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...story page 12

Photo: Tom Cruze,
Chicago Sun-Times

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Molly & Terry McHugh, Sitting: John & Lorretta Neena, Maggie & Al Neilson, Billy McTighe III, John & Kathy Neena, Mary Kate McTighe.



Hillary O'Brien, Mary McTighe, Peggy & Johnny Lattner, Maureen & Glenn Karlowicz, Dan & Michele Malone, Sean Ferrell.

Shannon Rovers Dinner Dance

Held at Soldier Field on October 21, 2006 the Shannon Rovers played to their own pack house! Pictures of the event are also on page 47.

Michael Flatley recovering from viral illness

Michael has been released from the hospital and is now resting at Castlehyde.

Michael Flatley has been released from the hospital and is now resting at his home, Castlehyde, two weeks after being treated for an unspecified illness.

The 49-year-old dancer and choreographer left The London Clinic with wife Niamh O'Brien, telling reporters, "I am on the mend."

Flatley's Web site states that the 20-date European tour of his "Celtic Tiger" dance show has been canceled.

Get well soon Michael!

lifetime achievement award for Hume

Former SDLP Leader John Hume has expressed his gratitude at being presented with a lifetime achievement award from the Political Studies Association in London.

Mr. Hume said, "I am very honoured to receive this award. I don't see it just as an award for myself, instead I see it as a strong expression of support for our peace process."

The Political Studies Association (PSA) in London presented Mr. Hume with a lifetime achievement award at a ceremony in London. The PSA is an organisation made up of politics professors, lecturers and researchers.

Their citation said: "Much of his political thinking was incorporated into the Good Friday Agreement, a visionary deal which embodied John Hume's commitments to peace, power-sharing and political pluralism."

"His Nobel Peace Prize speaks volumes for what he achieved, but the judges felt it important that the British political science community also formally recognised John Hume's magnificent contribution to peace and justice in Northern Ireland."

Mr. Hume is also a former winner of the Martin Luther King Award and the Gandhi Peace Prize as well as a host of honorary degrees from around the world.



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Dempsey wins Governing Magazine award

Mary Dempsey is among the winners of Governing Magazine's Public Official of the Year awards for 2006, given in recognition of outstanding achievement at the state and local level.

As Commissioner of the Chicago Public Library, Mary Dempsey is responsible for the daily administration of the Chicago Public Library. Under her leadership, the Chicago Public Library has expanded its public service hours to seven days a week at its three largest locations, constructed or renovated 40 full service branch libraries, upgraded its automated public access catalog, expanded book collections and library services for children and adults, installed free public WiFi access in all 79 branch, regional and central libraries; initiated a systemwide professional training and development program for all library staff, launched Internet ac-

cess and online automated reference services for library patrons and staff and formed cultural partnerships with Chicago's museums. Three new branch libraries opened in 2006.

Ms. Dempsey is a member of several boards and commissions and serves as the Vice Chair of the Board of Directors of DePaul University. In June 2006, she was elected Chair of the Board of the Urban Libraries Council. She is the recipient of four honorary degrees and numerous awards for her work.

This year's group of recipients is the thirteenth to be honored in Governing's annual awards program, which was launched in 1994. Governing, now 19 years old, is an independent national magazine devoted to coverage of state and local government.

Mary and her husband, Philip Corboy, live in Chicago.

Art Classes at Ed Hinkley Studio

Ed Hinkley Studio, located at 4052 North Western Avenue in Chicago, is offering art classes in watercolor, workshops in drawing and oil painting.

Winter Classes begin January 8th; Spring Classes begin April 9th. Session times are: Weekdays - Tuesday or Thursday, 10 am - 1

pm; Evenings - Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday, 6:30 pm - 9:30 pm; Weekends - Saturdays, 10 am - 1 pm, or 2 pm - 5 pm.

Private instruction is available. For more information, please visit: www.edhinkleystudio.com or call 773-539-6047.

A Classic Irish Christmas at Chicago Gaelic Park

On December 17th, the magic and meaning of Christmas will come alive at Gaelic Park with Andy Cooney's A Classic Irish Christmas. Andy Cooney, with his outstanding voice and dynamic stage presence, has always been a favorite among American and Irish audiences everywhere. His talent and versatility provide the ability to deliver a song directly to the hearts of his audience. Being christened "Irish America's Favorite Son" by the New York Times is a title he truly deserves. Andy Cooney and his guests will entertain you with the celebration of Christmas... full of the warmth and happiness which makes memories last forever.

Chicago Gaelic Park is located at 6119 W. 147th St., in Oak Forest. For



tickets and information call 708-687-9323. Admission is \$20 and doors open at 7:00 pm; the show starts at 7:30 pm. For more information visit www.chicagogaelicpark.org.

Irish Music Club announces new officers

The Murphy Roche Irish Music Club is pleased to announce its officers for the 2006-2007 year: Kell Chole (chair), Mike Macken (vice chair), Ann and Dave Falcon (co-treasurers), Mike Chole (secretary and regional delegate to Comhaltas), Terry Healey (Irish officer), Al Narbutitis and Kimberley McCauley (auditors), Kara Scheer (youth officer), Tony O'Connell (web master), and Joe Martin (public relations officer). Emphasizing the club's commitment to young members, the youth officer role was an innovation by the Murphy Roche branch of Comhaltas, the international Irish music organization. Ms. Scheer, who qualified for the 2006 All-Ireland music competition in singing, represents young members on the board. The club welcomes community input to its agenda for the year. For more information, please contact Joe Martin, public relations officer, 630-650-5751 or j7martin@gmail.com.

Roche Irish Music Club (Burr Ridge, Illinois) is a non-profit organization for musicians of all ages and skill levels who perform, want to learn, or just enjoy Irish traditional music (630 662-8611). The club is affiliated with the international organization of Irish Musicians, Comhaltas.



Murphy Roche Irish Music Club's new youth officer, Kara Scheer and Tony O'Connell, web master.

Founded in 1997, the Murphy

Tadhg O'Reilly Joins the Galway Tribes Team

Tadhg O'Reilly has joined Niall Freyne's team at the Galway Tribes of Frankfort!

Recovered from his last venture with Mary Todd's Pub in Frankfort - which nearly drove him mad - this looks like a great fit for the large Corkman (no longer a member of the Jenny Craig support group). The Tribes' is a beautiful authentic Irish Pub with excellent food and over 120 beers to sample. Prior to his time with Mary Todd's, you may

recall Tadhg was the Bar Manager of Chicago Gaelic Park. So, if you find yourself out in the Frankfort area, pop in and say hello to Tadhg, have a pint and a bit of craic!

Larkin & Moran at the Tribes

The Galway Tribes in Frankfort, Illinois will feature The Larkin & Moran Borthers as musical entertainment on Saturday, December 16th at 9pm. The Galway Tribes Irish Pub & Restaurant is located at 9680 Lincoln Way Lane, Frankfort, IL 60423, 815-464-9881, www.thegalwaytribes.com

Look for the Larkin Brothers new CD "Paddy" to be released sometime in February.

Clan backs O'Doherty bishop book

The centenary of the death of Bishop John Keys O'Doherty falls in 2007 and hopefully will be marked by the publication of a manuscript that took around five years to compile. The O'Doherty Family Research Association, created in 1981, is actively promoting this work within its global networks in a bid to ensure its publication.

The research by its author, Derry-born Rev. Bernard J. Canning of St. Thomas's Presbytery, Main Street, Neilston, Glasgow, has been very extensive. Fr. Canning states that, "Bishop O'Doherty to date was the first and last native of Derry City to become Bishop of Derry", adding that such was "because of the great poverty there."

The work is around 380 pages. It will include photographs, several provided by local people. It will be a limited edition of 800 copies.

Those seeking further advice are cordially invited to write directly to Fr. Bernard or phone his Glasgow parish office: 0141-881-1478, or fax: 0141-876-1702 The O'Doherty clan which is promoting the work at home and abroad can be contacted via its Detroit office, odochartaigh@comcast.net or locally by phone, 028-71-286359, at weekends.

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Boyle the Kettle

By Tom Boyle

We'll Have A Sup Of Tea

boylethekettle@irishamericannews.com



the adoption of Chinese babies? I think all of these children are better off and will live happier, healthier lives. They will never lose their identity and when they become adults maybe they will do great things for humanity." Respectfully, Tom Boyle

rehab where he could keep company with a great many of our political and religious leaders. Saints be praised! Faith and begorra!

We Get Letters

Liberal politics defined: tolerant, broad minded. This street has to be a two-way street. I didn't coin the term "chocolate city", Mayor Nagin did, in doing so, he showed contempt for the rest of the community.

When John Stroger suffered a stroke the gravity of his condition was not made public. The scramble to see who would replace him on the ballot totally ignored the mandate of the people who voted 48% for Forrest Claypool in the primary. We live in Cook County where ethnicity deter-

mines who will or will not succeed in being elected to political office in various jurisdictions.

My ancestors fought against the tyranny of the British empire and defended our country in time of war so democracy would survive. Nothing I said in my October column is even remotely connected to civil rights in Northern Ireland, your reference to spitting on NICRA.

When the St. Patrick's Day Parade steps off I'll be right up front! You need to take a realistic look at the world around you, Mr. Fennessy. I doubt that many could match my contribution to the Irish community or the Irish culture in the city of Chicago.

Merry Christmas!

Olympic Gold

Annette Rogers Kelly, 93, has finished the race, the last ribbon she broke was stretched across the gates of Heaven. Annette was featured in my March column where we talked about the Olympic games in 1932 and 1936 where she won gold medals in the 400 meter relay. The Olympic committee sent the family an Olympic flag which they proudly displayed at her wake. I'm sure the angels were cheering for her when she crossed the finish line.

Ronan Tynan

I didn't know what to expect when I went to hear Ronan Tynan give an inspirational talk at the Irish American Heritage Center on Sunday, October 29th. It turned out to be a great night. Giving a synopsis of his youth, his handicap, his remarkable achievements in sports, becoming a doctor, and ultimately a world-class tenor, he captivated the audience.

He spoke lovingly of his parents who were both diminutive, his father 5 feet 4" and his mother 5 feet 4 1/2". He wonders how he got to be 6'4" and 260 pounds! Growing up in Kilkenny, he became an improbable jockey, riding in steeplechase races and winning, even when the odds makers had him at 30 - 1. When Ronan started to practice medicine his father would sit in the waiting room so that the other patients would think he had a thriving practice. When his father passed away Ronan sang at his funeral. Prior to this he had stopped singing for some time because of sinus problems due to old facial fractures. He has recently published a book titled, "Halfway Home: My Life 'til Now." Following the performance he spent several hours autographing books and CD's until the books were sold out.

Reverend Ted Haggard

Leader of a 14,000 member church, married with children and involved with a male prostitute! Why?

Another blow to the Christian Right just in time for the election.

Todd Stroger

It was disappointing to see that he was endorsed by Senator Durbin and Senator Obama, owing to the way he got on the ballot.

Buick Lemon

When I retired I bought myself a brand new Buick LeSabre from Loren Buick in Glenview, IL. I was looking for a dependable transportation and a little bit of luxury. Buick had a great reputation for being a trouble free car. Would you believe three transmissions in less than 78,000 miles and there is much more. The heated seats, power windows, and cruise control all failed, and the list goes on. So much for General Motors quality! The Lemon lawyer is on the job.

Madonna

Chicago Sun-Times columnist Mary Mitchell, Thursday, October 26th writing about Madonna's adoptions said . . . "Still in turning to Africa to adopt a child Madonna has opened the old wounds of slavery and colonialism. I felt compelled to send Mary an email. "Mary, I don't understand how this adoption has anything to do with "Opening the wounds slavery and colonialism." Madonna certainly hasn't been as involved in human rights as Angelina Jolie who adopted a black child, Zahara. Does that adoption fall into the same category? Does that adoption shame you as well? The logic escapes me. We should all stop looking at the world in "black & white." African Americans are not the only people who carried the yoke of slavery. What about

Cathleen Falsani

Cathleen covers religion in the Chicago Sun-Times, and I'm a great fan of hers. Cathleen has done great work reporting on pedophile priests and many other aspects of the Catholic church. October 27, 2006 her column focused on a book written by Thomas Craughwell titled, "Saints Behaving Badly." Apparently many of our saints were not so saintly before they were canonized. When she mentions Matt Talbott the Venerable she said, "My favorite saint in Craughwell's book is not technically a saint - yet. But he sure should be, in my humble Protestant opinion. His name is Matt Talbott, and he was a quintessential Irish drunk who died penniless on a Dublin street in 1925 on his way to Mass." She goes on to tell the story of Talbott's life journey, and how he hit the bottom. It's a great story. The only problem I have with it is, once again, we are reinforcing the stereotype of the Irish drunk. The word quintessential is defined as the perfect embodiment of a thing. In today's world we would send him to

"May peace and plenty be the first to lift the latch on your door and happiness be guided to your home by the candle of Christmas."
An Irish Christmas Toast...



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Traveling the Fancy-Free way

By Patrice Poltzer

There are certain people you meet in life who exude such passion you can't help but be drawn to them and wonder what they do. Sandi Pufahl is one of those people.

She's not native Irish, but after spending even a few minutes with her you would think green blood flows through her veins. Sandi is a travel expert and president of Fancy-Free Holidays who lives and breathes for Ireland. She has found her passion in making other peoples' travel dreams a reality—including the dreams of Ireland.

Founded in 1989, Fancy-Free-Holidays is a boutique tour company that offers outstanding travel experiences to the most sought after destinations, combining great service with exceptional quality.

Pufahl, who has traveled extensively through Ireland for the last decade, purchased a second home there several years ago, and leads guided tours throughout the country. "Ireland is my second home. I travel there at least 10 times a year, so I bring a perspective of the country that you're not going to get elsewhere. I am not only interested in providing my customers with the best vacation possible, I enjoy sharing my personal experiences with them as someone who has also lived in the country for years."

Sandi recognizes the difference between seeing the sights of Ireland and seeing the spirit of Ireland. "We have inside knowledge of the area that no one else can provide. Other companies often promote a tour product that is put together by people who have never traveled to Ireland. Our customers realize the difference in every trip they take with Fancy-Free whether it is to the majestic cliffs of County Clare or the streets of Dublin."

"Often times I will have other travelers from different tour companies come up to me in the Dublin airport looking tired, jet-lagged, and confused and somewhat frightened because he or she has never been out of the country and cannot find their tour leader. I help everyone regardless of the tour company they are with. I make it a point to never treat my travelers like they are part of a mass tour. From the moment our customers land, I want their first impression of Ireland or any other city around the world to be a pleasurable one."

Sandi's in-depth knowledge makes her tours a step above the rest. The Newgrange tomb, built by Neolithic farming communities, is a kidney shaped mound which covers an area of over one acre and is surrounded by 97 kerbstones, many of which are richly decorated with megalithic art. Newgrange is best known for the illumination of its inner passage and chamber by the winter solstice sun which happens only three days a year for a 17 minute period each day at dawn.

"When people think of the wonders of our world or ancient sites, they tend to think of the Pyramids in Egypt. The megalithic tomb in Newgrange is actually older than the pyramids, dating back to 4000 B.C. It is one of the most magnificent sites you can see and many people don't even realize Ireland has this type of history."

"You can't just swing on up to Newgrange and take a tour. This visit takes meticulous planning to make sure you can gain entry

for your tour group. To view the winter solstice illumination, there is a 10 year waiting list and a lottery determines tour access of the tomb during these times. I will often schedule my Ireland trip dates strictly around the Newgrange tour availability because it can be difficult to get a tour group in throughout the year—and this is something that shouldn't be missed."

Another one of Sandi's favorite off-the-beaten-path sites is Inishmore, the largest of the Aran Islands in Galway Bay. It is an island so rich in language, culture and heritage that the Aran islanders will only let Gaelic speaking Irish folks permanently reside there and don't teach their children English until age 12. It is a place to sense the spirit of Gaelic Ireland and to experience awe-inspiring beaches, cliffs, great labyrinths of limestone... and the famous Aran sweater—called a jumper in Ireland. The Aran sweater is wrapped in traditional Gaelic culture unique to the magnificent island.

"The Inishmore people are historically fisherman. The women would hand-knit waterproof sweaters for their menfolk that had a distinctive pattern unique to the family, similar to a family crest. If their family member died at sea and the body washed up, the sweater was a way to identify the body."

While most tour operators simply drop off their travelers with instructions to "meet back in an hour," Sandi relishes the opportunity to share her love of Ireland with her groups and educate them on Irish culture.

The Causeway, located in Northern Ireland on the Atrium Coast, is a mass of basalt columns packed tightly together that rise magnificently out of the ocean forming stepping stones that lead from cliff foots and disappear under the sea. Even more impressive than the austere beauty of the Giant's Causeway is the folklore that surrounds the origination of this awe-inspiring backdrop. Irish legend holds that the columns were formed when a Scottish giant named Fingal walked over to the Irish giant Finn MacCoul's house to fight him and ultimately defeat the Irish giant and take over Ireland.

"Finn MacCoul and his Irish wife knew he was no match for the much bigger Scottish giant, so they dressed Finn like a baby and placed him in a baby cradle to trick Fingal. Legend has it when Fingal knocked on the door and saw how big Finn's baby was, he had no interest in fighting the presumably bigger father. The columns were formed as Fingal ran ferociously through the ocean back into Scotland."

When you ask her how she fell in love with Ireland and what it is about that country that clearly fills her with such joy, she replies, "I don't really know how I fell in love with Ireland. She grabbed me and fell in love with me. It is such a delightful country and it makes me so happy to know there is a place in this world that hasn't lost its wonderment."

And that is precisely what Sandi does on a daily basis. She passes on the mysteries and wonderment of the marvelous place called Ireland to all who enter her enthralling realm.

So if it is a cruise or a tour of Ireland that suits your fancy, give Sandi a ring at 630-778-7010 or email: sandi.pufahl@fancyfree-holidays.com. The website is www.fancyfreeholidays.com.

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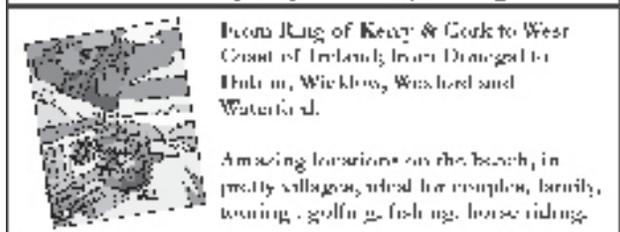


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SHARING A PINT

By Scott Powers



One of the things I enjoy most about writing this column is the opportunity to meet interesting and successful people in the Irish-American community. During the last few years, I've met actors, writers, musicians, business owners and plenty of other interesting characters.

Just recently, I decided to catch up

with a few of them to see where their careers and lives have gone since I first sat down with them.

Although I've enjoyed interviewing almost everyone I've met since starting the column in late 2004, Martin Gollongly is certainly the funniest person I've featured. It helps that he's a comic.

Over the last year, he and I have

become friends as we share a love for soccer and laughter. Unfortunately, the past year hasn't been all jokes for him as he was diagnosed with leukemia and went through a tough year of chemotherapy. He has since gone through remission and is awaiting a bone-marrow transplant for a complete cure. Despite everything, he did learn something about life through it all.

"Having this disease has really been an eye-opener," he said. "You don't know how lucky you are until your mortality is threatened. Lucky for me, I have a strong faith and a family that has rallied around me.

"I have totally changed my perspective on life. I spent as much time with my two kids and wife as I can. Life and time are both very precious and it's vital to stay positive.

"Everything, no matter how grim, has a bright side. Comedy writing and performing has kept me going. Although I am still working on using my illness in my act, it does have a funny side. When I first discovered a lump on my neck, I went to Chinatown to look for wise age or some herbal remedy, going through all the health stores, showing them the lump, and looking for a cure. After about

10 stores, I was directed to this little shop that was filled with dried bugs, spices and herbal cures. I explained myself to this 100-year-old lady who examined me very carefully and told me, 'GO see your doctor!'"

That's Martin for you.

Another more than cheerful person I featured in a past column was Rita Emmett, an author of self-help books. A lot has happened to her over the last year.

Since the column, Rita released another book, "The Clutter-Busting Handbook." It's a must-read for anyone with organizational problems. She's also now is an AOL expert coach, which includes people writing to her for advice. She's been on ABC Chicago News twice over the last summer and might be on again. In January, she'll be presenting talk at the Irish American Heritage Center. For more on Rita, go to www.ritaemmett.com.

Aside from all that, she still has time for her Irish roots.

"And yes, I'm still living a life filled with the luck o' the Irish (And also blessed by God)," Rita wrote in a recent e-mail. "For over a year, I searched for an out-of-print book called 1916 by one of my favorite

authors, Morgan Llywelyn. In July, I won it in a raffle at the Irish Fest at the Irish American Heritage Center."

Recently, I also caught up with Niall Hartnett, a photographer and the son of famous Irish poet Michael Hartnett. He's still working on his book on Irish writers and hopes to have it published sometime early next year. He's also designing a documentary style photo project on American political and social figures that will start in the New Year.

Also expecting something new in 2007 is Tony Duggins. Duggins and his band The Tossers recently posted on their Web site - www.thetossers.com - that they've back in the studio and hope to have a new album out in March.

This is just a few of the people I've met over the past two years. In the future, I hope to update you with more of them.

For now, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

After The Morning

By Cara Dillion

Championed by Geoff Travis (who discovered The Smiths and manages Pulp and Beth Orton), Cara Dillion has one of the most beautiful voices to emerge from the Celtic scene in recent years. Her latest effort, *After The Morning* (her first release in the U.S.) establishes her uncanny ability to wed the traditional influences to contemporary folk sounds and themes. The album



Cara Dillion

was produced by Sam Lakeman (both were former members of the group The Equation) and features an appearance from Paul Brady on the duet "The Streets of Derry". After the Morning's first single, "Never in a Million Years," garnered heavy airplay from BBC2 in the U.K., was the single of the week on BBC Radio Ulster and earned Cara a spot at this year's Cambridge Folk Festival. While Cara Dillion is still relatively unknown on this side of the pond, *After The Morning* is sure to make her a favorite of North American folk music fans.

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An Irish Christmas

By Moya Brennan

Moya Brennan is the first lady of Celtic music having collectively sold 15 million units around the world. Although she may not be a household name in the U.S. her music has most likely been played in your living room or stereo via her numerous movie soundtrack contributions, as the lead singer of multi platinum band Clannad, her work with Bono, her solo albums, or her recent work with the band Delirious.

With the release of *An Irish Christmas*, Moya reviews the Christmas story by delivering a beautiful Celtic treatment of classic Christmas songs along with a few originals. The album plays like a movie soundtrack from start to finish and



accompanied with a warm cup of tea or coffee makes for an unforgettable experience. Fans of Enya (Moya's sister), Sarah Brightman, Loreena McKennit, Josh Groban, and Andrea Bocelli will quickly add *An Irish Christmas* to their collection.

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The Circle Of Kindness: An Irish Journey of the Heart

By Jana Kolpen & Mary Tiegreen

"No act of kindness, however small, is ever wasted." - Aesop

Join Mademoiselle J. on her journey beyond the blue ocean, over the green hills, through a small crooked gate, down the narrow path to Merriweather, a cozy pink cottage in the charming Irish village of Dunwalsh-by-the-sea. The third in the series of enchanting fables, following the best-sellers, The Secrets of Pistoulet and its sequel, Dancing with the Moon, The Circle of

Kindness: An Irish Journey of the Heart (Stewart, Tabori & Chang; ISBN 1-58479-458-5; 80 pages, 150 full-color illustrations, hardcover; US \$22.50; October 2006) is a rich, transforming tale that shows us how even the smallest acts of kindness can go a long way.

Led by a fiery red-haired woman named Shannon, Mademoiselle J.

finds that acts of generosity, combined with spirit and compassion, have the profound ability to touch the lives of several people in the little village of Dunwalsh-by-the-sea. Whether they are delivering delicious Time-Passing Scones to the lonely Legendary Lady of Shanagarry, dining with the once-quiet craftsman at the charming

Inn Between (serving delicious meals between breakfast, lunch, and dinner), or preparing a festive picnic for the Bored and Colorless Sisters, together they gather the ingredients that the town needs for a nurturing recipe of food, love, and warmth.

Filled with beautiful illustrations and Heartwarming Recipes from the Pink Cottage, including Shannon's Famous Irish Soda Bread (this hearty

bread is guaranteed to soothe the soul) and Giving Hearts (these sweet heart cookies help promote the giving spirit). The Circle of Kindness is the perfect gift book for the whole family to enjoy. This beautiful gift package also features a romantic design, gatefolds, flaps with uplifting sentiments, recipe cards, and a Kindness Journal for you to record your thoughts and acts of kindness. www.hnabooks.com



Maria McKee Live Acoustic

Gritty, soulful solo performing and recording artist, Maria McKee, is releasing her first ever live acoustic solo album, simple entitled, Maria McKee Live Acoustic on the Cooking Vinyl label.



The Maria McKee Live Acoustic album came to life right when McKee was about to go back into the studio to record a new album, (now set to be released in April 2007) spurred by an offer to play the Celtic Connections festival in Glasgow, Scotland. Rather than repeat the same set she had performed from her 2005 summertour, she decided to mix it up and go it alone embarking on a solo tour across Western Europe and a few select U.S. dates.

McKee first established herself in the L.A. music scene as the lead singer of roots rockers Lone Justice. She has had her music featured in the film Pulp Fiction with the song "If Love is a Red Dress (Hang Me in Rags)", opened for such acts as U2, and had a number one single in the U.K. with the song "Show Me Heaven" which appeared in the soundtrack of the film Days of Thunder.

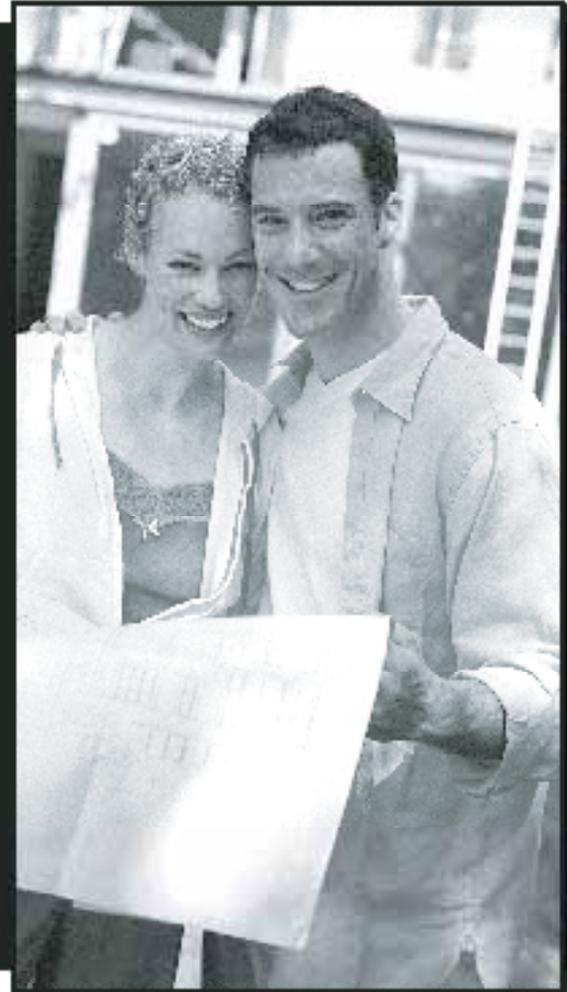
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CHICAGO Gaelic News

BY PAT HENNESSY



Beannact Na Nollaig, A Cairde Blessed Christmas. My Friends

Once again we get ready to welcome the coming of the Christ Child at the beautiful Christmas time. We extend our best wishes to our readers for a very happy and holy Yuletide and a peaceful and healthy New Year. Our thanks also to the many readers who over the year corresponded with us pro and con on my comments. That's what the writing of a column is all about. And of course our sincere thanks is extended to a hard working Editor and his star staff who put all our thoughts together and make it readable. Cur a mile malt agat, a cairde. (Thank you my friends.)

Christmas in Ireland over 80 years ago, when I was a "Carsoon" (young lad) was the most wonderful time of the year. Hustle and bustle was the order of the day even then, as cottages and farm houses had to be repaired, painted and whitewashed two months before the feast day. Nothing was left to chance, everyone, even the youngest had their

particular chore upon which rested the prestige of the family. Roaming in the woods for the holly and laurel was fun but it too had to be taken seriously in order to bring home the best. The nightly family rosary was said with much more fervour, with every member getting his own decade, and woe to him or her if it was not properly recited.

Prior to the coming of the Midnight Mass to the cities, the first mass on Christmas morning was the most important one of the season. Scheduled for 6:00 am the people made their way, hail, rain or shine most times walking in groups along the "Boreens" reciting the rosary and greeting newcomers with the old Irish salutation, "Beannact na Nollaig, a cairde", (Blessed Christmas, my friend). With the lighted candles in the windows of the cottages the only light along the way, this was a beautiful sight, if a snow flake or two drifted by, especially.

The overflow attendance in the church sensed the importance of this mass and the prayers and beautiful hymns were sung and recited befitting the big occasion. Everyone seemed so happy... A family visit to the crib after mass was also a special occasion, as the family knelt together led by their parents and gave thanks to the Child Christ for a good year, asking for a repeat with peace, good health for the coming one. Outside the church after mass was another memorable occasion, as friend greeted friend, especially so soon after a tragic and derisive Civil War. This was a good sign and later this apparent goodwill would be repeated on the hurling and football fields, tanum cun De (Thanks to God).

The big Christmas breakfast and dinner that day presided over by the parents and grandparents is still unforgettable. Hurling and football games were always on the schedule for the afternoons. The next day, St. Stephen's Day, "The Wren Boys" men and women dressed in tattered clothing and playing all kinds of musical instruments, roamed the countryside spreading happiness along the way. Thanks to the enterprising Kerry Association, this grand old Irish custom is continued at Chicago Gaelic Park, the night of the 26th. Call Gaelic Park at 1-708-687-9323 for more information.

Let's hope and pray that the coming year will bring peace to the world and the safe return of our gallant Armed Forces. And let's hope that Tony Blair, will recall his British troops and influence out of Ulster, Ireland, before he retires.

Comhaltas Visit Delights Chicagoans

Gaelic world renowned Comhaltas musicians on its 2006 U.S tour made Chicago Gaelic Park its Mecca recently and an overflow of music lovers from all over the midwest gave them a hearty Chicago Cead mile' failte and rounds of well deserved applause after each set. It was indeed an all star performance and Chicagoans loved every moment of it.

Without a doubt it was one of the finest performances featuring the traditional song, dance and music of the Gael seen here in a long time. The promotion of our music and dancing is in very good hands and as they travel over our country we join with Gaels the world over in wishing them every success and safe travel. Beannact De ar an oibre, a cairde gael.

Chicago Gaelic Park aglow for Christmas

Once again Chicago Gaelic Park will honor the coming of the Christmas season with another spectacular lighting and decoration display inside and

outside the spacious Irish Center. Well known Chicago Gael, John Crean and his hard working committee will again leave no stone unturned in presenting another award winning display.

For the past few years the beautiful decorations and lighting have attracted crowds of busy motorists passing by, to stop and most times drive inside to get a better look and to even walk around inside to admire and appreciate the splendour of it all. Readers are invited to come out and bring the family. The address is 6119 West 147th Street, Oak Forest, on the far southwest side of the city. Entrance can be made from So. Cicero Ave, or Harlem Ave. on 147th. Street, West on Cicero and East on Harlem.

Happenings at Gaelic Park Over the Holidays

Chicago Gaelic Park well known for its many all-star Irish attractions all year round will again present some star attractions over the holidays. Andy Cooney's "Classic Irish Christmas" will be featured on Sunday, December 17th. No doubt this show will present some of the old traditions of Christmas past and present, and with the famed entertainer Andy Cooney on stage, a memorable evening can be anticipated

And of course Gaelic Park's Family New Year's Party has also been a ...continued to page 19

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EVE 2007
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DOORS OPEN AT 8PM • KITCHEN WILL NOT BE OPEN
CHAMPAGNE TOAST • PARTY HATSON • LIVE DJ • 100 SECOND COUNTDOWN
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TICKETS: \$18 PERSON • \$25 COUPLE • \$200 BOOK
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Private Party Room Available



OR...

If you would prefer a more laid back, earlier gathering, join us by 6PM to ring in the Irish New Year!
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The Merging of the Green

By Mike Houlihan

Charlie Carey and Terry Duffy have a billion reasons to be buddies. Eight billion actually. \$8,000,000,000.00! That was the price tag on the recent merger between the Chicago Board of Trade and The Chicago Mercantile Exchange.

News of this deal last October electrified the financial markets and sent both of their stocks soaring. In one leap Chicago had become the most influential financial market in the world. The merger created the largest financial exchange in the world.

And the men who put it together were a couple of Irish guys who grew up on the south side of Chicago. They've just gone global.

The waiters at Gene & Georgetti's steakhouse know Charles P. Carey, Chairman of the Chicago Board of Trade, as "Mister Charlie". He's easy to spot in the back of the dining room, a youngish Jackie Gleason type holding court at lunch with a group of old pals, retired Chicago Bears, traders, Sun-Times writers, editors, political pundits, and sportsmen. Charlie orders for everybody, "Yeah pally, give us a platter of sausage n' peppers, Shrimp de Jonghe, slice up some steaks, and maybe a platter of Chicken Joe."

Soft and hard drinks are ordered up and the stories begin in a round robin of Chi-town banter, often punctuated by Charlie's basso profundo laughter. His foghorn voice booms through his manicured mitt as he masks his moving lips; probably a habit picked up in the pits when rivals stole bids, puts, and calls. Charlie hosts a free wheeling discussion of politics, sports, finance, religion, and ribaldry. If you're lucky enough to be in his company, you're in good company.

Charlie Carey was born on the south side, where he and his brother Jimmy grew up in St. Walter's parish. Charlie's dad was a Charlie too and had played football at DeLaSalle with Chuck Comiskey and George Connor. Comiskey called them "The CCC Boys".

Charlie's grandfather, Peter B. Carey, was Sheriff of Cook County as well as Chairman of the CBOT. "He was a delegate to the 1932 convention for the Democratic Party and part of the group that nominated FDR," Charlie says proudly.

Charlie's Uncle Bernie was also CBOT Chairman. "He was my dad's oldest brother. He almost became a priest, but quit about a year and half before (ordination). When WWII broke out, he flew 25 daylight-bombing raids over Germany, and lived to talk about it. He came back and became Chairman of the Exchange in 63-64-65."

Young Charlie moved to Oak Park in his freshmen year at Fenwick, spent a couple years there and then graduated from OPRF where he played football. He has dual citizenship as a south side and west side Irishman. Is there a difference? "Yes, but I'm not gonna say!"

Charlie Carey met Terry Duffy in the hog pit at the Merc where they both traded livestock in 1983. "Terry was partners with guys I knew, Mick Callahan and Bill Tunney. Mickey was west side Irish and Tunney was south side." They became friends over the next 23 years. "Terry's a guy I knew I could trust."

That trust cut through the years of animosity between the two exchanges and created what financial analysts are calling the deal of the century. "Look, the fact that we had a relationship going back to 1983, the fact that we had traded in the pits, I knew he was a guy I could do business with, and we proved it again by completing this merger. We could be very open, very honest, and we eliminated a lot of the...brinkmanship and cut right to the heart of the matters." South-side Irishmen, they spoke the same language, no bullshit.

Charlie's mom Pat still lives in Oak Park and the Chairman himself lives just a bit further west with his wife Linda and sons Charlie, Matt, and Jack. Charlie works the sticks on the sidelines at his kids' football games. He's proud of his Irish heritage. When the merger was announced to the press, the Financial Times featured a caricature of Duffy and Carey with the Chicago skyline in the background. Charlie pointed out his favorite part of the sketch, a flaming shamrock hovering over the John Hancock building.

Chicago Mercantile Exchange Chairman Duffy is the ying to Carey's yang, a lean Gentlemen Jimmy Walker type, sleek sophistication in a suit. His business cards read "The Honorable Terrence A. Duffy". Honorable he may be, but everybody at the Merc calls him Terry. A few years back Duffy and Carey hosted a fundraiser for the Children's Brittle Bone Foundation at the Auditorium theatre starring B.B. King. The lads made an appearance onstage in their suits and shades as the Blues Brothers, Charlie was Jake and Terry was Elwood. Perfect.

Terry's a south side guy from Queen of Martyrs parish who graduated from Leo in '76. His grandfather was John J. Duffy, 19th Ward Alderman and President of the Cook County Board. That's honorable clout. Terry inherited his grandfather's gene for leadership.

After college he was tending bar up in Lake Geneva. "I met a guy by the name of Vince Schreiber. Vince was

a mentor of mine and he introduced me to the business, and brought me down here. I was just out of college, 22, been here ever since, started as a runner, worked my way up through the ranks. My mother and father (the late John and Barbara Duffy) financed their home for me to get into business. I was very fortunate."

Terry met his wife Jennifer at the Merc. "She was between semesters and we met and fell in love, and I showed her the wonderful world of commodity trading...She was a member of the exchange for 17 years."

So she knows what you're talking about?

"Very well, probably better than I do sometimes."

I told ya the guy was smooth.

The Duffy and Carey clans nurtured values in Terry and Charlie that are the foundation for the trust they found in each other. Duffy says, "They may be in the blood a little bit...I think we have similar backgrounds...I came from a very middle class family, two things that were instilled in us by my parents were the love they gave for us, and the respect that they demanded we treat everybody else with, I think that suited



Terrence J. Duffy and Charles P. Carey.

both myself and my (brothers and sisters) very well throughout life."

Family, honesty and loyalty: the Irish trinity of leadership.

They've turned Chicago into the risk management capital of the world, a futures financial ex-

change representing \$4.2 trillion in notional value.

The Plumbers union has nothing on these guys. Local 130 may put the green in the river on St. Patrick's Day, but Duffy and Carey put it in the banks every day of the year.

Immigrant enriches America with his Irish furniture

He may be one of thousands of Irish immigrants who reluctantly left the Holy Ground in the early 90's to find himself happily settling in the States 10 years later. But Gabriel McKeagney's adventurous - and sometimes tumultuous - journey from Northern Ireland to Southern California brought him culturally closer to his roots as he moved geographically further from home.

Ironically, here in the land of pop and plastics, Gabriel McKeagney, a fifth-generation village carpenter and woodcarver who hails from Co. Fermagh, Northern Ireland, rediscovered the Ireland of his ancestors and

founded Irish Furniture, LLC. Gabriel is a true master of his craft and has chosen to use his talents to recreate a lost element of Irish history: its artistry in woodwork.

Working in the vein of the medieval village carpenter who created work specially commissioned by the local Irish Chieftain, Gabriel's work allows people to touch and feel something that had been destroyed by the ravages of time, weather and foreign invaders. With an innate knowledge of the Book

of Kells and Celtic Oral Tradition, Irish furniture embodies the beauty and humor that distinguishes Irish culture. Very little ancient Celtic furniture has survived the ages, but by incorporating carved designs from the Book of Kells, Irish Furniture has intuitively recreated a thousand year old history.

Gabriel's passion for things Celtic is not limited to woodwork. His knowledge of Irish history, trades work and traditional music is equaled only by his anthology of entertaining gypsy and fairy stories.

Arising from his love of Irish culture, Gabriel was naturally enchanted

by the haunting tones of Uilleann pipes, and has been playing the instrument for several years. He is one of only 2,000 worldwide, and founder of the Southern Californian Uilleann Pipers Club, which now boasts over 30 members and hosts an annual Tionol.

Gabriel grew up surrounded by old tools, artifacts, and stories of cartwheel construction. He spent his apprenticeship in Ireland making custom furniture and constructing new homes. He then spent three years in London, England, specializing in architectural reproductions of historical woodwork in many of London's preserved buildings.

Gabriel permanently moved to southern California in 1996, and in 1998, founded Tempo Carpentry & Design, LLC. By providing its clients with exceptionally artistic and architecturally pure woodwork, TCD has become the foremost designer and maker of European woodwork in Orange County, California. He lives with his wife and three children in San Juan Capistrano, California.

For more information, please visit their website at www.irishfurniture.com.



Close to Home

Innovation combined with tradition: that's a hallmark of Clancy family musicians, and it's one that guitarist Donal Clancy is carrying forward into the twenty-first century with his first solo release *Close to Home*.

The title is no accident, either. "These are songs I grew up with, songs I can't truly remember learning," Clancy recalls. Donal did indeed ask his father, Liam Clancy of Clancy Brother fame, to show him a few chords on the guitar when he took up the instrument as a young boy after starting out on the tin whistle and trying out the mandolin. He'd found a home. "Something about the sound of the guitar, the plucked strings, just appealed to me," he says.

The acoustic guitar adds many colors and textures to Irish music, but there's no long history of it in Celtic tradition, as there is with the fiddle and the accordion. Donal Clancy is one who's bringing the guitar forward to its rightful place as a strong part of Irish tradition. He's been involved with the best bands in Irish music, starting out in Clancy, O'Connell, and Clancy with his father Liam and his cousin Robbie O'Connell, helping to found the band Danu and then moving on to one of the hottest Irish and Irish American bands around, Solas. When it was time to make a change, he found his old band Danu in need of a guitar player again, and that's still one of his main gigs. "It was like coming home again, bringing it all back home," he says, laughing.

Close to Home is a chance to hear one of the finest guitarists of this generation in a quiet, intimate setting, just the man and his guitar.



"I just absorbed this music over the years," he says. "This is a record I've always wanted to make." www.compassrecords.com

Celtic Supper at Chicago Gaelic Park

You can enjoy a delicious all-you-can-eat buffet dinner on Sundays through Mother's Day (except for December 24th and 31st) at Chicago Gaelic Park, 6119 W. 147th St., in Oak Forest.

The all-you-can-eat buffet is served from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm. Dancing continues to 9:00 pm. Live entertainment scheduled for December includes Velvet Green on December 3rd; Sean O'Donnell on December 10th; and Velvet Green on December 17th.

Admission includes dinner and entertainment. \$15 for adults and \$8 for children 4 to 12 yrs old. 708-687-9323. Reservations are required.

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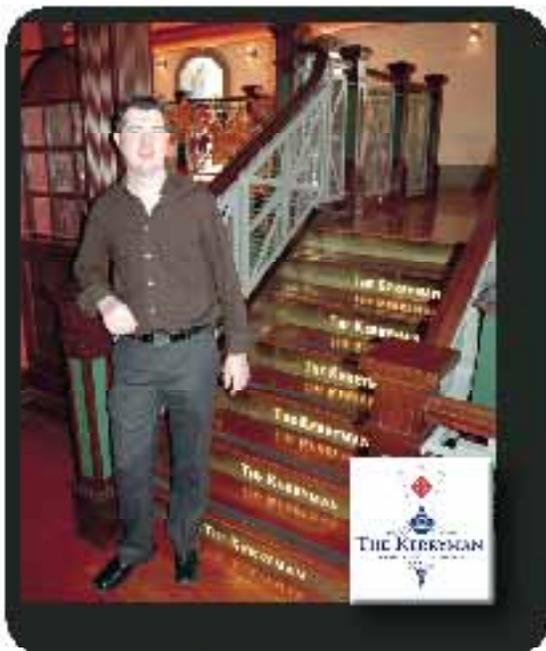
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Porchlight Music Theatre presents "A Wonderful Life"



(clockwise, L-R) Jack Mulopulos (Tommy Bailey), David Heimann (George Bailey), Abi McKenzie (Zuzu Bailey), Jess Godwin (Mary Hatch) and Emma Channen (Beth Bailey)

Porchlight Music Theatre, Chicago's inventive musical theatre company, opens its 2006-2007 season themed around 'The American Experience—Set to Music', with *A Wonderful Life*. Offering a new spin on the holiday film, *A Wonderful Life* is a musical version of the Frank Capra film classic "It's a Wonderful Life." The production runs through December 31 at Theatre Building Chicago, 1225 W. Belmont.

Celebrating 60 years as America's favorite holiday tradition, "It's a Wonderful Life" tops the American Film Institute's list of most inspiring films of all time. The Porchlight Music Theatre version is told in a fresh new way as a musical. *A Wonderful Life* is the remarkable collaboration of Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winner Sheldon Harnick and Grammy and Emmy Award-winner Joe Raposo.

Set in the small town of Bedford Falls in the 1940s, *A Wonderful Life* is the story of George Bailey, who has a heart of gold but has long felt like a failure. When George wonders what life would be like if he had never been born, an angel shows him how different the world would be if he didn't exist. *A Wonderful*

Life is a timeless story, perfect for the whole family.

"We honor the film with this fresh new musical version," comments director L. Walter Stearns. "We cannot improve on the classic, but our live musical experience tells the story in a unique way."

A Wonderful Life features performances by David Heimann as George Bailey, Jess Godwin (from Porchlight's *Gypsy*) as Mary Hatch and Jeff Award-winning actor, Peter Pohlhammer (Porchlight's *Sweeney Todd*) as the villainous Mr. Potter.

Porchlight Music Theatre Artistic Director L. Walter Stearns directs this production. Rounding out the creative team are Eugene Dizon (Jeff Award-winning music director), Matthew Raftery (choreographer), Kurt Sharp (scenic design) Jullian H. Pike (lighting design) and Theresa Ham (costume design).

Peter Pohlhammer returns to Porchlight Music Theatre where he was awarded the 2005 Jeff Award for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a musical for *Sweeney Todd*. Peter has recently appeared at the Drury Lane Theatre in Grand Hotel.

The performance schedule is: Friday and Saturday evenings at 8 p.m. and Sunday matinees at

2:30 p.m. There will be special Thursday performances at 8 p.m. on December 21 and 28 and two additional Wednesday matinees at 2 p.m. on December 6 and 13. There is no performance on December 24. Tickets, which range in price from \$25 to \$32, are currently on sale, and can be purchased in person at The Theatre Building Chicago box office (773-327-5252) or any Ticketmaster Ticket Center (312-902-1500), and online at www.ticketmaster.com. Discounted tickets are available for students, seniors and groups. For group tickets, call 312-423-6612.

Here Come The Irish!

By Jim McClure

Drinks are not on the house but everything Fighting Irish is as



Notre Dame alumni owners of Victory Liquors make the Lincoln Park bar THE place to catch the college sports scene, recently opened for the football season, and crammed with 29 flat screen TVs.

High-definition plasma and high-carbohydrate Home Run Inn Pizza highlight the fun for three rooms and bars worth of Notre Dame and other sports fans who gather along with Lincoln Park residents and DePaul students who frequent the Golden Domicile all week long.

Victory Liquors is located at 2610 N. Halsted St. in Chicago.

Hours: 6 p.m.-2 a.m. Monday through Friday; 10 a.m.-3 a.m. Saturday; 11 a.m.-2 a.m. Sunday; phone 773-348-5600.

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Hooliganism

Mike Houlihan



Among the many blessings I was grateful for last Thanksgiving was the re-discovery of a friend. The fact that the friend lives in Ireland made it even better.

Back in the early eighties I was living in Hell's Kitchen at 43rd and Ninth Avenue in New York. I'd only been married a few years and my twins were still in diapers. I was a young actor-producer then, continually on the hustle. I lived in subsidized housing and around the corner from my apartment was a row of Off-Off Broadway theatres where I wheeled and dealt my bag of tricks. I was romantically broke in those days, "a dweller on the threshold."

Across the street was the Blarney Rock pub, just fifty yards down from Holy Cross church. My search for spirituality ping-ponged between those two institutions; mass in the morning and halcyon nights and earlier mornings at the Blarney Rock.

My shaman at the bar was Mike Monaghan, a lad from the old country who'd just gotten married

himself. Mike the bartender was from Galway and his wife Cindy waited tables at the Rock.

Blarney Rock was a beacon of bonhomie late at night after trodding the boards of 42nd Street. It was cheap, close to home, and they served food as well as booze. They had steam tables and the guy with the paper chef hat behind the glass who would carve up yours andwich or whatever you wanted: mostly meat 'n potatoes dishes.

And then there was the lad from Galway, skinny then with big ol' glasses. "How are ye Mike?" he'd say through a wise guy grin as he put my glass on the bar.

The joint was usually empty by midnight and I'd find myself sitting in the corner of the bar as it stretched out fifty feet to the door, with a window onto 42nd Street. Mike and I would watch the transvestite hookers out the window as they assaulted drunk frat boys from Jersey. Magic Johnson with boobs, make-up and high heels smacking the mopes, as they would leap from the car, "She took my wallet!"

Mike Monaghan would stand at the door and shout, "HE took your wallet, ya amadon!"

Mike drank Hennessy then, a gentlemen's drink that could kick your ass. Just like Mike. Many a night I would sit at that bar and listen to Mike tell me stories of Ireland. The Quiet Man was our favorite movie. I'd tell Mike of my show business schemes, and he'd offer advice. We even pooled some dough once to put on a show with a couple of phony brothers from Limerick. They turned out to be scoundrels though, "the Irish are a treacherous race."

When the Hennessy was cookin' Monaghan would put his foot against the beer cooler behind the bar, cross his arms, and lean back against the bottle rack with a very serious look about him. His brogue would lilt, "Didja ever hear the story of Children of Lir, Osin of Tir na Nog, Cuchillin, Finn Mac Cool, and the Salmon of Wisdom? These stories are well tested thru the centuries."

I'd have him fill my glass and then relax while Mike Monaghan painted the pictures of Irish mythology. We'd sit there 'til two am, sometimes three, and then finally Mike would take my glass and say, "All right now get the fook out of here!"

And I'd go home. I finally did get the fook out of New York in

'85. Twenty-one years ago.

Last week I got an email for my old pal Mike Monaghan. "I'm still alive just about. I'm back in Ireland since '86. Still married to Cindy. Make contact if you want me to expand further."

My old pal Mike Monaghan. Well I wrote back immediately and within about a half hour of back and forth blarney we were on the phone talkin'. It was later at night for Mike, so he was pretty talkative.

We updated each other on our families, both proud to be married to the same women. These days, that's a feat. When my wife was pregnant in New York she wore her grandmother's big old camel hair coat. It was warm and roomy and sat in our closet til Cindy was preggers and we handed it off to her. I told Mike I would have to come to Galway and get that coat back.

So next summer it is, visiting my old pal Mike Monaghan and family. Mike told me, "When you come to Ireland, we will take care of everything. You can stay with us in Headford, a little village 16 miles north of Galway. Cindy will not be here, she will be in the Sahara on a camel coat-knitting course. We'll have great Craic, when you come over to Galway."

Maybe I can talk the Irish American News into paying my

way to Galway next summer to report on the great Craic.

Mike told me on the phone, "When you come to Ireland, I'll be your Barry Fitzgerald."

You always have friends in Ireland, but discovering them again is a blessing.

Carol Smith Passes Away

We are saddened to report the untimely passing of NACBA member and friend Carol Smith. Carol, owner of A.S.A.P. from Racine, Wisconsin became ill shortly after the Lombard show where she was her usual friendly self. We were shocked to hear that after several weeks in intensive care she suffered a stroke and passed away on October 9th.

Carol (age 60) is sadly missed by her husband Frank, her children and grandchildren as well as her many business friends and associates.

May she rest in peace.



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An Immigrant's Musings

Fr. Michael Leonard



Priests to undocumented immigrants: You are not alone!

I was one of more than fifty Priests for Justice for Immigrants who were present on 20th October at a press conference held in the chapel of Holy Name Cathedral. The group, which is made up of 120 Archdiocese of Chicago priests, discussed their concerns about the recently passed enforcement-only legislation that will adversely affect immigrants currently in the United States as workers, spouses and family members.

The Most Rev. Gustavo Garcia-Siller, M.Sp.S., Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago, began the event with an invocation in which he praised "church leaders who are committing themselves to walk a journey that will find our political leaders opening their hearts and minds to understanding the reality of today's immigrants."

In introducing The Priests for Justice for Immigrants, Fr. Marco Mercado, pastor of Chicago's Good Shepherd parish and a core leader

of the Priests for Justice for Immigrants, noted how "a shared need exists with our brother priests and bishops from around the country in support of the Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform to reiterate the call for respectful and comprehensive immigration reform that respects the dignity of every human being and protects the dignity and unity of families."

Fr. Larry Dowling, pastor of Chicago's St. Denis Parish, and also a core leader of the group then made the event's keynote address: a reading of four pledges that grew out of an initial meeting this past Lent. 1. "We'll accompany our undocumented brothers and sisters in their journeys to acknowledge that their status is the result of a long-broken immigration system. 2. We call for a suspension of any non-felony deportations that would separate spouses, or separate children from parents

or guardians. 3. A comprehensive immigration policy must be passed by Congress as 98,000 known and countless unknown families are at immediate risk," Dowling said.

The official teaching of the church seems close to making a definitive statement declaring limbo as not being part of our belief system. Yet for our 12 million undocumented brothers and sisters, the lawmakers of the land are willing to leave them in a state of limbo. The president has rightly stated that it is impractical and undesirable to deport such a large number. Yet by introducing enforcement only legislation that provides for the building of a 700-mile fence across the southern border our political leaders have failed to deal with the real issue of our broken immigration system.

What the U S Senate passed and the U S Bishops support is a comprehensive approach. What the Senate passed was a bill, which would do the following: 1. Deal with the issue of border security, 2. Introduce a guest-worker program that would match willing workers with employers. In other words if a company is unable to find a U S born worker for a position, then, it is free to find one outside the country. 3. Those living and working in the U S without documents would have the opportunity to adjust their status provided they could fulfill the following conditions: a) Pay a fine

of approx \$2,000 b) Back pay all taxes (As many as 70% of the undocumented population already pay taxes) c) Learn English d) Undergo a background security check. If they were able to pass this test they would then be give a work permit valid for 5 years after which if they were still in good standing with the authorities, they could then apply for a "Green Card" and having obtained one they would be in a position to apply for citizenship after a further 5 years. In effect they would have to wait for a minimum of 11 years to become a citizen. This is my no means a free ride but people would be very willing to have the opportunity to prove their good intentions towards this great country.

The Church has consistently called on political leaders to look at the root causes of migration. No one freely chooses to risk his or her life crossing a desert to get here without good reason. People come here because of poor economic circumstances in their home countries. Our government needs to work with our neighboring states, especially in the south. Together we need to improve the situation in the sending countries to ensure that people are not forced to migrate in order to support themselves and their families.

If you would like to find out more about what the church is saying on the topic of immigration, please visit: www.justiceforimmigrants.org

understand me. This could also be understood in terms of estrangement and estrangement happens at different levels. Firstly, people become estranged from themselves, secondly, from others and ultimately from God. This in turn if it goes on long enough can lead to a sense of hopelessness and ultimately to despair. A factor for young people (and the age group 15-24 is the group from which most suicides come) is the enormous pressure they are under to achieve and succeed in a fast materialistic age. Another factor in the rise in suicide at this time I believe is a corresponding rise in the loss of faith and its practice. Religion is not a magic formula for dealing with pain and hurt but it does help people to find freedom from burdens and can be a great source of healing to a broken spirit.

There are a few things I suggest we need to do in helping people deal with suicide. Firstly, I think we need to talk more openly about the issue. Secondly, we need to do everything we can to remove the stigma that is attached to suicide. Thirdly, we need to look out for those who are struggling and vulnerable. Many people who end their lives by suicide are struggling with addictions and depression. Identifying such sufferers isn't always easy but when we do we can at least make an effort to reach out a helping hand.

A Little Humor

Suicide

Numerous people have contacted me over the years because they were in need of a listening ear. And one of the things that people find most difficult to deal with is, I believe, the death of a loved one or friend by suicide. A friend once said to me of a person who died by suicide: "I thought I knew him really well, but I suppose I was wrong." The fact is it is extremely difficult to know what is going on in another person's mind. It is even impossible if the person is unable or unwilling to talk about whatever is causing them pain.

Suicide is on the increase at an alarming rate in Ireland and also among the Irish community abroad. I am sometimes asked as to why I think this is so. I do not have a complete answer. What I do think is there are a few things, which contribute to the situation that leads a person to take their own life. Someone once said: "Suicide is not chosen; it happens when pain exceeds resources for coping with pain." There are a number of things that diminish our ability to cope with pain. One is a feeling of isolation or of feeling so alone and thinking that no one will

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The above quotes were taken from actual bulletins!

Christmas

On behalf of all at C.I.I.S. I take this opportunity to wish all of our readers and supporters a blessed Christmas and every success in 2007.

If you have any comments, questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at the office Tel. 312-337-8445. Cell 773-677-5341 or you can e-mail me at the following: siochan@catholic.org.

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A blaguard weighs in

By Catey Sullivan

Some 22 years ago, Malachy McCourt gave up the drink. He was, he explains, weary of living a life built on a liquid foundation. These days, the author, actor and raconteur doesn't imbibe in anything stronger than tea.

But make no mistake. Nobody's going to be inducting Malachy McCourt into the Temperance Hall of Fame any time soon. He recently signed a lucrative contract to pitch Guinness to the masses.

"They're a highly philanthropic organization, Guinness is," McCourt says. "They're giving me back all the money I lost on them when I was drinking."

The irony of a recovering world class drinker extolling the joys of the world's finest fermented beverages isn't lost on McCourt. Indeed, McCourt's monetary reclamation from Guinness is just another twist in a life rich with beguiling ironies. As the McCourt's well-known story goes, McCourt and his brother Frank grew up poorer than dirt in Limerick, Ireland. Their father was a drunk. Their mother suffered like St. Agnes.

Frank and Malachy made it to adulthood, fled Ireland and came to



A Couple of Blaguards stars, Jarlath Conroy and Howard Platt.

the United States with little more than twin gifts for storytelling and, oh yes, prodigious amounts of charm. Had they been snakes in the time of St. Patrick, surely the McCourt brothers could have convinced the Emerald Isle's Patron Saint to let them stay.

Frank went to work as a school teacher. Malachy embarked on a career of bartending, ditch digging, fast-talking and the aforementioned world-class drinking.

Eventually, the brothers put their heads together and penned "A Couple of Blaguards," a sharp, raucous and unsentimental recounting of their adventures growing up in Ireland and forging their way in the United States.

Malachy insists that "Blaguards," which stars Howard Platt and Jarlath

Conroy and runs through Christmas Eve at Chicago's Royal George Theatre, is not autobiographical. Although, he admits, Frank's autobiography "Angela's Ashes" and his own memoir "A Monk Swimming" were in fact largely based on the stories that started out in "Blaguards."

If that contradiction makes about as much sense as pitching Guinness while embracing sobriety, well, so what. It's contradictions that make the McCourts such a successful commodity and such excellent showmen.

Consider, for example, the chasm between the bone-marrow deep tragedies that defined the McCourt childhoods and the scathing, undeniable comedy that blazes from the heart of "Blaguards."

As the tortured pop song goes, hell is for children. It is also, as "Blaguards" recounts, for those damned to suffer eternally exploding eyeballs, sizzling intestines and all manner of other fearsome and fearsomely hilarious maladies.

"You can either live in total despair or you can have fun," McCourt says. "The Irish, we're a peculiar species. We definitely have that ages-old melancholy, that almost eastern fatalism about us. But you know there's no true humor anywhere in life unless you also are

familiar with the very bottom of things, with darkness and despair, and with the relief of living through it and surviving to another day.

"Oppressed peoples," he adds, "generally have a very good sense of humor."

And this brings McCourt to the Catholic Church. That institution factors heavily in "Blaguards," as various characters recount descriptions of hell (exploding eyeballs and all) a lesson on the "best" of the Seven Deadly sins (it's not the one you think) and the perils of touching the Host with your teeth. ("If you bite God in two, you'll roast for eternity.")

"So many Catholics, so few Christians," McCourt says.

"Ireland was fine until organized religion came in and ruined everything," he adds, and continues to give a thumb-nail view of the History of Religion in Ireland

"St. Patrick was not Irish. We had a fine pagan society, clean water, education, health care—then he came in and pushed women aside and imposed organized religion on everyone. Then King Henry II, he got permission from the Pope [in 1165] to invade. That brought in organized religion.

"True Irish are not Catholic. Catholicism was imposed on us from

the outside. It's the religion of the oppressor," McCourt says.

"I've retired from Catholicism, I have a spiritual life now which is fine for me," he concludes.

This past election season he took a short break from writing to run for Governor of New York on the Green Party ticket.

"I got about 1 percent of the vote. That's about 41,000 people," he estimates.

With election season over, he's back writing. A ninth book, "I Never Drink When I'm Sober," is slated for release next year.

"It's about sobriety," he says simply.

"Growing up, we learned how to tell stories," McCourt says.

"We didn't have TV or radio, we didn't have electricity. So we told each stories. That's where I learned to be a storyteller."

A Couple of Blaguards will be playing at the Royal George Theatre, 1641 N. Halsted, Chicago, 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays-Thursdays; 8 p.m. Saturdays; 3 p.m. Sundays through Dec. 24th. Tickets are \$39.50 for weekday performances; \$49.50 for weekends and are available at the Royal George Theatre box office, by calling (312) 988-9000 or (312) 902-1500, or online at www.ticketmaster.com.

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Healy Law

By Martin J. Healy, Jr.
Senior Partner



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 eight 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. Readers are encouraged to call or write with questions concerning personal injury law.

Statute of Limitations

As the end of the year approaches, many of us take time to reflect on things that have happened in the past year in addition to events that we

look forward to in the coming year. There are many personal reasons for reflecting on certain important dates that approach such as weddings, christenings, birthdays, graduations, communions, etc... From a professional or business point of view, it is also a good time to review important dates that have passed or are approaching in the coming year. In the legal profession, one of the most important dates, if not the most important date that lawyers observe and frequently review is the statute date or the statute of limitations.

A statute of limitations is a law which places a time limit on pursuing a legal remedy in relation to wrongful contact. After the expiration of the statutory period the aggrieved person or party loses the right to file a lawsuit to seek monetary damages or other relief unless a legal exception applies. All lawsuits have a statute of limitation. It can be challenging for an attorney let alone a lay person to keep track of the various statutes and their exceptions. Anyone who is concerned about losing their right to sue as a result of the expiration of the statute of limitations should contact a qualified attorney who can help them determine which statutes apply and help preserve the right to a remedy.

The following represents a sample of the statutory limitation periods in the state of Illinois. However, it should be noted that this is an example of statutes of limitations

and there may be exceptions that apply which may extend or limit your cause of action. In addition, it is often possible to bring multiple causes of action from a single accident of wrongful conduct or even alternative theories of recovery which may change or extend your statute of limitation. Again, we highly recommend that you consult counsel before making a decision as it pertains to the statute of limitations.

Auto Accident Cases

The standard statute of limitations for an auto accident in the state of Illinois is two years from the date of injury. However, like most laws there are exceptions to this time period. If your accident involves a municipal or similar governmental bodies, you may be required to file suit within one year of the date of injury. In addition, some governmental entities must be given notice of the cause of action within six months of the date of accident.

Medical Negligence Cases

A medical negligence case must be filed within two years of the date of the act giving rise to the injury. If the injury cannot reasonably be discovered during that two year period the lawsuit must be filed within two years of the date that the injured party knew or should have known of the malpractice but in no event more than four years after the date of the act giving rise to the injury. This is sometimes

known as the discovery rule.

The discovery rule is a rule that has been provided to allow individuals to file a lawsuit within a certain time period after the injury has been discovered or reasonably should have been discovered. There are occasions where it is not possible for a person to discover the cause of an injury or even to know if an injury has occurred until a considerable time after the act which causes the injury. For example, the misdiagnosis of an illness or injury or the failure to diagnose an illness or injury may not be discovered until months or even years after a standard two year time limitation has run. Also, if there has been continuous medical treatment by the same provider, that may affect the date on which the statute will begin to run.

Defective Products Cases

A product liability action must be brought within two years after the plaintiff suffers the injury. If the injury is not discovered within the two year time limit, suit may be filed within two years of the date of discovery, but in no event more than eight years of the date that the injury occurred.

Injuries to Minors

In general injury, medical malpractice or product liability cases, a minor's age at the time of injury will determine when suit must be filed. Generally a minor has two years after his or her eighteenth birthday to file an action. However in medical malpractice cases at most, a minor has eight years from the malpractice to file suit.

Workers' Compensation Cases

Formal notice of injury should be given to employer as soon as possible but not later than 45 days after the injury. In general the rule is an injured worker has 3 years after date of injury, or 2 years from the date of the last payment of compensation.

Because of its complexity, there has been much litigation over the question as to the time for filing litigation. We strongly advise anyone injured to contact an attorney before making a determination as to which statute of limitations may or may not apply to their particular case. SIMPLY, get in touch with an attorney as soon as possible after an injury.
By Jack Cannon
The Healy Law Firm

Jack Cannon was raised in Ireland and is an associate attorney with The Healy Law Firm. He has been representing injured parties in the State of Illinois for fourteen years.

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Ed McElroy, host of "Community In Focus" which airs weekly on Comcast Channel 19, recently hosted Cook County Commissioner Elizabeth Gorman and Judge David R. Donnersberger.

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Chicago Gaelic News

Continued from page 10
sell out well in advance of the date. December 31st is the day to remember for all the fun of a New Year's party. And looking ahead to February the "Merry Ploughboys" will present their star attraction on Saturday, February 3rd. For more information on all of these attractions, call Melody or any of the charming front office ladies at 708—687-9323,

Gaelic Park is also the location for the Sunday afternoon Celtic Suppers starting at 4:00 pm. Over the past couple of years this event has become very popular. A good dinner is on the menu from 4:00 pm until 6:00 pm and then traditional Irish music and dancing is featured until 9:00 pm. This year is the 6th year that the Hennessy family, over a 100 of us, will make this our annual Christmas family dinner and each year we enjoy it even more. It's an ideal place for the celebration of holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, etc. Reservations are made for large groups. Again call Melody at the front office, 708—687-9323.

Irish Based Group To Build Loop Skyscraper

An Irish-based financial group, The Shelbourne Development Ltd., are finalizing plans to build the world's tallest tower in Chicago's Loop, according to a story in the Chicago Tribune recently. "We're pulling the master contract together with the architects and engineers" said Thomas Murphy, attorney for the Group. The three year construction project, overlooking the lake and river, at 400 N. Shore Lake Drive is scheduled to start next spring. Financing will be provided by the developer, Robert Kelleher and the Anglo-Irish bank, according to the report.

If we were to hear such news in Ireland when I was a youth, it would be like hearing that an Irishman was the first human to walk on the moon. Such would be our pride, But today, such big news is common place. The emigrant ships which brought millions of Irishmen and women away from their homeland is now heading back towards the Emerald

Isle. Tanum cun De.

Plans for the Tower at Lake Shore Drive and North Water Street were announced about a year ago. It would rise higher than the 1,450 foot Sears Tower. Planning and zoning approval has already been obtained from the City for a 150 room hotel, approximately 300 condominiums, priced at \$800,000 to \$5 million.

Murphy is undaunted about housing sales, as he remarked, "This property will not come on the market for three years. Chicago is improving and by then will be great! Times they are a'changing, and thankfully the Irish are keeping up with the Jones's and that makes all of us proud.

Washington Park Ideal Site For Olympics

Mayor Richard M. Daley's recent announcement that he would pick Washington Park for his 95,000 seat Olympic Stadium, if Chicago gets the nod to house the world-wide event in 2016, is a good one. Not only is this beautiful and spacious park out in the neighborhoods, getting the community involved, but it would be in close proximity to the Loop where other events would be staged. It would also be the venue for track and field events.

Needless to add, the stadium would only be temporary and could readily be converted after the games are over into an "amphitheatre stadium," with 10,000 seats for concerts, cultural events and even for Chicago track and field events. A proposed possibility of mass transit connections is also on the drawing board.

The location could also benefit from the erection of two Astro turf fields for hockey and football with revitalized lagoons, bike paths, and with underground parking. The whole community would benefit.

Washington Park has its historic ties with the GAA in Chicago as it was here that the old caman game and football was kept alive by the "Faithfew", like "Evergreen," Galway man, Mike Mulryan, Corkman, Tom O'Mahoney, Billy Faulkner, Tipperary, Jimmy Connellan. Clare, Paul Burke, Cork and many others during the lean years between the

30's and '50's. They met here on Sundays and sometimes during the week to puck the ball around, kick football and pray for the day that emigration would re—open again. It did of course in the late 40's, when flocks of young Irishmen and women came to Chicago and reactivated the GAA. The rest is history.

The Many Faces Of Christmas

We are all pretty well familiar with the customs and traditions of Christmas in Ireland and here in our own country, but reading an old copy of "Ireland's Own" recently, I came across a story by writer, Vivian Igoe, who tells us of how customs varied from country to country, especially in Europe. For instance, our own Celts brought mistletoe on their travels and the Saxons brought holly.

Some countries do not celebrate Christmas, but for the ones that do, the old Christmas tree holds pride of place. The tree originated in Germany and then spread to other countries. Most countries put lights on the tree, but Norway only uses white lights. Norway has an unusual custom. They tie a Christmas tree to all the masts of its many ships for the duration of the Christmas period whether the ships are docked or on the high seas.

In the Low countries, December 5th, the eve of the feast of St. Nicho-

las is the big feast day with all its festivities. St. Nicholas is the patron saint of sailors and children.

Opinions differ as to where Santa Claus actually comes from... For example, in Ireland it is generally understood that Santa comes from the North Pole with his sleigh pulled by his favourite reindeer. In Finland, Santa is in Lapland north of the Arctic Center. In Holland, he is said that he lives in a snowy clime but he doesn't even have reindeers.

Carols and music making are popular in all these countries and an old custom which has survived in parts of the Netherlands is mid—winter horn blowing. The farmers blow on long horns made from elder trees and the call is relayed from farm to farm. This represents an exchange of announcements that Christ is coming.

The beautiful Christmas carol "Silent Night" was composed in Austria, December 24, 1818. It was written by a parish priest, Josef Mohr in a little village near Salzburg. It took the choir master, Xaver Gruber only two hours to compose the melody for Fr. Mohr, in order to fill the void because the church organ was out of order. Fr. Mohr sang the carol by the wood carved Nativity scene that evening. But it might have faded into oblivion had not the organ repairman discovered it. And thus this popular carol was born and became famous all over the world.

In Austrian homes wreaths made of fir or spruce boughs are decorated with four candles, each representing the four Sundays in Advent. One candle is lit on the first Sunday and on the fourth Sunday all the candles are lit. This Custom originated in Germany in 1918 after the First World War and spread to the rest of the country in the 30's. Catholics have them consecrated in Church.

This is the time that the children in Austria write their letters to the Christkind and not to Santa Claus. They place the letters in the windows where they can be seen. They believe that it is the Christkind that brings the presents and decorates the Christmas trees.

The tradition of the crib is much older than the Christmas tree in Austria and they have always been famous for their elaborate cribs with wood carved figures in which the Nativity scene has an Alpine backdrop. December 24th is a fast day in Austria with carp being the main dish. After the meal the Adults will head off for Midnight Mass guided by their lanterns across the snow to the joyous ringing of church bells. Merry Christmas to all and a happy and healthy New Year.



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Deirdre O' Kane and Podge & Rodge to host the Meteor Ireland Music Awards Feb 1, 2007 Nominations Announced For The Meteor's

The 2007 Meteor Ireland Music Awards, Ireland's most anticipated music event of the year, will take place in The Point Theatre on Thursday, 1st February and will be broadcast on RTE TWO (TV) at 9pm on Sunday, 4th February 2007.

The star-studded music spectacular, now in its seventh year, will be hosted by Irish comedian Deirdre O' Kane and the hilarious duo Podge and Rodge.

The appearance of one of Ireland's funniest comedians, combined with the bachelor brothers from Ballydung Manor, will undoubtedly add sparkle and humour to an entertaining night of laughter, music and glamour!

18 Meteor Ireland Music Awards will be presented and music fans will be able to vote for their favourite artist or band in six public categories.

Public voting has been taking place since Thursday the 16th November and couldn't be easier, for the following Meteor Music Awards:

- Best Irish Male Act
- Best Irish Female Act
- Best Irish Pop Act
- Best Irish DJ.
- Best Irish Band
- Best Live Performance

Fans can vote in Ireland by texting VOTE to 085 71 14444 to receive a list of keywords and categories.

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Voting is open to all Irish mobile networks and will be charged stan-



Deirdre O' Kane

dard text rates. Online voting will be available on www.meteor.ie Everyone who votes will be automatically entered into a competition to win tickets to the 2007 Meteor Awards.

The Hope for 2007 Award will be voted for by 2FM listeners while the remaining awards apart from the Most Downloaded Song will be decided by votes cast by representatives of the Irish music industry.

Speaking at the launch of this year's awards Meteor spokesperson Andrew Kelly, Chief of Policy and Corporate Affairs said, "We are a growing brand, committed to bringing competition to the mobile communications market

and driving down Irish mobile prices and it seems that as we grow the Meteor Ireland Music Awards grow with us." "This year is no different", he added, "and we can expect a fantastic show on the night, made all the better by the fact that music fans can text vote for the winners in six very popular categories".

RTE TWO's Kevin Linehan, Head of Variety Television said, "This will be RTE TWO's seventh year as host broadcaster of the Meteor Ireland Music Awards

ceremony. We are delighted to be associated with an event that celebrates and promotes the wealth of established and new young talent on the Irish music scene".

Tickets for the Meteor Ireland Music Awards have been on sale since Friday the 17th of November and are available from Ticketmaster and usual outlets nationwide and cost €40 each including booking fee. This is strictly an over 16 year's event. 16 - 18 year olds need to be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Irish American Active Retired Club (ARC)

Today's prosperous Ireland is in no small measure the result of the sacrifices made by countless emigrants who left her shores over the years. Their departure provided relief to a struggling economy and the remittance sent home kept the State afloat during the 'lean years'.

Chicago Irish Immigrant Support recognizes the sacrifices and the hard work of Ireland's past emigrants and wishes to repay that debt in some small way by offering a venue for senior emigrants to come together to relax and take part in social activities. The club will feature guest speakers and an array of fun past times.

Would you like to join our Active Retired Club (ARC)? Our new club will cater to Irish and Irish American seniors who wish to maintain their cultural roots to Ireland while making new friends. If you are interested come along any Thursday at 7 pm to Gaelic Park or the Irish American Heritage Center. Call Breandan on 312-337-8445 for more details.

Gunther Murphy's Closes

After 15 great years in Chicago Gunther Murphys has decided to shut its doors! Gunthers has hosted many great acts over the years, most recently Damien Dempsey. December 2nd was their last day.



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Faith Robinson's Journey Home

By Susan Gedutis Lindsay

Home. Few words bear so much meaning. Far more than a physical place, home refers to a point of repose, a vein of connection to our hearts where we find comfort, warm memories, joyful connectedness, and also peaceful solitude. In her debut recording *A Journey Home*, vocalist Faith Marion Robinson leads us to that place—but hers is a home filled also with treasured souvenirs of her home away from home: Ireland. Just as the places we have been become a part of who we are, her work in *A Journey Home* successfully paints Irish sounds, instrumentation, and melodic sensibility over both traditional Irish and American selections in a fit that sounds surprisingly natural. Robinson sits comfortably in the armchair of American style, but warms her toes—and indeed, our hearts—at the Irish fire.

Robinson discovered a love for Irish music through her Irish family. Like the Norman invaders who by the 14th century had become “more Irish than the Irish themselves,” Ireland has made a home in her heart, and this is the home about which she sings. “Twenty-five years of travel to Ireland to visit my family has educated me in the ways of the Irish heart,” she said. “I have felt enriched by the Irish character, which I have experienced as kindness, sharing, and compassion.” Singing the songs that have been forged in those communities is a tribute to family and friends, and the Irish spirit that has so enriched her life.

Co-produced by Robinson and Ray McGlaughlin, who also serves as keyboardist for Irish entertainer Daniel O'Donnell, and engineered by Seamus Cullinane of Foster and Allen, the work was recorded in Roseland Recording Studios in Co. Westmeath, Ireland. It features some of Ireland's finest studio musicians, who move among the Irish and Broadway selections with remarkable finesse, putting a truly Irish stamp on



Faith Marion Robinson

Robinson's vocal performance style.

What comes across clearly on this CD and in talking to Faith is her compassion and sensitivity. For example, she performs with great sincerity on “The Town I Loved So Well,” Phil Coulter's bittersweet requiem for the war-torn Northern Ireland city of Derry. First released in 1971, it is a contemporary piece that has become nearly an anthem in Ireland. The song has been sung by many of Ireland's national heroes of song—Paddy Reilly, Luke Kelly, Ronnie Drew—and it is courageous of Robinson to take it on. But to the listener's delight, she does so with great gentility and poise, and proves that its universal themes may be owned by us all.

For Robinson, this music represents not just a personal but also a spiritual journey that serves as a backdrop in each of the recording's 11 tracks. Throughout, soaring keyboard washes help to create a broad horizon over which her voice is painted, while rich resonant whistle tones, plaintive uilleann pipes, and graceful string gestures bring both mystery and nostalgia.

She first experienced Ireland's mystique in listening to the Chieftains as teenager, and it's a spirit she brings to her own creation. “When you listen to the Chieftains, an ancestral remembrance occurs,” she said. “It

brings about a feeling in time and space when we were all Celtic. I believe somehow we're connected to this memory through our cells, a sense memory, and it touches me very deeply. It's just magical.”

“I really like to put together Irish music because you have this secret history... old songs, standard songs. That was sitting with me,” she said. “But I also needed to express some of the Broadway things that were in my own personal journey. I started mixing at the cauldron.” The connection between her stage background and Ireland is not far-fetched, however, as many of the songs that have become favorites among Irish and Irish Americans alike were staples on the American vaudeville and musical theater stage at the turn of the century. Indeed, fans of Irish tenor John McCormack will be delighted to hear Faith's versions of some of his perennials.

She brings a haunting feel to “He Moved Thru the Fair,” a macabre tale of love and death, with lyrics adapted to a female protagonist. The song, a well-known and very old traditional song, juxtaposes the transcendent joy of an impending wedding against the loss of that love before the awaited day arrives... stated outright in some versions, but only suggested in a most chilling way in this version. Here, we learn only that he comes to her in the night without a sound... did he die? Did he forsake the wedding vow? It's unclear but the organ pipe brings an eerie feeling that leaves us wondering.

Robinson also revisits and updates many of the favorites of the Irish cabaret, including the haunting lullaby “Little Boats,” arranged by Herbert Hughes and first recorded by Irish tenor John McCormack in 1941. She also performs other McCormack signatures, “Bless This House” and “The Kerry Dance.”

Robinson delivers another lasting favorite, “Danny Boy,” next. In her version, McGlaughlin's almost mournful piano intro pulls us in, and the song climbs steadily to its triumphant high note, which she reaches with freedom and ease. Uilleann pipes and whistle throughout maintain the sentimental feel.

Another McCormack piece she presents is “The Cloths of Heaven,” a song whose lyrics were adapted from the William Butler Yeats poem “The Wind Among the Reeds” by Thomas F. Dunhill.

Her voice truly shines in “Somewhere - Over the Rainbow.” This medley of two staples—“Somewhere” from the Broadway musical *West Side Story*, and “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” from the *Wizard of Oz*—is so natural that it's hard to imagine that they are not performed together regularly, yet Robinson candidly admits that the

similarities between the Emerald Isle and that magical place over the rainbow—Emerald City—are not lost on her. Robinson's strength as a vocalist also shines in Rodgers and Hammerstein's “Do I Love You Because You're Beautiful,” while whistle accompaniment adds touches that both “Irish-ize” and lend a hint of jazz appropriate for these American standards.

Ireland is no longer so far away. The world has grown smaller, and *A Journey Home* sometimes can mean no travel at all. Faith Marion

Robinson's journey is one we take into our hearts... to the place where some small part of us all is very, very Irish.

Faith Marion Robinson's *A Journey Home* may be purchased through www.regorecords.com and at select music stores. For more information, visit www.fait-marionrobinson.com.

Susan Gedutis Lindsay covers music for the Boston Irish Reporter and is author of *See You at the Hall: Boston's Golden Era of Irish Music and Dance* (University Press of New England, 2004).

Fourth Annual Ireland Network Black-Tie Ball

Mark your calendars for the Fourth Annual Ireland Network Black-Tie Ball which will be held on Saturday, February 24, 2007 at 7pm at the InterContinental Hotel Chicago, 505 North Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611, 312-944-4100

As before, this year's event is in the magnificent Grand Ballroom at the InterContinental Hotel. The event will kick-off at 7pm with cocktails. Dinner will follow and the evening will round off with music and dancing.

Tickets are \$125 per person (same price as 2005 and 2006), which includes dinner and a full open bar.

This event is open to non-network members. Tickets will be sold on a first-come, first-serve basis:

Reserve your tickets today with an RSVP to Rose Whitehorne at the following email address: rose.whitehorne@chicago.ida.ie. Checks should be sent to Ireland Network, c/o IDA Ireland, 77 West Wacker Drive, Suite 4070, Chicago, IL 60601. Make your checks payable to the “Ireland Network Chicago” and include the mailing address where you wish to receive the tickets on all correspondence to ensure your tickets are mailed to the correct address.

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MICK

By Mike Morley



reviewer, Frank West, a man who's had the tenacity to devour and review thousands of Irish titles over the years. No dice. Out of curiosity I touched base with Peg Reid,

librarian at the Irish American Heritage Center. ("What's the title, again?") Peg looked it up and actually found one copy available there.

Naughty Mary, whist yer gob.

I don't recall how I came across this book about Mary McAleese, the first Irish President born in British-ruled Northern Ireland. But with Christmas coming up the end of the month, it's a good time to recommend her inspiring biography by Ray MacManis titled *The Road From Ardoyne, The Making of a President*. (Brandon Books - Mount Eagle Publications, Dingle, Co. Kerry, Ireland, ISBN: 0863223419)

Mary was raised in the Ardoyne, a poor Catholic Belfast neighborhood that's borne the brunt of many pogroms by pro-British mobs over the years. Ardoyne is home to Holy Cross School for Girls where day after day in 2001 and 2002 Royal Police allowed Protestant "neighbors" and members of pro-British UDA and UVF paramilitaries to pelt Catholic parents and their daughters with spit, abuse, bags of urine and explosive devices as they made their way to grade school.

Back in 1969 the Ardoyne was also set upon by Protestant mobs encouraged by RUC and B-special police. Catholic families in several entire streets were burned out of their homes and 17 residents shot. Mary's father packed the family up and drove down to Dublin. They returned, but had to once again abandon their home when it came under repeated attack.

I decided this would be a great read, and went off to Borders to pick up a copy. The book was published in hardcover in 2004 and paperback a year later, but Borders had never heard of the title and did not have it in inventory. My odyssey had begun. An online search of Brentano's and other American booksellers was also futile. Amazon.com had a few copies, used and new, but all were from the UK-booksellers at the Scottish Parliament, the British Parliament, and smaller private shops - that's where the interest lay. I ordered two and waited for them to arrive.

Meanwhile, I checked with an Irish librarian at my local public library. "I've never heard of it," she said, but ran a search of the Illinois system. She came up with one copy, not in Chicago, but down in Urbana in an Irish collection at the U of I. I had it sent up. Then I ran into Irish American News' long time book

At Shannon airport this year I browsed the large bookstore at the duty free. On either side of the main passageway were two huge displays - biographies of Hillary and Billery. I asked the salesgirl about the Irish President's biography. She rubbed her chin and looked ceilingward. "I can't say I've heard of it." This wasn't a big shock by now, even in Ireland. I was used to telling librarians and booksellers all about a book they should have been describing to me. So I asked if the manager was around... perhaps she had heard of it. She rounded up the manager, a pleasant and very knowledgeable young man. He knitted his brow, pursed his lips, rubbed his chin, but no cigar. He was equally dumbfounded, but wanted to know more about the book. When I got to the part about her family being burned out of Belfast, a light seemed to come on. "Oh, that's a no-no", he said. "A no-no - What do you mean?" He told me that the President was not supposed to make any controversial statements. Apparently fiery attacks by armed police and klan-like religious vigilantes were not fit for discussion, especially by the country's President.

Like Alice discovered in Wonderland, things were getting curiously and curiously. You'd have thought I was asking for copies of *Ulysses*, or *Naked Lunch*. But of course everyone would recognize those titles right off; and they'd have copies on hand. I called the Irish Consulate here and, sure enough, the secretary also had not heard of the book. Considering the book was about the boss, and written with her approval, one would think they'd have a big stack on hand. She put me on hold and got back in a minute or two. Yes, the vice-consul and consul had heard of the book. I mentioned the Shannon experience. "Oh, that's a small bookstore". The consuls suggested I try the big Irish bookseller, Easons. (Easons does not carry it.) They suggested Amazon. I told her the hard cover came out in 2004. "Oh, 2004. You know they only come out for awhile and then they're gone". I pointed out that 2004 was only 2 years ago and that the paperback was released only last year. Besides, the book didn't sell out, it had never been put on the shelves in

the first place. I could tell the receiver on the other end had McAleese's account of her stint as a reporter and researcher for the government-owned



RTE during the hunger strikes, a period she describes as "the most difficult, the darkest, the worst time of my life", may be considered even more of a "no-no", something best kept in the closet behind the Waterford shamrock bowls. McAleese has compared working for RTE current affairs back then to working for the East German secret police. It was a sticky situation. Some former staffers maintain that up to 15 members of the Official IRA or Workers Party were ensconced in key positions at RTE. They were anti-Republican, anti-Nationalist, and courted the Unionist point of view in their programming. McAleese (in her diary): "RTE journalists... never did their research, never did their homework. They would come to Belfast and head straight for the bar of the Europa Hotel. They used to

get their information, or a version of the information, from the RUC Press Office." "H-Block coverage is biased at worst, misguided at best."

So, buy the book. Buy a couple of copies if you can round them up, and give one to a friend. Pass your copy around when you're done. You will have the thrill of beating the system and tasting forbidden fruit, all from the comfort of your easy chair.

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We Get Letters

In Ireland, a recent High Court ruling (*O'Keefee vs. Board of Education*) set precedent by establishing that the Irish Government, the Irish Department of Education, and the Catholic Church do not have a duty or a responsibility, to ensure that children attending public National/Elementary schools are free of sexual assault from the pedophile teachers they employ and pay.

Such was the case when Ms. Louise O'Keefee sought justice and closure for the series of sexual assaults and appalling crimes against her by the school Principal of the public school she attended. Ms. O'Keefee took her case to court, because it seemed to her and the Irish people, that the State, the Department of Education and the Catholic Church had a responsibility to ensure children could receive an education free of sexual molestation and torture.

Since 1924, the Irish Department of Education has overseen the administration of policies and planning, as well as implementing legislature down through the chains of command. It pays the salaries of the teachers, sets the terms and conditions of their employment, writes the contracts; and provide for their retirement.

It assigns inspectors to elementary schools throughout the country. Throughout each Diocese, it partners with the Bishop. He is the Patron of the schools, and he appoints the local parish priest to the screening and hiring of teachers. Together, on the local level, the priest and inspector, have the direct responsibility of ensuring children are educated. The taxpayer foots the bill.

However, in the recent High Court ruling, the Honorable, Justice

Eamon DeValera ruled for the Department of Education, (and his sister Sile DeValera, she is an official with the Department of Education) and the Catholic Church.

Because of Judge Eamon DeValera's ruling, Ms. O'Keefee was penalized by the Irish State for challenging the Department of Education, and she was ordered to pay one-half million Euros in court costs. A single mother, who provides for the support of her children, now faces homelessness while the Director of Education, Mary Hanafin, aggressively pursues her home, her only asset. However, the abusing pedophile is enjoying a comfortable retirement paid by the Department of Education.

I attended public elementary school in Ireland and I fled to America, so often referred to as 'The Land of the Stupid' by the school principal, Noel Conway during his theatrical outbursts. The school curriculum consisted of a study period usually after lunch. Children became frozen with terror; their fears magnified by the sound of his footsteps between the rows of desks. During the molestation study assignment, children who were unable to complete study assignments micturated with sheer fright. The sounds of the whipping stick and the wailing of children filled our classroom. Memories still screaming inside me, the abuse, helplessness, and powerlessness; the sounds of innocent children whipped, kicked, dragged, and verbally terrorized; no child would dare tell their parents - he was the pillar of the community. The priest visited weekly but he turned his back to the helpless, frightened

children. On the very rare occasion, the inspector from the Department of Education visited our school; we were forewarned our school attendance was being checked.

On July 2000, the court sentenced him to a two-year comfortable protective stay for his thirty-year reign of terror and sexual molestation on children. Many tried to tell their stories, others could not. The Irish Government provided him with counseling services during his prison stay, but they steadfastly refused counseling services for those whose childhoods he destroyed.

In 1998, the Irish Government announced the establishment of the commission to investigate child abuse. Counseling services were widely advertised in the Irish-American papers. Around this time, the Catholic elementary school scandals were erupting in Boston. In Ireland, counseling and compensation was denied those who attended the public schools. The then Director of Education, Michael Woods announced their parents should have attended school with them.

This past month the Department of Education fired off letters to people who endured abuse in the schools. They warned them not to challenge them in the courts, otherwise, the consequences would be severe and swift - a fate similar to that of Louise O'Keefee's - homelessness. Nevertheless, Prime Minister, Mr. Bertie Ahearn, has strongly praised the partnership between the Catholic Church and the Irish Department of Education for its fine administration and management of the public Elementary/National schools. In the past voices were silenced, those voices need to be heard and not silenced again.

Mary B. Williams



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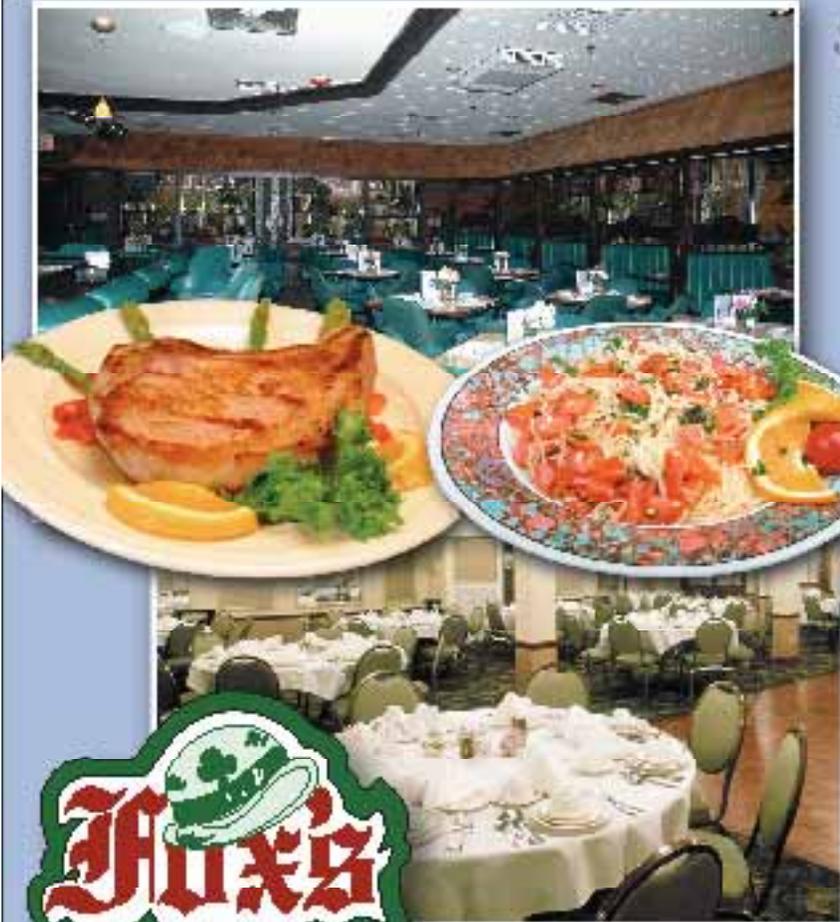
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Hybrid makes 71 mpg with Khaos Gassaver
by Billy L. Andal

Although hybrid cars are fuel efficient, they can get even more miles per gallon if hooked with the Khaos Super Gas Saver.

This happened when a 2004 model Honda Civic Hybrid (gasoline-electric) sedan made about 71 miles per gallon (mpg) after being fitted with Khaos. Previously, the car owned by

Len Tolentino made only 41 mpg.

A realtor and mortgage executive, Tolentino said she learned about the benefits from Khaos use from his brother whose mileage on his 2003 Ford E-150 Van being use for airport shuttle improved by 48%.

Initially, Tolentino didn't believe the savings.

But, wanting to put more muscle on her sluggish hybrid and perhaps get better mileage, she gave Khaos a try and had one installed.

"Right after the hooked up, I feel I got more power," she relates. After two fill-ups Tolentino was amazed to find out her hybrid Civic was making about 71 mpg aside from a more responsive engine. "It's like I'm now driving a V6, the engine runs so smoothly," the proud owner said.

Tolentino's hybrid made some sort of history in the automotive industry as it was the first gasoline-electric car tried and tested with the Khaos device in the world. The experience of Tolentino proved more than ever that Khaos really works, on 4 to 12 cylinder conventional gas engines, and also on hybrids.

For over 30 years now Khaos has demonstrated tremendous success in making most vehicles fuel efficient and more powerful with cleaner emissions on most automobiles, domestic or foreign.

Before it's entry into the United States market, Khaos gas saver has been proven effective in generating more mileage and gas savings for cars and trucks in Europe, Asia, Australia, Africa and the Middle East. In Europe, many prefers Khaos for delivering almost zero emission levels.

The wonderful product was invented by a Filipino named Pablo V. Planas in 1973 who has refused offers by investors to buy out the rights for mass production despite the various tempting offers.

With a reasonable price, investment for Khaos hook-up is easily recovered in a few months considering the savings in gas from 15 percent to as much as 50 percent reduction in oil change frequency and other maintenance expenses. It can be easily attached to the vacuum hose line on the throttle body and does not connect to or alter the electrical and computer devices of vehicles. Installations takes about 30 minutes and usability is warranted for the lifetime of the car. Khaos can even be moved from one car to the other without any hassle.

Due to the huge market and business potential and to reach out to more individual motorists, fleet owners, state and federal government agencies and to all other people in and out of the United States interested in reducing huge amount of expense on gas and maintenance, Khaos Fuel Solutions, Inc., the US distributor, is inviting applicants who may want to be sales agents and distributors.

People wanting to seize the potential business opportunity of the gas saver or those interested in simply buying Khaos may call 1 800.921.7798, 224.388.0017, email bnb13@sbcglobal.net, one_abcorp@yahoo.com or visit www.onegassaver.com.

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Her Best Move

Summertime Films has announced the studio-direct release of its new film, Her Best Move, a lively teen dramady about a high school soccer phenom who must deal with the conflicting interests of parents, boyfriends,



school – and her shot at being the youngest player on the women's national soccer team.

Hot young Irish songwriter Eoin Harrington, wrote an original song ("What If") for the film and soundtrack of Her Best Move." Dublin-born Eoin Harrington recently opened for Damien Dempsey in San Francisco in October and is an award-winning songwriter, highly sought after for his dynamic singing style and high-energy stage presence.

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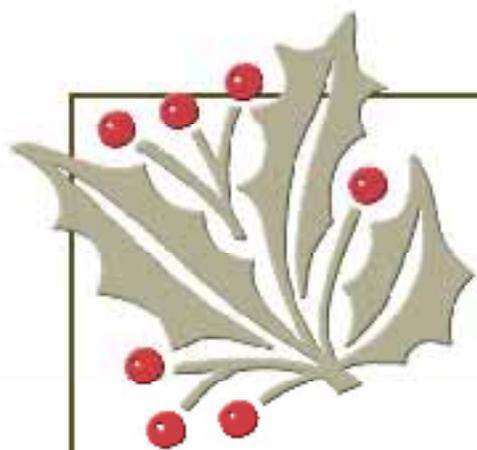
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(Merry Christmas *and* a Happy New Year)

to

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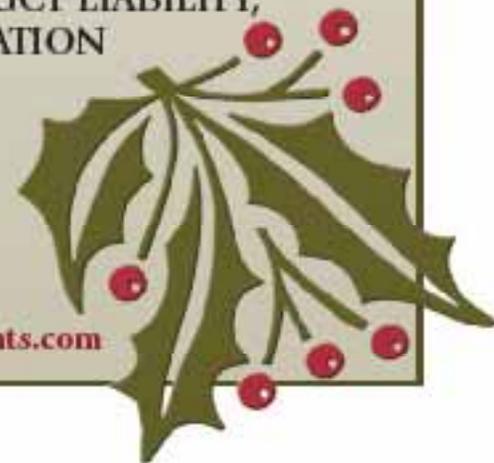


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Tinker's Dam

by Fr. Kevin O'Neill Shanley



Christmas gift was fondly remembered

Uncle Tom was a quiet man who loved people dearly, and especially family members such as my three brothers and myself. He was very much a grandfather figure for us, since we never knew or met any of our grandparents in Ireland. He was also greatly fond of my Mother and looked forward to our visits to his home in the Greenville section of Jersey City, N.J. His home, with Aunt Mary, his wife, was on a bluff overlooking the wide expanse of Newark Bay. Our family lived in rather cramped quarters in a cold-water flat in another part of the city.

Most Sundays after Mass and our dinner, Mom and Dad would pack us aboard the Public Service trolley on West Side Avenue for the trip to Greenville. As we later raced up Custer Avenue to Uncle Tom's home, we had the exciting feeling of being out in the open with a grand view of Newark Bay.

When we entered Uncle Tom's home, he would most often be sitting near the door to greet us. He'd say to my Mom, "Mary, I felt it in my bones that you'd be visiting today, and welcome."

Uncle Tom was a diminutive man who had emigrated from Drogheda in Co. Meath, Ireland. He was illiterate but very wise in his own way. Perhaps he felt a closeness to my Mom because they were both outsiders in the family, being in—laws. Years of heavy toil and dangerous work, first as a sand-hog digging the subway and auto-truck tunnels under the Hudson River to New York City, and later as a factory worker, robbed him of what little good health he had. His labors, especially underground, brought on emphysema and other problems.

But Aunt Mary was able to keep the household together with her Irish education and financial acumen. They couldn't have children of their own but accepted foster children

from the state Children's Welfare Office, and raised them as their own. My brothers and I simply regarded these children as our cousins.

The Great Depression

When Uncle Tom lost his job during the Great Depression of the 1930s, he and Aunt Mary, owning their own home, were in-eligible for Public relief, as it was called in those days.

However, they also took in borders, especially a man we simply called "Uncle Gus." His board money, along with raising vegetables in their extensive garden, getting apples from an abundant tree and raising chickens for eggs, kept Aunt Mary and Uncle Tom able to hold onto their home.

On our often weekly visits to Greenville, Mom and Uncle Tom would often sit quietly to talk about the "old days" in Ireland. She was a Dublin girl who met my father's family, the Shanleys, on visits to Skerries, Co. Dublin, not too far from Drogheda. Mom had a warm sympathy and affection for Uncle Tom and the great difficulties he had experienced and overcome in life. She encouraged him to continue to seek work, and when he got a job as a night watchman at a small war plant near home, Mom expressed her pride in his achievement and walked with him through the factory. He was proud to show his workplace to all the family.

One of the difficulties that made life harder for Uncle Tom was his fondness for alcohol. It may have been

because of his poor health, lack of education, or simply the great difficulties of his life. Whatever the reason, the family tended to look down on Uncle Tom as almost an outcast.

But not Mom. She had already experienced the disease in her own father, and seemed to have more sympathy and understanding for Uncle Tom. He often felt that it was our Mom's kindness, affection, and understanding that helped him through some of his more difficult times.

Christmas Gifts

During the Depression, of course, it was difficult to give or receive presents, especially at Christmas time. A single toy or other gift, often homemade, was all that most children, or adults, could expect.

Uncle Tom tried, in his daily rounds of collecting discarded junk, empty bottles that could be redeemed for two cents, often was on the lookout for items that could be used for possible gifts.

In one of their many conversations, Mom had mentioned to Uncle Tom her difficulty in keeping her kitchen knives sharp, especially those used for carving meat and other foods for the family. Uncle Tom must have made a mental note of their conversation.

Sometime later, not long before Christmas, when he trudged down an abandoned railroad line in Greenville, he spotted a large discarded railroad spike. It could be, he thought, a good instrument

to sharpen Mom's knives. Uncle Tom hurried home with his potential Christmas gift for Mom. He carefully dropped it into a pan of kerosene to remove the collected rust and other materials that covered the spike. Then he sat down with a chisel and file to remove another layer of rust to bring forth the original iron spike till it looked almost new. Then came the process of sharpening the edges to produce a real knife-sharpener.

Carefully wrapping the spike in some already used Christmas wrapping paper, Uncle Tom began the long journey of walking some three miles to our family flat.

He knocked timidly at our kitchen door, and Mom opened it and greeted him warmly. He sat by the kitchen stove while Mom made him a cup of hot tea. After a little while, he shyly offered her his Christmas present. Mom opened it gingerly, not quite knowing what to expect.

"Oh!" she gasped as she saw the old railroad spike burnished and polished to a useful and bright state.

"I thought it might be useful," explained Uncle Tom, "in keeping your knives and other things sharp. It won't soon wear out."

Mom kissed Uncle Tom affectionately, and thanked him profusely for this very unusual Christmas gift. The railroad spike proved quite useful and remained in the utility drawer in our kitchen for many years afterwards. It was a reminder to Mom of how good and loving a man Uncle Tom really was. And she would often remind her sons of how important a gift at Christmas is if given with love.

A Classic Irish Christmas at Gaelic Park

On December 17th, the magic and meaning of Christmas will come alive at Gaelic Park with Andy Cooney's A Classic Irish Christmas. Andy Cooney, with his outstanding voice and dynamic stage presence, has always been a favorite among American and Irish audiences everywhere. His talent and versatility provide the ability to deliver a song directly to the hearts of his audience. Being christened "Irish America's Favorite Son" by the New York Times is a title he truly deserves. Andy Cooney and his guests will entertain you with the celebration of Christmas... full of the warmth and happiness which makes memories last forever.

Chicago Gaelic Park is located at 6119 W. 147th St., in Oak Forest. For tickets and information call 708-687-9323. Admission is \$20 and doors open at 7:00 pm; the show starts at 7:30 pm. For more information visit www.chicagogaelpark.org.

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Irish Rebel story up for award

It May Be Forever - An Irish Rebel On The American Frontier has been designated a finalist in the 2006 Best Books National Book Awards by usabooknews.com.

Their citation reads, "A beautifully written historical novel filled with excellent research and characters! Highly recommended!"



It May Be Forever recounts the real-life adventures and tragedy of Michael Quinn (1846-1934). Born into famine-era poverty in rural Ireland, Michael and his family flee to England, where Michael becomes a child laborer in the textile mills of Lancashire.

Faced with British prejudice and discrimination, he joins the Fenian rebels, a group determined to free Ireland from British colonial rule. Chronic unemployment, however, drives him to America, where an ill-fated Fenian invasion of Canada lands him on the untamed plains of the Wild West.

Faced with unaccustomed opportunity, Michael quickly abandons his fight against oppression. In pursuit of a great fortune, he turns away from family and friends, and supports the movement for the dispossession of Native Americans of their lands and livelihood in the Black Hills of South Dakota. When the horror of the massacre at Wounded Knee gives rise to demons of conscience, he is plagued with recurring nightmares from which only a Lakota holy man offers any hope of redemption.

It May Be Forever is a cautionary tale that shows how the many small decisions of life can create the most unintended consequences, and how easily a man of strong convictions may become that which he most despises.

It May Be Forever - An Irish Rebel On The American Frontier by David M. Quinn. AuthorHouse, 2005; ISBN 1420880918; Dust Jacket Hardcover; ISBN 1420880926; \$24.00; Paperback; ISBN 1420880918; \$16.00.

Ohio Irish American News premieres January 5th, 2007

After almost 30 years serving Chicagoland and the near Midwest, Irish American News is branching out, with the premiere of its latest publication, IAN Ohio.

With eight Irish festivals in seven Ohio cities, we believe it's time for Ohio to have its own Irish-American newspaper!

Focused on the news, people and events of Irish note and impact and how they affect those living in and around the Buckeye state, the Ohio Irish American News will offer articles, book and music reviews, profiles and pictures of current and historic businesses, sports, bands and newsmakers,

guest commentary, travel and tourism news and many special features, all relating to the Irish American experience. There are over 1,445,000 people of Irish descent living in Ohio and the impact and involvement of the Irish in Ohio has shaped the state since its birth. IAN Ohio will bring the movers, shakers and music makers to you from a unique perspective each month.

Monthly editions will be available at over 100 locations in and around Ohio, including Irish restaurants, pubs, organizations, businesses, concert halls and festivals. Anyone subscribing for the yearly price of \$25 will receive 12 monthly issues by first class mail.

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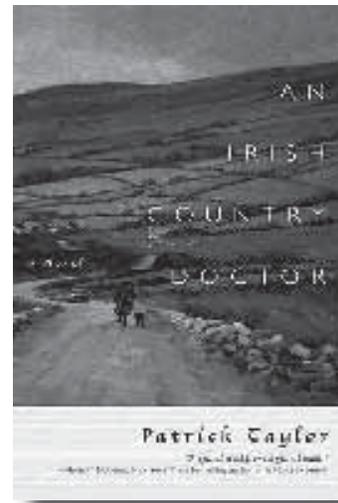
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An Irish Country Doctor

By Patrick Taylor

If James Herriot had treated people, practiced in rural Ireland, and written a novel, you'd have An Irish Country Doctor. Instead of Herriot's Yorkshire moors and countrymen, Patrick Taylor presents a now-gone rural Ireland, based on his own experiences, portrayed with love, wit, charm and an eye (and ear) for detail that only an Irishman could recreate.

In the rural Ireland of the early 1960s, young Doctor Barry Laverty begins his medical apprenticeship with a crusty, big-hearted, old mentor. Together with the remarkable Dr. Fingal Flahertie O'Reilly, Laverty must navigate the eccentricities



and charms of the residents of Ballybucklebo. It's a long way from Belfast, and Barry soon discovers that he still has a lot to learn about country life. But if he sticks with it, he just might end up finding out more about life - and love - than he ever imagined back in medical school.

Funny and heartwarming, An Irish Country Doctor features a joyously quirky cast of unforgettable characters, and will warm any heart looking for a quirky and clever read. So pull up a chair and grab a pint; you may not be able to put it down for a while.

An Irish Country Doctor by Patrick Taylor. A Forge Hardcover, Feb 2007. ISBN: 0-765-37623-4; 352 pages; \$24.00.

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T radition In Review



By Bill Margeson

December. Christmas. We love Christmas, and we know you do, too. Let's take a stroll down Christmas Album Lane, and recommend to you the very best of the best when it comes to Irish Christmas Albums—and a few last minute recommendations for your Irish trad lover's stocking stuffers. As usual, finding these gems is up to you. We recommend Google—or better yet, The Rampant Lion in Villa Park at 1-630-834-8108 or Paddy's On The Square in Long Grove, at 1-847-634-0210. Both shops are masters of the form in finding now-obscure Irish albums. We're recommending albums we know about personally. There are a massive number we haven't heard. So be it. It is a sub-stratum. Here we go:

Christmas Albums We Love and So Will You

1) The Best of Celtic Christmas—Compendium album on the Narada label—
A real winner, with lots of im-

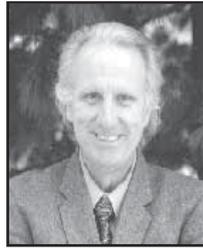
portant artists offering their takes on Christmas classics. Double album. A bargain, to be sure! From Kathy Mattea and Cathie Ryan to Altan, it is wonderful.

2) All on a Christmas Morning—Aengus—BMG Music

Robbie O'Connell is a great singer, and Chicago's Jimmy Keane is the best piano accordion player in Irish music. How can you lose? Lots of great guest stars. Most of these songs and tunes are not frequently heard. GREAT stuff. Break out the eggnog!!

3) The Soul of Christmas With Thomas Moore—Compendium—Upaya/Tommy Boy

A weirdly conceived double album, the first cd is wonderful, with a ton of great artists. Who is Thomas More? This ain't The-Man-For-All-Seasons-Thomas-More. Perhaps you think we are pagans for not knowing Thomas More. Fine. Get over it. What IS memorable is a cd filled with gorgeous Christmas treats from the likes of



Liam Tiernan, Johnny Cunningham, John Doyle, Seamus Egan—well, the group goes on and on. A lovely, lovely winner of a thing.

4) Shamrocks and Holly—Frankie Gavin and Carl Hession Orchestra—

This was put out some time ago, and we have lost the label under



Frankie Gavin

which it was released. No matter. Except to the label people themselves. Anyway, Frankie formed DeDannan; this alone makes him an immortal. He has done a lot of other types of projects, none of them remotely near the iconic quality of DeDannan, and some of them not up to snuff at all. Then, there is

this album. Designed to be totally commercial, it is. Frankie does not musically challenge himself on this album, and there is no need to. It is just a terrific instrumental album which you will love. Getting this one may not be easy, but it is well worth the internet archaeology required. We love this album to bits!

5) A Childhood Christmas—Bohola (with Kathleen Keane)—Capal Beag Music

Another example of great musicians meeting terrific material. Most of these treats may not be familiar to you—but Bohola should be. Kathleen Keane brings some local voices to the project. This is really, really good. Really. Get this. We mean, anything with the God Rest Ye Polka HAS to be heard. Very Irish and very special. This is a great mix of tempos, ambience and style.

6) On Christmas Night—Cherish The Ladies—

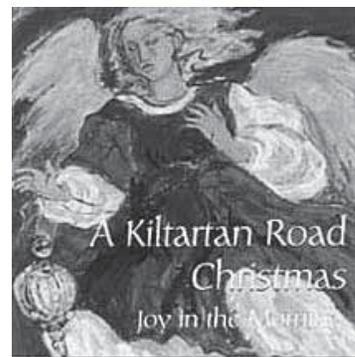
This one should be easy to find. For those of you who love Cherish, this one is a stunner. The New York Times loved it, too—but don't let that stop you from getting this tasty treat. Fun, lovely vocals, lively tunes and warm feelings abound. Leader Joanie Madden knows her stuff, and it all comes together here.

7) Thistle and Shamrock Christmas Celidh—Fiona Ritchie

Lovely compendium from the radio show. Fiona is a trad maven and diva, and this album is a winner, also—just like she. Rest easy, it is not a celidh album.

All-Time Favorites —Get 'Em, Tiger!!

1) Joy in the Morning, A Kiltartan Road Christmas—Kathy Cowan—Indie—



Kathy Cowan's Kiltartan Road is from a Chicago gal who never misses. Wonderful instrumental backing to her gorgeous voice. The musical taste is impeccable. We always listen to this Christmas Eve. A mix of old and new that slays us every year.

2) The Bells of Dublin—The Chieftains—RCA

Our number one fav of all-time. If you don't have this, you don't have Christmas. Guest artists join

the lads before we all lost Derek Bell and Martin Fay. This is the very definition of a classic. There is absolutely no need to say anything. Get up, go get it, and play it. Over and over. Like us.

The All-Time Best Female Single Christmas Song On An Irish Christmas Album

Cathie Ryan singing "It Came Upon A Midnight Clear" on The Soul of Christmas album in the #3 slot above.

The All-Time Best Male Single Christmas Song on an Irish Christmas Album

The Chieftain's Kevin Conneff and The Voice Squad singing "The Wren in the Furze" from The Bells of Dublin album.

Three New Albums To Buy For Yourself or Pretend They Are For The Family

Humdinger by Paul Brock and Enda Scahill. One of the five great instrumental albums we have ever heard, it is sweeping Ireland as you read this.

Fiddlewings by Manus McGuire showcases the Irish fiddle being played as perfectly as possible. A master at his work.

McNally's Row of Flats by Mick Moloney is a masterpiece and a critical part of Irish-American musical heritage at the same time. We hate to call an album "important", but this album is important. A rollicking, perfectly played, wonderful turn of music. WOW!!

Male New Artist to Watch For in 2007

Cork's Mairtin de Cogain is a shanachie, and there ain't many left. He is a wonderful, total entertainer, and we will be flogging his solo album and his Fuchsia Band next month. Bigtime new talent.

Female New Artist To Watch in 2007

Kathleen MacInnes is out of Scotland on the Greenrux label, and she is a wonder. What a voice! What an album! og-Mhadainn Shamhraidh (Summer Dawn). Big things should happen for this woman in 2007 if there is any justice in a strange world. She is has a flawless voice. A huge, huge talent! Much more on her later!

Merry Christmas. Go spend money on, and support these artists. It is your civic duty. GET UP!!! God Bless You and Your Families!
Executive Editorial Assistant - Mary Ann Kiefer.

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Raised On Songs and Stories

By Shay Clarke



We wanted to have it ready by mid-summer, but that just wasn't practical because of our touring schedule. Because this project is perhaps a little more special to us, we really wanted to pull it back, and take a little more time with it. There will be

some originals on there from previously released CD's, that aren't available anymore... re-tooled, of course! There will also be some stuff on there that we'll be including in upcoming shows, as well as stuff nobody has heard yet... even the band!

S: It sounds different from previous albums.

P: While we're on this subject, I've got one more thing to say regarding our originals!

Don't look for us to become one of those bands that start doing their own stuff, and suddenly refuse to do copies or "covers." Not that there is anything in the world wrong with that, an awful lot of bands go down that road, and it seems to work for them. God bless 'em! But I feel like this, anybody that performs has at least two sides to them. In our case an artistic or "musical" side, and the performer or "entertainers" side. Some people are truly gifted and excel at both... they make me sick! (kidding) But with most people, one side usually outshines the other. Personally, I would much rather be known for being a fine entertainer or performer, than a writer or musician.

Because of that, unless the day comes that everybody in the crowd wants solely our tunes, and they're letting us know it, we'll still include what seems to be our most popular "cover" stuff into our show. Eventually we'll start performing more of our originals, but if there's one of our songs that you just have to hear when you come to one of our shows, you better shout it out and let us know somehow, or we might not get to it.

S: A lot of people talk about your God Bless America start of the show. It's very patriotic and very popular. How did that get going, and why?

P: I'm glad you brought it up! It started as a way of trying to keep the patriotism alive, in the wake of 9/11. I could see that it was waning, and that saddened me. Then somewhere along the way, it became a way of saying thank you, to our vets, and our troops currently serving, as well as their families. Sometimes I think we all forget just how fortunate we are. It just seems right to take a couple of minutes to thank all the people that made it possible for us to enjoy the good times that we get to share with everyone. Plus Peggy's dad (the Rooster) was in the Navy, and my father was an Army man. Peggy's two older brothers both served in the Navy as well. I guess our family background makes us a little more sensitive to the fact that our soldiers and their families all deserve more love and respect than what they get. You know, it's not just our soldiers either--when we can, we voice our thanks to our hometown heroes like the police, firefighters, EMT's, etc. God bless them all.

S: So, would you call yourself a patriot?

P: I don't know, I do know that I'd call myself a proud American... I love this country!!

We are so lucky to have the way of life that we do! I guess it's only natural that some people take it for granted, but I think that's a real shame!

S: Are you ready for your Christmas Tour?

P: I'm big-time ready! My favorite time of

year has to be the Christmas Concert Tour.

I LOVE Christmas, I always will. I love getting to see as many of the "BC Faithful" as we can during the holiday season. We are going to have some new songs from our "Noel" CD to add to this year's show. I just wish we could get to more cities.

S: Where are you on New Year's Eve?

P: We will be home in Cleveland for NYE! We will be at a pub/restaurant called the West Park Station. It's right down the street from the old Price's Public House, where we performed our first BC gig. As always, keep checking our website for schedule updates and news. We'll also have lodging info on there soon, for any of the out-of-town BC Faithful, who may want to join us for NYE! It's gonna be a party!! Two parties in one, actually... It will also be our Bon Voyage Party, as we leave for Punta Gorda a couple of days later.

S: So, you are going to winter in Florida again, this year?

P: Yes. We will be at the Celtic Ray in Punta Gorda, FL, every weekend from the first weekend in January through mid-February. (except Superbowl weekend) Friday and Saturday nights and Sunday late afternoon/evenings. January and February are beautiful in Punta Gorda. C'mon down and join us for some fun in the sun!! Then March will bring us back up north for the "Green" season!

S: I hear you are changing your website.

P: Yes, we are currently revamping the site, and it should be really cool when it's done! There'll be all kinds of new pics, easier navigation, an online store, etc.

S: Any new news from Cleveland?

P: Actually yes, our buddies John "Turk" Price (Price's Public House), and Jim and Sheila Sheehan (Sheehan's Pub) have opened a new pub right down the street from the West Park Station, in an area of Cleveland that's quickly becoming what I call "little Ireland!" Their pub will be called Price's Pub, and we'll be playing there when we can.

S: Any closing words for the "BC Faithful?"

P: Live every day like it's your last, God bless us all, and for God's sake, take care of yourselves and each other! And to all our friends in Chicagoland, we look forward to seeing you at The Hemmens, in Elgin, on December 21st. Merry Christmas to all of you from Brigid's Cross. Peace out!

For more info on Brigid's Cross, please visit their website: www.brigidscross.com

Next Month: Malachy McCourt stopped by the WRMN studios a few weeks ago to record an interview for our "Blarney on the Air" radio show. He was in town to promote "A Couple of Blaguards" the comedy written by himself and his equally famous brother, Frank McCourt. And when we had finished the radio business, I sat down and had a greta chat with one of my heroes... yes, since reading Malachy's book "A Monk Swimming" I have been in awe of this man. The show "A Couple of Blaguards" runs at the Royal George Theater in Chicago for 4 weeks beginning November 25th and stars Jarlath Conroy and Howard Platt. My interview with Malachy will be in the January issue.

Mairtin De Cogain played at the Claddagh Irish Pub and Restaurant in Algonquin Commons recently. He was in town as our guest on "Blarney on the Air." Mairtin, who fronts The Fuchsia Band from Cork, is in his own right, a brilliant entertainer. He is a Seanachie (storyteller) for

the new millennium, a brilliant sean-nos singer and an actor, check out the movie "The Wind That Shakes the Barley." My interview with Mairtin will also be in the January issue. www.thefuchsia.com

Happy Christmas to all of you and I hope a prosperous and peaceful new year!



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Christmas Drive for Irish POWs

Christmas is a lonely and difficult time for the families of nearly 100 Irish Republican prisoners of conscience currently serving political sentences in jails in Britain and Ireland. Many of these prisoners are charged on flimsy or circumstantial evidence, doctored forensics, mere

allegations, or the word of a "secret", masked witness. All are sentenced in "Special" three-judge, juryless courts - some for 20 and more years - while their children, families and loved ones struggle to survive on the outside.

The Irish Freedom Committee/Camann na Saoirse is hosting their annual Christmas Drive for the families of Irish Republican POWs. 100% of donations go direct to the families of Irish Republican Political Prisoners. This year's event is being held at The Abbey Pub - Main Stage, 3420 W. Grace, Chicago on Sunday, December 10, 2006 from Noon to 3:00 PM. An afternoon of holiday cheer, song and dance is planned with musical guest, "Jigmaster" Steve Fitzgerald. Christmas Cards for Irish Republic POWs will again be available to sign, and there will be a raffle drawing for one-of-a-kind POW-made prison crafts. Donation is \$10 which includes one raffle ticket. Cash Bar and full Abbey Kitchen fare is available.



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Horoscopes

By Therese Castro

ARIES: The full moon in December 2006 falls in your third sector of short travels and correspondence. There will be lots of coming and going in your sphere. Try to tie up loose ends before the holiday gets away from you. There is more to do and less time to do it in.

TAURUS: It is time for a big change for you. Now you call the shots and have a lot of changes in mind for the new era. What you want to do is held closely by you. But your ideas will reach far and wide into the future. See what new innovations you can effect.

GEMINI: The spotlight is on you this December but your competitors hold all of the cards. You are alone against a more powerful force that will win out the battle but not necessarily the war. This fight might not be worth it, however.

CANCER: The times are changing and so are you. The full moon of December 2006 falls on the fourth day of the month. This will usher changes that could give you a much needed break from all of the stress. You may be able to plan a long vacation to foreign places or pursue some personal goals.

LEO: You will be vindicated in some way in December. What you thought you were losing has slowed or stopped its progress. Maybe someone in your life has threatened to leave or to cause you pain. Rest assured nothing dire will occur now. Beware however the passing of the holidays.

VIRGO: You will be noticed by your hard working ways. What was the status quo before will not suffice now at work. It is time to stand up and get noticed for what you are really worth. You will succeed in the near future.

LIBRA: The full moon in December will usher in a change much needed in your midst. The solar system planets align to bolster your secret dream. You must contribute to your own success however for a desired change to occur. Dare to excel!

SCORPIO: So you didn't get what you secretly wanted for your birthday? Have patience.

Wait until after the New Year to cash in on your dreams. You are holding the line during the holidays so as not to rock the boat at that time. If you are contemplating a major life shift the New Year will provide the opportunity.

SAGITTARIUS: You are in the limelight this December with five planets in your sign.

Others are showering you with attention, even if you don't want it. You are also expected

to do the ritual of the holidays, even if you don't particularly relish those things. You just would rather be left alone to ruminate.

CAPRICORN: You could be looking at a big change this December. Any moves or major shifts would be better implemented in the New Year, however. Try to be patient and wait for the dust to settle before making plans for the future then in the New Year, act.

AQUARIUS: Be patient with the full moon of December. Do not loose heart because old sourpuss Saturn is opposing you from across the zodiac. Let the critics have their say. In the end you will triumph through strength of character.

PISCES: A lot will be going on in your social and professional sphere. You will be quite active over the holidays in social and political venues. Hope or Christmas shopping is complete because you will be booked up for time consuming activities.

IAHC Holiday Art Show

The IAHC will present a holiday art show and sale, Deck the Walls! this winter in the Art Gallery. The show, which runs from December 1st through January 2nd, features the artwork of Alice McMahon White, Theresa Walloga, Bridget Scales, Julie San Felipe, Dan Addington and photographers Brad Temkin and David Creedon. The artists will showcase their art, which will be for sale in time for holiday gifts.

Alice McMahon White returns to the gallery with her lyrical Irish pastel landscapes, complimented by antique frames. Theresa Walloga's imaginative large-scale paintings are inspired by Irish myth and legend. Bridget Scales' plain air watercolors capture the ephemeral light she observed on her travels to the fair-isle. The poetic/calligraphic works of Milwaukee artist Julie San Felipe recall zoomorphics from the illuminated manuscripts. Dan Addington's paintings incorporate his love of medieval and gothic forms and Irish history, and explore the use of alternative materials like wax, tar and wood. Brad Temkin's black and white photos span the past quarter century and portray an Ireland that is quickly disappearing with the birth of the European Union and its progress. David Creedon's photography is set against the backdrop of isolation, hardship and loneliness he witnessed in rural Ireland in the 1950s, in contrast to the totally different Ireland of today.

Deck the Walls! runs from December 1st through January 2nd. The gallery is open Saturdays from noon to 3 pm and Sundays from 1 to 4 pm and during the week by appointment. The exhibit is free and open to the public.

There will be a free reception in the art gallery on Friday, December 1st from 5-8 pm. An artist's open house will also be held December 3rd from 9 am to 3 pm, during the IAHC's annual Christmas Bazaar.

For more information on the Deck the Walls! exhibit, call the IAHC at 773-282-7035, ext. 10.

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3 Chicago screenwriters win competition

The holiday season just got brighter for three aspiring Chicago screenwriters...

In January of 2006, the Chicago Film Office and the Illinois Film Office launched their biennial Illinois/Chicago (IC) Screenwriting Competition. The winners are: Cliff Zimowski of Lisle, Illinois for "Lunch and Learn", Frederick Mensch of Palatine, Illinois for "Bones" & Mike Houlihan of Chicago, Illinois for "Ballhawk."



The Houlihan clan: Paddy Mike and Bill

Mike Houlihan is a former columnist ("Houli in 'da Hood"), and contributes occasional feature stories for the Chicago Sun-Times. His humor column, "Hooliganism" has appeared in the Irish

American News for the last ten years. Mike began his career as an actor in 1973 when he joined the American Shakespeare Festival in Stratford, CT. He subsequently appeared in

the classics onstage with the nation's most prestigious regional theatres, as well as numerous appearances off Broadway. He made his Broadway debut at the Helen Hayes theatre in Solomon's Child in 1980. As a producer he won the 1981 New York Drama Desk Award for his production of Joe Orton's Entertaining Mr. Sloane. He has guest starred on television in ER, Chicago Hope, and The Untouchables, as well as appearing in several major motion pictures including The Hudsucker Proxy, Losing Isaiah, and Rookie of the Year. His experience as an actor, director, and producer, paved the way for his career as a playwright. His play Goin' East On Ashland ran for more than six years in Chicago from 1993-99, and his play Mickey Finn had it's world premiere production in Chicago at the Royal George Theatre in April of 2000. Mike is currently in post-production for his independent film Tapioca, starring Ben Vereen, Tim Kazurinsky, and a host of Second City veterans. (View the

trailer at www.TapiocaTheMovie.com.) Mike grew up on the south side of Chicago and is a proud graduate of Mt. Carmel high school. The movie's genre is comedy and the logline is: a Waveland Avenue ballhawk and his Alderman brother bond over baseball buffoonery.



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Alex McGrath and Pat O'Toole enjoy a day at Hawthorne Racecourse. It's hard to tell if they won anything though!



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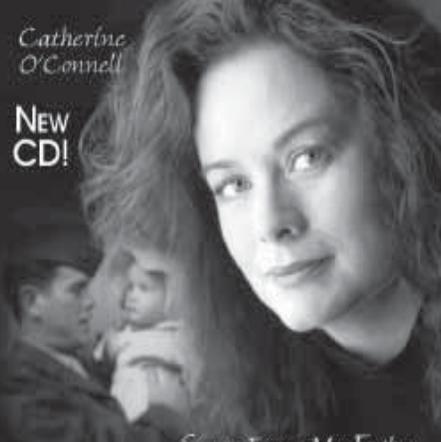


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Swimming Upstream

By Charles Brady

Musing on Religion

(With thanks to my friend Shane McGinley—yes, I do have some—for his perceptive comments)

I found myself haunted by two profoundly different images in the last few weeks. One was of the sneering curled lip on the face of one of the priests who had been helping themselves to more than eight million in stolen money. Of course we can get a bad photograph of anyone if we try; but there was something stomach turning about the disdain that emanated from his face. And millions? Houses and holidays galore: I couldn't help but think of the line in Roman Polanski's Chinatown when Jack Nicholson asks John Huston how much is enough; how many houses can



you live in; how many lobster dinners can you eat? The best that could be said about this sorry greedy mess is that for a change it didn't involve the abuse of children. When it comes to matters concerning the church these days I'm just grateful for small mercies.

Contrast that photo with the image of two Amish men sitting in numbed silence after the world came knocking on their door in the form of mass murder. There is a quiet dignity in their grief, a look on their faces that speaks of bewilderment and pain but also of a weary acceptance... and as we have since discovered, even of forgiveness. We could learn from them.

Well, certainly Bono could. After the stomach-churning exhibition of Madonna going to Africa in order to buy a designer child (you're loaded, woman, why not just set up a trust fund and let the kid grow up in his own country? Or even better—move yourself and your phoney cockney husband into one big mansion with those other two frauds, Brad and Angelina) we have the U2 frontman making an unholy show of himself—again. Now he's wailing that he also wanted to adopt an African child back in the eighties, but the rules wouldn't let him. Rebels, eh? Don't you just love them? They'll take on anyone as long as the rules let them and there's a tax-free buck to be made out of it. Bono couldn't remember the child's name mind you but he's been haunted by that image ever since. Dear oh dear, the problems that some multi-millionaires have to put up with.

He has recently moved his corporation to Holland, just in case he might have to spend tax euros in Ireland. That's his own business, just as long as

he never ever again lectures us on how to spend our money. We the taxpayers are the ones looking after the schools and infrastructure of this country, Bono. You were simply put on this earth to annoy and lecture people; to hang out and shake hands with dictators and to pretend that you're 'cool' because you gave the late Pope a pair of groovy shades.

Please, would someone pass me a bucket? I think I may be violently sick.

I'd better be careful here, though. I'm just a poor journalist—I certainly wouldn't want to incur the wrath of a corporation that goes after a former employee because she has a Stetson belonging to the little guy. Oh yes. She also said that he's so insecure that he has to wear padded shoes. Newsflash for Bono: we had already figured that one out for our humble selves, no need to take her to court. Try emulating a really decent person and true lady. Sandra Bullock, minus the fanfare, managed to donate a million of her own money to the tsunami disaster fund and then later another million to the New Orleans fund. What a lovely woman she is.

Meanwhile in Trinity College, Dublin, last week a radical Islamic activist called Anjem Choudary was allowed to spew his hatred once more (he's been here on two previous occasions). Why does the Irish Government insist on letting this dangerous headcase into the country?

Well, as he quite reasonably says: "As a Muslim I believe Islam is superior to every other way of life and that it can resolve all the social and economic problems that Ireland suffers from. And as a symbol of that, the flag of Islam should be flown over the Dail." Sounds fair enough to me. Perhaps we could dress him as Santa Claus and stuff him down a chimney somewhere, never to be seen again.

God knows I gripe about this country all the time; but it gives me something that Islam can't: I can complain about things in Ireland without having my door booted in at three in the morning, to be dragged out and beheaded. (Well, Sinn Fein/IRA aren't quite calling all the shots yet, thank Heavens.) So if it's all the same to the Imam I'll stick with democracy, thanks very much.

He also was kind enough to tell us that Ireland was a legitimate target because of the U.S. planes flying into Shannon Airport and that the Pope should be very careful about what he says. And we allow this. Sometimes I just despair. Then again George W. Bush believes that what he does is also in the name of God. That mysterious entity certainly gets around (God I mean, not George Dubya).

I am indebted to Correlli Barnett of Churchill College, Cambridge for his fine article in The Daily Mail on the changing perceptions to the war in Iraq

and for the dreadful statistics he gives: 655,000 Iraqis dead since 2003; 2,798 American servicemen and women, 20,000 wounded; 119 British soldiers; and there is now mass-unemployment with 96 per cent of the 28 million population surviving on basic food rations. God told Dubya to do this?

I thought I had read most of Gore Vidal's collections of essays but I recently came across one called Armageddon? - Essays 1983-87. It was fascinating to see the comparisons with the present, despite the pieces obviously being set around Reagan's rein. I laughed out loud when he wrote: "I think there should be a Constitutional amendment making it impossible for anyone to be president who believes in an after-life". Well, certainly it would make the world a less dangerous place.

And: "... there is no cosmic point to the life that each of us perceives on this distant bit of dust at galaxy's edge, all the more reason for us to maintain in proper balance what we have here. Because there is nothing else. Nothing. This is it. And quite enough, all in all."

Then I think of that photograph of the two Amish and the look on their faces: terribly pained and yet with a kind of acceptance. And I think once more... we could learn from them.

Oh, and by the way: to all who have put up with my moaning over the past year, thank you.

And Merry Christmas. And that's not Happy Holidays or Festive Fun or whatever the PC Brigade and Soul Police have come up with this year to torment me with: it's—repeat after me—Christmas. It's a Christian festival and if that upsets the Usual Suspects who scour newspapers in order to be upset due to the fact that they don't have any lives, too bad.

So I'll say again to the few sane people left: Merry Christmas!

P.S. Oh no, this is too good. I've just switched on the news to discover that Rumsfeld has been awarded the Royal Order of the Boot by His Satanic Majesty. "Fresh Perspective" needed, it seems. So off you shuffle, like some sort of animated villain from the most violent Itchy and Scratchy cartoon ever made. Get it through your head, warmonger: a cartoon is all you ever were. And a pretty lousy, badly drawn one at that.

I laughed until I stopped. This IS going to be a good Christmas! Bye Donald. Mind how you go. Don't slip on that carefully placed banana skin because that would really break my heart and the hearts of all the parents who lost their children because of you. The Weapon of Mass Destruction turned out to be your own buddy! How about that?

Sometimes I just think there might be a God after all.

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Careers

by James F. Fitzgerald, CPA

Be a Career Guru!

Surely, during the New Year, you will have an opportunity to give advice to some young person. What will you tell them about how they can improve the quality of their lives and enhance their career development? Here are my three suggestions.

Set Your Goals in Concrete

Set goals at the very beginning of your career. Yes, your career might change, but you will still be better positioned if you had goals for your first career choice. When I started at the CPA firm, Coopers & Lybrand, I was determined to do an outstanding job as an auditor. My dedication prompted a partner to ask me to transfer to the consulting staff; at age 25. I was thrilled at the promotion.

Having a sense of certitude about that initial career will serve you well; people will notice how focused you are in accomplishing your goals. Having goals will be decidedly helpful in showing how you could succeed in your new assignment.

Many of us simply don't seem to understand the critical importance of setting goals. For example, there was a study done of all the 1952 graduates of Yale University. Those who had goals, about 3% of the graduating class, when surveyed 20 years later, had accumulated 97% of all the wealth that had been amassed by all the surviving members of the entire class. In other words, 3% of the class owned 97% of the total wealth of all the class members. The obvious conclusion is that people who set goals achieve such goals. Those who don't set goals just tend to drift. Has this been your experience?

Dr. Victor Frankel, in his classic work, *Man's Search for Meaning*, states that the simple act of determining one's goals, by itself, becomes a motivator for many of us. He witnessed this in the German concentration camps during World War II. He felt that goals helped people generate far more energy and gave focus to that energy. Goal setters were significantly more creative.

A major reason why people fail to set goals is that defining goals gets much harder as we progress in life. For example, we all understand that if



a person covers 100 yards on a football field, his team will be awarded six points. If a player sinks a basket, s/he will get 2 or 3 points. These are very clear cut and understandable goals. However, when it comes to establishing more complex

goals, such as career or lifetime ones, many of us struggle to define specific goals.

Obviously, once you decide what goals motivate you, you will be able to decide whether or not you are willing to pay the price. But even when a person establishes clearly stated goals, he is commonly afraid that he will not be able to achieve the stated goals. Why? Because failure may subject us to criticism from friends and family. A second reason that people fail to set goals is that they are fearful that they will achieve them. And they aren't convinced that they can live with the achievement of the goals that they themselves have set. I can assure you that I really sweated through all my first year consulting assignments. I still wasn't convinced that I could perform adequately as a Senior Consultant.

Our goals must be specific and written in order to take on the character that is needed to make them pertinent. It has been stated by many authorities that our minds work much like a homing torpedo or missile. To work, they must be directed at a specific target; otherwise they will simply run erratically, detonate or destroy themselves.

One's ability to achieve any set of goals, however simple or grand, will be significantly enhanced if the person knows how to effectively use their time. There are many ways to improve the effective use of your time. Take a time management course. Read one or more of the excellent books written on controlling your time. We all have the same 24 hours a day. It's simply a matter of how we use the time and make it work for us.

Find a Mentor or Two

If a person hopes to be successful in an organization, s/he must find a mentor. I fell into it; the partner who later transferred me to the consulting staff interviewed me when I joined the firm. He continues to be a mentor to me all these years later.

Organizations tend to be very complex. It is highly desirable that you have access to someone who can help you comprehend some of the complexities of the organization. Mentors can provide all kinds of assistance to a younger

person. They may simply provide a willing ear to listen to the frustrations and/or disappointments. They may have some insights into the appropriateness of dealing with certain problems within the organization. The importance of a mentor simply cannot be overdone.

It is essential for everyone to step back, at some time, hopefully several times during their career, and do some analysis or research into their own marketability. What would enhance your marketability? Do you need some additional education, degree or certification? Are there some "bells and whistles" that should be added to your repertory? Should you be attending certain kinds of programming that would help expand your awareness of the new changes in your field? What suggestions or insights does your mentor have for you? When I was offered a promotion into the Human Resources field, my mentor supported me completely.

Develop a Positive Mental Attitude

There are all kinds of admonitions about "when the going gets tough, the tough get going." Perhaps we should consider what Winston Churchill once said when he was asked if he could summarize the lessons he had learned. He said that he could sum up the lessons of his life in ten words: "Never give up. Never give up. Never, never give up."

It is absolutely essential that a person work at developing a positive self image and a sense of positive self expectancy. There are numerous self study programs that address the issue of how one develops a positive self image. Controlling one's own attitude is critical to improving one's self image. Self talk can be tremendously helpful in supporting your self image. I use it every time as I prepare to make a presentation. Do you ever use self talk to pump yourself up?

"I have a dream." This quote is readily attributed to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. However, it might also be very easily ascribed to all of us who have sat back, perhaps at the end of a fishing pole, and dreamed of what the future will hold. It is critical that a person learn to "dream the big dream" and to "see" the fruits of their labors in very specific, graphic terms. The motivationalists who deal with such issues say that it is essential that we visualize these things. Use pictures, drawings or other representations to enhance your "feel" for your dream.

Perhaps you will have a golden chance to help a child, a grandchild, a niece or nephew, or just a pal in this New Year. You may be able to help them to improve the quality of their life by reviewing

these suggestions with them. All the best for a happy, prosperous New Year in 2007.

James F. Fitzgerald is the president of James F. Fitzgerald & Associates, Inc., an Oak Brook, IL-based senior executive career transition and executive coaching firm. Phone: 630-684-2204. Email: jamesffitz@sbcglobal.net.

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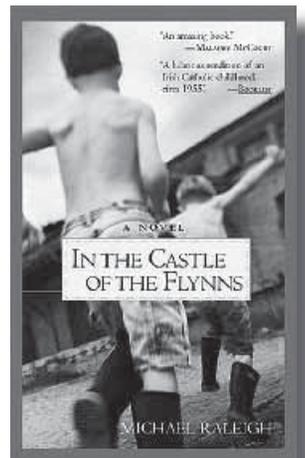
Cathal Liam book signing at Paddy's on the Square in Long Grove



Cathal Liam (above) and Michael Raleigh (below) presented their respective books at the Irish American Heritage Center, Sunday November 12th to a full house. Michael's book is "In the Castle of the Flynn's."



Author Cathal Liam will be signing his newest book, *Blood on the Shamrock: A Novel of Ireland's Civil War*, at Paddy's On The Square in Long Grove, Illinois on Saturday & Sunday, 16 & 17 December from Noon to 6 pm. Liam's historical/political novel details the events surrounding the 1921 London Treaty negotiations, the ensuing Dublin Treaty debates and the run-up to the outbreak of the tragic internecine fighting in July 1922. The personalities of the 20th century iconic giants Eamon de Valera and Michael Collins are carefully detailed. Book reviewer Joe Kavanagh has stated, "armed with murderous subplots, along with romance, heroism and betrayal galore, this is certainly one of the most dynamic and enjoyable retellings of the Irish Civil War that I have ever read."



Interested readers filled the room at the IAHC to listen and question the authors.

Garda Gaby

Written by David McCann;
Illustrated by Julie Bauknecht



This charming story was written in Ireland by new author, David McCann. Our hero is Garda Gaby, an Irish law enforcement officer who is always ready to help the citizens of his little village.

David McCann, like his character Garda Gaby, lives and works in Northern Ireland. He attended St. Joseph's College, has previously worked for the BBC and CSV Media, and is now a freelance journalist.

Ideas about Garda Gaby began swirling around David McCann's head early when he

would read books to children. Slowly but surely the story about an Irish police officer named Gaby began to take shape, and stories came tumbling out.

Originally written as a potential television series, Garda Gaby was easily transferred into print form, and is sure to enthrall and delight families and children of all ages. Book comes with Garda Gaby's Song on CD.

Garda Gaby by David McCann, illustrated by Julie Bauknecht. Dorp Express is a part of the Moon-Star Unlimited Inc. Company. ISBN# 192906392X; 12 pages (large pictures); Ages 8 & up; \$12.99. www.dorpexpress.com.

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Donegal Woman

By Tom Boyle

The story of a young girl hired out at the age of twelve, as written by her grandson John Throne.

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Her life of pathos, abuse, and hard labor, almost entirely devoid of human affection, save that of her children. The story is set in Donegal in the early 1900's, when landlords held sway over the lives of many and their hard-scrabble existence.

Donegal Woman will break your heart ...

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The Donegal Woman

By John Throne

The story of an Irish Heroine

It is the story of the authors grandmother who as a young girl of twelve was forced into the hiring fair system but was never broken by that system. As each of her children was born she responded to their needs and grew stronger and stronger.

It is also the story of the man she was forced to marry and who did not treat her well.

Hired by the landlord to control the local tenants he is continually faced with loosing that control. Events like the Dublin lockout, the 1916 uprising and the strikes of local farm laborers encourage revolt in all those whom he is paid to keep in line. And at home he is faced with revolt as Margaret grows stronger and stands up for her children and herself. He reacts in the only way he knows, by trying through physical and psychological means to exert even greater domination over Margaret. This destroys any possibility of a warm, gentle, personal and sexual life between them.

The Belfast Telegraph: "John Throne's shocking book, The Donegal Woman - the story of his grandmother - has been selling out across Northern Ireland. The Donegal Woman has been lauded by critics....Critics have compared the writer to Peadar O'Donnell and Patrick McGill."

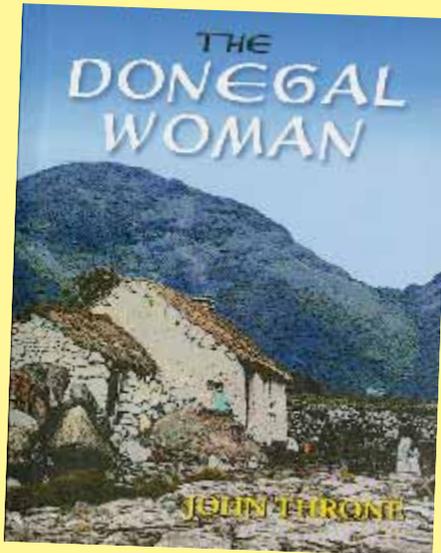
Eilis Ni Dhuibhne reviewing the book for the Irish Times writes that while the book has "flaws it is a compelling book....Indeed, this book forces one to reassess what good literature is.....it deserves a place on everyones shelves." The Sentinel: The Donegal Woman is "...seen by some as a platform for women's rights issues."

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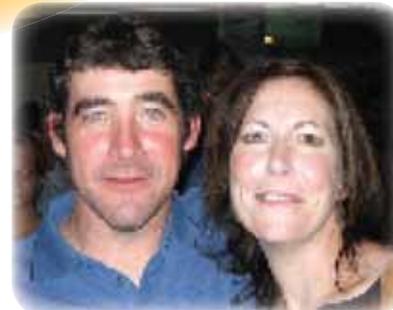






Race Night in Support of Micheál Molloy

A benefit is being held for Micheál Molloy, a native of Tourmakeady, Co. Mayo in April, 2007. Pictured here are supporters who attended a recent fund-raiser held at the Abbey Pub. If you would like to make a donation it can be mailed to: State Bank of Countryside, Attention: Renee Sannes, 6734 Joliet Road, Countryside, Illinois 60515. Please make checks payable to: Micheál Molloy Benefit Trust. For further information on Micheál Molloy Benefit, please contact Nora DeLance at 847.685.0706 or visit www.michealmolloy.com.



Get Your Irish Up ...North!

By James McClure

No Place Like Nome for the Holidays

Glancing about my tiny Anchorage one bedroom apartment I spotted the bare \$3.95 tabletop Christmas tree I bought as an afterthought and considered the sage words of my Notre Dame alumna mentor Kathleen Duffey, class of 1981: "You haven't been in the TV news business until you've spent Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner by yourself at a McDonald's."

True words, except that earlier in the week when I tugged at the doors of the Northern Lights Boulevard 24-hour McDonald's on Thanksgiving Day, I found the Golden Arches locked and sealed.

Even the villainized home of corporate uniformity has a bigger holiday heart than TV work! Looking forward to spending another Christmas alone in an almost-foreign land, my itinerant broadcasting world includes an assignment to substitute for the morning news anchor on Holiday Week. One a.m. on the 26th and back to the grindstone. Bah humbug.

As Christmas fell on a Sunday last

year that meant an e-mail exchanged with one anchor friend in Arkansas and some instant message jokes with another anchor friend in Washington about how the three of us were all using the same story about wildfires in Oklahoma for the second day in a row. Such is makeshift family and camaraderie at Christmastime in the news business.

Santa hitches a ride

But the real Christmas story...as only seems proper...takes place near the top of the world in Alaska. Home of reindeer, the North Pole, and Santa Claus riding off on his C-130 Hercules cargo plane from the Alaska Air National Guard.

Yes Virginia, there really is a Santa Claus in North Pole, Alaska near Fairbanks and indeed I've seen him travel all over Alaska before his little side trips to the rest of the world.



Once you get outside Anchorage, a city of nearly 300,000 you are in remote territory. And nobody knows that territory like the Alaska National Guard. It was their legendary Yupic Eskimo members that made up the Territorial Guard taking on Japanese invaders in World War II and it was members of the same eskid-modified helicopter detachments that this year in Iraq became the first war fatalities for Alaska guardsmen in 60 years.

Which brings up an interesting mission for Santa and the Guard at this season of peace. With so many Guard families, many of them in remote villages, coping with a loved one stationed overseas in Iraq and Afghanistan, who will provide that sense of family that comes with a head of household that is absent--along with a meal and presents?

Using the same forms of transportation the Alaska Army and Air Guard uses for training and for mountain and sea rescue, planes and helicopters fan out across The Great Land in what's known as Operation Santa



Alaska Air Guard gives Santa's reindeer a day off.

Claus, now in it's 50th year. Volunteers provide both themselves for serving and goods for giving. Santa's got a brand new bag in the most remote place in the United States. Toys, clothing, books, school supplies and even necessities like water are provided, says Major General Craig E. Campbell, Adjutant General of the Alaska National Guard. "As with each of our previous years, it is our 300 volunteer elves, working year-around, that make this effort come together and work so well," Campbell says.

Gung Ho Ho Ho!

Lest we forget my brother Marines stationed at Elmendorf Air Force Base covered earlier in this column, they too participate as part of the Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program. In true Marine fashion. They and their Navy medics go where angels and fools fear to tread, racing across the tundra in snowmobiles. "We go up along the Kuskokwin and Yukon Rivers in some pretty remote areas" says Staff Sergeant Tommy Jones, "and we've had some pretty close calls in the past with some of our guys almost going through the ice so we train for falling in by jumping in ice water every year in a full backpack." Figures. The same guys that were chasing kidnappers and hostage murderers across the Iraqi desert months earlier racing across icy riverbanks with sacks of toys for children, still with an element of danger. War and peace.

In more comfortable fashion I'm along for the ride with the Clauses in a warm Air Guard plane bound for Kodiak Island, near the beginning of the Aleutian Islands, just a few hundred miles from Russia. We land at the Coast Guard station now popularized in the Kevin Costner movie The Guardian, although most of those scenes had to be shot in the Carolinas because there was a minor volcano eruption I covered nearby during planned filming. Only in Alaska.

I wasn't quite prepared for the scene as we bussed in with Santa and Mrs. Claus to the tiny National Guard Armory on the fishing village/island. The native faces of the wives and children of course, were beautiful, straight out of National Geographic with all the variety of the Americas and the Pacific Rim. But posters lined the walls made by the children. Giant Christmas cards if you will, showing Daddy or Mommy in camouflage overseas in a faraway land in something they will one day know was



Little Eskimo girl with Christmas presents

called The Global War on Terror.

A Star is Born

A conga line of civilian volunteers and army soldiers carries all the food and gifts into the gym. Among them is a black bereted paratrooper wearing two stars moving as quickly and quietly as any private or conscript. Major General Charles H. Jacoby, Jr. is the head

of all United States Army forces in Alaska and he has had to send men and women to battle not once but twice, most recently extended a tour into the holidays that was supposed to end earlier. He of all people seems to know the burden of the season and attempts to ease it with quiet humility, carrying heavy boxes on his shoulder.

While the children look at the long table filled with every food imaginable and an air force band plays traditional Christmas music, the gym erupts as Santa walks in to greet all the children and hand them their presents, hold them a bit and let them feel some of the peace and homecoming that will have to wait a little while longer until their serviceman or woman is back.

The love and peace in the air at a time of conflict across the globe is thicker than the home-baked turkey and ham on the table. The humvees, snow vehicles and troop trucks fade in the background of the decorations and people surrounding them in the armory. For a while you forget that you are in a military facility. What you can't forget is that during the season that celebrates the coming of the Prince of Peace there is a sense of that peace in this remote corner of the world. A great warmth in the coldness.

Not many dry eyes in the place, including mine. I came a long way to find hope in the darkest part of the Northern Hemisphere. Returning home that night I look up and see The North Star outside my apartment was never more beautiful than in the crystal clear pollution-free sky. Perhaps something like the vision three travelers saw far away from their families moving through a desert on a cold night 2,000 years ago.

I went to sleep that night thinking of all the love that conquers hate and loneliness in this world. And that I witnessed it at Kodiak in Alaska, and that I didn't have such a bad little tree, or Christmas, after all.

Jim McClure is a television news reporter and anchor when not freelancing for Irish American News. He may be e-mailed at JimMcClure71@aol.com.

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Voice of the Immigrant

By John W. Kearns, Attorney at Law



Criminal cases, even without convictions, put permanent residents at risk

As we have discussed previously, if any immigrant (also permanent residents), have had any criminal case against them, including multiple DUIs, or one within the past five years, this is very likely to put them at risk of removal (deportation), even if no conviction was entered against them. Even if the case was dismissed, the certified disposition will have to be obtained from the court and the case eventually explained to immigration authorities for a supervisor's review, which will delay the immigration procedure.

If the case ended with a supervision or conditional probation that resulted in no conviction on the record, the very fact that the defendant pled guilty or agreed to facts that could support a finding of guilty, means that there is a "conviction" on the record for immigration purposes. Most criminal lawyers do not understand this and are happy to recommend a plea of guilty after arranging that no conviction will be entered of record after the defendant successfully completes a period of probation. That is a good day's work for a criminal attorney, but it may well get the client deported.

When does the issue of a criminal record, even without convictions, come up to slap the immigrant or permanent resident? And what is the remedy? Relatives come to me when the immigrant has already been arrested and detained by immigration authorities after the criminal case is resolved, or even after the prison sentence is completely served following conviction. One lady (suffering from childhood polio, but with a drug conviction) in jail was transferred to the immigration detention facility, ordered removed and deported after serving an eight year sentence; another husband and father (and gang member) after serving three years.

Guess when the families came to me? Do you think I had eight years, or three years, or any time at all to go back into the original court and try to vacate the conviction based on all the factors and persuasive arguments? Not a chance. The family of the man who just completed three years in the state prison came to see me a week after the man was transferred to immigration detention. The man was deported on the next morning. Now

we must still do the complicated procedures of vacating the convictions and reopening the order of removal and/or we must now proceed with a waiver application based on the exceptional extreme hardship to the U.S. citizen wife and children caused by their husband and father's deportation. Hardship? What hardship? The guy spent the last three years in jail for a crime which he voluntarily committed. I would have much preferred the family came to me a year ago, when we had time to prepare the case while he was still on U.S. soil.

These situations, where even the permanent resident with two shoplifting supervisions in the last five years can be deported, will arise most commonly when the green card holder leaves the country for an innocent visit to the home country. Imagine the surprise when they cannot get back into the U.S. and are turned away at the airport in spite of their green card! This can happen in the citizenship interview: be sure your lawyer knows about your arrests and understands how this impacts the naturalization process if you don't want to be arrested right out of the interview. We have seen legal immigrants get arrested by immigration authorities while renewing their employment authorization cards, and now the USCIS is trying something new and illegal: withholding renewal of the expiring green card itself if there are criminal convictions! First of all, why would anybody these days not become a citizen within the ten years that the green card is valid? Do something about that old arrest or conviction record while you have time. Do not wait until the problem is down your throat! Secondly, this issue

of USCIS withholding reissuing the expire green card because of criminal records has all the immigration lawyers in a buzz. They argue that this is improper and illegal; if the immigration authorities want to do something about it, let them issue the Notice To Appear and place the green card holder into removal proceedings! (By the way, USCIS AGREES this is error, to withhold the issuing of the replacement green card, but they are still doing it anyway!) Well, if you ARE in that situation, let's get moving on your case BEFORE you are in removal proceedings.

Once again, be reminded the noose is tightening on immigrants. The enforcement against those with criminal records will not go away even if immigration reform passes in Congress. Enforcement will only get stronger. Do not ignore the problems. The lawyers CAN help you, if you give them enough time to be able to do something.

The information provided in this article should not be construed as legal advice or legal opinion on any specific facts or circumstances. While the statements contained herein reflect the opinions of the author only, and not the publication or its editors, the information provided may be a summary or compilation from other sources, who are gratefully acknowledged hereby. The contents are intended for general information purposes only, and you are urged to consult with a lawyer concerning your own situation and any specific legal questions you may have.

©Copyright John W. Kearns Attorney Kearns practices immigration law and general practice from Chicago, Illinois. We invite questions or topic requests by email: jwkearns@hotmail.com. Please call or email with questions about immigration, business, or general law or American culture. Consultations by telephone or in the office can be arranged by calling: (312) 738-2529. Native speakers are available in our office. See ad elsewhere in this

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F or The Republic

By Chris Fogarty



FRANK DURKAN, R.I.P., was born in Bohola, Co. Mayo in 1930. At seventeen, he emigrated to his uncles O'Dwyer in New York. His uncle Bill was Mayor of NYC and his uncle Paul was the widely respected civil rights attorney and member of the NYC council. Durkan became a lawyer and worked with Paul until the latter's death some years ago. In 1982 Durkan successfully defended fellow Mayo-man George Harrison, the main US gun-runner to the IRA, by proving that for many years the CIA and FBI had provided the guns to Harrison. To the Prosecutor's charge that Harrison had run guns for six months, Durkan replied to the court; "This claim of six months is an insult to my client; Mr. Harrison insists that he has been sending guns to the IRA for at least twenty-five years." Durkan's skills were indispensable and are missed.

HAVING WON that case Durkan began to take only politically safe cases and began supporting the IRA faction that eventually sold out. In 1991 he refused to take our watertight case in which MI5/FBI had planned to send us to long prison sentences. After we won it by proving in federal court that MI5/FBI had criminally fabricated the evidence we again sought legal counsel, for our suit for damages. Durkan again turned us down. The US political climate had changed. By then, America was fully deceived by our news media who blamed Irish forces for the atrocities perpetrated by Brit forces. Earlier, in 1973, in response to international outrage re the Bloody Sunday massacre by British soldiers in Derry, Margaret Thatcher assigned a spook team and directed her foreign office to subvert the news media, especially that of the US. It took a few years, but by 1982 the US (and Irish-American) news media were acting as Brit propagandists. The many Brit massacres and car-bombings were reported here as IRA deeds. A deceived America ceased supporting democracy for the Occupied Irish.

THE PEOPLE SPOKE, and repudiated Bush & Co's Iraq war. Despite Fox TV, Limbaugh and Rapturist radio, the people continue to move toward reality. It was a Hobbes' choice of an election. Either vote for the Dems and abortion, or for the Repubs and genocide, torture and the Zionist/Rapturist lurch toward Armageddon. Still; the day after the election Bush actually uttered a few sane words about "bipartisan collaboration." We began to hope; until...

NEW INSANITY issued from him on Nov. 19th. While attending the ANET economic conference in Ho Chi

Minh City (once Saigon), Bush was asked; "What lesson has the US learned from its experience in Vietnam?"

(Before reading Bush's answer, note that Vietnam is the new Asian economic tiger. It is booming. The US is its best customer. After fifteen years of unprovoked war against Vietnam that killed some 58,000 of our military and some 3 million Vietnamese and destroyed its infrastructure and \$hundreds of billions of our tax dollars, we pulled out, ignominiously off the roof of the US embassy, defeated. We had accepted the same settlement that we rejected some eight years earlier in 1967. Had we accepted the deal in 1967 we would have saved the lives of some 40,000 US soldiers, more than two million Vietnamese, and most of the wasted \$billions.) Also note that our war on Vietnam was just as illegal as our current one on Iraq. Both were criminally instigated. Lyndon Johnson's Gulf of Tonkin "Incident" was just as fraudulent as Bush's claim that "Saddam's WMD threaten America." And here's how you can know that Bush & Co were not merely deceived about those WMD but were lying; had the WMD's existed we would have chosen our best military units to make a bee-line to destroy or take control of them. That no such mission was assigned proves that no WMD's existed. Units were assigned to "shock and awe" the people, to destroy gov't buildings and to seize control of the oil facilities, the oil ministries, the palaces, the main bridges, the airport, etc., but none was assigned to destroy or take control of any WMD.

BUSH'S REPLY is that the lesson that he has learned from Vietnam is "We'll succeed unless we quit." Consider his reply in light of actual events in Vietnam and Iraq. He is thus beyond hope. If he prevails he will complete his destruction, not alone of Iraq but of our nation's future. He will make us the target of the world.

THE NEW CONGRESS: will it restore our Constitution? It is legally obligated to do so; but will it? The crimes of Bush & Co and their compliant Congress have liquidated some 650,000 Iraqi innocents, morally gutted our nation, sunk us in debt and for the first time in our history have made the USA an international pariah. Though there are fewer criminal Dems than Repubs in Congress; it doesn't guarantee that the new Congress will represent the US any better than the last one that was owned by AIPAC and Abramoff. Many Dems are just as compromised by AIPAC as the Repubs. Nearly all act for Zionist

expansionism instead of America.

JOHN MURTHA was selected by Speaker-Elect Nancy Pelosi to be her No. 2. Vietnam hero Murtha had believed Bush's claims of WMD; but eventually grasped reality. He thus began to oppose that war and also worked to uphold military honor by denouncing the cover-ups of a few mass murders of Iraqis by our troops. But a large majority of the incoming Dems in Congress voted for Steny Hoyer instead of Murtha. Hoyer remains an active accomplice in Bush & Co's crimes against Iraq and Palestine, so it is unlikely that the Hoyer wing of the Dems will uphold the US Constitution against Bush & Co. Hillary, Kerry and Dean are also active Bush accomplices, calling for more troops, so beware.

EX-CIA CHIEF GATES is chosen to replace Rumsfeld. I met Robert Gates at a Young Presidents' Organization seminar in Budapest a few years ago and sought his advice as to how to get the US justice system to duly prosecute the FBI for its crimes against us. I was shocked by his ready acknowledgment that the FBI commits such crimes, especially for a foreign power and against US citizens. He couldn't think of a way to get the US justice department to take action. All he could suggest was that I ask the Washington Post to cover the story and to use his name by way of introducing myself; but that newspaper proved no more ethical than the Trib or Sun-Times. Hours later, Gates' address to the YPO really spooked me. He recounted how the Reagan administration defeated the USSR, claiming that his CIA had largely done it by distributing hundreds of thousands of bibles throughout the USSR - miniature ones for reasons of security, he said, its pages less than one inch square! He didn't inform us as to how thick a one inch square bible would have to be. What a wacko.

THE ZIONIST LOBBY operates largely through its American Israeli Political Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the most powerful PAC in D.C. How powerful? So powerful that a paper revealing its power couldn't be published in America and had to be published in a British journal. Even the prestige of the paper's authors, U of Chicago Prof. John Mearsheimer and Harvard U. Prof. Steven Walt and their respective academic institutions couldn't prevail. Kudos to DePaul Univ. for having the Jewish professor, Norman Finkelstein, on its staff. Finkelstein is one of the few Jews who publicly oppose Zionist crimes against Palestinians; so the ADL and other Israel-first groups are pressuring DePaul benefactors to stop donating so as to force it to fire Finkelstein. But there are signs that America is waking up. The New York Review of Books wrote; "Israel continues to mock its American patron, building illegal

settlements in cynical disregard of the 'road map.' The president of the United States of America has been reduced to a ventriloquist's dummy, pitifully reciting the Israeli cabinet line." It is for Israeli purposes that we brought death and destruction to Iraq and Lebanon. It is all to facilitate Eretz Israel long planned to reach from the Nile to Baghdad.

BIAS TOWARD THE RICH has been US policy for years; as bribery takes over the US Congress. Income inequality discrepancy now approaches, if it has not surpassed, that of Robber Baron days. Here are the facts (from Center on Budget and Policy): Growth in income from 1990 to 2004 among segments of American taxpayers is as follows (inflation-adjusted): The average income of the bottom 90% of all taxpayers rose 2% to \$28,355. Meanwhile the average income of the top 1% of taxpayers increased 57% to \$940,441 and that of the top 0.1% of taxpayers increased by 85% to \$4,506,291.

CHICAGO PRO-LIFE efforts will continue until Roe v. Wade is overturned. While science must advance in constructive ways, who isn't horrified by cloning, by abortions, and by the conceiving of human life for the purpose of harvesting its body parts? At pro-life demonstrations Mary and I have long admired Chicagoan Tim Murphy's commitment as a volunteer and organizer. He consented to the following interview (from which I have deleted my questions to save space)

TIM MURPHY was raised in St. Denis parish on the southwest side and later in Oak Lawn when the family moved there. His g.g. grandfather Cornelius Murphy came from Cork in 1834 and later helped build the railroad from Chicago to Harvard, IL. His paternal g.g. grandmother was from Wexford. His maternal grandfather was from Bohola and his maternal grandmother from Clare Island, Co. Mayo. Through her mother, Catherine O'Malley, Tim is related to the legendary sea queen Granuaille (Grace O'Malley). He now works full time for the Thomas More Society, Pro-Life Law Center in Chicago. He replies;

I WAS ARRESTED thirteen times for right-to-life activities. These range from acts of civil obedience, to problems with police, to false charges by pro-abortion counter-demonstrators. Most of the charges were eventually dismissed. I was also sued in federal court under RICO statute in 1989 and acquitted of it in 2006. Despite the full weight of both the abortion industry and Clinton's Justice Department, other pro-lifers and I were vindicated by the Supreme Court. That was the third time I was before the Supreme Court. I was charged with crimes that never occurred at places I had never been to. The whole thing was rather Kafkaesque. No other

case has ever been before the Supreme Court three different times. Sometimes our legal system, which is the best in the world, works right. Our three trips to the Supreme Court were only to ensure that it did.

A MAIN OBSTACLE is that as time goes on with 40 million lives taken by abortion since 1973, abortion is becoming ingrained in our culture. Too many individuals who have either had an abortion or helped someone procure one have to justify what they have done by promoting abortion. The most common method of doing this is voting for pro-abortion candidates. If you are pro-life, then, for starters, vote Pro-Life. Do NOT vote for candidates who support child-killing. Pure and simple. If both candidates support abortion then don't vote for either of them. That's just for openers...

TIM'S BIO from a Thomas More Society press release reads; Timothy J. Murphy, a long-time veteran of the pro-life activist movement was employed by the Pro-Life Action League in Chicago from 1988 until autumn, 2001. At that time Murphy joined the staff of the Thomas More Society, a public interest law firm dedicated to protecting the rights of of pro-life activists. Murphy was known for innovative protest tactics and an uncanny ability to inspire and motivate others, and for organizing highly effective and visible pickets and street demonstrations. Murphy and several other pro-life activists were named as defendants in the NOW v. Scheidler case when RICO charges were added by amendment early in February, 1989. The case had begun three years earlier when Joseph M. Scheidler, Joan Andrews and John Ryan were originally sued in Federal District Court in June, 1986. Two abortion mills joined NOW in charging Scheidler and others with interfering with interstate commerce for their abortion protests. Murphy was sued primarily for his involvement in the humane retrieval of the remains of 5,000 aborted babies which had been left in formalin-stained, disheveled cardboard cartons on a pathology lab's loading dock in Northbrook, Illinois, left over a period of months for a garbage pickup that never came. This real-life enactment of Sophocles' Antigone (also a corporal work of mercy for Roman Catholics, fulfilling a duty to bury the dead) lasted nearly nine months, without any interference on the part of of pathology lab personnel. The pathology lab was later named as a defendant in the lawsuit as well. The dead babies were buried at ecumenical religious services in their cities of origin (detailed on each formalin-filled bag of remains), including a burial of some 2033 infants by Chicago's Roman Catholic prelate Joseph Cardinal Bernardin. Well known in the pro-life movement as a researcher,

Beyond the Abbey

BY SEAN CALLAN



in England? That was altogether a different kettle of fish.

McDonagh's commercial success caused questions about his Irish credentials to become more strident. Some critics maintained that McDonagh was not an Irish playwright at all and that his plays should not be considered among Irish genre. According to Gabriel



Martin McDonagh won an Oscar in 2006 for his short film *Six Shooter*, the playwright's first move into film

Greene, Steppenwolf Theatre's literary manager "One Irish academic proclaimed McDonagh to be as Irish as the Asian chicken McNuggets of McDonald's were Asian." By extension, people raised questions about the quality of his work

McDonagh apparently was taken aback by the attacks of the parochial Aryans of Ireland. Nevertheless, he answered them not with the bitterness of Sean O'Casey but the artistry of a gifted playwright. O'Casey, in his self-imposed exile in England, had

denounced Ireland as the "sow that ate her own farrow." McDonagh, on the other hand, responded by writing *The Pillowman*, a remarkable work. This was first produced at London's Royal National Theatre in 2003 and since then, it has snagged major prizes in London and Broadway. It received the Oliver Award for best new play in London in 2004 and the Drama Circle Award for best foreign play in New York last year. The *Pillowman* was last month's production at the Steppenwolf Theatre. It is about Katurian (Jim True-Frost,) a writer who pens horror stories but, who has experienced little in the way of publication success. He lives in an unnamed totalitarian state where the play is set. He has been arrested because murders have occurred that are similar to his stories.

In the play, the writer is interrogated in a holding cell by two police officers, Tupolski (Tracy Letts) and Ariel (Yasen Peyankov,). The pair is convinced that the writer had a hand in the murders. They work Katurian over with threats and felicitations in a good cop - bad cop routine. The questioning has comic moments but often the chuckles are choked into gasps, when pictures of unbridled mayhem suddenly are introduced. As the play progresses, everyone has a story to tell. The police tell theirs and Katurian's are reenacted in a series of viciously funny yet disturbing flash backs.

In the end, the police prevail. Katurian agrees to confess to the murders if his stories are preserved for posterity. He does not want them to be destroyed in the event of his execution. Such immortality will satisfy his artistic impulses and answer those who doubted his tal-

ent. The police officers pretend to acquiesce to his wishes and Katurian recounts his gruesome tales. In the Steppenwolf performance, directed by Amy Morton, Letts and Peyankov are gripping, convincing and surprisingly sympathetic figures as agents of the totalitarian state. But True-Frost is less engaging and generates little warmth or conviction as the beleaguered, wimpy writer.

Overall, *The Pillowman* dishes up an amazing smorgasbord in its two and a half hours. It is, at times, theatre of the absurd, comedy, farce, police thriller, crime and unjust punishment and surrealistic horror. It has elements of Kafka and Dostoyevsky and keeps the audience continually off balance and guessing. Ultimately, the play explores artistic creativity and the responsibility of the artist to society. It is far from the west of Ireland where McDonagh's work began. *The Pillowman* offers a lot on stage, but it provides additional food for thought long after the fall of the final curtain. That additional bonus is not often served up in modern theater.

Kilt & Clover's Celtic Christmas

The Kilt & Clover (1414 North Main, Rockford, Illinois) will be celebrating a Celtic Christmas on Saturday, December 9th from 11am - 5pm in the store. Celtic folk music by "Blue Clover", "Casey's Fancy" and "Slainte" is on the agenda for entertainment, as well as bagpiping by the City of Rockford Bagpipe Band and Irish and Scottish dancers. Tea service all day. For more information, call Kilt & Clover at 815-962-5458.

Playwright Martin McDonagh first burst upon the theatrical scene a decade ago with *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*. At that time, it was noted that his name and parents were Irish and that he had spent several boyhood summers in Ireland. But was he really Irish? That question was debated hotly in Ireland because McDonagh had been born and raised not in Ireland but London, England. True, he wrote like an Irishman about Irish situations and characters conceded some purists. But he scarcely sounded like an Irishman when he spoke they said. That was the rub which caused some Irish eyebrows to rise instead of smile.

During his summer visits to

Murphy has uncovered over 300 malpractice lawsuits filed against abortion providers in the Chicago area alone. Murphy also has contributed articles to *The Wanderer*, a Catholic weekly, *All About Issues*, published by the American Life League, to the *Pro-Life Action News*, *Life Advocate*, and other publications. More recently, Murphy spearheaded the post-trial investigation of false testimony in the *NOW v. Scheidler* trial on the part of plaintiffs' witnesses who claimed that pro-lifers had engaged in violent assaults against abortion providers or clinic patrons. His exposé was reported in a cover story in *World Magazine* (10/2/02). Murphy and his wife, Beatrice, reside in the Chicago area. CF: Thank you, Tim Murphy.

PROTECTING CHILDREN. The hosts of the traditional Roman Catholic radio show on WJG 1530 AM will interview Mary and me on Sunday, Dec. 31st, from 10 to 11 a.m. Being near the Dec. 28th feast of the Holy Innocents, the show will draw attention to the murder of children and our absolute obligation to protect them. Mary and I will provide the data on the millions of children murdered in the Irish Holocaust (the so-called Potato Famine) and will name the perpetrators of that still-covered-up genocide. We will also report the data on child-murders due to the conflict in Occupied Ireland, and the fact that Brit gov't- supported terrorists murdered all but twenty of the total of 174 murdered children. See www.terrorismireland.org.

WHICH BRIT REG'T starved your relatives? See www.irishholocaust.org. Contact me via fogarty@ix.netcom.com or tel.

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The Voice of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago Administrator, Prersident and CEO Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago

Celebration of Giving

At Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago, the few weeks between Thanksgiving and December 15 may be our busiest time of year, but they are filled with blessings! It's our Annual Christmas "Celebration of Giving," when thousands of generous people from Cook and Lake counties provide Christmas gifts for 10,000 of the neediest children in our care; and for hundreds of the poorest families we help.

We are blessed—and the children and families we serve are blessed!—by the thousands of donors who shower us with new toys, books, dolls, games and sports equipment for the children. In addition, hundreds of families, businesses, and parish and community groups pick out and pack up basic necessities such as new clothing, household items and grocery store gift certificates for almost 500 struggling families, consisting of 2,000 family members.

Our Christmas "Giving" tradition started in 1947, when Catholic Charities' Maternity/Adoption staff held a small Christmas party in a social worker's home to gather gifts for children awaiting adoption or placement in foster homes who might not otherwise receive gifts. The custom grew into Catholic Charities' annual "Toy Shower" and "Sponsor-a-Family" program, which today—almost 60 years later—still share the joy and blessings of Christmas with the very poor.

Thousands of generous folks who deeply care about people in need donate new, unopened and unwrapped toys for foster children and the children of poor families in our care. Generous volunteers sort them, and the families' caseworkers deliver them to their clients' homes to be placed under the tree. The goal is to collect at least three gifts for each child—something to cuddle, read or play with.

On Christmas morning, the

hearts of the children's parents, grandparents and foster parents are touched when they see the joy on their children's faces as they open their gifts. Our caseworkers, who walk closely with each family as they deal with the joblessness, crisis or multiple problems that have caused their poverty, share in the family's joy.

This is a season of charity—of unselfish love for the neighbor whom we do not know. It is a time when Catholic Charities lives up to its name and mission in a very visible way – and so does every Catholic Charities donor, volunteer and benefactor!

In his first encyclical, "Deus Caritas Est, God is Love," Pope Benedict XVI states that "love will always prove necessary" because "there will always be situations of material need where help in the form of concrete love of neighbor is indispensable." With the help of our partners in charity, Catholic Charities can guarantee to those in need what the Holy Father calls "the very thing which the suffering person—every person—needs: namely, loving personal concern."

During this Advent season of preparation for the Feast of Christmas, the ways of outpouring this "loving concern" have been as creative as the gifts are numerous.

• Sixty enthusiastic Catholic

Charities' Junior Board members, assisted by 25 members of the Boston College Young Alumni Club, give an awesome party for 350 foster children, ages 3-12, and their foster and birth parents. Dozens of generous companies, stores and individuals donate everything that makes a great party: pizza, pop, paper products, candy canes, cookies, goody bags and lots of books and other prizes. Santa Claus visits and each child takes home their own Polaroid picture with the jolly old fellow!

• The Spirit of St. Nicholas Ball, December 1 at the Chicago Hilton, benefits all the children in the care of Catholic Charities throughout the year.

• The Chicago Firefighters and Paramedics Union Local 2 hold their 8th annual Toy Parade on December 2, delivering 4,000 toys for children who are clients of Catholic Charities.

• The Wynstone Housewalk: a beautiful mid-November tour of Christmas-decorated homes by the Wynstone Women's Board of Catholic Charities benefits Catholic Charities Lake County Services.

• The Catholic Charities Lake County "Christmas Gifts" program benefits 11,000 persons in need: families, children and seniors. Call: (847) 782-4126 for information.

• For several years, Catho-

lic Charities board member Peg Ciccarelli and nine friends from Lake Forest have spearheaded a collection of new, washable, beautifully wrapped nightgowns for the women at Catholic Charities' Bishop Conway Assisted Living Residence in Chicago, and for several other Catholic Charities programs for women in Chicago and Lake County. This year, their goal is 200 gowns. For more information, please e-mail Peg at: inverleith@aol.com.

Catholic Charities has been blessed all year by the great charity of so many generous "givers!" Thank you for imitating the love and generosity of God—who gave us his only begotten Son—by giving from your hearts to bring comfort and joy to God's beloved poor.

May God bless you and your families this Christmas and always.

Catholic Charities' "Celebration of Giving" continues through December 15. If you wish to participate, donations of gifts for the "Toy Shower" and "Sponsor-a-Family" may be dropped off at any of nine locations in Chicago and suburbs between December 3 and December 8. For further information about donating, call the Toy Shower Hotline: (312) 738-1674. To volunteer, call (312) 655-7322.

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Irish Artists Series features A Percy French Matinee

A Percy French Matinee features songs and poetry from IAHC members and friends, including Brigid Duffy Gerace and Pat McKenna and a slide presentation of French's watercolors.

William Percy French was born in County Roscommon in 1854. He wrote his first successful song while studying at Trinity College in 1877. He was a civil engineer in County Cavan and it is there that wrote his best songs during this period. French was also a prolific painter of landscape watercolors and during this period considered art to be his true vocation.

A Percy French Matinee is Sunday, January 7, 2007 from 4-5:30 pm in the auditorium, as part of the ongoing Irish Artist Series, sponsored by the IAHC's Cultural Committee. The cost is \$10 and includes the ticket and refreshments. Tickets can be purchased at the door. For more information, call 773-282-7035, ext. 10.

Irishfest LaCrosse ornament will adorn Wisconsin Christmas Tree

The ornament created for Irishfest LaCrosse by Joyce Diveley, Wee Folks chairman for Irishfest LaCrosse has been chosen for the Festive Wisconsin Tree in Madison.

The ornament will be displayed on the Capitol Holiday Tree which is decorated with 2400 multicolored lights and 1400 handmade ornaments donated by Wisconsin citizens.

The Tree Lighting Ceremony will take place in the Capitol Rotunda of the Wisconsin State Capitol Building, 2 E. Main St., Madison, Wisconsin at 11:45 am and will remain lit until January 3, 2007.

(Irishfest LaCrosse takes place next August 10th, 11th, and 12th, 2007)

IAHC Hosts Annual New Year's Eve Party

The IAHC will hold its annual New Year's Eve Party in the Fifth Province Lounge on Sunday, December 31, 2006. Doors open at 7 pm.

The cost for the party is \$25.00 for advance purchase and \$30.00 after 12/30. The cover charge includes hors d'oeuvres, a champagne toast at midnight, party favors and live entertainment by Finbarr Fagan's Band. To purchase tickets, call the Center at 773-282-7035, Ext. 10.

Peter Behrens reading and signing at Heritage Center

The Irish American Heritage Center Library is proud to present a reading and book signing by author, Peter Behrens. The event is Sunday, December 3 at 1 pm and is free and open to the public. It takes place during the IAHC's annual Christmas Bazaar. Behrens will read from *The Law of Dreams*, his first novel.



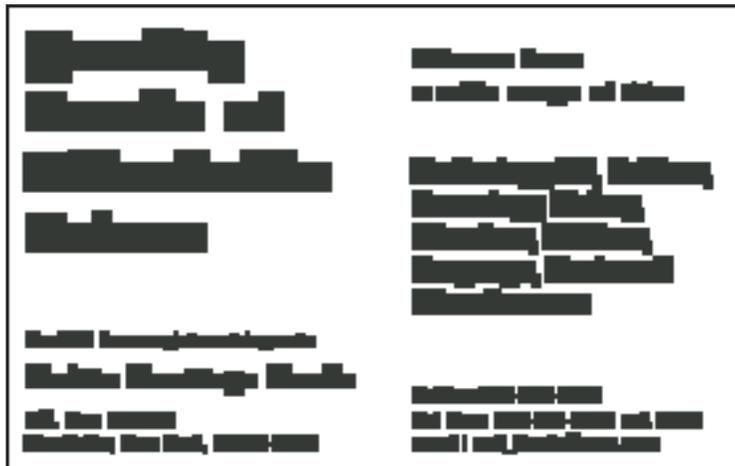
Peter Behrens

The Law of Dreams tells a haunting tale of a young man's perilous journey from innocence to experience. The story follows Fergus O'Brien from Ireland to Liverpool and Wales during the Great Potato Famine of 1847, and then beyond—to a harrowing Atlantic crossing to Montreal. On the way, Fergus loses his family, discovers a world beyond the hill farm where he was born, and experiences three great loves.

Behrens is a native of Montreal where he was educated at Lower Canada College, Concordia University and McGill. He held a Wallace Stegner Fellowship in Creative Writing at Stanford University and was a Fellow at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, Massachusetts.

His collection of short stories, *Night Driving* was published in 1987. His stories and essays have appeared in *Best Canadian Stories* and the *Atlantic Monthly*.

For more information on the Peter Behrens signing and reading, call 773-282-7035, ext. 19. or visit www.irishamhc.com.



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Irish Books and Plays in Review

BY FRANK WEST



Little Chapel on the River

"The tiny pub is crowded and it's only 6:15 p.m. A light breeze sneaks through the windows off the Hudson River. On the opposite bank, I can see the fortresses of West Point military Academy glowing hot in the late summer sun. The yellow rays streak across the water and onto the backs of the men standing in this green-walled, green-ceilinged Irish drinking hole nestled between the river and the railroad tracks. The pub which is barely big enough to hold the old giant metal Coca-Cola cooler stuffed with beer [no liquor is served], red-topped bar and five stools, is tacked onto the side of an old country store..."

The pub is located in Garrison, New York, which is about 50 miles north of New York City. It is the last stop on the rail line and is about one hour travel time on the train or by car from the city.

Garrison is on the banks of the Hudson river where it passes through the ruggedly beautiful Highlands of that river. It's extraordinary how rural the area is despite being near a huge metropolitan area.

The Irish owner has operated the pub for over forty years. He moved to this town immediately after coming from Ireland. He did not want to live, or to raise a family, in New York City.

The owner is Jim Guinan (sounds like Guynan). He is affable, kind and good at telling stories. His warm personality makes everyone feel welcome. He is the soul of the place. He symbolizes humanity and stability in a fast changing world. The pub is simply called Guinan's.

Little Chapel on the River: A Pub, A Town and the Search for What Matters Most by Gwendolyn Bounds. Harper Paperbacks/800-631-8571; New York, 2006. 320 pages, \$13.95.

The author, Gwendolyn Bounds, was traumatized by the 9/11 World Trade Center disaster. Her office, at the Wall Street Journal, was across the street: her apartment was only a block away.

Suddenly she realized she had a major life choice to make: professional advancement or seeking the warmth and acceptance of caring people. Or, said another way, do you live for the job, or does the job support you and the things you want to do in life? As soon as she entered Guinan's pub she knew what the decision would be.

Ten days later Gwendolyn Bounds moved to the town of Garrison, New York.

"This is the story of a place... you don't find around much anymore, a spot where people wander in once and return for a lifetime."

People need the feeling of belonging. We want to belong: to a family, or a lover, or a place, to people at work, or even to the regulars at a bar. I believe it is a basic human need to belong, to

feel totally accepted. We need the wonderful feeling of acceptance as we are. We don't want people to want us for their own needs. We don't want to be accepted as we may seem to others or as they may perceive us because of our job or wealth. We want to belong, to be accepted, because of who we are.

That is the deep attractiveness of Guinan's. Everyone is accepted "as is", as a fellow human being - not tolerated, but accepted.

Gwendolyn Bounds felt this unqualified acceptance. She loved it. And after the trauma of 9/11, she realized that this acceptance by other people was the really important thing in life.

When she entered the tiny pub, Jim Guinan made her feel welcome. This total acceptance, or love really, was typical of this Irishman.

Acceptance of people as they are is a wonderful part of the traditional Irish character. As the ancient Irish saying says: "the sun shines equally for everyone."

The book tells us a great deal about what Gwendolyn Bounds values. But her biographical information is short: "Gwendolyn Bounds is a columnist for the Wall Street Journal, where she worked since 1993. A native of North Carolina, she now lives in New York's Hudson Valley."

The beautifully written book, Little Chapel on the River, is about the things that are important in life. The reader will thank Gwendolyn Bounds for reminding us of this in such a beautiful way.

These quotes help explain Guinan's.

Bounds say about Guinan's: "Up until this point, I had never really belonged to anything, except maybe my job. No church, no volunteer groups and... not even a steady sport."

Bounds explains the attractiveness of Guinan's: "...a cast of characters as the hourly trains rumbled by its windows. For them the cramped space was far more than a pit stop on the way home - it was an extension of home itself. Guinan's was where they came after a death to toast and remember, on holidays and birthdays to pay their respects and buy a round or two, or on a late winter afternoon when a cold wind made things lonely enough that you just needed to see a friendly face."

Once a month there is an all night session of Irish music: "A rainstorm is brewing, the downpour still dormant inside thick clouds, but you can feel it coming like heavy hands pressing on your shoulders. [There is little moonlight.] Without the natural light, the county roads are dark and treacherous. Deer linger in the wings of the woods, poised to dart out around the next sharp curve, their eyes saucer-like in the headlight's glare. As I carefully navigate my way across the bridge onto the river landing, I'm impressed that despite the nasty conditions, the parking lot outside Guinan's is nearly packed... I hurry toward the bar, picking up my pace as the faint strain of fiddles and guitars streams through the front door."

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Can Timmy Save Toyland?

"The ice was melting. Slowly, ever so slowly. Toyland was being destroyed. If Toyland disappeared there would be no more toys, no more Santa and no more Christmas."

The ozone in the atmosphere over the North Pole is getting thinner and the arctic ice is melting. But gangsters want to make it melt quickly. They want to lay claim to the gold, oil and precious minerals they believe lie under the ice.

In the last book McDonnell wrote, *The Boy Who Saved Christmas*, Santa was kidnapped by Irish gangsters. An Irish boy, Timmy, rescues Santa and saves the kindness felt for one another at Christmas time. That boy was Timmy Goodfellow. He is the hero of this book, too.

Vincent McDonnell is a popular writer of fiction for children. The book is written for children ages 9 to 12.

He "... has given workshops and readings all over Ireland." He was raised in County Mayo and now lives in Newmarket, County Cork.

In this book Timmy struggles against criminals who are plotting to release at the North Pole, chemicals from giant aerosol spray cans. These chemicals are very harmful to the ozone in the atmosphere. This would permit more of the sun's rays to reach the ice and quickly melt it.

I like McDonnell's blending of fact (depletion of the ozone in the atmosphere) and fantasy (Santa Claus, etc.) As a former school teacher, I know this is an interesting way to present a science lesson to children.

The gangsters hate Santa Claus, Timmy and any act of kindness or thoughtfulness. They kidnap Timmy's sister, and he has to stop their plans for her, for the North Pole and for Santa's home.

"Toyland consisted of thousands of acres of ice. Built on the ice were the workshops where the elves made the toys. Here also were the huge warehouses where the toys were stored, along with houses in which the elves lived. The cozy cottage where Santa Claus lived and the stables for the reindeer stood nearby. Now they were all in grave danger."

McDonnell's writing is full of surprise and adventure. Even though I knew this book was written for readers at 7th to 9th grade levels, it held my attention to the last page. I have reviewed several of his books and they all have that wonderful quality of suspense.

I think you'll enjoy *Can Timmy Save Toyland?* by Vincent McDonnell. I did.

Quoting from a review of McDonnell's last book: "You can do much of your Christmas shopping by contacting Dufour Editions and asking about the many current books from Ireland. They can be reached at 610-458-5005."

Can Timmy Save Toyland? By Vincent McDonnell. The

Collins Press/Dufour Editions: Wilton, Cork. (Distributed in the U.S. by Dufour Editions 610-458-5005). Published in 2006, 185 pages, \$10.95.

Movie Leads to Thoughts of Irish History

I recently saw the movie *Queen*. The main actor, Helen Mirren, gave a magnificent performance as Queen Elizabeth II.

The movie is about the reaction of the British royal family to the death of Princess Diana.

The royal family chose to ignore the enormous outpouring of affection and love by the British public for the dead princess.

Despite a life of privilege, Diana was able to touch ordinary people in a very human way. She had worked hard to end hunger, stop the use of land mines, and prevent the spread of AIDS, etc.

However, as Queen Elizabeth coldly pointed out, since Diana's divorce from Prince Charles, she was "no longer a member of the family."

Queen wants us to feel sorry for Elizabeth. But this is impossible because she shows no human empathy. She can only relate emotionally to animals! She relates to her many dogs, to a stag, etc. She can't relate to humans. She, and the others in the royal family, are coldly indifferent to people and to how they feel.

When Elizabeth's sister, Margaret, visited Chicago (this was during the time Jane Byrne was mayor), she was overheard to say that putting a tuxedo on an Irishman was "like putting socks on a pig."

It is beyond the scope of this short article to explore the economic usefulness of the immensely rich British royal family. So I won't call them parasites, drones or leeches.

Elizabeth's ancestors changed their name in 1917, during World War I. Britain was fighting Germany, and it wouldn't do to have a German dynasty ruling Britain. So they changed their name. They were the Saxe-Coburg-Gotha family from Hanover. But, almost like magic, they changed their last name to Windsor.

That is the dynasty that spawned the three Georges (the American Declaration of Independence was sent to

the third George) and Queen Victoria. Elizabeth speaks admiringly of her in the movie *Queen*.

Lest we forget, Victoria was queen when Ireland endured the agony of the Great Famine. And she was queen during the intense struggle over ownership of Ireland's land. This struggle resulted in the Land League.

The Mayo man, Michael Davitt, formed the Land League in the late 1800s, to work for Irish ownership of Ireland's land. For this he spent seven years in Victoria's jails.

One arm had been ripped off in an industrial accident while he was a child laborer. Victoria's jailers handcuffed his arm behind his back and gleefully put his bowl of food on the floor of his cell. He had to eat it like a dog.

These thoughts went through my mind as I watched the movie, *Queen*. Is emotional unconcern or emotional disconnect an inherited trait of the Windsor family?

Speaking of George the Third...

I recently heard a quote of George Washington about Irish determination. Fully one third of his army was Irish, so he understood the Irish character.

The winter of 1778 was a bleak period at Valley Forge. The British had occupied several large colonial American cities. Valley Forge was near the British-occupied city of Philadelphia. The American army had camped there for the winter.

The soldiers in the American revolutionary army endured the great hardships of that winter. About these terrible times Thomas Paine wrote: "These are the times that try men's souls."

This was the lowest point in the American Revolution. Only 8,000 men wintered with George Washington at Valley Forge. He lived with them and shared their suffering. These were only two of the reasons they loved him.

Washington knew that if the British army left the comfort of Philadelphia and made a lightning attack on Valley Forge, the Revolution would have been crushed.

Washington said that if this happened, he would retreat into Virginia, and go up the Virginia Valley. "I will plant my flag for the last stand among the Scot Irish people there. I know they will not surrender as long as one man is left to pull a trigger."

These are the same Southern people who, in recent census data, identify themselves more and more as just Irish. The grip of religious hostility that the British used to separate the Irish people (religious hostility and hatred only began to be a power in the 1840s) is loosening now in modern America. The Scot Irish (Presbyterians) had been treated just as badly as the other Irish by the Saxe-Coburg-Gotha family, aka the Windsors.



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Sporting Log

By Sean Og. O Ceallachain



Suggestions that Croke Park might be used to house additional soccer and rugby fixtures has been quickly knocked on the head by GAA President Nicky Brennan. While the GAA is quick to point out that the ground has been made available to soccer and rugby while the Lansdowne Road stadium is being redeveloped, no provision has been made between the soccer and rugby Boards for extra games.

This has arisen because of media speculation that the highly attractive Champions Soccer League final and the valuable Heineken Rugby League final might be played here next year. The suggestion has brought a speedy reaction from GAA president Brennan.

He said, "Croke Park was opened to other sports for the sole purpose of facilitating Irish international rugby and soccer teams while Lansdowne Road is under redevelopment. That was the position last year, it's still the position and it will remain so," he insists. UEFA-European soccer's controlling body

announced that they would consider staging a major final in the redeveloped Lansdowne Road, possibly in 2010.

The question then arose, what if Lansdowne Road wasn't completed in time? It led to speculation that the GAA should open Croke Park rather than allow a major international attraction to go elsewhere. "It just will not happen," said the GAA chief, "end of story. As of now, our agreement is to open up Croke Park for Irish rugby and soccer internationals for 2007. We have commenced discussions regarding 2008, but that's as far as it has gone."

"We're working on a year-to-year basis with the IRFU and the FAI, the governing bodies of both sports while Lansdowne Road is being redeveloped. It applies to their international games only, so there's absolutely no chance of doing any deal for the Champions League or any other league either. In fairness to the IRFU and the FAI they are keeping us apprised of the planning situation regarding Lansdowne

Road. Having been through the process ourselves with Croke Park, we know what it is like," he said. Moving away from the subject, Brennan takes the opportunity of lambasting those supporters who invade the pitch at Croke Park after Major matches. He rightly claims that the playing surface at Croke Park suffers greatly when trampled on that way. He points out that a pitch evasion opens the door to safety problems which the Association is very acutely aware of. He feels that people can be very irresponsible and claims that the Association has been involved in litigation and when people get injured during pitch invasions. It means that if it continues, the GAA will have to erect ugly fencing around the playing area. Is that what we want?

A detailed inspection of the pitch is being carried out at present. Yes, there were some problems but the reality is that Croke Park's playing surface has an incredible heavy programme of matches in the July-August period and obviously every player wants the surface perfect for their game. No other surface could stand up to five or six games in 24 hours, accompanied on occasions by crowd invasions. The ground staff will keep working on it in order to get it match perfect. Under soil heating has been installed which will enable the

ground staff to have greater control over growth patterns, temperatures etc.

There has been a problem too with the presentation of winning trophies to successful teams at Croke Park and that is another area which has to be improved.

According to president Brennan, far too many mentors are allowed onto the sideline and that leads to more of them entering the pitch at various times, and that has led to confrontations this year. Teams have more back-up personnel nowadays which is fine but they all don't need to be on the sideline. And they won't be next year.

The GAA and the Australian International Rules bodies will be meeting in Dubai early in the New Year to discuss the recent scenes that took place in the final match of the series at Croke Park before a record attendance of 83,000 last month. The media and GAA writers condemned the incidents which led to Meath's Graham Geraghty being taken to hospital, when he was attacked by a couple of Aussie players. A few weeks before the second Test at Croke Park senior GAA officials let it be known

that any return to the thuggery which marked last year's series, for which the Aussies had to accept most responsibility will result in the scrapping of the series for the foreseeable future.

The words of those GAA officials ring very hollow now as the scenes that marked this year's games in Croke Park were an absolute disgrace. They were condemned by all the GAA writers present and yet in a survey taken among the players, most of them stated they wanted the series to continue. Of course, the Aussies Rules game is hard but it is played by professionals who are also well paid for their services. The Irish players have to go to work the following day showing the effects of their labours on the field of play. Candidly, I believe the GAA will not opt out of this hybrid game. A former GAA president I have spoken to was totally against the series when it started many years ago. He claimed it served as a perk for some officials who make the trip with the players. The fact that it is marked by ugly incidents mainly by the Aussies, didn't seem to matter. It poses the question "when will we ever learn?"

Marciano Award for John Duddy

Newly crowned IBA World middleweight title-holder "Ireland's" John Duddy, will be

presented the prestigious Rocky Marciano Award as a distinguished champion on December 3 at the Boxerama XXV awards luncheon, celebrating the 25th American Association for the Improvement of Boxing, Inc. (AAIB), in White Plains, New York.

The humble Duddy is, of course, greatly honored to be receiving the Marciano Award. "It's hard to describe in words how I feel about receiving this award," John remarked. "Two years ago, Bernard Hopkins received it. I need to do a lot more to live up to the standards of the Rocky Marciano Award winners. It's more than I could ever imagine.



Attempt to break world record in stationary bike "Spin" Marathon

Five Seasons Sports Club member, George E. Hood is trying to break the Guinness World Record (GWR) for "spinning" on a stationary bike. Five Seasons Sports Club will host this event January 10-13, 2007 at its facility located at 6901 S. Madison in Burr Ridge, IL. Hood will attempt to spin for 83 hours and break the existing record of 82 hours.

Any proceeds from the event will be donated to the Illinois Chapter of Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS), a national organization dedicated to assisting the countless loved ones left behind by law enforcement officers who've been killed in the line of duty.

Hood, a career federal agent, has been training since early 2006 with countless non-stop hours on the

spin bike, transition to an all liquid food product used during the event and sleep deprivation. GWR Ltd™ marathon rules permit Hood a 5 minute break after each completed hour which may be accumulated. Hood's efficient use of break time will be necessary to sustain his effort. He must maintain 12 MPH during the event. He is being sponsored by LeMond Fitness Incorporated (www.Lemondfitness.com) and Chicago Home Fitness to provide Hood with ultra efficient RevMaster spin bikes for the event. Longevity Plus, Fallbrook, CA will provide Hood an all liquid diet known as SPIZERINCTUM™ (www.spiz.net) during the event. Contact Tom Galzin, (630) 570-5200 or George Hood, 847-318-8365 x3001.

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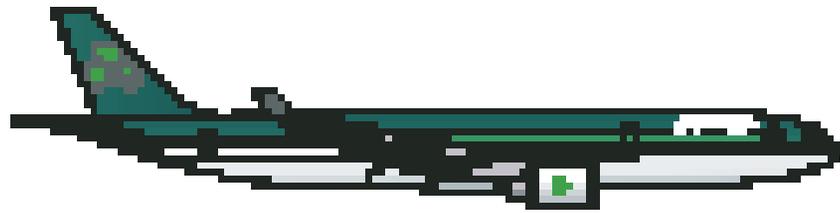
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