britain's claim to Ireland's Six Counties. The hand-over of the Six Counties to Britain is, according to Adams & Co and the Irish gov't, a step toward (incredibly!) the reunification of Ireland!

[v]These five towns experienced no casualties; only property damage underwritten by the British Treasury.

Omagh victims' attorneys possess, I am informed, copies of eMail correspondence between Rupert and his MI5 handlers, including the case-closing ones cited above. Meanwhile I possess watertight evidence of MI5/FBI's Chicago crimes as follows: 1) The case-ending motion with its scientific proof that the evidentiary audiotape MI5/FBI had submitted against us in US Case 91CR911 had been criminally doctored, 2) copies of the signed Winnetka police report that, under agent Buckley's direction, framed me for the Langert family murders, and much other criminal evidence. It is conclusive, watertight, and is available to the Omagh victims' families.

The unraveling of the criminal conspiracy is already complete. The abundant, watertight evidence awaits prosecutors of integrity. Believe in America; these MI5/FBI criminals will be prosecuted. Their crimes are heinous. And it matters little where the prosecutions begin. Let's hope that US prosecutors are the first to uphold the law. Their prosecution of MI5/FBI/Buckley/Rupert for their crimes here will trigger prosecutions of their later crimes in Ireland. Similarly, Irish, or British, prosecutions of that gang for their involvement in Omagh to, as in Chicago, frame Irish republicans including McKevitt for it, will trigger prosecutions for their similar crimes here.

Our U.S. republic; is it still operative? Let's find out. Take copies of this to reporters, law enforcement agents, politicians and Justice Department officials. Demand that they do their jobs and honor their oaths to uphold the Constitution. I ask the same of decent people in Ireland and the Six Counties. Reach me at 312 664 7651 or fogarty@ix.netcom.com.

IMC says IRA is not a threat

The IRA does not present a terrorist threat or a threat to security forces, according to the latest Independent Monitoring Commission (IMC) report. The ninth IMC report, which deals with the program of security normalization published by the British government last year, restates the commission's belief that the IRA "has taken a strategic decision to follow a political path". The commission said that the organization had instructed its members not to engage in public disorder and added that any illegal activity engaged in by the organization or its members could now be effectively handled by the PSNI without any need for military assistance.

But the report warned none of the loyalist groups have taken political decisions similar to that of the IRA but said that it did not consider these groups a significant threat to the security forces.

The report claimed that the British government had fulfilled its commitments under the security normalization program. Measures undertaken as part of the normalization process have so far included a reduction in the number of British troops by nearly 900 to just over 9,200; the withdrawal of the army from five of the 10 joint PSNI/army bases; the closure of Forkhill Army Base, and the removal or demolition of a number of towers and observation posts.

Ireland's Minister for Justice Michael McDowell said that, "The IRA movement should respond by fully engaging with policing structures in the North".

Mayor Richard M. Daley joins the St. Patrick's Day Parade queen, Ms. Kelly Green, at the St. Patrick's Day Reception at the Chicago Cultural Center, 77 East Randolph, on Tuesday, March 7, 2006. Also pictured are (r to l): Mike Neary and Ed Cox representing the Irish American Heritage Center. Photo by: James Patterson, City of Chicago

Kennedy-McCain resolution

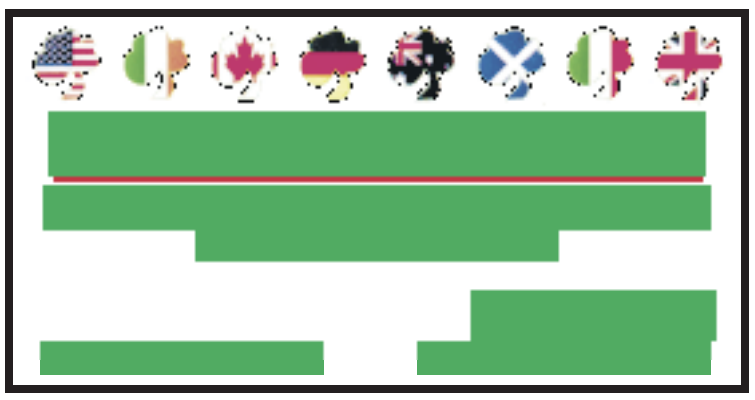
By Breandan McGee

Monday, February 27th, saw the City of Chicago's Finance and Human Relations sub-committee unanimously pass a resolution calling for comprehensive immigration reform. The sub-committee fully endorsed the Kennedy-McCain Initiative that offers a path to earned legalization and denounced the anti-immigrant Sensenbrenner Bill. Billy Lawless of Chicago Celts for Immigration Reform proposed the motion and addressed the sub-committee before the vote, highlighting the need for comprehensive immigration reform.

He was joined in support by the Rev. Michael Leonard and Cyril Regan of Chicago Irish Immigrant Support. Also present was Charles Sheehan Consul General of Ireland. The Irish voice on immigration reform has been gathering momentum over the last few weeks culminating in overt support from the Irish government for the Kennedy-McCain initiative.

Alderman Pat O'Connor then brought the motion before the City Council where he was co-sponsored by Aldermen Burke, Cardenas, and Ocasio. The motion backing the Kennedy-McCain initiative and denouncing the Sensenbrenner Bill was passed unanimously on Wednesday March 1st by a vote of 48-0. Kennedy-Mc Cain calls for earned legalization for the undocumented while at the same time strengthening the borders. It is a comprehensive and pragmatic Bill aimed at fixing the broken immigration system. Chicago City Council should be congratulated for taking an historic decision and for showing true leadership on this issue in a climate where prejudice and unfounded fears are being exploited.

Pictured At Hatwhorne Racecourse recently, (l to r): Billy Lawless, Mark McElduff, Senator Dick Durbin, Fr. Michael Leonard, Cyril Regan and Davy McCallion attend one of the numerous rallys in support of better immigration laws.



Loyalist to minister to peacemaker

by Cliff Carlson

On a recent visit to Chicago, Reverend Bill Shaw, a Protestant from North Belfast, explained his organization to Irish American News.

Reverend Bill Shaw grew up in a Loyalist area in Belfast, Northern Ireland and remembers what it was like before the "Troubles." "I didn't meet a Catholic properly until I was 17," said Bill.

His attachment to the church was nominal. He married at 22, and when his wife became pregnant they started attending church together because, as Bill puts it, "that's what you do!" Four years later, while listening to a particularly riveting sermon, he had a "conversion experience."

It wasn't long until he offered himself as a minister in the Presbyterian Church and was accepted. He graduated from Queen's University in Belfast and became a minister at a church on Shankill Road in 1989.

After three years Shaw was called to oversee two churches in Portadown. "It wasn't until I went to the Portadown area that all my neighbors were Catholic," said Bill. "In 1994 the Drumcree protests began in earnest. I came to see that for a Christian, the primary role is to be a peacemaker. That wouldn't have been apparent to me until several years into my stay in Portadown," he continued.

Reverend Bill Shaw, relaxing at the Chicago Athletic Club recently.

He applied to be the director of the 174 Trust, an organization with the goal of building bridges and good relations between all the communities in North Belfast. He was accepted and has been director since 1998.

The 174 Trust was established in 1982 and has set up shop in the Duncairn Complex, a former Presbyterian church. It is now a shared space, a neutral venue in North Belfast in the heart of one of the most divided and disadvantaged areas of Belfast.

The programs for which the 174 Trust is responsible include a pre-school playgroup, an after school youth group club, disability and youth projects, an Irish-language nursery school, an Alcoholics Anonymous group, a Senior citizens group, and more.

Young men in Reverend Shaw's youth group are ages fifteen to nineteen. "For most of them, I'm the only Protestant they know. I make sure they meet Protestants in football matches and other things we do," said Shaw. The kids on both sides have the same problems. The area is low on opportunities, such as higher education and jobs. While the South of Ireland has sorted things out, the North offers limited horizons to its youth in troubled areas.

By age 10, children in Northern Ireland take a test over a two-day period, one day in October and one in November. The top 25 percent are offered grammar school educations and will most probably go on to college. The other 75 percent attend secondary schools where the percentage going on to college is much lower. "Where I grew up in Sandy Row, almost no one went on to University, and that is still the case in both Protestant and Catholic communities now," said Bill. Shaw was the exception, going to college for two years when he was eighteen.

A group of Chicagoans from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds traveled to Belfast to see for themselves how the progam worked. Below is their story.

Pilgrimage of Peace and Reconciliation

By Vicki Reynolds and Brian Murphy

Northern Ireland is a place of paradox. There is indescribable beauty and also the presence of a very ugly wall. On either side of that wall are Christians, some who bravely work for peace and justice, and too many of whom don't act very Christ-like. There is great richness of hospitality but also entrenched poverty. Great work is being done in the area of reconciliation, while there are forces that benefit from the maintenance of the status quo.

Into this paradoxical place, pilgrims from Chicago's Fourth Presbyterian Church and Old St. Patrick's Catholic Church entered twice in the last eighteen months for journeys of peace and reconciliation. Our intent was to listen and to learn about what people in Belfast are doing to heal and reconcile from the violence of the "troubles" which have been going on for decades. These "troubles" revolve around issues of class, politics, economics and religion. Although the violence has subsided substantially, the "troubles" are still far from over. Because of this many individuals and groups are constantly working, praying, and hoping for reconciliation. Our groups wanted

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to learn through the stories and experiences of the people of Northern Ireland and transfer their learning to peace and reconciliation efforts in Chicago.

Our host in Belfast is Rev. Bill Shaw, a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland and the Executive Director of the 174 Trust (www.174trust.org). The Trust is an ecumenical agency that provides essential human services in a predominantly Catholic neighborhood.

While in Belfast we stayed with the Catholic Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, popularly known as the Redemptorists, at the St. Clement's Retreat and Conference, a quiet and beautiful place overlooking Belfast Loch. The Redemptorists are very instrumental in promoting peace and reconciliation at St. Clements and Clonard Monastery (www.clonard.com) in the Falls Road section of Belfast.

On Sunday mornings we attended services at both Catholic and Presbyterian churches. Congregations were incredulous but encouraged that Catholics and Presbyterians could get along and were even traveling and worshiping together. They were also amazed that we were there to listen, not to offer advice on how to deal with the "troubles," but simply to hear their stories.

The main focus of the trips is the work of the 174 Trust in the New Lodge neighborhood of North Belfast. In 1995, the Trust bought a former Presbyterian Church compound with multiple buildings and grounds. Today the manse, school building, and auditorium, known as the Duncairn Complex, are filled with educational and social activities for all ages. When begun, the locals were understandably dubious of the programs…especially because they were led by a Presbyterian. But with energy, love, and philanthropic support, Shaw is transforming the decrepit, graffiti-scarred complex into an indispensable resource for hundreds of local Catholic residents.

A group of Americans from Old St. Patrick's Church visit Bill Shaw, (third from right) in Belfast, 2004.

Shaw also showed us other areas of Belfast including the Shankhill, Falls Road, Ardoyne, Short Strand, Sandy Row, the Markets, and Tiger's Bay neighborhoods. On the Falls Road we visited the Sinn Fein Headquarters and Bookstore and had lunch at the Culturlann Cultural Centre (www.culturlann.ie). We also journeyed up the stunningly beautiful Antrim coast to the quaint village of Ballycastle for a visit with the folks at Corrymeela, a retreat center that brings people together from both sides of the "troubles" for healing, peace, and reconciliation (www.corrymeela.org).

We heard over and over again that forgiveness is not about forgetting the past, but it begins with creating a space for the telling of stories so that each of us can remember the past in a different way. Only then can we begin working together to build a peaceful future.

Although we didn't resolve the many paradoxes we encountered, we learned that what is necessary is to be OK with ambiguity, to listen to stories, and to "curl up in the question mark."

174 Trust operates out of Duncairn Complex, a former Presbyterian church.

Vicki Reynolds is the Director of Mission at the Fourth Presbyterian Church and Brian Murphy is a member of Old St. Patrick's and a graduate of the Catholic Theological Union.

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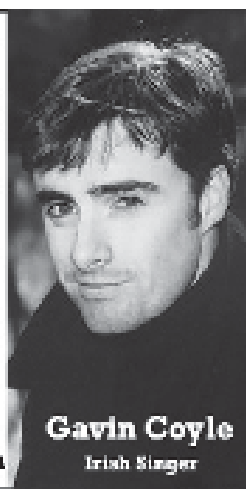

Gavin Coyle
Irish Singer

SHARING A PINT

By Scott Powers

Seanachai's Jacquelyn Flaherty

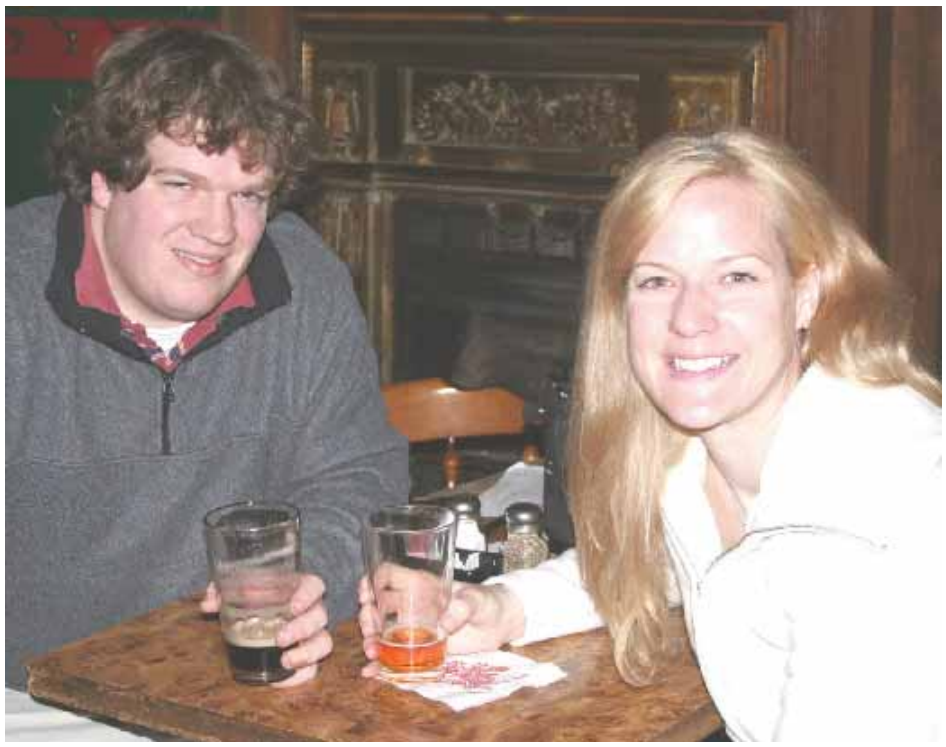
By Scott J. Powers

Jacquelyn Flaherty left me a voicemail to give directions to the Lincoln Park pub where we were supposed to meet. At the end of it she described herself to help me pick her out. "I'm pretty tall, blonde, no, (she laughs) I don't mean I'm pretty. I'm considerably tall." While it never crossed my mind she was calling herself pretty, it did hers. It bothered her that she might come off vain. She wanted to be sure I didn't assume that. It was my first clue she wasn't your stereotypical actress. After Sharing a Pint with Flaherty, the artistic director for the Seanachai Theatre Company, I understood how true that is.

Her goal in acting has never been fame. Sure, she would like the fortune, especially since she works three jobs, but Hollywood isn't a destination point for the 31-year-old. She's often the center of attention on stage, but she doesn't like to be off it. She even feels strange when she's recognized by someone in public for one of her acting roles. "That's weird," she said.

She has always had a desire to be someone else while growing up in Pittsburgh. When she saw Top Gun, she considered a career in aviation. The TV show LA Law made her think about becoming a lawyer. Eventually, she realized she didn't want to be those people; she wanted to pretend to be them. And so, her acting career began.

After finishing up grad school studies in Indiana University's Theatre and Drama program, she came to Chicago with her future husband in 1988. Two and a half years after arriving she landed a spot at Seanachai's production of The Pagans. It wasn't a group Flaherty knew of. Seanachai (Shaw-uh-kee) is a theatre company devoted to Irish storytelling. She said. "I grew up Irish and I know that's my family's background" (both of her parents' families are from Galway) "but I wasn't drawn to Irish drama."



Scott Powers and Jacquelyn Flaherty

To this day, her role in The Pagans, which was an award winning play, is among her favorite. She loved performing with Seanachai's group and they returned the feeling by asking her to join them. In 2003, she became the company's artistic director, which includes deciding what plays they will perform. Whistle in the Dark, which opened on March 25 at Victory Gardens Theatre, will be her third play as director. She also chose 2004's Drink Me and last year's Bold Girls. She acted in both past plays, but she is not performing in this year's. She has enough to juggle with bartending at Kincades, working as a legal assistant at Hill Gilstrap & Balson and trying to orchestrate the opening of Whistle in the Dark with press releases, costumes, sets and much more. She also just got done with a role in Shattered Globe's production of the comedy House of Blue Leaves.

"It's a little crazy right now," said Flaherty two weeks before Whistle in the Dark opened. "I do my brainwork while working at the law firm, working out. I'm writing press releases in my head while pouring beers. I forget who I'm supposed to be when I answer the phone sometimes. Now I'm an actress/legal assistant/artist director/bartender. I'll wake up at 3 a.m. remembering to do something. I'm trying to keep the plates spinning. But the play's like your baby and you only have it for eight weeks."

Flaherty isn't sure what her future holds. She would like to help Seanachai start producing two plays a year again. She hopes to start a family someday and possibly move back to the East Coast. As for acting, she plans on taking the summer off to spend time with her husband and ride her horse, Hillary, who she recently moved to a Chicago suburb from Pennsylvania.

She has fallen in love with Chicago and its theatre community. Being the face of Seanachai has also made her proud of the company's Irish affiliation. "We're known as the Irish theatre company," she said. "If you want Irish stories, you see us. It helps my last name is Flaherty. That makes it easier to be in charge."

* For more information about Seanachai and its upcoming performances, check out www.seanachai.org or call 773-878-3727.

** Have a comment or future profile suggestion for Sharing a Pint, contact Scott Powers at sjpowpow@yahoo.com.

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We Get Letters

Dear Editor,

On page 3 of IAN of the March 2006 issue, a write up by SDLP, DL Alasdair McDonnell really aggravated me. America has a massive problem with illegals. 20 million plus Hispanic illegals are sapping this great country's social services.

I love everything that is Irish. Although the family name is of German extraction, both families originate from County Cork!

As far as this co called "contribution to society" line of ____, that doesn't break any ice with me. My son started college at 13 years old. At 19, he had gotten his B.S. degree in Computer Sciences. He hasn't been able to get a decent paying job, or any job for that matter, because of HIB visa holders! The poor darling illegals aren't working their fingers to the bone in strawberry fields either! They are taking jobs away from Americans in the construction field, roofing, auto, industries to name a few.

You like our tourist dollars, but flagrantly flaunt our laws! If you make way for one group, you have to make way for all groups. That is not only insane, it's outright dangerous! I feel bad about the history of the Irish Americans. But, the law is the law. If it is not upheld, we have nothing. There is a right way to come to American and the illegals are not the right way, be they Irish, Hispanic, Polish or any other ethnic group. Both of our families came to America. There was no free education, health services, food, lodgings, or preferential treatment for them. They worked hard and after many years, if not decades, they finally gained acceptance and respect.

I cannot help the strife in Ireland. Indeed, understanding of it completely eludes me. I have tried for many years to understand the conflict between Catholic and Protestant, North and South. If you can't solve your differences in your home country, how can you expect to solve them here? The bottom line in fact is, Ireland's problems are not mine! America cannot and should not be expected to be the police force of the world. Or the resolvers of other countries internal problems. These are my views, and unfortunately, not my government's views.

I will vote against any kind of legislation that allows illegals to remain here. I am not alone in my personal viewpoint. Call it whatever you like, my feelings will remain unaltered.

Sincerely, Gail M Morser

Chicago Bro. Rice School tops in U.S.

For the second year in a row, Chicago Bro. Rice school in Chicago has been named one of the top schools in America. The prestigious honor was conferred on the south—side all boy High School by Acton Institute, a national Education organization that advocates quality education.

The popular high school has been educating Chicago youth for the past 50 years in the Mount Greenwood area, a pro—Irish neighborhood where one of the two big Chicago parades honoring St. Patrick is held. The South Side Parade has been held annually since 1971 when it was reactivated by neighborhood children led by popular, Chicago Police Capt. & Kilkennyman, Bill Hennessy. Prominent alumni include executives of major corporations, top government officials, well known lawyers, journalists, authors, professional athletes and religious leaders. Also, prominent Chicago political leaders, Tom Hynes, Sheriff Mike Sheahan and Jerry Joyce.

Brother Rice school is one of three CBS schools in Chicago. The others are Leo and St. Laurence, also located on the great south side. Four Irish Christian Brothers came from Ireland in 1920 and started Leo school in an Irish working class neighbor hood. It was an immediate success and attracted students from all over the city.

Bro. Rice and St. Laurence opened their doors in 1956 and also had immediate success, attracting enrollments of over 1800 students annually. The tremendous success of alumni's from the three CBS schools testify to the excellent teaching of the Brothers and teachers. Students from their schools go on to major U.S. university's and to higher honors in preparation for life's adventure beyond.

Students, alumni, teachers and parents are actively involved in the cause of canonization for Bro. Edmund Rice, a saintly Callan, Co. Kilkennyman, who founded the schools 200 years ago. He was beatified by the late Pope Paul II in ceremonies at the Vatican in 1996. More than 1500 alumni, students and parents marched in the two big St. Patrick Day parades in The Year of Edmund, 1994. They were accompanied by a beautifully decorated float depicting the Bro. Rice ancestral home in Callan.

In 1981, my late wife, Eileen and myself visited the Rice home and received a tremendous cead mile failte from members of the Callan past pupils led by Mr. Holden, the late Seamus O'Brien, Ned Egan, the late Bro. Carr and others. It was a memorable occasion. We also received a beautiful OLD Ireland plaque made by Ned Egan. Our sincere thanks to the committee and the O'Brien family, the late Seamus and his charming wife, Kathleen, for their wonderful hospitality over the years.

Dear Editor:

Despite the recent headlines and news accounts about jailbreaks, escaped prisoners and possible corruption in the Cook County jail, the legacy of Cook County Sheriff Michael Sheehan will be that of an honest and courageous public servant.

Sheriff Sheehan's character will remain unsullied. He has never personally profited from his years in public service nor has he ever allowed himself to be surrounded by questionable characters with ties to organized crime, a situation that was quietly tolerated by some of his predecessors in the came office. He has kept himself and his office above and far apart from the influence of corruptive forces.

I believe Sheriff Sheehan has tried his best under extremely difficult circumstances and budget constraints to administer an office that would reflect his own high standards of honesty, quality and efficiency. What-ever failings the office has suffered were hardly of his making or that of his immediate circle of appointees, all of whom have met the same rigorous standards of excellence Sheehan has demanded of himself.

The citizenry of Cook County has been well served by Mike Sheahan. He Is deserving of our praise and gratitude.

Sincerely yours, P.J. O'Dea

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Horoscopes

by Theresa Castro

ARIES: This is your month. You need to use this opportunity to branch out or to launch your pet projects. There are a few times when the window of opportunity is open to you. Now is that time. Strike while the iron is hot.

TAURUS: The planets Venus and Neptune are in your sector of hopes and dreams. This means that if you truly know what you want you can get it NOW! Don't hesitate to go to those who can help you in your cause. Press on!

GEMINI: The Month of April 2006 holds a lot of good opportunities for you. You can use this time to plant new seeds that will flourish through the year. Planet Mars will be there to help you. Forget some of the worries of the past.

CANCER: Cancer is symbolized by the crab which has a hard shell outside and a vulnerable core. You need to balance your sense of survival with your need for happiness. Say no to things that pressure you and give chances to people you think are insignificant. Embrace some changes in your world. These things make life worth living.

LEO: You don't need a whole lot of encouragement to toot your own horn but the planets of April 2006 will bring you legitimate reason to do so. Now don't step on other peoples' toes while chewing on your own foot to do so either. If you use the sincere and modest method to the top you could come out the winner.

VIRGO: This April the planets will help your assertiveness but may threaten to burn some bridges. There are always ways to negotiate sticky issues with a little diplomacy. Aggressive tactics do not work and Virgo persons aren't usually fond of going that route anyway. Keep in mind that Venus may not help you too much this month either.

LIBRA: You are being pressured by most of the planets in your sector of partners and open enemies. Can you imagine that these two entities are ruled by the same planets?

Well they are and some times there is a fine line between the two. Wouldn't you agree you need the same finesse to deal with both? This month you will feel like Daniel in the lions' den. Be like Dan - don't get bitten!

SCORPIO: You have tried a long time for people to take you seriously. One reason is that you are so darn private that you hide your light under a bushel. So as a consequence, you are not noticed. The planets of April will bring you some opportunities to count for something, at least at work. But you may have to try harder in your personal life.

SAGITTARIUS: You are a fire sign as are Leo and Aries. This means that the month of Aries, April is a good time to press ahead with your plans. If you want something you will have a better chance of seeing some fruits of your labors. Don't squander this moment!

CAPRICORN: You will find your energy level this month pressed to the limit. The majority of the planets of April 2006 will be in a challenging relationship to your sign.

Capricorn people are however equipped with the strength and tenacity to find solutions to their problems. Virtually no obstacle is too great for you dear Cap!

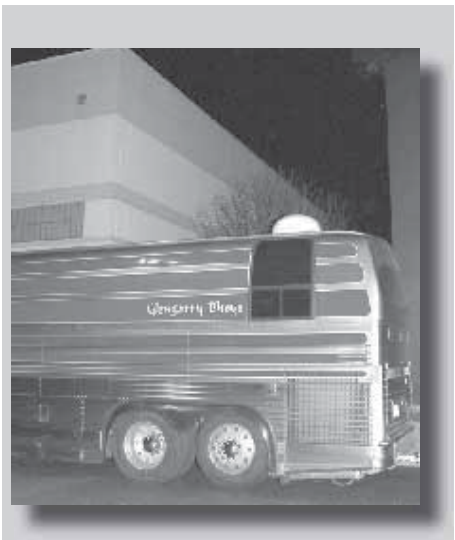
AQUARIUS: Many of you are finding happiness due to Venus and Chiron in your sign. This is great and you deserve this after so long without. If you are already happily attached watch out for sudden new additions to the family. If you're older look for surprise grand kids!

PISCES: You, like Aquarius above, may be in for a few surprises. Uranus, the planet of surprises, is in your house for an extended stay. Venus and Chiron are in your twelfth sector of hidden subjects. This time some hidden admirer may well be there. "Who is that?" you ask. You don't know.

Milwaukee crowns Miss Colleen

Milwaukee has its Irish Fest and St Patrick's Parade and now it has its Miss Colleen. On Saturday, March 4th, 21 year old Robin Fierro was crowned the first ever Wisconsin Colleen. The aspiring pediatric nurse is of both Irish and Spanish descent and hopes her victory will encourage bi-cultural women to explore their "Irishness". 13 year old Mary O'Connell of Bristol, WI was crowned Jr Colleen. She told the audience at Milwaukee's Marion Center of her Irish roots in Limerick and Mayo and that one of her relatives was a reported witness to Our Lady of Knock. The Little Miss Colleen title went to 10 year old Domonique Homan of Milwaukee who wore a beautiful white frock with shamrock trim. The emcee was Michele McCormack who is the morning anchor for CBS 58 in Milwaukee and a former Chicago Rose of Tralee.

The pageant director is Jennifer Hribar who decided to create the pageant at the urging of members of Milwaukee's Irish community. Her number is (262)835-4851 or you can contact her by email misscolleenpageant@excite.com



Glengarry Bhoys Band played at T. J. Maloney's in Merriville, Indiana during the festivities leading up to St. Patrick's Day. Things must be going well as they came complete with their own bus!

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Careers

by James F. Fitzgerald, CPA

Missing ingredients: Creativity and Leadership

A friend told me that my February column on risk taking resonated with him. He said that his $3 billion company has become incredibly risk averse. He has been persuaded that you have to avoid any possibility of failure. This mentality even affects how you are expected to make an internal presentation; the organization prescribes a very specific template that you must follow. He is convinced that such rigidity destroys creativity.

In David Halberstam's book, The Next Century, he postulates that the greatness of America is behind us, no longer ahead of us. I can't bring myself to believe that, but his points are compelling and well supported. We will become a Great Britain or France in the future; someone to be consulted but no longer a significant force by ourselves. Our international leadership will continue to diminish.

I am inclined to agree with Halberstam's concerns about our leadership. We seem to have become a country of "me-too's". If something works for you, that's the way it is going to work for us, too. I don't hear anyone talking about containing or channeling the increasing influence of India or China. Instead we seem to manifest a sense of the inevitable that they are going to dominate world business in future years. Our creativity seems to have become increasingly subordinated to the dictates of the Wall Street number crunchers. For example, sometimes sending manufacturing to third world countries makes financial sense. But you have to ask yourself, have we really explored all the domestic options? Or are we simply following the crowd overseas? Knee jerk reactions are not a reflection of leadership.

We need demonstrable leadership in this country. Regardless of who you want to blame for the aftermath of Katrina, there was a woeful lack of leadership. We all thought someone would be charged with getting the job done. But I don't see anyone in charge, do you? Instead, we had a whole cadre of bureaucrats striving to point their finger at others, so they didn't get blamed themselves. They aren't willing to take a chance. No one wanted to step up to the proverbial plate. Someone needs to decide on the path to be taken and then have the courage to stick to it.

I am reminded of an instance when I overheard my son's basketball coach address his team at half time. They were down 6-8 points. The coach said the other team was very athletic and very quick. "We can't out quick them. But we can out think them." He counseled his players to never pass on the first or second attempt. After the defender has leaped through the ceiling a couple of times, he is not likely to get up quite as well the third or fourth time. Why can't we Americans aggressively respond to the business threats we are facing in a similar fashion?

Many business leaders seem to view the world from a defensive mode as opposed to an offensive mode. Look at the Detroit automotive manufacturers. They are talking about closing plants and massive lay-offs. The Big Three have become a national embarrassment; they have been ignoring major issues like fuel economy, style, dependability and quality for years. Their answer to this crisis is to take away the livelihood of thousands of their long-term employees. Too bad, it's not personal; we need to feed the all important bottom line. That approach hasn't worked in the past, why should it work in the future? The quickest solution seized by American business is to lay off people. Why doesn't some business person say instead that we need to expand our sales in order to justify the number of people we currently employ? Nah, that would take some courage. And as we know, there might be risks on the path of courage. Let's play it safe.

Why don't the car manufacturers tell the financial wizards on Wall Street to get off their backs? We are going to reinvesting in our business for the next five years. Stay out of our way. Instead we see announcements like this one: Playboy profits fall but forecast drives stock up. In February, 2006, Playboy reported a 68% drop in their quarterly profit, but their upbeat forecast lifted the company's stock price. So it seems that we have reached the point where someone's guess of future earnings will be given more importance than the real drop in profit. Can't we handle even a bit of bad news? One has to ask, have we crossed the line into national lunacy?

One of the 17 leadership concepts that General Colin Powell enumerated in his Leadership Primer was decision making. When you reached 40-70% probability of success, he recommends taking action. But, I see business people becoming exceedingly conservative. Some want 90-95% certainty. Often by the time they reach that level of certainty, the window of opportunity has past. Anytime you meet a business executive who says that his company has never failed in a significant project, you need to wonder if they had reached 100% certitude before they took action.

We are frequently reminded that many of our military vehicles in Iraq are not properly armored. Also many of our soldiers do not have quality personal body armor. Why not? Because no one apparently is charged with the task of getting the job done. Aren't we the same country that turned out tanks, planes and ships by the thousands during World War II? Today, we can "kill" a target using an unmanned aircraft controlled by someone thousands of miles away, but we can't find a way to get armor on Humvees? Once we realized that our Humvees were not properly protecting our soldiers, we should have given someone the authority and responsibility to get the job done. Where is our leadership?

How many business people do we hear declaring the Enron situation as an affront to any decent business person? Where is the moral indignation of the business community? Instead we wait for the federal government to step in with the Sarbanes Oxley legislation. Some people say that the oppressive demands of this legislation will kill off more companies than it will save; its costs are so prohibitive. Perhaps people won't speak up against it because such criticism might point the spotlight at their company. Besides, who wants to be seen as supporting supposedly unethical business people?

As long as we continue down the path of conformity, we will spiral downward into a pool of mediocrity. Maybe we should prepare ourselves, in a global sense, by practicing "Do you want French fries with that?" Clearly, we are surrendering our leadership position in the world.

I thought the willingness to go against the tide defined us Americans. How wrong I was? So if you have an opportunity to exercise your leadership or creativity, seize it. It's (was) the American way. Carpe Diem.

James F. Fitzgerald is the president of James F. Fitzgerald & Associates, Inc., an Oak Brook based senior executive career transition and executive coaching firm. Phone number: 630-684-2204.(NEW) Email; jamesffitz@sbcglobal.net. Jim is on the Executive Committee of the Career Transitions Center of Chicago.

Washington's St. Patrick's Day Ball on February 25th, 2006 was a success with nearly 300 people in attendance. John P. Walsh received the Annie Moore Award. (L-R) John Morytko (Director of Operations for the Irish American Cultural Institute), Gerald P. McBride Chairman), John P. Walsh (Former Chairman/CEO and Annie Moore Honoree) and Consul General, Tim O'Connor.

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Review of the "Irish music school concert" on January 28, 2006

The Irish Music School held its first major concert and recital, "O Gluin go Ghluin" – Irish for "From Generation to Generation"- on January 28, 2005 and the evening was a smashing success. Over 500 people jammed into Gaelic Park's Emerald Ballroom to witness performances by Chicago area traditional musicians of all generations, with the musicians themselves ranging in age from 8 to 70+.

Proceeds from the event are intended to assist the school teaching programs and start up a slew of new classes on both the North and South sides of the city. The event's success was particularly sweet for the Irish Music School (IMS) instructors, Sean Cleland and Patrick Finnegan, and not just because of the strong attendance.

The school is founded on the philosophy that successful students should learn their music through examples provided by peers, instructors, and older musicians, particularly senior immigrant musicians who have been playing music since childhood. The school is a collaborative effort among a bunch of different Chicago area Irish music teachers. Tunes are taught by aural transmission (i.e. "by ear") in a variety of learning situations ranging from structured classroom settings and private lessons, to the rough and tumble of a pub session; instructors make extensive use of recordings instead of relying on transcriptions. Many students practice together outside of school functions, and it is not unusual for one or both parents of a child student to attend lessons or sessions as participants. Several of the young up and comers in the group have a parent or older sibling that plays traditional music, and some of the parents played traditional music as children and decided to re-visit the experience. The concert provided a resounding affirmation of this approach.

The atrium and the Emerald Ballroom itself were both buzzing well before the show began. Many stalwarts of traditional music in Chicago were in attendance, including: Brendan Williams, originally from County Clare, Ireland, a fine concertina player and father of John, the famous concertina, accordion, and flute player; Tom O'Malley, originally of County Mayo, a much respected and admired accordion player; Jimmy Coyle, a grand accordion player from County Mayo and past chairman of the Irish Musicians association, John Daly, an outstanding fiddler originally from County Cork and the new executive director of the Irish American Heritage Center; and several others soon to be mentioned below.

There was a slight delay as the guests mingled, bought refreshments, admired the various silent auction items, and settled into their seats. In keeping with the theme of the event and the school's philosophy, the lead off act was none other than a group of the most experienced traditional musicians in town, dubbed "The Irish Musicians". They were: Frank Burke, fiddle; Patrick Cloonan, button accordion; Albert Neary, wooden flute; Joe O'Shea, button accordion; Jimmy Thornton, wooden flute and button accordion; Dennis Cahill, guitar; and Tommy Masterson, drums. The group played old-fashioned, lively, yet unhurried dance music with lots of bounce and life. The most memorable number from their set was a medley of reels commencing with "George White's Favorite", proceeding to "The Bird in the Bush", and concluding with a composition by Galway flautist Vincent Broderick, "The Tinker's Daughter"; this arrangement was especially full of what quality musicians call "lift", a subtle swing that compels even those born with two left feet to try a step or two.

Next up were Sean and Clodagh Ryan, a husband and wife duet on flute and fiddle accompanied by Dubliner Patrick Broaders. Sean is a Chicago native who grew up playing traditional music on wooden flute and uilleann pipes, learning tunes from Chicago stalwarts like the late Joe Shannon and Kevin Henry, while Clodagh, nee Boylan, is from County Derry and has toured with the much-respected band Providence. The two met in Ireland while students and maintained a correspondence and friendship for several years before tying the knot. Their accompanist, Pat Broaders, has been living in Chicago since the early 90s and is an outstanding uilleann piper in addition to being one of the finest Irish bouzouki players and singers in Irish trad today. The trio offered up a fiery display of old favorites and some newer material. Ryan's powerful flute playing, Clodagh's tough, rowdy fiddling, and Pat's droning, rhythmic backing on his "bouzar" (a guitar-shaped bouzouki) created a pleasing mix of sounds, with plenty of clarity, rhythmic force, and spaces for the tunes to breathe.

Next up were the Chicago-based trio bohola, named after the small village in County Mayo, Ireland. Sean Cleland (fiddle), a lifelong devotee of Chicago Irish traditional music and one of the chief instructors and director of the Irish Music School, joined band mates Jimmy Keane (piano accordion) and Pat Broaders for a rousing performance. Keane's roots in Irish music run very deep: his father was a Connemara sean-nos singer, while Jimmy grew up playing traditional music with many of his father's friends on the south side of Chicago in the 1960s and 1970s. Jimmy himself is a world-renowned virtuoso on the piano accordion winning all Ireland competitions a record setting 6 times - no mean feat. Cleland's illustrious musical history includes his founding of the acclaimed band The Drovers in 1988, which he lead for 10 years and through 4 great albums. The Drovers were featured in two big Hollywood movies, Backdraft in 1992 and Blink in 1994.

The trio wove Broaders' gritty, soulful ballads with hypnotic, foot-tapping medleys of dance tunes to great effect. The usual bohola technique of dissecting a tune into its most basic rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic components, changing dynamics, then returning to the tune for a rousing finish, was on full display. The music sparkled with life and energy, and it was thoroughly entertaining to witness their spontaneity, focus, and obvious enjoyment of their art.

After a brief pause, it was time for the students to perform, and after such tough opening acts, they had their work cut out for them, but they didn't disappoint.

First up were the 2005 Midwest Fleadh Grúpaí Cheoil champions. The Fleadh Cheoil (flah key-ol) is a national competition organized by Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann, an international organization founded in Ireland in 1951 to preserve Irish traditional music and dance. Solo, duet, and small ensemble competitions encompass the majority of the Fleadh's events. Grupai Cheoil is an ensemble competition piece in which the students play an aesthetically pleasing assortment of different tune types and perform them as well as possible; the effect is reminiscent of scored film music, where an air might transform into a march, then into a jig, etc. The kids gave a terrific accounting of themselves and demonstrated handily why they were the judge's selection for the Midwest region champions.

Next up, some of the parents of IMS students joined their children on stage for a few tunes. The IMS encourages parents, especially those who already play traditional music, or grew up playing it, to attend classes with their children and learn the same tunes. This helps to reinforce good practice habits and gives parents a fantastic opportunity to spend quality time with their kids. It also helps to strengthen the community of traditional musicians in Chicago. Bringing generations together for some tunes helps to create the kind of environment that allows traditional music to flourish, an environment where traditional music making as an activity is not the exclusive preserve of a supremely talented few, but a normal, every day leisure activity shared and enjoyed by many.

Turning back to the kids for a moment, the next few performances featured duets and small ensemble performances by siblings and small groups of students who had become friends while participating at IMS classes and sessions. Sharing music with others can build lasting friendships, while the friendly competition of keeping up with a sibling or a group of friends also is a powerful motivation to practice. No less than 7 different groupings of students, featuring 18 of the school's students, participated in the segment, displaying cooperation, musicality, and maturity well beyond their years. It was a truly heartwarming thing for any devotee of traditional music to witness.

On a similar note, the very youngest and newest members of the school, ranging from age 8 to 11, were rounded up and given their moment in the spotlight, and ac-

quitted themselves well. Not a hint of nerves was in evidence as they played through their tunes, and the crowd went wild for them, warmly applauding their efforts.

The IMS also teaches adults and many of its adult students were there in support of the school and its efforts. After a brief pause to sort chairs and microphone placements on stage, the entire student body of the IMS joined all the other participants onstage for one last blast. There must have been close to 50 people playing together, and it was a fitting conclusion to the evening.

Even after the concert wound down and most of the guests left, a small but still multi-generational group formed a circle in a corner of the Emerald Ballroom and continued playing tunes until the lateness of the hour compelled their departure.

The IMS is highly encouraged by the turnout and hopes to make this concert an annual event. Those interested in enrolling a child, rekindling their own interest in traditional music, or giving the fiddle, whistle, flute, accordion, or other traditional instruments a try can contact school director, Sean Cleland at sean@seancleland.com or (773) 412-6166. The school website is www.irishmusicschool.com.

Cook County Treasurer Maria Pappas honored the Irish Children's Fund for its dedication to the well being of children of Irish descent. Meeting in her downtown office are, from left: photographer Victor Skrebneski; John Walsh, president of the Irish Children's Fund, Inc; Mary Jo Porter, of the Fund; and Treasurer Pappas. Pappas said the Fund has worked for Irish children everywhere, setting a fine example of generous giving and pride in heritage.

Martin Duffy Master of Scotch and Colm Egan, Master Distiller Old Bushmills Distillery shown here at a recent tasting held at Chief O'Neill's Restaurant.

New Shaw Festival season 2006

Shaw Festival Theatre selects program for 2006 season Niagara-On-The-Lake, Ont: The 2006 season at the Shaw Festival Theatre here will feature two outstanding plays by George Bernard Shaw: "Arms and the Man" written in 1894, and "Too True to Be Good" written in 1931, according to Artistic Director Jackie Maxwell in her fourth season at the famed Canadian theatre. Both productions will be staged at the math festival theatre.

In announcing the 2006 season, Ms. Maxwell noted: "There is so much to celebrate in the new playbill. It represents for me what the Shaw Festival is really about: exploring the many worlds of our dramatic mandate, taking full advantage of the diverse talents and imaginations of our brilliant ensemble, commissioning new plays and adaptations, and celebrating the wit and wisdom of Bernard Shaw whose irreverent spirit is at the heart of all we do."

The 2006 schedule includes ten productions, which will run from March 30 to November 19 in the Festival Theatre, the Court House Theatre, and the Royal George Theatre.

Two plays by the Festival's namesake are re-examined in the new season. Jackie Maxwell will direct Shaw's comic skewering of heroism and "higher love" Arms and the Man, while Jim Mezon will explore the extravagant To True to Be Good.

Other Productions

The Festival Theatre program will also include High Society, the musical adaptation of "The Philadelphia Story," featuring the memorable tunes of Cole Porter, and Arthur Miller's stunning drama The Crucible.

The Court House stage will feature the world of Eva Peron's Argentina with the contemporary play The Magic Fire. Also on the playbill will be Henrik Ibsen's Rosrmersholm, and Love Among the Russians based on Anton Chekhov's work.

At the Royal George Theatre playgoers may attend The Heiress, adapted from Henry Jame's novella "Washington Square," and The Invisible Man, a world premiere of an adaptation of H.G. Wells' scientific adventure. Filling the bill for the 2006 season will be Design for Living by Noel Coward.

For a free brochure, write: Shaw Festival Theatre, Box 774, Niagara—on—the—Lake, Ont., Canada LOS 1JO; or call: (800) 267-4659.

Irish Govt $30k Grant to Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform

The Executive Director of the Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform, Kelly Fincham (pictured), welcomed the announcement from the Irish Government that it had awarded a $30,000 grant to the ILIR. Speaking from the organization's offices in New York, Ms Fincham said that the grant highlighted the importance of the ILIR, which has been set up to mobilize grassroots Irish American support for immigration reform and to lobby the US Government on behalf of the estimated 40,000 undocumented Irish in the US. ILIR has already attracted the support of leading Irish Americans as well as cultural and sporting groups such as the AOH and GAA, and intends to engage Irish Americans in the immigration debate. The ILIR will be holding a series of town meetings across the US over the coming weeks. Contact: Kelly Fincham, Executive Director, ILIR, 718-598-7530 or email kfincham@irishlobbyusa.org

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CHICAGO Gaelic News

BY PAT HENNESSY

ST. PATRICK HONORED IN CHICAGO

As they have done in other years since the start of the parades in 1953, Chicagoans honored Ireland's national Apostle St. Patrick with two big celebrations and colorful parades on the weekend before the feast day March 17th. The official one led by Mayor Richard H. Daley and Consul General For Ireland in Chicago, Corkman, Charles Sheehan, and dignitaries from Ireland, including Mr. Michael Ahern, Minister for Trade and Commerce, and other prominent Chicago political leaders, paraded on Columbus Drive, adjacent to beautiful Lake Michigan, to the cheers and well wishes of an estimated 300,000 spectators.

The big parade consisted of over 200 unita, including some of the best marching bands in the Midwest, colorful floats and marching units from almost every Irish-American organization in the city, including Irish traditional dancing students from several Chicago schools. It was a fitting tribute to St. Patrick and another great day for the Irish in Chicago.

The following day Sunday, crowds of people began flocking in to the assembly area from an early hour. And passing through the beautiful neighborhoods of Morgan Park and Beverley Hills they were greeted with the tri-color flag of Ireland and other Irish decorations in almost every home. The ideal weather brought out record crowds and the lilt of the pipers tuning up for the big march-past made for a real Irish setting. And by the time that the famed StockYards Pipers Band stepped off to begin another great tribute to Ireland's favorite saint, more that an estimated 400,000 people had jammed the line of march from 103rd Street on Western Ave to Kennedy Park at 115th. Street.

Again over 180 marching units participated including some great marching bands; Bro. Edmund Rice/ McCauley, Morgan Park High school, Midlothian Pipe Band, Northwest Indiana Pipe, Pioneer Drum and Bugle, the famed Shannon Rovers, St. Germaine High, Gaelic Park with a fine marching unit led by the hard working Harry Costello, and a prize winning float by the Morrissy family, Kerry Association with the beautiful "Rose of Tralee" Queen. Other well known participants included, Young Irish Fellowship Club, "Wee Folks of Washtenaw and Talman" who reactivated this parade in the late 70's, Chicago—Irish Emigrant Support Group, and well known family Clans, The Daley's, Sheahans, The Hynes, Duighan Clan, Dwan Clan, The Gainer Clan, and the Hennessy Clan, marching in every Southside parade since 1953.

Lisa Madigan popular Attorney General for the State of Illinois with her contingent was well received along the line of march. Other well-know personalities included Congressman, Dan Lipinski, Judy Topinka, Treasurer for the State of Ills. and John Daley, County Commissioner. Irish Dancing schools included in the celebrations; Trinity, Jerry O'Loughlin and World Academy School of Dancing.

This parade was another great success for the hard working committee led by Ms. Sheehan, coordinator, Pat Hendry and others. Over the years it has developed into one of the finest most colorful community celebrations/ parade in the country, honoring as it does so well and with so much respect for the saint and Ireland, it makes all of us proud to participate. Long may this dedication remain. It was the dream of the founders back in 1953 to produce such an excellent organized community St. Patrick Day celebration on the great south side of Chicago. It has come to pass. Beannact De, a cairde gael ar an oibre. (God bless you Irish friends on your work).

GAELIC PARK FESTIVAL QUEEN

More then 30 beautiful colleens, one prettier than the other and even with more college degrees, participated in the queen contest at Gaelic Park recently. A full house at the weekly Celtic Supper gave them a great re-ception and awaited the result with a lot of speculation and lots of anticipation. Coordinator of the contest the popular Kay Knightly had everything in readiness and the contest, apart from a long wait for the result, went smoothly.

Three judges interviewed and in the end selected Jennon A Bell, a beautiful 23 year old resident of Evergreen Park, with a BA, in English and broadcasting, and presently employed at Weber Shandwick. Another beauty, Kathleen May, 23 year old resident of Willow Springs, placed second. She also is a World champion Irish dancer, with a Bachelors degree in business. Our congratulations to both. They proved worthy winners.

Of the others, who mostly were college graduates or students, each and every one of them is also to be congratulated. Any one of them could have won this contest. They were all beautiful and talented and worthy of the prestigious crown. Unfortunately, only two could be chosen.

Dynamic President of Gaelic Park Board of Directors, John Griffin congratulated all the winners and contestants and thanked Kay Knightly, the three judges and all those who had helped to make the event so successful. It was indeed another very well conducted contest. Thanks also to the hard working Manager of Gaelic Park, the charming lass from Mayo who directs the day-to-day oper-ations of this great enterprise, Marian Ryan, who was here, there and everywhere making sure that everything went according to plan. It was a fun evening for the more than 300 who attended.

CONGRATS FR. KEVIN

Our heartiest congratulations are extended to fellow columnist and good friend Fr. Kevin Shanley, O.Carm., named one of 100 top Irish—Americans by the "Irish—American Magazine", published in New York. He was honor-ed with others at the Gala Awards Dance recently held at the New York Athletic Club.

It is indeed a very prestigious award to be named top of such a distinguished group of Irish—Americans, but our own Fr. Kevin can hold his own any day with the best. The chosen ones come from various fields; political life, labor, entertainment, business, history, religion, entertainment, law enforcement and related activities.

But Fr. Kevin's dedication to his religious life in addition to so many other subjects, such as writing, teaching in Irish and English, love of Ireland and its causes, among others qualify him to not only be nominated, but to be chosen among the top. Coming from a fine Irish Nationalist background he is well equipped. His late father, Michael, who participated in the glorious Easter Rising of 1916 and the heroic struggle for freedom 1919—'22, taught him well and he has never missed an opportunity to promote Ireland's rightful cause for freedom and reunification.

We join with all our readers in extending best wishes to Fr. Kevin. He richly deserves this high honor and we all rejoice in this much coveted award for his life long dedication. Beannact De ar an oibre, a cairde agus beannact De leat.

CHICAGO IRISH REGROUP FOR IMMIGRATION REFORM

In union with other big U.S cities, New York, Boston, and San Francisco, Irish immigration reform groups are getting together in support of the McCain—Kennedy legislation now pending in the U.S Senate. The two senators from Illinois, Dick Durbin and Barack Obama, although in our corner, need to be kept reminded again and again that this is the better of the many bills presently floating through congress. The plight of the "undocumented" is a serious problem that should be remedied this year, not only in the interest of our brothers and sisters, but also in the interest of the security of our country.

The Sennebrenner-King bill recently passed in the House of Representatives will do little to improve the problem and would even make "felons" of most "undocumented". Hopefully, wiser heads will prevail and a committee of Senate and House will adopt most of the McCain-Kennedy bill. But that will not happen unless Irish groups keep the pressure on congressmen and senators until a good piece of legislation is signed into law by the president.

The Irish Reform group in the 80's did a great job in securing over 60,000 amnesty visas for our "undocumented" at that time. But unfortunately, although it served its purpose, it did nothing to help "handicapped" countries like Ireland, England, France and other such nations. It failed to get a bill on the books that would ensure that "handicapped" countries could compete fairly for the U.S. visas. For example, only a few hundred U.S.

visas are available for Irish emigrants annually, whilst other countries are allowed thousands.

That is the crux of the problem as it relates to the Irish and other nationals. The present law gives no consideration to the large contribution made by earlier Irish emigrants in the building and defense of our country and it does not recognize that the pattern of Irish emigrants is usually a single person whilst emigrants from other countries travel as whole families. That part of the immigration law needs to be remedied.

Our congratulations to hard working Fr. Michael Leonard leader of the Chicago Immigration Support and his many workers including the ageless Maureen O'Looney who worked hard on this problem with the first Irish Immigration Committee back in the 60'when the Old National Quota System was abolished and the new law came into effect. The committee got a bill passed in the House but it died in the U.S senate for want of support, even from some Irish—Americans. Our congratul-ations also to the newly formed Chicago Celts for Immigration Reform, who are doing a great job also. For more information call Fr. Leonard at 312-337-8445 or call, 773-677-5341. Beannact De ar an oibre.

BRO EDMUND RICE MASS-MAY 6

Bro. John Bornbos invites all friends of the Bro. Edmund Rice cause for Canonization to attend annual Eucharist celebrating his beatification on the feast day, May 6th, at St. Xaviers University, McDonaugh chapel starting at 5:00pm. A reception wil1 be held afterwards. He extends a cead mile failte to all.

This will be the 10th anniversary mass since he was beatified by the late Pope John Paul II. Beatification is the next step to canonization. The saintly Kilkenny born Br. Rice was the founder of the Irish Christian Brothers and dedicated followers of his now teach in over 30 countries throughout the world including three in Chicago; Bro. Rice High school, St Laurence and Leo, which was the first one to open in 1920 at 79th, and South Sangamon, on the great Southside of the city. For more information call Bro. John at 773-445-4988.

TONY DESANTIS- A GREAT HUMANITARIAN

Once again as he has done over the years, at least since I first met him in the late 50's, over fifty years ago, famed Chicago area showman, Tony DeSantis has contributed a million dollars to Catholic Charities, to help feed the hungry of his beloved city, Chicago. This is the largest sum of money ever received by this great Catholic organization in its 89th year of helping the poor of the city.

Birthplace of Edmund Rice, September 1981 (L-R) Ignatius O'Neill (also born in the house); Liam O'Halloran, President Callan C.B.S. Past Pupils Union; Pat Hennessy; Rev. Brother Carr, Superior, Callan C.B.S.; Eileen Hennessy; Rev Brother Phelan, C.B.S.; Seamus O'Brien, P.P.U.; Sean Holden P.P.U.; Patrick O'Neil (last resident of the house); Rev. Brother Moloney C.B.S. Curator; Jim Brady, Kilkenny, Ned Egan, Callan.

Fellow columnist, Fr. Michael Boland, hard working administrator of this fine organization said, he was "deeply grateful" for the gift. "It allows us to continue one of the main reasons people turn towards Catholic charities, because they are hungry." Catholic Charities serve almost five mi11ion meals every year through its shelters, soup kitchens and senior lunch programs in Cook and Lake counties, Fr. Boland explained.

Hale and hearty at 92 years of age, Mr. DeSantis, said he always wanted to contribute towards his church, especially now when it is under so much fire from the media. "With all the bad press Catholics are getting today, a little on the bright side might help," he said.

…continued to page 54

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Gaelic News (cont'd)

I was honored to meet Tony DeSantis through my brother Bill, who was Police Captain of the Southwest side Gresham, during the 50's. Back then as owner of Drury Lane at 9500 So. Western he promoted many fine shows featuring great Irish—American actor, Pat O'Brien and his charming wife Eloise, and many others. He never missed an opportunity of helping different charitable organizations helping the poor and is even today one of the finest humanitarians that I have ever met. We join with Fr. Bland in thanking this fine Southsider for his wonderful work. Tony DeSantis is a fine example to all of us to support Catholic Charities, whenever we can. Beaannact De ar an oibre, Tony and Fr. Michael Boland.

CHICAGO GAELIC CONVENTION

A record large crowd of stockholders and members attended the annual Gaelic Park Convention held recently and heard officer after officer speak in glowing terms of another very successful year. They spoke also of the many different programs, including the playing of Ireland's national pastimes, hurling and Gaelic football, Irish dancing, music, drama, Irish concerts, including "Ireland On Parade" and many other traditional Irish pastimes.

Re—elected president for another year hard working John Griffin, and the board's dynamic Secretary, Mary Riordan, detailed the many activities that are programmed during the year and the many fine officers who promote and conduct them in a professional manner. Gaelic Park is indeed a beehive of activity. No matter the day and time you visit, there is something very interesting scheduled and you are always welcome to attend or participate.

Conducting the day-to-day business of the park is perfor-med in a real professional manner by the charming Mayo lass Marian Ryan, aided by popular and hard working Tim Tobin. Congratulations on another great year as Chicago Gaeldom looks forward to another exciting schedule on the playing field. The busy season opens in April and runs through September. See you at Gaelic Park every Sunday from 2—6pm.

DID A FAILED IRISH AMBUSH CHANGE THE COURSE OF HISTORY?

Our thanks to good friend and reader of our magazine, and staunch Irish nationalist, Mike Geraghty, who sent along a fine story written by Paul Craven, concerning an unsuccessful Irish ambush that might have changed the course of history in Africa and Asia.

The central figure Arthur Ernest Percival was educated in the best of English tradition. He went to all the top schools before he enlisted In the Kings Army. He was reputed to have served with "distinction" and was awarded all kinds of decorations; the MC and the Croix de Guerre in the first World War and he won more decorations.serving in Russia.

Finally, he was sent to Ireland in 1920 where he was reported to have "terrorized the people of Bandon, Co. Cork" and even 'murdered' Irish prisoners when he commanded the infamous Essex Regiment. Tom Barry, leader of the West Cork Flying Column, prepared an ambush for Percival and his motley crew, but unfortunately the English convoy went another route.

He was finally transferred from Ireland in 1922, promoted to Major and sent along to Malaya in an attempt to stop the Japanese onslaught. Here he displayed another part of his character, incompetence and stupidity. As the Japanese approached Singapore he ignored advice from his engineering officer to have his soldiers dig trenches and build fortifications. Instead he dispersed his forces, concentrating them in one place. As a result, when the enemy approached they encountered only weakened defenders and as a result Singapore fell.

The result was a disaster for the British on February 15, 1942. It was a loss that could be compared to Britain's loss of her American Colonies to George Washington in 1781. Percival was forced to surrender under a white flag and William Joyce, Irish radio commentator said that the Japanese troops celebrated by singing "The Boys of Kilmichael" which commemorated Tom Barry's successful ambush a month after his failed attempt on Percival in Bandon.

Percival retired after being released from the prisoner of war prison in 1946 and wrote a book, "The War In Malaya" which was released in 1949, the same year Tom Barry published his own book "Guerrilla Days In Ireland". Percival immediately threatened to sue Barry for his mention of "Terror—squads", but he soon withdrew his suite after Barry informed him that it would have to be tried in Ireland. He then wanted to meet with Barry but was informed that any such meeting would only happen at the point of a gun. The invitation was again withdrawn.

As a result of Percival's defeat at Singapore the event is generally regarded as having changed the colonial history in Asia and Africa. But historians love to speculate, "what—if" Barry's ambush had succeeded in 1920? Could the Japanese forces have been halted by a more competent General than Percival? Did the failed Irish ambush change the course of history? What do you think? Give us your opinion. Write Pat Hennessy, Irish American News, 7115 West North Ave, Suite 327, Oak Park, IL. 60302.

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Sporting Log

By Sean Og. O Ceallachain

The GAA are looking into the flood lighting of their super stadium, Croke Park, when international soccer and rugby will be played there in 2007. But GAA officials have closely observed the sport of cricket and baseball to determine what specifications they need for the proposed floodlights in Croke Park. With the hurling ball incredibly hard to see when it is lofted high in the air at night, and the TV coverage of floodlit hurling games not always up to scratch. Because of the lighting, the stadium manager Peter McKenna wants a state of the art system for his arena.

He has chosen a wattage of 2000 lux to enable floodlit hurling to be played and seen properly. "For the floodlights we require, the closest analogy to hurling would be baseball and cricket." McKenna said " and we're probably closest to cricket with the wide pitch they use. " In the RDS in Ballsbridge, Dublin, they use 450- 500 lux which works well for rugby, but it is a bit gloomy on TV. Up to 1250- 1400 lux is used in the English Premiership soccer, but for a fast ball game you need to go higher again. We're looking at 2000 lux for the game of hurling." Such specifications for the lights were listed in the planning applications for the new system that was sent in by Croke Park last week.

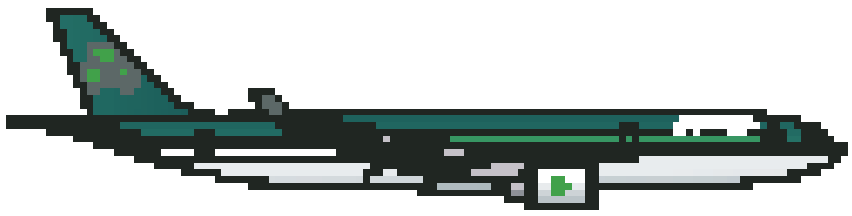
In the meantime there are calls for the GAA to explore the possibility of establishing its own TV channel. Munster Council chairman Sean Fogarty is convinced the suggestion is indeed very valid, recalling that his Council had to reprint 50,000 tickets for a provincial championship game last year after a change was made to the starting time to facilitate RTE, the Irish television channel. He believes the time for change has come. "That made us look unprofessional," he said. "2 RTE paid for the reprinting but we had the tickets handed out, had to recall them back and hand out new ones. It was a waste of manpower and a waste of time and gave the impression that we didn't know our jobs."

He says there would be no problem filling a GAA channel's schedule. Fogarty maintains that they could have championship, Tommy Murphy, Nicky Rackard, Christy Ring Cups, and ladies football and camogie games on air all the time. He recalled a recent schools game where one particular TV station took over the sideline with vast broadcast equipment and the TV company was not asked to pay any money for coverage rights. He feels that TV companies have been getting too much out of the GAA for too long.

Liam Hassett admitted that the All-Ireland football final last year against Tyrone had a profound influence on his decision to quit inter county football. Hassett, Kerry's captain when they won the All-Ireland in 1997, revealed the hunger for football at the top level did not return in him for the first time, and the pace of the all-Ireland final convinced him that it was time to give it up. He said "I think that last year while I had a good year up to the final. I think I was probably found out in the game. Things did not go well for me on the day and I found it difficult enough. Even though you might have the experience, when you don't have the legs on All-Ireland day, it shows up and it is time to be realistic," he added. The genial Hassett also mentioned that he spoke to team manager Jack O'Connor earlier in the year and was told to go away and think about it before making any decision. During the competitive stages of the National League he claimed some satisfaction out of the matches, but he still had periods of doubts. The All-Ireland that year subsequently convinced him that his inter county career was coming to an end.

Kerry have also lost towering forward Michael Quirke who has dropped out of the panel. Dara O Cinneide joins Hassett on the retirement bench while Willie Kirby has yet to announce whether he will continue for another season. Kerry were not very impressive against Offaly in their National League game at Tralee. Team manager Jack O'Connor puts that down to the present heavy weather that is taxing the stamina of the players. O'Connor said "We played very poorly at times against Offaly. But we are not pushing it in training. We are doing only one night a week until the evenings stretch a bit longer," he said. Missing from the side at present is the great Seamus Moynihan. He has returned to club matches but claims that he is still not fit enough for inter county football. In spite of the fact that Kerry are without a number of their top players the bookmakers still make them 9 to 4 favorites to win the National football League title.

Another star hurler unable to make up his mind whether to return to the game is Tommy Dunne of Tipperary. At present he has resisted all attempts to lure him back to the Tipperary hurling team. One man who would like to bring him back is team manager Babs Keating. The former 'great' believes that Dunne, who captained Tipperary to their only All-Ireland success of the last fifteen years, has still the talent to make the team. The Toomevara player says he hasn't ruled anything out or in, but needs more time to think about it. Dunne is a great player, and even at this stage of his career would give Tipp an enormous boost for the white heat of Munster championship hurling. It was Babs Keating who first discovered Dunne away back in 1993 when he was the county's team manager. He could do so again in 2006.



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