

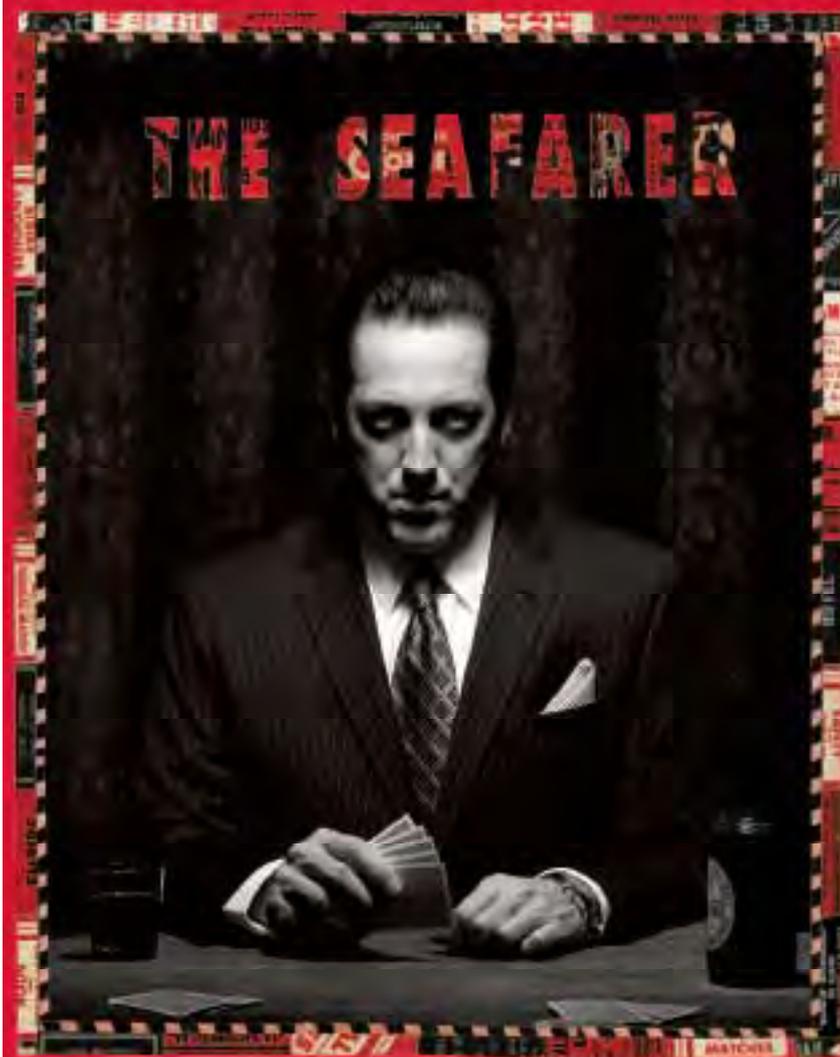
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Christmas • 2008



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PETE DOWD



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Randall Arney

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Ryan Praskovich Wins 2008 US Junior Solo Bagpiping Championship

Fifteen-year-old Ryan Praskovich of Pittsburgh, PA won the 2008 Balmoral Classic US Junior Solo Bagpiping Championship recently, receiving the top prize of a set of McCallum bagpipes made in Scotland. He also received a trophy and a two-week full scholarship to Balmoral School of Piping and Drumming.

The national competition, which was open

to the public for viewing, took place Saturday, November 15, 2008 at Hillman Center for Performing Arts in Fox Chapel, PA. It is the only US bagpiping competition for pipers 18 years of age and under. An invitational tournament, entrants are required to meet strict standards based upon amateur upper grade competitive successes.

Entrants competed in two main styles:

Piobaireachd, the classical music of Highland bagpiping, and MSR (marches, strathspeys, and reels), the traditional music of Scotland. The Overall is a combination of scores from Piobaireachd and MSR. The competitors were adjudicated by a panel of three champion senior pipers and awarded points for tempo,

tone, rhythm, execution and expression.

The competition was part of The Balmoral Classic, a US celebration of Highland bagpiping which is held annually in Pittsburgh. The next Balmoral Classic will be held November 6 and 7, 2009, at Hillman Center for Performing Arts on the campus of Shady Side Academy, a private high school in the borough of Fox Chapel, just northeast of Pittsburgh.



Ryan Praskovich of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Overall winner of the 2008 Balmoral Classic US Junior Solo Bagpiping Championship, holds his trophies and the competition's top prize of McCallum bagpipes. (Photo by Evan Kenepp.)

DePaul Irish Society Welcomes Bloody Sunday Activist John Kelly

On Wednesday, January 21, 2009, one week before the 37th anniversary of Bloody Sunday, John Kelly, 17-year-old John Kelly, Bloody Sunday victim Michael Kelly's brother, will speak in Chicago at DePaul University. Mr. Kelly has accepted the invitation extended by the student-run DePaul Irish Society and the faculty-run DePaul Irish Studies program.

Bloody Sunday itself was an event that took place on January 30, 1972. According to eyewitness reports, English soldiers fired upon participants of a peaceful march against internment without trial. Subsequently, 14 people were killed and 12 others were wounded. In the coming months, the English Parliament intends to make its final decision on the Bloody Sunday inquiry—a process that has taken 37 years to complete.

Mr. Kelly has been actively involved in the efforts to bring justice for the families of Bloody Sunday victims. In 1992 he was made chairman of the Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign and remained so until the project

was taken over by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair in 1998. After, he joined the efforts of the Bloody Sunday Trust, "a Derry based history and educational project," and is currently employed as the Education and Outreach Officer for the Museum of Free Derry.

The DePaul Irish Society has invited Mr. Kelly to speak because his perspective offers a personal and historical take on this devastating chapter in Irish history. The DPIS also believes that now is the perfect opportunity to both educate the Chicago community about this event in Irish history and promote the DePaul Irish Studies program.

The speaking program will begin at 5pm at Cortelyou Commons, located at 2324 North Fremont Street on DePaul's Lincoln Park campus.

For more information on this event, Mr. Kelly, the DePaul Irish Society, or the DePaul Irish Studies program, please contact Lauren DeBueriis via e-mail at laurendebueriis@yahoo.com.

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Nuggets from the Navigator

By Cliff Carlson, Publisher

One man's nugget is another man's fool's gold!

This month's cover

A multi-talented friend of mine, Peter Dowd, of Oak Park, Illinois painted this month's cover, "Snowy Commute." I think it captures Chicago in the Winter, and still gives us a sense of why we love this city.

His family is close knit, and all are beautiful human beings. His wife Marcia is a rock who helped Pete found the law firm, Dowd Bloch and Bennett. She is a life partner to be proud of. Daughter Jennifer took care of my son as a volunteer at Children's Hospital, and that is how I met the family. She has two children of her own now. Daughter Susan went on to become a veterinarian, and son Doug is an accomplished and employed computer programmer.

I took the following paragraphs off of his website, www.jpdart.com which he wrote himself. Here is what he modestly has to say about his art.

"I am a Chicago labor lawyer who

paints for the fun of it, My critics are friends, fellow art students and art teachers. My patrons are an encour-

aging spouse, three discriminating children and some admiring sisters. Da-Vinci didn't have it this good. If I have developed a unique style I am unaware of it. I keep trying new methods and techniques. I usually paint from my own photographs or imagination, but sometimes borrow images from newspapers or books. This website, created by my son Doug, is my first show. Some of the better works are hanging on my patrons' walls. The rest are in "collection of the artist" awaiting a decision on whether ever to sell a painting.



I am especially grateful to Ed Hinkley, a most talented and patient artist and teacher. I met Ed at Ox Bow, a summer camp for artists in Saugatuck, Michigan, run by the Art Institute of Chicago and then took classes with him in his Chicago studio. Ed's work is so different from his students', but his "one little thing" insights on his students' work are usually a revelation.

talent and become an artist." J. Peter Dowd is a 1975 graduate of the University of Chicago Law School. His broad labor experience in representing unions, and employee benefit funds includes advice to unions and boards of trustees, contract negotiations, arbitrations, labor board proceedings, appellate litigation and complex class action cases involving the Employee Retirement Income Security Act, the Illinois Pension Code, Landrum-Griffin issues, and union trusteeships. He represents both private and governmental pension and welfare plans and construction industry training and apprentice funds and has also represented individual employees and classes of participants in litigation to enforce federal and state laws involving pension and welfare funds.

His experience in representing individual employees includes a wide range of cases involving Constitutional rights, pension and welfare rights and benefits, civil rights, wage and hour laws, disability claims, Landrum-Griffin rights, and state pension and civil service issues. Prior to entering the practice of law he was a certified teacher and a union officer. He taught labor relations law as Adjunct Assistant Professor at Rosary College (now Dominican University) in River Forest and has been a presenter at various professional conferences.

He was a partner in a large Chicago labor firm until 1985 when he left to form a new partnership, now Dowd, Bloch & Bennett. He is admitted to practice in the United States Supreme Court, the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals, the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois (trial attorney), the Illinois Supreme Court and a number of other Courts of Appeals where he has argued cases.

And his golf game shows it!



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Among the accomplished artists who tolerated the more primitive efforts evident here and share credit for any improvements were Audrey Warnimont Brown at the Oak Park Art League, Judith Raphael at Ox Bow and Tom Torluemke, at the Art Institute of Chicago.

I grew up in Roslyn Heights, New York, and spent my youth drawing. I drew landscapes, portraits of famous people, figures and, in school, surreptitious notebooks filled with drawings instead of class notes. Unfortunately, there were no art classes in the schools I attended.

One apparent benefit of my youthful drawing was, I am told, that I encouraged my next door neighbor to draw and inspired him to consider a career in art. I am sure that many other people had a much greater influence on his choice and eventual success as an artist, but I enjoy the possibility that I encouraged Charles Bourke Wildbanks to cultivate his

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Gavin Coyle's Annual Christmas Concert A Benefit for the People's Resource Center

Gavin Coyle, award-winning singer and recording artist, presents his *2008 Annual Christmas Concert - A Benefit for the People's Resource Center*, December 13 at 8pm at the McAninch Center at College of DuPage. Accompanied by Paul Burgess, Gavin will draw his audience into the spirit of Christmas through performing Christmas and holiday tunes, both from the U.S. and from his native Ireland.

Tickets are on sale at the MAC box office at Park and Fawell Boulevards in Glen Ellyn, by calling 630-942-4000, or online at www.atthemac.org. Tickets are \$25.

Gavin Coyle was born in the city of Derry, Northern Ireland and credits his parents from keeping him and his four sisters from harm amidst the bombing and shootings of the Troubles. He also credits his parents with encouraging their inter-

est in music. At 14, he won the title of All-Ireland Singing Champion. Though he first visited America as a teenager, as part of a peace



Gavin Coyle

project to build friendships to heal the social and religious divisions in his homeland, he returned to the U.S. in 1995 to live permanently. An accomplished singer, songwriter

and award winning recording artist, Gavin has released 3 CD's of pop, folk and traditional Irish music and two Christmas CD's. He has sung the National Anthem several times at Wrigley and Soldier Fields, and can often be found performing on the weekends in local clubs around DuPage County. Gavin also gives of his time by performing concerts for a variety of charities, including the People's Resource Center. He currently teaches music and resides in the western suburbs with his wife Bridget and three daughters.

The People's Resource Center is a non-profit organization that helps those in need in DuPage county. Proceeds from the concert will support PRC services including the county's largest full-choice food pantry and clothes closet, emergency rent/mortgage assistance and empowerment programs to break the cycle of poverty including computer training and access, literacy and art classes, and job search assistance.

Kieran O'Hare and Liz Knowles Take to the Road With Celtic Legends Dance Show in France

The biggest live Irish dance show out there at the moment, *Celtic Legends* has invited Chicago musicians Liz Knowles and Kieran O'Hare on board as composers and musical directors. The show is currently on a sold-out arena tour in France has a busy schedule for 2009 including a mammoth visit to China and Korea playing the biggest theaters in many of its largest cities, a U.S. tour, and 3 month stop in Reno, and a tour of South America in the fall.

The show which centers on a 5-piece live traditional Irish band and a troupe of live Irish dancers is already a celebrated act in France and tops the list of touring acts there every year playing large theaters to thousands of enthusiastic Irish music fans. The *Celtic Legends* CD and DVD has been released by France Television and Universal France.

Legends producer and creative director, Michael Londra known also as the voice of *Riverdance* on Broadway and *The Passion of the Christ Symphony* had previously worked with Liz on other projects and immediately decided on the pair when finding a new artistic team.

"In my opinion Liz and Kieran represent the best of what Irish music is today". The Chicago based singer continued, "they combine not only excellent musicianship but also are aware of the demands of showmanship and the theatrical elements of a big show like *Legends*. This is rare in traditional Irish music." The *Celtic Legends* organization is thrilled to bring Liz and Kieran on board."

The Chicago pair had a baptism of fire playing to 5,000 people in the Zenith arena in Paris on their first week with the show. "I don't think Liz or Kieran really had a clue how big the show was until that night when the curtain went up" Londra laughed and added "I can safely say they did Chicago proud." In November alone, they played to about 60,000 Celtic fans.

www.celticlegends.net.



Liz Knowles and Kieran O'Hare

(L-R) Commissioner Terrence J. O'Brien, the President of Metropolitan Reclamation District of Greater Chicago and Mayor Richard M. Daley, who participated in the award presentation to Commissioner O'Brien at The Water Environment Federation (WEF) 81st annual Water Environment Federation Technical Exhibition Conference (WEFTEC) in Chicago recently. O'Brien was presented an award for his many contributions toward improving the water environment. In accepting the award O'Brien stated, "I am grateful and flattered to receive this award, but the workers of the MWRD should be the recipients of this recognition."



Catherine O'Connell Launches New CD



Just in time for Christmas, Chicago's own "Celtic Diva," Catherine O'Connell is releasing a new Christmas CD, *Small Miracles*. Each song on this CD resonates in its own way, and includes many old holiday favorites. Tracks include "Santa Baby," "Gabriel's Message," "Silent Night," "Christmas in the Trenches," "Silver Bells," "In the Bleak Midwinter,"

"This Christmastide," "The Wexford Carol," "There's Still My Joy," "O Holy Night," "I'll Be Home for Christmas," "Winter Wonderland," and "Angels We Have Heard on High."

A *Small Miracles* CD Launch concert and party will be held at St. Patrick High School Performing Arts Center, 5900 W. Belmont Ave. on Friday, December 12th, at 8pm. Tickets are \$10.00 (2 for the price of one at www.catherineoconnell.com).

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The Fenians' Hooley Holiday 10th Anniversary of First Trip To Ireland

From March 26-April 4, 2009, The Fenians will once again wing their way to Ireland. Since 1998, the Orange County, CA quintet, led by mandolin player and lead singer, Terry Casey, have taken hundreds of their fans with them on their bi-annual pilgrimage to the Ould Sod.

Working again with Hammond Tours of Albany, NY, The Fenians have put together what they believe is a great itinerary, and a fantastic value.

The ten day trip includes round trip air fare, deluxe coach with Irish driver and guide, first class hotels, breakfast every morning, three dinners, and more, all for \$2099 per person from LAX, based on double occupancy, plus the inevitable taxes and fees. Arrangements can be made to fly from Boston, Chicago, and other airports, as well.

"We wanted to keep it affordable, and yet complete," offers Terry. "There is something for everyone on the tour—first timers, as well as return guests."

"A guided tour like this is a great way to see Ireland for the first time," says Rob Williams, guitarist and singer for the band. "But there are also fans that have been on all five of the previous trips. That's because of the camaraderie that develops when you spend a good part of ten days together. Many of our guests are already fans. But you'd be surprised how many new people hear about the trip, and decide to sign up."

"Some of the great rewards about our tours," muses Casey, "are the many life-long friendships spawned from them. There have even been a couple of marriages. We've kept in touch with our driver/guides. You just can't leave it with a goodbye at the airport."

But now, on to Ireland. The tour begins in Dublin.

"Dublin is a legendary city," says Chris Pierce, drummer/vocalist for the band. "There is so much to see and do there—from the many cultural attractions such as The Book of Kells, at Trinity College, to the pubs, restaurants, and shops of Grafton Street, and Temple Bar."

"Bring a good pair of walking shoes," advises bassist Brendan Harkins. "It's a great way to get into the pace of the city; although, it's by no means the only way to get around."

The tour continues with a stay at the elegant Faithlegg Manor, in Waterford. While there, stroll over the beautiful grounds, luxuriate in the spa, or play a round of golf. That evening there will be

a special dinner to commemorate the 10th anniversary of The Fenians' first trip to the Emerald Isle.

Then it's off to the picturesque coastal city, and culinary capital of Ireland—Kinsale, in County Cork.

"I love Kinsale," shares Williams. The harbor



is so peaceful, the winding, storybook streets simply charming. And talk about food. You have to dine at one of the great restaurants there."

Next, the lads and their guests head for the famous Rock of Cashel, and an opportunity to see some of the beautiful midlands of Ireland. Afterwards, the coaches wind their way to the exciting, west coast college city of Galway, one of The Fenians' favorite places to perform.

"We love to play there," pipes in Brendan. "It's one of several shows we traditionally do while we're in Ireland." We've also played in Dublin, and Cork, just to name a few."

The tour winds up in the ancient walled city of Limerick.

"The last time we were there, we had a last night, all-nighter, with much singing and toasting, and even a few tears," quips Chris.

The Fenians hope you will accept their invitation to join them on their magical, musical adventure—their Hooley Holiday in Ireland.

Celtic Christmas Session

On Sunday, December 7th at 7:30pm, the Chicago Irish Pub Music Meetup is putting on a special event—*A Celtic Christmas Session*—hosted by Paddy Homan, at The Galway Arms Pub, 2442 Clark St. in Chicago (773-472-5555). One and all are invited to sing along, enjoy beautiful music and a great venue with lots of friendly faces. Reserve now at <http://celticmusic.meetup.com>. www.paddyhoman.com.

Congrats to Martin Healy, Jr.

Irish American News would like to congratulate Martin Healy, Jr. on recently being elected Chair of the 1700-member Products Liability Section of the American Association of Justice (formerly the Association of Trial Lawyers of America-ATLA). *Congratulations!*

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Chicago Gaelic News



Pat Hennessy



Beannacti Na Nollaig - Blessing of Christmas

Once again as we approach the great holiday, the Nativity of the Christ Child, we would like to extend *Beannact Nollaig* to our readers and friends. May the day be, for you and your families, a happy and holy one and may the coming New Year bring for you all continued good health and success.

Our special thanks and best wishes are extended to Cliff, our dynamic editor, for making the valuable space available and to his great staff for making it readable for our readers. Thank God, this year I begin my 55th year of writing, having started with the great national paper, *The Irish Echo* in 1954. It has been a great adventure for me. I have met so many fine people who became good friends over the years, that the humble effort that I contribute is small in comparison.

Our beautiful Christmas in the Chicago Irish community at Chicago Gaelic Park on the southwest side of the city and the famed Irish American Heritage Center on the northwest side, both provide spectacular presentations of our traditional Irish Christmas, celebrating the coming of the Christ Child in their inimitable way and in a manner to make all of us Irish Americans proud of our ancestry and this country of ours, the United States of America.

The influx of young Irish men and women who made Chicago their home in the late 1940's brought with them two things—love of God and love of the culture, games, song, dance and music of the gael. This they did in quick time, the GAA in 1949 and the Irish Musician Associations and other kindred clubs followed, in fine style.

These pioneers, sometimes without jobs, set their objectives and goals for "a green sod of our own" and an Irish American Heritage Center. They realized that these mighty goals would take years to complete, but a start had to be made and a sound foundation laid so that "the dream could become a reality."

Needless to say the torch of leadership was passed on from year to year and it became an established Center. Then in a more affluent period in the 1970's, a fundraiser was

begun for Gaelic Park by a small but very active group of dedicated men and women led by Liam O'Brien, John Crean, the late Joe Ahern, John Lynch and others and an area was purchased on the southwest side. Later the "dream became a reality" and Chicago Gaelic Park was established. Later led by dynamic Hugh O'Hara and his Josephine (*Ar dheis De go raibhn an ainm*), property was purchased to house the Heritage Center.

And so as we enjoy the many fine Irish programs over the coming Christmas period at both Centers, let us remember that all this magnificent work was achieved by dedicated young Irish men and women, through voluntary efforts, sometimes right after their own work was finished. Let us remember and congratulate and thank every one of them. We would be remiss, of course, if we did not mention the many dedicated men and women like the hardworking Marion Ryan, Manager at Gaelic Park and others, who make it all work, day and night.

Both Centers will again display magnificent lights inside and outside this year thanks to the many fine volunteers led by John Crean and others who make it all possible. Again my sincere best wishes to all our readers and friends. May you and your families enjoy every moment of this beautiful event. *Slainte agus Beannact na Nollaig* - Best Wishes and Christmas Blessings to all.

Christmastime in Ireland with Tony Kenny

The next best thing to being in Ireland for the Christmas holidays is to be at Chicago Gaelic Park, 6119 W. 147th St. in Oak Forest on Sunday, December 14th at 7:30pm for Tony Kenny's great show. Tickets are now available at the front office. For more information call any of the beautiful colleens at the front office at 708-687-9323.

Christmastime in Ireland is a unique Irish show featuring the lad himself, Tony Kenny, presenting some of Ireland's finest songs, music and dance. Other famed Irish entertainers include Kathy Durkin, Ireland's charming Entertainer of the Year, Joe Cuddy, the funny lad of the group and the spectacular Dublin

City Dancers with musical director Joe Fitzgerald.

Imagine sitting in an Irish home with a turf fire blazing and a bunch of the lads having the "craic," fun, some great old dancing around the floor, with others singing, storytelling and celebrating the great feast of the coming of the Christ Child. You won't want to miss this all-star show, so be on time and have your tickets

U.S. Visa Deal for Irish

Something we have long advocated in this column over the years is a U.S.-Ireland visa deal for the two countries. It will not help the more than 60,000 Irish men and women who are presently listed as "undocumented aliens," but in time that too may be eased, particularly now with our new president, Chicagoan Barack Obama and Democratic majorities in both the House and Senate.

The deal worked out by the two countries would allow 20,000 young Irish citizens to come and work (if possible) for one year. The time restriction is difficult to understand but it could be improved as time goes on. It's a start now and one that should help the GAA keep the Irish games alive in the U.S. The Irish government will allow 5,000 Americans to find work in Ireland for a one-year stay.

In order to qualify for the visa applicants must have graduated the same year that they apply and have an Irish passport. For more information visit www.dfa.ie or check with the nearest Irish Immigration Reform Office.

Death of Famed Clare Hurler in Chicago

The untimely death here recently of famed Clare hurler and well known Chicagoan, Jimmy Halpin from Ennis, cast a huge cloud of sadness over Chicago and midwest Gaeldom. The late Jimmy graced many a Chicago, midwest and even New York playing field and was a prominent member of the all star Shannon Rangers team of the 60's and part of the 70's.

He held a very important position with the City of Chicago as Transportation Supervisor at busy O'Hare International Airport. In this high position he made many friends and received awards for his outstanding service over the years. His brother John also held a high position with the City as Commission of Streets and Sanitation and also served with distinction under many Mayors, including Harold Washington, Jane Byrne, etc.

The large crowds at his wake, funeral mass and interment testified to his popularity of this great gael. Our deepest sympathy is extended to his beloved wife and fine family in Chicago and Ennis. *Ar dheis De go raibhn an ainm.*

Her husband Ned also worked for the CTA as did her brother-in-law John Hennessy. Her large wake and mass at St. Damien's and burial at Holy Sepulchre testified to her popularity. *Ar dheis De go raibhn ainm.*



Shirley Mae Hennessy

Death of Shirley Mae Hennessy

On a personal note, our sincere thanks is extended to the many friends who called and sent mass cards on the recent death of a beloved lady, Shirley Hennessy, wife of our nephew Edward (Ned) Hennessy. The late Shirley was mother of Michael Hennessy, who was a CTA Manager some years ago.

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December Events at The Heritage Center

Christmas Bazaar

Get into the holiday spirit with the Christmas Bazaar and Bake Sale at the Irish American Heritage Center Sunday, December 7, 2008 from 9am-3pm including mass, a breakfast, bake sale and Santa Claus.

Mass is celebrated in the auditorium at 10:30am and a traditional Irish breakfast follows. The Irish Heritage Singers provide music.

Breakfast is \$8 for adults and \$4 for children and reservations are required. 773-282-7035, ext. 10. All other events are free.

Browse the bazaar, where there will be a craft sale from Chicago artisans and an Irish-American quilt will be raffled. There will be an instant raffle with prizes from each of the day's vendors and local Irish import stores.

The Jolly Holly Bake Shop sells homemade pies, bread, scones, cakes and cookies. Everyone's favorite, Santa Claus himself, visits from 1-3pm and children can have their photos taken with him for free. The IAHC is stroller-friendly.

Book Launch

by Mike Houlihan

In the IAHC Library during the Christmas Bazaar and Bake Sale on

December 7 at 2pm, the Center hosts a book launch with writer, producer and performer, Mike Houlihan, to promote his new book, *Hooliganism*. He will read from the book, sign it and sell copies of the book and his DVD, *Going East on Ashland*. The event is free.

Houlihan began his professional career in show business 36 years ago as an apprentice actor with the American Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford, CT.

He is Chicago's own "triple threat" writer, producer and performer whose talents earned him the respect and confidence of our media community. He is a former weekly features columnist for *The Chicago Sun-Times* and since 1996 has written a column for *Irish American News*.

For six years he entertained audiences as the author and star of his one man comic memoir of Irish Chicago, *Goin' East On Ashland*, from 1993-1999, playing to sold-out crowds at Piper's Alley, The Beverly Art Center, The Irish American Heritage Center and The Royal George Theatre, among others.

Houlihan studied acting at The Goodman School of Drama and the University of Illinois at Chicago. Since 1991, he has been President

of Mike Houlihan Creative, an advertising, public relations and marketing firm.

Annual Raffle

It's time again for the Center's Annual Raffle. Only 500 tickets will be sold. Support this important fundraiser. The prizes are:

First prize: \$10,000 or 20% of total tickets sold. 2nd Prize: \$2,000 or 4% of total tickets sold. 3rd Prize: \$1,000 or 2% of total tickets sold

Four Fourth Prizes: \$500 or 1% or total tickets sold

The drawing will be held in the Fifth Province on Sunday, December 7. Tickets are available from member of the Board of Directors and friends of the Center as well as from the Center office. Tickets can be purchased with Visa, MasterCard or personal check. All proceeds from the raffle are used to support the Center.

Author/Scholar

Charles Fanning

December 14

The IAHC will host author and Irish scholar, Dr. Charles Fanning for a book launch. He will discuss, read from and sign his five-volume series by Chicago writer, James T. Farrell, published by the University of Illinois Press. The volumes will be available for purchase.

Farrell's five O'Neill-O'Flaherty novels depict the sprawling, epic tale of two immigrant families' struggles with harsh urban realities in early twentieth-century Chicago. Fanning has edited and written introductions for new editions of the classic novels, published by the University of Illinois Press. The series includes: *A World I Never Made*, *No Star is Lost*, *Father and Son*, *My Days of Anger*, and *The Face of Time*.

Fanning is Professor of English and History and Distinguished Scholar Emeritus at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. He is a graduate of Harvard College (BA,

MAT) and the University of Pennsylvania (MA, PhD). He taught in Massachusetts and Missouri before coming to Illinois, where he was Professor of English and History and founding Director of Irish and Irish Immigration Studies at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

Three of his books have won national awards: *The Irish Voice in America: 250 Years of Irish-American Fiction*, winner of the Book Prize in Literary Criticism of the American Conference for Irish Studies; *The Exiles of Erin: Nineteenth-Century Irish-American Fiction*, winner of an American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation; *Finley Peter Dunne and Mr. Dooley: The Chicago Years*, winner of the Frederick Jackson Turner Award of the Organization of American Historians.

Fanning is also editor of several other books on the history of the Chicago Irish, Irish immigration and the Irish Diaspora. His memoir of growing up in Boston in the 1950s will be published in 2009 by the University of Massachusetts Press.

The book launch is Sunday, December 14th at 2pm. Admission is free.

The IAHC is at 4626 North Knox Ave. in Chicago. 773-282-7035 or visit www.irish-american.org,



Charles Fanning

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Irish Inns and Tours is a group of five Irish inns that offer both romantic and corporate accommodations for visitors to Wisconsin. You are welcome to visit our Irish hotels scattered throughout Wisconsin: St. Brendan's Inn (Green Bay), County Clare Inn (Milwaukee), 52 Stafford Inn (Plymouth) and Rochester Inn (Sheboygan Falls). We also have an inn in Ireland, perfect for that vacation getaway!



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St. Brendan's Inn, located in Green Bay, Wisconsin, offers lodging accommodations, authentic Irish food, Irish drink and Irish music - all in an elegant, yet comfortable setting. Each room offers free hair-dryer, maple furniture, in-room whirlpool baths, walk-in rainfall showers and a high-speed internet connection area in each of our 28 guest rooms.

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University College Cork Launches Graduate Network

President of University College Cork (UCC), Dr Michael Murphy, officially launched the UCC Graduate Network in Chicago on November 18th at the University Club of

Chicago. A strong contingent of graduates and friends met together and heard about the many interesting developments at the University.

The UCC Chicago Alumni Com-

mittee comprising Olivia Nelligan, Edward Galvin, Paddy Homan and Conor Cunneen were instrumental in the nights substantial turnout of the UCC Chicago Alumni Chapter, and many others in attendance.



Olivia Nelligan, Michael Durkan, Ronan Adams, Thomas McEvoy

Horoscopes
By Theresa Castro
Are on the website
this month
www.iannews.com

The Bowery Boys at Marriott Theatre

The Bowery Boys, a new musical, will make its highly anticipated world premiere at the Marriott Theatre, 10 Marriott Drive in Lincolnshire opens December 17th and runs through February 15th.

Set in 1876, New York City, in the world of Diamond Jim Brady, Tammany Hall and the notorious Five Points, *The Bowery Boys* follows the journeys of Dick, a street wise kid, and Mary, a young British heiress whom Dick befriends after she is cruelly abandoned on the mean streets of New York.

847.634.0200 or visit www.marriotttheatre.com.



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PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT APPEALS SEMINAR

December 17, 2008 - 7:30pm



On Wednesday, December 17th, Cook County Board of Review Commissioner Brendan Houlihan will be holding a seminar on how to appeal your property assessment should you believe you are over assessed in Cook County.

The seminar will begin at 7:30 pm. Attendees are asked to bring their tax bills in order to more effectively file an appeal should they feel their residence was wrongly assessed. There will be a short presentation, and staff from the Board of Review (Property Tax Appeals Board) will be there to answer questions, and help fill out complaint forms.

The presentation will explain how to file an appeal, and how an appeal is granted. Please arrive at 7:30 pm at Gaelic Park at 6119 W. 147th Street in Oak Forest. Any questions, please contact Commissioner Houlihan's office at (312) 603-3644. The Board of Review does open on a township basis. For more information on how to file an appeal, go to: www.cookcountyboardofreview.com

Brendan Houlihan
Commissioner Cook County Board of Review 1st District

Healy Law

Martin J. Healy, Jr.



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 treatment of the legal subject matter in the column is general in nature, and should not be considered as legal advice given to a client. 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.

Asbestos: Hidden Killer and Basis for a Claim

This month's column focuses on the history of asbestos, its health risks and the rights of individuals faced with asbestos exposure. Asbestos use in insulation became increasingly popular among manufacturers and builders in the late 19th century. Asbestos was heavily used in residential homes and commercial buildings. In and around World War II, here in our Calumet shipyards, thousands

of metric tons of asbestos were manufactured for use in the interior of ships. It was so well liked because it was cheap yet highly useful due to its thermal-insulating, flame-retarding and chemical-resisting qualities. It wasn't until later that the public really began to understand asbestos' insidious nature. Today, we know unequivocally that asbestos is toxic. Inhalation of asbestos fibers

can cause serious illnesses, including malignant mesothelioma, lung cancer, asbestosis and some other rare conditions. Due to this danger of asbestos exposure, the law provides certain protections and legal remedies.

Asbestos is the name given to naturally occurring, fibrous silicate minerals. It is made up of microscopic bundles of fibers that can become airborne when asbestos-containing materials are disturbed. When inhaled, the fibers attach like fishhooks into the lungs. Asbestos exposure becomes a health concern when high concentrations are inhaled over a long period of time. As a person's exposure to fibers increases, either by breathing more fibers or by breathing fibers for longer times, that person's risk of the disease correspondingly increases. The kinds of workers who most become ill from asbestos are those who are exposed on a day-to-day basis in jobs, e.g., pipe fitters and pipe coverers, where they work directly in or around the material. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, an estimated 1.3 million employees face significant asbestos exposure on the job.

Mesothelioma, a rare but deadly cancer that attacks the lining of the lungs is almost exclusively caused by asbestos exposure. However, due to a long latency period, symptoms of mesothelioma (shortness of breath, severe cough, chest pain) may not appear for 20 or more years. For this reason, mesothelioma is often not diagnosed until later stages of development, an unfortunate reality that complicates treatment and diminishes chances of survival.

Attempts At Legislation

A continuing conflict wages between supporters of asbestos victim's rights and supporters of business protection interests. In 1989 the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued the Asbestos Ban and Phase Out Rule, which at the time most deemed a consumer protection victory. However, the Rule was subsequently overturned by a Federal appellate court in 1991. In this court decision's wake, some consumer products can

still legally contain asbestos, while other products cannot. Banned products include corrugated paper, rollboard, commercial paper and felt flooring. Permitted products include asbestos-cement sheet, asbestos clothing, pipeline wrap, auto brake pads and roof coatings.

In 1999, the Supreme Court ruled against a multi-billion dollar class action asbestos lawsuit because it was said to compromise victim's rights. The Court declared that it is Congress' role, not its own, to pass laws to manage asbestos lawsuits. Due in part to the increasing amount of workers over-exposed to asbestos, and in part to the Court's declaration to the lawmakers, in the last decade, asbestos legislation has been introduced to Congress almost annually.

That same year, in 1999, Congress then proposed the Fairness in Asbestos Compensation Act. This Act proposed to create a government body responsible for resolving asbestos lawsuits before they reached an already heavily-burdened court system. A similar Act piece of legislation attempted create an Office of Asbestos Compensation within the Department of Justice and made a Compensation Fund available to pay victims of asbestos health problems if they met certain medical criteria. In 2003, another asbestos Act proposed to create a privately financed national trust fund to help compensate asbestos victims providing that they met certain medical criteria. Critics were concerned that the fund would preclude many legitimate victims from receiving sufficient support. The asbestos legislation battle continues as trial lawyers seek to retain the right to bring asbestos lawsuits (600,000 have been filed in the US) while businesses want immunity from such suits. The status of this legislation

Employee And Consumer Protections

Asbestos laws are shaped by several bodies including the Environmental Protection Agency, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and various interests groups.

Employers are required to follow Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations dealing with asbestos exposure. For example, employers involved in building demolition or asbestos removal are required to provide employees protective equipment, such as properly fit respirators and train

on safety procedures. Workers who are concerned about asbestos exposure in the workplace should discuss the matter with co-employees, their union, and their employers.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission is charged with protecting the public from unreasonable risks of serious injury or death from products that pose a fire, electrical, chemical, or mechanical hazard. The commission cites that deaths, injuries and property damage from consumer product incidents cost the nation more than \$800 billion annually. Specifically regarding asbestos, the CPSC warns consumers about the hazard of exposure to consumer products containing asbestos. It dictates labeling requirements of asbestos products. Labels must provide a warning if the product contains asbestos, and the label must contain the name of the manufacturer or distributor. Asbestos products not labeled according to these provisions will be considered misbranded, and will be subjected to enforcement action by the Commission.

Physician And Attorney Involvement

If a worker is exposed to asbestos because of his or her job and sustains injury, he or she could be entitled to benefits under the Illinois Occupational Disease Act or Workers' Compensation Act. The Acts recognize the dangers of long-term asbestos exposure, and seek to compensate workers who develop asbestos-related illnesses. In addition, that same injured worker could have a claim against the asbestos manufacturer. It is important to note that because of the issues involved in late diagnosis, and because all claims must be brought within a certain time period, individuals should be encouraged to contact an attorney as soon as possible if he or she believes his or her injury is asbestosis exposure related.

Individuals who have been or suspect they have been exposed (family members of exposed workers may also be at risk) to asbestos dust on the job should see a physician. Asbestos fibers can be measured in various ways. A chest x-ray and lung function test may be recommended. The chest x-rays cannot detect asbestos fibers in the lungs, but they can help identify any lung changes resulting from asbestos exposure. So if there has been exposure to asbestos on the job, first see your doctor and if necessary, consult an attorney.

Jack Cannon
Matthew Healy

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Happy The Man by The Guggenheim Grotto

Over two years since the critically acclaimed debut... *Waltzing Alone* hit U.S. shores, Dublin-based pop/folk duo The Guggenheim Grotto is set to release *Happy The Man* in January 2009 on new model indie label United For Opportunity. Released digitally, the album has reached No. 1 on the iTunes Folk Chart.

Happy The Man boasts The Guggenheim Grotto's signature mix of timeless pop, soaring melodies and emotionally intelligent lyrics, but presents a greater maturity and a higher sense of self-consciousness from the duo, Kevin May and Mick Lynch. Their songs have been used in major network primetime television shows including *One Tree Hill* and *Brothers And Sisters*. www.guggenheimgrotto.com

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New Year's Eve Party At Heritage Center

The Irish American Heritage Center will hold its annual New Year's Eve Party in the Fifth Province Lounge on December 31, 2008, and all are invited!

Tickets for the party are \$25 and includes hors d'oeuvres, a champagne toast at midnight, party favors and entertainment by Joe McShane and Joe Cullen.

Doors open at 7pm. To purchase tickets, call the IAHC at 773-282-7035, ext. 10.

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bohem Gifts in Ballina, Co. Mayo

bohem Gifts is small retail gift shop in the heart of Ballina Co. Mayo in West Ireland. They offer top quality, unique, handcrafted gifts from

craftspeople throughout Ireland, ranging from gifts for the home to ideal gifts for baby and much more.

The store's name is a derivative

of bohemian and the store is just that, filled with the work of artists, craftspeople, and designer makers. The family-owned operation makes a conscious effort to support local

craftspeople throughout the country, caring about where and who their products come from. Items are shipped, where applicable, with information about the artist, designer or craftsper-

son, along with care instructions.

The online store is an extension of the shop. All prices quoted on the website include postage and packaging worldwide. www.bohemgifts.com.

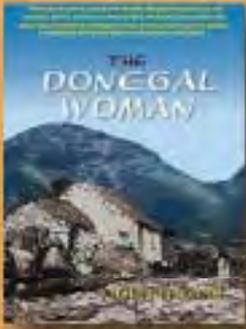
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NELL McCAFFERTY Irish journalist and writer



"...this book forces one to reassess what good literature is... I am not sure which category of English literature in Ireland will accommodate it - but whatever its genre, it deserves a place on everyone's shelves."
... *EILIS NIDHURHNE The Irish Times*

"An unadorned, searing tale that reclaims from the often brutal and brutalizing conditions in remote rural Ireland the buried history of one woman's struggle to survive and rear her children. *The Donegal Woman* pulls no punches. It is a just memorial to courage and perseverance, that through with numbers of innocence, love and natural beauty. A daunting, unforgettable portrait."
... *GERALD DAWE Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, Essays and Poets*

"We have had stories before on the harshness of the life for the unwieldy of Donegal in past times, the schling eloquence of Patrick MacGill, the forensic sager of Peader O'Donnell, but nothing like this. Nothing as steady-eyed in its gaze or as relentless in its detail, as unflinching in its depiction of the class and gender contradictions that divorced humanity and stunted sexual and spiritual growth from generation to generation. Like a dark curse passed down, a dumb inevitable condition never to be mentioned. This is the most powerful piece of new writing I've encountered in 2006."
... *EAMONN McCANN The Belfast Telegraph*

Published by The Drumkeen Press, 35, Springtown Road, Derry, BT48 0LT, Northern Ireland

The Donegal Woman reached number two on the best seller list in Northern Ireland in 2006. It is now in its seventh printing.

www.thedonegalwoman.com

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Greenwich Company proudly presents this one-of-a-kind 24x36 print of THE PROCLAMATION OF IRISH FREEDOM, Easter 1916. Display it in your home or office and share an episode of Irish history that helped forge the Republic. The sixteen men pictured here meeting in Dublin's Liberty Hall were key proponents of and participants in the Irish rebellion of 1916, commonly termed the Easter Rising. As a military action, the Easter Rising lacked initial popular support and ended disastrously within a week's time. Yet, this military defeat proved to be a strategic political success igniting Irish patriotism. The majority of the members of this Military Council and the hundreds of men and women who fought with them were not professional soldiers. Although all of the men in the picture were executed for their insurgency, their sacrifices rallied Ireland's people and brought new and lasting life to the nation's quest for freedom.

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nevins full page

Irish Books and Plays
in Review



Frank West



I Know These People!

As I walked through the book store, I passed the Chicago section. There was a series of books of pictures of various Chicago ethnic groups. I searched—and sure enough, there was a book of beautiful pictures about Chicago Irish people.

Irish Chicago is a collection of pictures about the Irish contribution to Chicago, and the achievements of Irish Chicagoans.

Many of the things shown, I knew about—the Irish mayors and political, labor, and business leaders. But many of the pictures were of non-famous Irish attending benefits, concerts, community events, and, of course, St. Patrick's Day festivals.

However, what surprised me was that many of the pictures were recent and were people I knew! What a delightful surprise!

Readers will recognize more people in these extraordinary pictures: James Tansey, Liz Carroll, John Williams, Noel Rice, Kevin Henry, Larry Nugent, "Cuz" Teahan, Johnny McGreevy, Pat Roche, The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem, Michael Flatley, Tom Tunney (now Alderman of the 44th Ward), Ann Sather (I saw her often in her restaurant), Dan McLaughlin, mayor of Orland Park, Andrew Greeley, James Maguire, Eileen O'Connor, and Gerald Sullivan.

Irish Chicago is positive and optimistic. It points the way to the future for the Chicago Irish. "... a high level of participation in these

[music and dance] and other arts [books and plays] will keep the Irish community in Chicago dynamic rather than nostalgic..."

Images of America: Irish Chicago by John Gerard McLaughlin. Arcadia Publishing, Chicago, 2003. 138 Pages; \$19.99. www.arcadiapublishing.com.



New Kind of Book

When the publicist called to say she had sent *Cleburne*, she described it as a graphic novel. This was a new term to me. So when the book arrived, I was surprised to find it filled with colorful and vibrant pictures, but with little text! (Your imagination supplied the text.) The book was something like a comic book for adults. It was strange, but it worked.

The book tells the story of Irishman Patrick Cleburne, an extraordi-

narily brave and resourceful officer. He rose in the ranks to become a general for the Confederacy. This book is about the last year of his life.

All I knew of him before reading this book was that during the Civil War he stopped a huge Union fleet from entering the Red River, near Arkansas, from the Mississippi River.

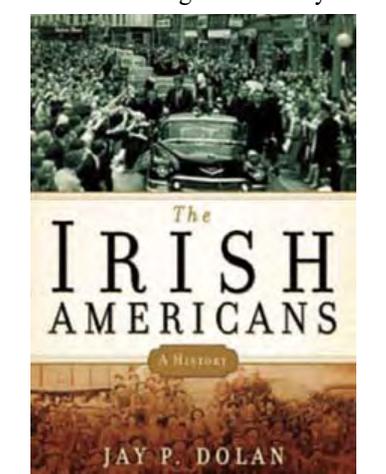
He had only seven cannons—land batteries—but he positioned them at this vital point. He refused to stop firing and to flee despite the fleet's bombardment. He kept up firing until the Union fleet turned around and retreated down the Mississippi. This was in 1864.

This book tells us of his personal life during the war, something about his fellow generals and especially about his plan to add manpower to the Confederate forces by enlisting slaves.

General Cleburne realized that the South was at a great disadvantage with the North in manpower—history books say four or five to one!

The Irishman felt compassion for the slaves. But he realized that they presented a huge potential source of soldiers for the South.

It is a misconception that Southern soldiers fought for slavery. Few



of them owned any slaves. They fought for the right of each state to be independent. Each State was to remain separate and have its own political power. They didn't want their State's to be interfered with, invaded or bullied by the central government in Washington.

However, the United States was gradually becoming a centralized government in Washington, and in that concept, the states were similar to administrative districts. That was the main issue of the Civil War.

General Cleburne risked his military career to propose that slaves become armed soldiers. For their service they would become free upon enlistment. "This was a revolutionary concept for its day and sent Cleburne's life spiraling down a perilous road..."

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JENNIFER FAUS

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—*Verbal Magazine*

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—Paul Greengrass, Director, *Bloody Sunday*, United 9/11

"This book conveys a very touching insight into the personalities who were taken from us on Bloody Sunday. Jennifer Faus, in this book, has personalized our loss. Her commitment to the relatives of those who died has been unflinching."
—Ian Cooper, former MP and Civil Rights Activist

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However, it was too late in the Civil War by then (1864) and his visionary idea came to nothing.

Patrick Cleburne "was not only a great military leader, but he was an advocate for African-Americans who risked his reputation for his ideals."

Cleburne: A Graphic Novel, story and art by Justin Murphy. Rampart Press, Jacksonville, FL, 2008. 208 pages; \$24.95.

The Irish

Americans: A History

The Irish Americans, by Jay Dolan, tells the amazing story of how immigrants from Ireland, many of them desperately poor, achieved economic success and social acceptance in America.

Dolan uses vivid anecdotes and quotes, with startling facts (all carefully researched and documented) to tell that story of relentless struggle.

Until Dolan published this book, there had been no general history of the Irish in America since William V. Shannon published *The American Irish* in 1963. I use this book frequently for help writing reviews. The literature and theater sections are particularly useful.

Dolan focuses this new book on four topics: religion, politics, labor and nationalism. Each of these parts of the story of the Irish in America is important to our past.

Catholicism is an integral part of our history. Religion is a strong motivator of human actions. But Dolan overemphasizes the importance of this tradition. However, there are many other motivators, such as money, love, greed, etc.

This is a reflection of Dolan's many years as a teacher at Notre Dame. The five previous books he has written are each about Catholicism. About this interest he says: "For much of my career I had focused on the history of American Catholicism."

There is no mention of writers, musicians, composers or playwrights. There is hardly anything of a creative or intellectual aspect. Where are Eugene O'Neill, James Farrell, John O'Hara, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Thomas O'Shaughnessy, Frank McCourt, Alice McDermot, Thomas Flanagan, or playwrights like John Patrick Shanley?

About his enormous omission, Dolan says: "I have to acknowledge that his history of the Irish in America is incomplete. I do not discuss their achievements in literature, which have been extraordinary. Nor do I examine the fields of music or sports... I leave this another day and

another historian"!

I enjoyed this book about Irish American history. The part of this great story discussed here is well told, but there is much more to tell.

Sex was not seen as joyous or life-affirming, but as a source of guilt and shame. Women were not viewed as our loved daughters, but as a necessary evil. These quotes tell us much about ourselves as Irish Americans, even today.

, "According to the clergy, the vice... bedeviling the Irish was the sin of the flesh. When it came to sex, the Irish were prudes... In Ireland the system of marriage... shaped the attitude toward sex. Those sons and daughters who could not marry were, according to Catholic moral teaching, obliged to live a life of permanent celibacy. The opportunities for marriage and family was one of the major reasons why so many

young Irishwomen emigrated. No doubt many single men chose emigration for the same reason."

, "In warning young men to avoid sins of the flesh, the clergy depicted women as evil temptresses who could lead them down the road to perdition." Another clerical warning: "In regard to women, do not trouble about them until the time comes for a suitable marriage..."

Contrast those warnings of sin

and guilt with the humane and charitable attitude of a political leader in Boston. Not only did he care for his constituents and was kind to them, but he viewed them compassionately, as he said "with charitable and forgiving eyes [for their] lapses of human conduct."

The Irish Americans: A History by Jay Dolan. Bloomsbury Press, New York, 2008. 384 pages; \$30.00.

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IRELAND, SHE WROTE



Molly Horan



There's No One as Irish as Barack O'Bama

The 2009 Budget announced this October by Brian Lenihan, Fianna Fail Minister for Finance, put the party into a ring-a-round-the-rosy which has the public pleading for its immediate "all fall down." A 76% disapproval rating of Fianna Fail released in November comes as no surprise, as it follows a month of protests against the increased class

sizes in schools, medical cards for pensioners over 70's becoming means-tested, and the withdrawal of the Cervical Cancer Vaccine for adolescent girls.

This is what belt-tightening is looking like here in Ireland. Thread-hanging Fianna Failers are ogling the Obama campaign strategy according to An Taoiseach Brian Cowen. For the hopefuls in Fine Gael and Labour, it was noted by one pundit that the lack of an Obama-like character in their ranks disserves them now in these changed times, too.

"Obamania" in Ireland is full of as much zeal as it is throughout the UK, mainland Europe, the rest of the world, and 54% of the United States. Have you heard the song starting, "O'Leary, O'Reilly, O'Hare and O'Hara, there's no one as Irish as Barack Obama?" Including "Connemara" and "The Hill of Tara" as names lyrically linked with Barack

"O'Bama," what the Hardy Drews and Nancy Boys did by recording this song amplifies the overall sentiment here.

I thought it was confined to Roddy Doyle's, "Say it loud, I'm black and I'm proud!" catch-phrase in the Commitments, when a racially-charged motivational speech in the film lays the lot of the Irish in 1980's Dublin in line with Blacks in America. Even though Niall O'Dowd mega-phoned for Senator Clinton in Ireland until Super Tuesday, claiming the impossibility of a black President-elect, his shift to Obama folded his play of the race card, while we all saw this could become a fair gentlemen's match.

The grassroots campaign might have used new media, but succeeded by studying pages of something hyper-important in the book of Irish history. Back to the early 19th Century—after Union with Britain, wasn't there a man called Daniel O'Connell, and didn't he emancipate the Catholics? By that, didn't it mean political power for Catholics in Westminster, and didn't he do this by asking everyone with one common purpose to make small contributions? The penny-priced subscription to O'Connell's Catholic Association is not so different from the 2008-ized Obama campaign in the least, and explains the Obama appeal in Ireland.

"Ireland's reaction [to Obama's victory] is not very different from the rest of Europe. Over the last 8 years, U.S. foreign policy has isolated America from its friends and allies, which led to disillusionment with what America stands for in terms of equality and freedom," says Evan Blewett, assistant to the African-American Finance Director of Obama for America and my fellow DePaulian and Dail Eireann Intern.

He continues, "Obama has been able to give a vision of hope and a rekindled American Dream, one that says if you work hard enough, anything is possible. This American Dream inspired millions of Irish to take chances on the dangerous seas of the Atlantic for hope of a better life."

This victory cures a 7-year political itch for most young Americans. Dating back to the last breath of American Unity in 2001, when a short lived pledge of our red-white-and-blue blood cells to the American Flag burned out. Exposure to the inconvenient truth, injustice, and pursuit of cr-happiness turned our optimism in an early grave as our government reacted to September 11 with its ongoing total misfire.

This itch might have turned some of our patriotism to stone for a while, but it turned the U.S. into shades of Old Britain in not-smiling Irish eyes. Seven years later is our resurrection.

I did not invest my every hope into the Barack Stock during primary season. Faithfully purebred Clintonian, I was a middle-class beneficiary of adolescence the '90's with a soft-spot for Northern Ireland's peacemakers. In fair play, I transferred all support to Obama when the time came, having already perfected my pro-Obama argument (to fair-weather democrats):

"Bluffing republicanism because of antiquated prejudices against black people makes as little sense as a feminist platform balanced enough to support both Sarah Palin and Senator Clinton."

Lads in the pub, the Irish pollsters, mistook me for a certifiable psychic medium from the States. To them, it has been as if the winner of the election was covertly stamped onto my U.S. Passport when I crossed customs in September.

I prefer their new, changed question: "Where were you when Barack Obama won the election?"

2008 became the latest "Where were you when...?" moment when swing states on November 4th chose our man. Way back in primary season, we all knew "change" was inevitable... should a democratic victor prevail. Maybe not as easily—but possibly, now could have become memorialized as when we conferred a new status to the spouse of a president: The First—Ladies Man.

Guinness would have become an overnight scarcity in Ireland if Senator Clinton took back the White

House. A Hand to Mr. President-Elect however, it almost did, as I was there to witness. Cashing in one of my "luck be an Irish lady" cards on election night, my Dail Eireann credentials schmoozed my way into the U.S. Ambassador to Ireland's political rave at the Guinness Storehouse.

This was no under-funded open bar; corporate sponsors like Dell and McDonalds chipped in heavily, and down the line somewhere, the sub-mattress accounts in the Phoenix Park Ambassador's Residence were well-raided. Ambassador Tom Foley was served his eviction notice in high style.

A fellow intern topped our turn for Ambassador handshakes with a gutsy, "so who'd you vote for, Ambassador Foley?"

"You would really be very surprised," he told us.

As a first impressionist, this dig-nitary was ambass-aded by this admission. If one of Bush's former Iraq-based financiers would vote democratic, Ireland might be the influence he was under.



The Answer has New EP/DVD

Irish rockers The Answer, currently on tour with AC/DC and playing massive stadiums, recently released their EP/DVD *Never Too Late*. They're also featured on the new "Guitar Hero: World Tour" game. *Never Too Late*, a limited edition, 4-song EP/DVD comprises three studio tracks—"Never Too Late" from the band's debut album *Rise*, "The Doctor" from *Rise: Special Edition* and "Highwater or Hell" a sneak preview from their forthcoming 2009 U.S. debut LP—plus a live version of "Come Follow Me" from a 2007 show in Japan. The EP comes packaged with an exclusive one-hour bonus DVD loaded with exclusive band interviews, documentary clips from the past two years, live performance highlights and videos. Next up will be their second album—and debut North American full-length—*Everyday Demons*, in early 2009. www.theanswer.ie

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Pictured L to R: Officers John Stajcic, Joseph Smith, Thomas Fahy, John Gana and Mark Donahue, President of the Fraternal Order of Police, Chicago Lodge #7. Not pictured are Officers James Korienek and Kurt Kaner. President Donahue presented a Life Saving Award to each of the officers recently for their efforts to help save four recreational boaters who called in a distress signal in the Chicagoland harbor area. Unfortunately, only one of the boaters survived, after their boat crashed into the freestanding breakwater of Calumet Harbor, despite the fact they were all wearing prescribed life preservers.

Eileen Ivers in Chicagoland

Eileen Ivers, the original musical star from *Riverdance*, will be bringing her Celtic Christmas album/tour, *An Nollaig: An Irish Christmas* to both the Lund Auditorium at Dominican University, 7900 W. Division St. in River Forest, IL on Dec. 5th (7:30pm, \$28-\$35, 708-488-5000, www.dom.edu) and the James Lumbar Center for the Performing Arts at the College of Lake County, 19351 W. Washington St. in Grayslake, IL on Dec. 9th (7:30pm, \$30-\$42, 847-543-2300, clcbboxoffice@clcollinois.edu.)

Over the past 15 years, fiddler Eileen Ivers has established herself as the pre-eminent exponent of the Irish fiddle in the world today. Well known as a nine time All-Ireland Fiddle Champion, founding member of Cherish The Ladies and musical star

of *Riverdance*, Eileen Ivers has performed with The London Symphony Orchestra, The National Symphony at The Kennedy Center, The Boston Pops, The Chieftains, Hall and Oates, Afrocelts and Patti Smith.

Her latest CD, *An Nollaig: An Irish Christmas* is a joyous and animated Christmas collection composed equally of traditional carols, dance tunes and holiday classics. The release coincides with Eileen's annual Christmas tour and continues to display why Ivers is hailed as one of the great innovators and pioneers in the Celtic and world music genres.

Seasonal Benefit and Holiday Edition of The Game Show Show and Stuff! at Strawdog Theatre

On Monday, December 8th from 7-10pm, at Morseland, 1218 W. Morse in Chicago, Strawdog Theatre Company's annual holiday benefit, *Strawdog Yuletacular 2008*, will feature a retro-style variety show with comedic sketches, a holiday cooking demonstration, a raffle and silent auction, and live, big-band style music provided by Strawdog's guest band, The Jenn Rhoads Project. Admission (\$20 in advance; \$25 at the door) includes complimentary appetizer buffet and drink specials.

On Friday, December 12, and Saturday, December 13, 2008, Strawdog will offer a holiday incarnation of *The Game Show Show and Stuff*, an interactive live game show hosted by ensemble member Anderson Lawfer. Contestants chosen at random from the live audience compete for prizes through physical challenges and trivia games—more info at www.gameshowshow.com.

The Game Show Show and Stuff Holiday Edition will be at the Strawdog Theatre, 3829 N. Broadway St. in Chicago; doors open at 9pm; performance begins 10pm. Call 773-528-9889 or visit www.strawdog.org

Merry Christmas! and Happy New Year!

500 Clown Christmas at North Central College

500 Clown Theater will present its holiday hit *500 Clown Christmas* for a limited holiday 2008 engagement during the first season of programming at North Central College's Theatre of Meiley-Swallow Hall, Old Grace Evangelical Church, 31 S. Ellsworth (at Van Buren) in Naperville, December 18-21. Three clowns welcome the audience into a musical celebration of action-based performance and improvisation that would make Fezziwig proud, complete with a holiday toast, gift-giving and original live music written by John Fournier. A three-piece band cranks out Fournier's songs of family, commercialism and peace on earth, while the clowns clamor through their holiday party in search of the meaning of Christmas. The show runs about 70 minutes with no intermission, contains mature language and themes (recommended for ages 14 and up), and includes *Season of Concern* collections.

Call 630-637-7469 (SHOW) or boxoffice@noctrl.edu for tickets and times. www.northcentralcollege.edu/show.



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Beyond the Abbey

Sean Callan

E-mail: Irishquill@aol.com



Da, the fall production of the Gaelic Park Players, is said to be the favorite play of its author Hugh Leonard when he judged his work. There is good reason: it is a touching, tender and funny play. It is a compilation of memories of growing up and how they remain part of one's life—sometimes for good, sometimes for bad, but always for ever.

In the play it is 1968 and Charlie (Mick Kenna), an Irish expat living in London, has come home to bury his father. But the old man (Barney Farrelly) remains very much alive, at least in his son's memory. He appears, phantomlike, and continually intrudes. Charlie is powerless get rid of him as he relives scenes from the preceding 40 years.

The play replays episodes in the relationship Charlie had with his father, and by extension other people from his past as well. This includes his tight lipped adoptive mother (Kate McNally), who sees herself as saintly and long suffering and is not shy about letting others know it. Concerned with outward

appearances, she sucks up to "higher ups" and insists that Charlie do the same if he wants to get on. There is Oliver (Tom Kearney,) Charlie's boyhood pal who would like nothing better than to get his hands on Da's home now that no one will be living there. Charlie comes to dismiss him as a "vulture."

Failed pickup

In boyhood their relationship was better. In a comical scene Charlie (depicted as an adolescent by Mike Azarkiewicz) and Oliver try to pick up Mary (Jacqueline Moran) a girl with a reputation for sexual permissiveness from nearby Glasthule. A fumbling Charlie makes his move but is foiled by the untimely arrival on the scene of his father. And there is Mr. Drumm (Robert Emmet Reidy) a toffee-nosed, bowler-hatted, umbrella-toting chief clerk, who arranges Charlie's first job at forty shillings a week.

At first glance *Da*, an underprivileged gardener, appears as an ignorant bigot who hopes for a German

victory in WWII and has no time for the British. What he thinks of the Irish government is never made clear. Eventually, we come to realize that he is much more complicated and Barney Farrelly plays him that way. Farrelly displays the right balance of bombast and reserve to garner our sympathy. Also outstanding was Robert Reidy whose haughty sangfroid as he tried to advise Charlie against accepting a soul-destroying office job was flawless. The production was directed by Larry Coughlin who made excellent use of the tight stage space. Overall, it is likely that Hugh Leonard would have been pleased with this presentation.

Mrs. Whippy

Cecelia Ahern, the writer whose chic-lit books sell by the millions is the likely literary successor to Maeve Binchy, Ireland's top selling easy-read author. As daughter of Bertie Ahern, Ireland's former Taoiseach, whose life story was aired on RTE last month, Cecelia was no stranger to domestic drama when she was growing up. It is no secret that during her adolescence, her father moved out of the family home and moved in with another woman. Cecelia, who was interviewed for the program on her father, said that her father's moving out did not bother her. Even so, it must have given her lots of material for her books and now a play. Cecelia has decided to try her hand at drama.

Cecelia's first play Mrs. Whippy, a one woman saga somewhat akin to the tales Conor "Mono" McPherson weaves mostly for men, ran in Dublin last month. It received tepid reviews. At first glance, the

storyline is interesting enough. It is about Emelda (played by Marion O'Dwyer,) a dumpy 46 year old mother of 5, who has been ditched by her oafish husband for a skinnier model. Emelda struggles to cope with her shaky self image and dysfunctional modern Irish family (a son who stabs a security guard, another who spends his time hiding under a bed and a third who runs away to Thailand) and seeks solace in ice cream – gooey, drippy, syrupy, multi-flavored concoctions. This has been the support she turned to throughout life. She has indulged whenever she has been challenged: at the time of her wedding, on vacation and lots of other situations as well.

Lack of Drama

Mr. Whippy is an ice cream van driven by a cheerful chap who lures the neighboring children by playing Greensleeves over the van's loud-speaker. Emelda is attracted too and eventually falls for the merry ice cream vendor. But do theater goers swallow the play? *Irish Daily Mail* critic Michael Moffatt stated "you feel as if you've been button-holed in a corner by some woman telling you her whole life story in excruciating detail... while munching ice cream. It's the lack of dramatic skill that's



a big let down." The author "badly needs some advice on how to give her ideas dramatic structure." But judging from the subject matter and Ms. Ahern's success with novels, it is likely that we have not seen the last of her work on stage.

And speaking of Conor "Mono" McPherson, a revival of his play *A Dublin Carol*, directed by Amy Morton, is currently underway at Steppenwolf. The play is about a Dublin dyppo trying to deal with his demons on Christmas Eve. It is as authentic a depiction of alcoholism as continuously swigging 150 proof rum. McPherson wrote the play when he was struggling with his own alcoholic demons in the 1990s, the complications of which nearly ended his life. Not long after completing the play, he was rushed to a London hospital where he remained in an alcohol induced coma for several days. He said later he was lucky to survive and stopped drinking. *A Dublin Carol* runs through Dec 28.

Screwtape Letters at Mercury Theater

Fellowship for the Performing Arts is presenting the acclaimed hit drama *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis at The Mercury Theater, 3745 N. Southport Avenue. The production's run has been extended by popular demand through January 4, 2009.



(L-R) Yvonne Gougelet stars as "Toadpipe" and Max McLean as "Screwtape" in *The Screwtape Letters*. Photo by Johnny Knight.

The Screwtape Letters offers a funny and provocative look into C.S. Lewis' brilliant novel that explores the theme of spiritual warfare from a demon's point of view. The play follows a senior devil, Screwtape, and his secretary, Toadpipe, as they train an apprentice demon, Wormwood, on how to "undermine faith and prevent the formation of virtues" in a young man who has just converted to Christianity.

312-902-1500 or www.ticketmaster.com.

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A Wonderful Life at Theatre at the Center thru 12/21

Theatre at the Center will present the popular and charming holiday musical *A Wonderful Life*, running through December 21st at Theatre at the Center, 1040 Ridge Road, Munster, IN. Offering a new spin on the classic holiday film, *A Wonderful Life* is the musical stage version of the Frank Capra film classic *It's a Wonderful Life*.

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. *A Wonderful Life* is the remarkable collaboration of Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winner Sheldon Harnick and Grammy and Emmy Award-winner Joe Raposo.

Blending music, comedy and drama, *A Wonderful Life* is set in the small town of Bedford Falls, New York in the 1940s, and is the story of George Bailey, who has a heart of gold and is destined to live a small town life, despite his big dreams of seeing the world. When financial ruin threatens to destroy the family business, George considers ending it all and wonders what life would be like if he had never been born. But Clarence, an angel working to get his wings, intervenes, helping George to see how many lives he has



touched and how dwindled his town would be if he had never been born. *A Wonderful Life* is a timeless story of love and redemption, perfect for the whole family.

Box Office at 219.836.3255 or Tickets.com or 800.511.1552. www.theatreatthecenter.org.

(L-R) Natalie Ford ("Mary Hatch"), Rod Thomas ("George Bailey"), Tessa Newman ("Zuzu") and James Harms ("Clarence") star in *A Wonderful Life*.

The Seafarer

Play Cards with the Devil, The Stake? Your Soul

By Frank West

The Seafarer by Conor McPherson will be presented at the Steppenwolf Theater from December 4th through February 8th.

Plays of his that have been produced in Chicago are: This Lime Tree Bower, The Weir, The Good Thief, Shining City and Dublin Carol. Dublin Carol is being produced now at Steppenwolf.

Conor McPherson is a young Irishman (38 years old) who is greatly prolific at writing plays that are at once powerful, subtle, magical and hopeful. The New York Times says about him: "Quite possibly the finest playwright of his generation."

The play takes pace on Christmas Eve and is set in a small coastal town in North Dublin, near Howth.

The five characters come together in a run-down basement apartment to celebrate Christmas. We see them interacting; there is heavy drinking; and late that night they get involved in a card game.

Four of them are shabbily dressed,

but the other one who is little known, but invited to Christmas Eve, is well dressed. Later we learn, as does Sharky, the main character, that the well dressed man, Mr. Lockhart, is the devil. He comes to this world only on Christmas Eve and hopes to take a soul with him.

When the others leave the apartment for a short while, Mr. Lockhart tells Sharky: "I'm the son of the morning, Sharky. I'm the snake in the garden. I've come here for your soul this Christmas... We made a deal. We played cards for your freedom (he freed Sharky from jail 23 years before) and you promised me—you promised me—the chance to play you again... You think you're better than me?... Well, think again. Because I'm going to play you for your soul and I'm going to win, and you're coming through the old hole in the wall with me tonight..."

In a previous review of another McPherson play, I said: "You can't just passively watch this play, because McPherson deeply engages your imagination, But isn't that the essence of theater: a good story with the viewer's imagination completely

involved?"

Richard Christianson, former Tribune theater critic, says: "... McPherson casts a haunting spell of theatrical power through the crafting of his language and the cunning of his structure."

Conor McPherson was born in Dublin in 1977. He received an extremely severe and repressive Catholic education, which he remembers well. When he attended University College in Dublin, he began to write plays and direct them. He lives now in Dun Loaghair Ni Chiosain.

McPherson says: "I'm an emotional writer. I'm not an intellectual writer. I believe we're driven by feelings, and ideas are just rationalizations of those feelings. It all comes from our libido and our sense of inadequacy."

Probably because of his early school experience, he had suffered "alcohol abuse, broken relationships, death and disappointed hope..."

Quoting from a previous review: "He has conquered and controlled [those demons] but his plays are informed and draw their power from those experiences."

His stories of human loneliness and the pains of being human are deceptively simple. The Tribune's theater reviewer, Chris Jones says "...and yet [they] sock people in the face with a level of existential angst as potent as anything by Samuel Beckett..."

Conor McPherson wants us to make the most of life. In his plays people receive hope, understanding, and sometimes second chances. As he says: "...in my plays, communication and compassion have to be the highest values."

A House With No Walls at Timeline

Timeline Theatre Company, 615 W. Wellington Ave. in Chicago, is presenting the Chicago premiere of *A House With No Walls* by Thomas Gibbons through December 21st.

From the author of *Bee-Luther-Hatchee* and *Permanent Collection* comes an inspired-by-real-life drama. Philadelphia wants to build its new American Museum of Liberty on the grounds of George Washington's Philadelphia home and slave quarters. Soon a conservative academic star and a liberal political activist are confronting each other with polarizing questions of African-American legacy and identity. Elegantly juxtaposed with this contemporary conflict is the true story of one of Washington's slaves as she contemplates escape. 773-281-8463 or visit www.timelinetheatre.com.

Holiday Show at Gift

Santa's Great American Depression Holiday Show! America, a collection of sketch comedy and improvisation from Second City and iO actors, is a hilarious hour where the holidays bring out the worst (and best) in a wide array of characters, where Batman comes to terms with economics, a bomb is loose in an American city, Santa gets no rest, and Thomas Jefferson rediscovers what it means to be an American. For mature audiences only.

Shows are Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays @ 8pm until December 13th at The Gift Theatre, 4802 N. Milwaukee in Chicago. 773 283-7071 or www.thegifttheatre.org.

White Christmas

Just in time for the holiday season, Village Players Theatre in Oak Park brings audiences *A White Christmas!*

Inspired by the classic film *White Christmas*, this spectacular holiday concert will take you on a musical journey from a World War II performance for the troops, to the glamour of a Florida nightclub, and finally, to the charm and simple beauty of a New England town. Complete with lavish costumes, original arrangements, comedy and plenty of warm-hearted sentiment.

December 13 & 14, 2008, in the Mainstage Theater of Village Players Performing Arts Center, 1010 Madison St., Oak Park.

Performances Saturday at 8pm & Sunday at 3pm. Tickets are \$25 for Adults and \$20 for Students & Seniors.

www.village-players.org or by calling 866-764-1010.



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Reverend Michael M. Boland

Administrator, President and CEO Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago



Celebrate Christmas by Giving

For more than 60 years, the six weeks before Christmas have been a very special time at Catholic Charities: our "Celebration of Giving" across Cook and Lake Counties.

In good and bad economic times families and individuals, parishes, corporations and organizations rooted in the spirit of charity give thanks by sharing what they have with others who do not have enough.

The Advent and Christmas seasons are times of great gratitude and great charity. I want to express my thanks and that of the Catholic Charities' Board and staff to all the generous "Givers" who spread the true spirit of Christmas to the thousands of children, families and individuals who need our help!

From November 15 through December 15, we are conducting our annual "Celebration of Giving" consisting of our traditional "Toy Shower" collection of new, unwrapped toys for children and our "Sponsor-A-Family" program.

Last year, nearly 7,200 children received at least three "Toy Shower" gifts: something to learn from, something to play with and something to cuddle: toys, books, dolls and educational games.

Nearly 600 of the neediest families in our care received new clothing for all the members of their families, and necessary household items through our "Sponsor-A-Family"

program. This year, we expect the number of family members who will receive these much-needed gifts will reach 10,000.

For those who wish to donate, eight Catholic Charities drop-off locations in Chicago and six suburbs are open for Toy Shower gifts from December 8-11 and for Sponsor-a-Family gifts from December 11-14.

Catholic Charities has been blessed with several extraordinarily dedicated groups of volunteers who share the Christmas Spirit with great generosity each year.

- In mid-November, the Wynstone Women's Board of Catholic Charities hosted their annual "Wynstone Holiday Housewalk" a tour of elegant homes, to raise money for Catholic Charities Lake County Services.

- For the 10th year, the Chicago Fire Fighters and Paramedics of Union Local 2 and their families delivered, on December 6, about 4,000 gifts to Catholic Charities in style: via vintage fire trucks.

- The 19th Annual "Spirit of Saint Nicholas Ball" on December 5 welcomes 1,200 people to fund children's programs in Cook and Lake counties.

- Catholic Charities' Junior Board, joined by the Boston College Alumni, will host a Christmas Party for all the toddlers and pre-school children who attend our 12 Childhood Development Centers. Santa Claus and his

elf "Twinkles" will visit; and bean bag games, face painting, balloon animals and photos with Santa will delight the children. Each child will receive gifts of new books and art supplies.

We are very grateful for the pizzas donated by Father and Sons Pizzeria, and plates and utensils supplied by Dominic's.

- For the first time, we welcome Fifth Third Bank as a sponsor of the "Celebration of Giving."

- Corps of volunteers from parishes, schools and businesses help to sort and organize the Toy Shower and Sponsor-a-Family gifts.

On behalf of Catholic Charities and our dedicated staff and board members, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the wonderful organizations, donors and volunteers who so generously devote themselves to helping the low-income families and individuals who are suffering from the downturn in the economy, loss of a job or their home, or other crises, who turn daily to Catholic Charities for help.

On the first Christmas, God sent his only-begotten Son as his gift to a world desperately in need of joy, love and hope. Thank you for bringing these eternal gifts of joy and true charity to families so in need of them this Christmas season! God bless you and your families!

- *Volunteers are needed until December 15 to sort and package gifts. To donate or volunteer, please contact Michael McDonnell, Director of Volunteer and Junior Board Relations at (312) 226-0650, or mmcdonne@catholiccharities.net.*

In Lake County, contact Jim Wogan at (847) 782-4126. Or visit Catholic Charities' website: www.catholiccharities.net/celebration.

- *For those who wish to make donations of cash or toys: Catholic Charities' website now has a new*

secured link for financial donations and a link for the list of federally recalled toys.

Rob Roy Musical at the Arie Crown

Rob Roy The Musical, a new musical based on the legendary Scottish hero from the late 17th and early 18th centuries world premieres in Chicago, Feb. 3 – Mar 15 at the Arie Crown Theater, Lakeside Center, McCormick Place, 2301 S. Lake Shore Drive in Chicago. The play tells the tale of the famous Highlander from his days as a peaceful clan leader through his difficulties with the abrasive Duke of Montrose. Rob Roy MacGregor is branded as an outlaw due to a business transaction which bore all the signs of a set-up. This all took place at a pivotal time in Scottish history, when the Scots hoped to finally break free from King George I. Rob Roy captured many times, always managed to escape while becoming a hero to the Scots. 312/279-6190 www.ticketmaster.com. www.robroythemusical.com

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Hello, my name is Billy Caldwell and I am a three year old boy from Omagh, Co. Tyrone. At four months old I took my first seizure and my mummy didn't know what was wrong with me. I was in this seizure for nearly twenty hours and I could have died. After this I took up to twenty seizures per day until my mummy brought me to America to get help.

In America I attended Chicago Memorial Hospital and I was diagnosed with Angelman's Syndrome. I didn't want to have to go to America but there wasn't the proper scanners or treatment to help me in Northern Ireland. Since I have gone to America I have been put on a new diet, I don't need drugs and with therapy I might even walk some day.

Lots of people have been helping my family raise money to keep me in the US. My treatment costs £1000/week so one idea we have come up with is to raffle a house. This house is located in beautiful County Fermanagh on the shores of Lough Melvin, near the village of Garrison. It is a new build, three bedroom house, just like my own at home.

As we are only selling 3000 tickets some really, really lucky person will win this fabulous house and will live in it, or use it as a holiday home or sell it and be really happy. Tickets are just £100 and a lot of people are buying these for Christmas presents and I think that is a really good idea.

My friend, Anne Monaghan, of AM:PM Communications LTD is helping us and you can get a ticket from her on 0777 7676517 or from my website www.billycaldwellfoundation.com I hope you can help me as I really want to feel a lot better and do things lots of other little boys and girls do! Billy.



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Earmarks need to go away, ethics reform should get top priority.

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are getting a monthly stipend of \$1200 which is deposited directly into their private bank accounts. They are allowed to spend this money in any way they see fit and they are required to submit an expense report. \$1200 per month = \$14,400 per year x 17 = \$244,800 per year; money that certainly could be used for legitimate expenses. Some of them use the money to lease cars, pay for gas, donate to charity, etc. Once again, this money could be put to better use. Each commissioner is given \$250,000 per year to maintain their office. This is literally throwing the taxpayer's money away.

Dribs and Drabs

Mostly drabs! Round and round she goes, where she stops, nobody knows. Who will Governor Blagojevich appoint to fill Senator Obama's seat in Congress? Will his decision be based on his hope to run for a third term?

Will it be ethnically correct? Everybody is lining up—Danny Davis, Jesse Jackson, Jr., Emil Jones, Luis Guitierrez, Alexi Giannoulis, and Tammy Duckworth. Whoever is appointed will be teaming up with the Democratic majority to put into play new policies on healthcare, the war in Iraq, etc. They will have to forestall the tsunami of social welfare until we dig ourselves out of the hole.

We are once again doling out the dollars to bail out big business; this time the automotive industry—General Motors and Chrysler, and to a lesser extent, Ford. These companies have been badly mismanaged. High executive salaries, concessions to the unions, and building gas-guzzling SUV's and trucks, while their lobbyists successfully fought against fuel-efficient cars along with the oil company lobbyists.

I did business with General Motors for over eleven years. At that time, the Saturn car was a top secret project. Chrysler was the industry joke. My Detroit friends said many of the people on the assembly line were high on alcohol or drugs. In Lansing, MI, where the Oldsmobile was made, the busiest place in town was the liquor store before shift change. And it was the people going into the plant, not those coming out, who were buying the booze. Lest we forget, the big three—GM, Chrysler, and Ford—are multi-national corporations. Ford has plants on six continents. Is the European Union going to help us bail them out?

Iwo Jima

Last month due to limitations of space, I could not say everything that I had to say. My friend Karen Barry's father was also in the Battle of Iwo Jima. Just eighteen years old, Cpl. Sabitino "Bud" Nardecchia, from Austin, TX, was with the 21st Regiment, 9th Battalion. During the battle, the Marines were manning an anti-tank gun. Throughout the day, every man who manned the gun had been killed. Just as Bud Sabitino was to take over the gun, the order to cease fire was given. Cpl. Nardecchia also saw combat on Guam and in Northern China.

Irish Fellowship Club

The Irish Fellowship Club's annual Christ-

mas Luncheon will take place on December 5th at the Chicago Hilton and Towers. Thomas J. Cashman will become President, while Alderman Tom Allen becomes Chairman of the Board. Good luck to Tom as he dons the mantle of President.

The Irish Fellowship Club of Chicago supports Catholic education at the high school level for children who could not otherwise afford it.

Bishop McDevitt

My grand-nephew, Victor Shaffer, is playing football for Bishop McDevitt High School in Harrisburg, PA. Their record is 10 and 2 and they just beat York in the quarter finals in the AAAA division. Hopefully they'll go all the way to the State Championship. Victor is a 6'1", 270 lb. Junior and he plays tackle. More importantly, he's a straight A student in advanced courses and was recently inducted into the National Honor Society.

Father Greely

Father Andrew Greely had an accident recently in Rosemont; while exiting a taxicab his coat caught on the door and he suffered a concussion when he fell. He has been in critical condition at Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge, IL for nearly a week at this writing. Please keep him in your thoughts.

Irish American Heritage Ctr

The long-awaited modifications to the elevator are finally complete, and you can ride all the way to the Social Center. Thanks to Ambrose Kelly and the volunteers, this project was completed cost-effectively.

Support the Irish!

The easiest way to support Irish activities in Chicago is to become a member of Chicago Gaelic Park or The Irish American Heritage Center, the Irish Fellowship Club or the Young Irish Fellowship Club. Information on membership can easily be found online.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas.

Election

The party of change with a "righteous wind" at their back have blown the GOP out of the water. President-elect Barack Obama faces the staggering task of getting our country back on track. Hopefully, George Bush and Dick Cheney won't start any more wars before the inauguration. One thing is sure when President-elect Obama takes office, he can't make things much worse. George Bush left everything in a shambles.

President-Elect Obama

— An Open Letter

Dear Sir,

The problems you are facing are seemingly insurmountable. Bipartisanship is essential to your success as President. If you don't break up the special interest groups and put the brakes on the lobbyists, you'll never get the job done.

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Flora MacDonald Gammon Receives Prestigious Award

Flora MacDonald Gammon was named "Exceptional Celtic Woman of 2008" on October 10th at the eleventh Conference of Celtic Women in Milwaukee, WI. Gammon, 62, of Waynesville, NC was the sixth woman so honored, following such luminaries as Morgan Llywelyn of Ireland, Ann Trevenen Jenkin of Cornwall, Margaret Bennett of Scotland, Elinor Bennett of Wales and Dolores Keane of Ireland.



Flora MacDonald Gammon with her husband John Dall.

Gammon, a noted vocalist and historian of Scottish traditional music, teaches children throughout North and South Carolina in the Artist-in-School program as well as Elderhostel sessions for adults. She was instrumental in relocating the Scottish Tartans Museum from Highlands, NC to Franklin, NC. She serves on the board of the North Carolina International Folk Festival, Folkmoot USA, and is the director of music for the annual Grandfather Mountain Highland Games.

Morgan Llywelyn, award-winning author

of *Dublin, Ireland* and the first recipient of the award in 1999 said "Flora Gammon exemplifies the Scottish heart and soul in America, passing on her heritage to the generations in Appalachia and especially to Celtic women world-wide."

"She is the first American woman to be so honored by the Celtic Women conferences",

noted Marjorie Logie Warren, Glasgow native and owner of Thistle Studio tartan designers.

"Flora MacDonald Gammon has been a stalwart friend and supporter of the conferences of Celtic women since their inception in 1998; she has served as singer, mistress of ceremonies and lecturer of the Scots emigration to America," stated Jean Bills, founder of Celtic Women International and Conference of Celtic Women in Milwaukee.

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Swimming Upstream

By Charles Brady



Frank Carroll: A Lust for Life - Part Three

We left Frank last month as he joined the Electricity Supply Board in 1948. He continues...

My first introduction to heavy work was digging a trench at Bachelor's Pea Factory on Bannow Road, Cabra West. It was really tough work because at that time there were no JCB's or tipper lorries. Everything was done with sledgehammers, picks and shovels and the lorry had to be loaded and unloaded by hand.

The next job was the laying of the first oil cable from Fleet Street to Inchicore. We started work at six in the morning because we had to go across Dame Street and so as not to disrupt the traffic we had to get as much work before it became heavy. It could be seven or eight at night when you got home. Your hands and back would be so sore from digging cuttings, pulling cable and loading the lorries that there was nothing to do when you got home and had your dinner except go to bed.

I would look forward to the weekend that I might be off, when on a Friday night I would get on the bike and cycle through Dunshaughlin to Rathfeigh and Skryne, which was a distance of 22 miles and call into my Aunt Polly for a slice of her apple tart, or to Freddy Crocock or Bridie Bennett for a laugh.



Frank Carroll

In the early 1930s the landscape of Cabra changed dramatically with the extension of the city suburbs into the quite rural area. In 1930 work commenced on the Corporation Housing Scheme at Old Cabra.

In September 1932, the year of the Eucharistic Congress, the foundation stone for the Church of Christ the King was laid and the Church was opened on the last Sunday in October 1933—the Feast of Christ the King.

The church was then in Arran Quay parish and it was not until 1941 that the area became a parish in its own right. The first parish priest, Canon O'Ceallaghain, was one of Dublin's better-known characters and he drove around in a distinctive black car. He was Parish Priest from 1941 until his death in 1973.

The first bus to come to Cabra was the number 12 in 1930—a single decker running from Eden Quay to Cabra Road. This had only recently taken over from the No. 12 tram, which ran as far as Doyle's Corner in Phibsboro, where a tram terminus was situated. It later became Kelly's Carpetdrome.

As more and more houses were built in Cabra, extra services were needed to take the people in and out of the city, so the service was extended.

Two events that stand out was the carnival in Dalymount Park of 1943 and the other was in 1942 when Jack Doyle fought Chris Cole from Mullingar, a fight that Cole won in the 1st round. To stand in St. Peter's Church and see such a magnificent specimen of a man like Doyle is something that you never forget.

Other happy memories were Eddie Fitzroy and myself meeting our girlfriends at the picture house end of the park for a sing-song before rushing home to hear the top twenty on Radio Luxembourg and hear Mario Lanza singing "Be My Love."

In 1954 I married my wife Pauline and moved into two rooms over Tommy Matthew's shop in North King's Street opposite Crean's Soap Factory and beside the school I had gone to as a child. When looking out of the back window I was looking directly into the play yard of the school.

During a big storm in 1956 when a chimney fell on the roof, the Corporation moved us to Cabra West; but after a couple of

months and many complaints regarding the suitability of the house, the Corporation offered us a new house on Deanstown Avenue, Finglas West, which was a new housing scheme. When we arrived there we found ourselves in an environment dominated by roadway in various stages of construction.

There was mud, dirt, sand and building equipment; no street lighting and no shops; a bus service that did not go beyond the Dick McKee Memorial in the village and so one had a long walk to the bus.

People had very little in those days by way of money or possessions and bare floorboards and plaster walls remained a part of many houses until bit by bit the money was obtained to decorate and furnish rooms.

The style of life for people in those days was also very different from today. There was no heating other than by open fire and many is the time I went across to the fields opposite the house to cut down some tree branches to keep the fire going on winter nights, when there was nothing for families to do except sit in and listen to Radio Eirann, Radio Luxembourg and the BBC.

While in the E.S.B. I also did some electrical work for the Doyle Brothers. I would go on my bike with a ladder and wire up the signs in the different shops. I would cycle out to Portmarnock after I clocked out, to where they had a workshop where they made signs and would spend hours bending iron bars into swan neck brackets.

I gave up the job with the ESB after nine years and went to work with the Doyle Brothers, which entailed going around the country erecting signs and renovating old ones.

Chasing a bigger wage I then headed for Aldershot in England and began work the day after arriving in the Command Power Station. My next job was in Aldershot, cutting and mitring brackets for truck bodies. There were some great work mates and after 48 years I still keep in touch with Ron Chuter. Then there was Ken Harley, a Jehovah's Witness, and many is the debate we had on religion; but always in a friendly manner. He would give me books on Jehovah and I would give him Catholic ones. It was while there that my wife Pauline sent me an ad that had appeared in the *Evening Herald*, put in by Hobson Morris. Marrowbone Lane was looking for a sign erector to which I answered and was called for an interview.

I attended on Monday 15th, worked a weeks' notice and commenced with them on 27th February 1960.

During my three years going around every village in the 26 counties I had two mates, both deceased—Paddy Bergin and Jimmy Billane. As we all came from struggling backgrounds

their company made being away from home (which could be up to two weeks at a time) more bearable. ***

I'll be concluding 79-year old Frank Carroll's reminiscences in January. In the meantime, may I just wish anyone who has stuck with these columns over the years—and I certainly didn't expect them to last this long!—a very merry Christmas and a warm and loving 2009. Even if you are only an occasional reader and even if you can't stand me, the same applies!

Merry Christmas!

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Hooliganism

Mike Houlihan



Hilda Hogan had never posed au naturel before... but... she needed money for a Christmas gift for her husband Phelim.

Times were tough; it was the winter of '08.

Phelim was a professor of swordial psychology, facing the loss of his job. DePaul University was cutting back on all swordial scholars in light of the Obama election.

Hilda was trying to keep a positive face forward to help encourage Phelim in his job hunt. But Hilda herself wasn't making much money working as a button counter at Macy's. She was bound to get laid off right after Christmas and besides, button counting wasn't going to carry them both.

Hilda knew if she could give Phelim the right present for Christmas, his confidence would soar and he'd maybe take that test for the plumber's union. She'd picked out a genuine reproduction of the *Book of Kells* for Phelim, "That would make a man out of him!" sighed Hilda.

She saw an ad in *The Reader* for models at the Art Institute. Hilda felt she was well suited for the position. "All I have to do is sit there naked for about an hour and the students will paint my body. I could do that!"

Of course Hilda never said that out loud. She wanted the *Book of Kells* to be a big surprise for her husband.

Phelim was staring right through Christmas and into the abyss as he worried if he'd find work as a swordian psychologist outside the University. He didn't want to frighten Hilda with his financial

dilemma so he decided to find the perfect gift this Christmas that would make her proud of Phelim again.

Hilda loved old movie memorabilia and she bore a striking resemblance to the young Irish actress with the ravishing red hair, Maureen O'Hara. So Phelim found a gift that would have special meaning for his Hilda.

In fact he'd already picked it out from the catalogue of Burke & Hogan, Irish artifacts dealers. Phelim was about to put a bid on Maureen O'Hara's bloomers from the film, *The Quiet Man*. They weren't cheap but they could only increase in value. Phelim thought to himself. "It's like buyin' gold underwear!"

Phelim saw an ad in *The Reader* for contestants in the circus at the United Center. They were looking for men to wrestle a bear. Phelim thought, "All you have to do is stay in the ring with it, I could do that!"

That December the young couple both made sacrifices by taking on additional jobs to make each other happy. On Christmas Eve Hilda and Phelim knelt by the tree and exchanged gifts.

Phelim told Hilda, "I wrestled a bear darlin' to get you this."

Hilda was shocked and afraid for her husband and yes, swooning at the thought of him putting his life in danger in order to buy her *Quiet Man* undies.

Phelim bashfully told her, "I'm afraid I didn't last very long with the bear Hilda, but I'm hoping it's the thought that counts."

Hilda shrieked, "What kind of bear was it darling? Was it a black bear, a polar bear, or oh my God, a grizzly bear?"

Phelim put his head down, "It was Steve McMichael. He grabbed me by the neck and socked me in the mouth, kneed me in the balls and I was done. He tossed me out of the ring at the United Center. It was humiliating."

Phelim went on to tell the amazed Hilda that since he was

eliminated in only one minute the promoters would only pay him \$35 for wrestling the bear.

He handed her a gift wrapped package, "So all I could get you was this. Merry Christmas, honey."

Hilda gazed at the package and a smile played across her face. She told Phelim of her job as an art class model.

"So I walked into this studio at the Art Institute and there's about twenty kids, mostly girls but about five geeky guys, and they have the black jeans and the striped shirts and the black greasy hair and nose rings and eye lid piercings, all of them Emos. So I take off the gown and sit back and this guy starts going nuts about my tattoo."

Hilda had a tattoo that irked the Emos. Wrapped beautifully in red roses across her derriere were the words "I Vote Pro-Life". The art professor and several students objected to this and Hilda got in a screaming match with the "baby-killers!"

"When I finally got dressed they would only pay me \$25 because I didn't do the whole session. So all I could get you was this." Hilda handed Phelim a package with gift-wrapping, "Merry Christmas, Phelim."

Phelim said, "You open yours first Hilda."

She tore off the wrapping paper and found a 15th Anniversary DVD of *Goin' East On Ashland*.

Hilda swooned again, "It's not *The Quiet Man*, but it's still a classic piece of memorabilia!"

Phelim opened his present to discover the book, *Hooliganism*. He kissed Hilda and said, "It's not the *Book of Kells*, but it's a fun read while you're sittin' on the crapper!"

It was an O'Houli Christmas for Hilda and Phelim and their love grew stronger because of it.

Here's wishing you the same, Merry Christmas!



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Sporting Log



Sean Og. O Ceallachain



The movements of GAA team managers is very prevalent at the moment and will continue into the New Year. The two prime counties in football and hurling, Kerry and Kilkenny have already rubberstamped their nominees for the onerous positions for the new season starting in January. Perhaps, the most successful manager in hurling is Brian Cody, who led the "Cats" to an historic three in a row run of All-Ireland senior titles last September and now faces the motivating prospects of four in a row. Cody, has been eleven years in charge of Kilkenny hurling teams and to date he has led them to 6 senior title successes and 2 National League titles.

Cody's appointment was ratified last month around the same time as Kerry's Jack O'Connor as football manager of famed Kerry. O'Connor replaces the incumbent Pat O'Shea, who was unsuccessful in 2008 having failed to Tyrone in the All-Ireland final. Jack O'Connor will have Eamonn Fitzgerald as one of his selectors in his second coming as Kerry manager. One of the extraordinary aspects of O'Connor's return to management concerns his recent autobiography in which he slates a number of the Kerry players for their lack of effort in the All-Ireland final this year. That may account for the fact that a number of the present Kerry team failed to attend the launch of O'Connor's book even though they were invited. Maybe some of them had previous engagements.

Four young GAA players approached by Australian Rules talent scout Ricky Nixon will be busy meeting some Australian club mentors who maybe interested in signing them for "Rules" football. Laois native, Conor Meredith, Antrim's Niall McKeever, Mayo's Tom Parsons and Derry star James Kielt will be hoping to impress AFL giants this month in trial matches. Meredith (18) will trial for a week each with North Melbourne and Richmond while McKeever (17) will trial for a week each with Richmond and St. Kilda. Kielt who has just arrived Down Under is having trials with North Melbourne and St Kilda's. It seems Parsons who was a member of the Irish International team who played in the recent Tests against Australia stayed on after the series and is schedule to discuss the possibility of an AFL career.

Even though Ireland won the Test series against Australia in Melbourne a lot of credit had to go to the home country for the manner in which they approached the game and contributed to a marvellous contest which proved the best since the series started some years ago. Last year the hybrid game was at a crossroads following disgraceful scenes indulged in by the Aussies in the final match at Croke Park. It certainly annoyed GAA officialdom and the series were very nearly abandoned. Wiser council prevailed and the two Associations met in Ireland earlier this year and decided to change the rules and eliminate the possibility of the scenes which marred the meeting of the two countries last October 07. It must be mentioned that the Australian players adapted themselves brilliantly to the round ball and mastered its use. Unbelievably Australia outscored Ireland 12-6 in 'overs' (the equivalent of points in Gaelic football.) They won the 'overs' count 15-7 in the second Test in 2006 and by 19-7 and in 18-11 in 2005. Maybe the concentration on the hand passing gambit is at present destroying Gaelic football? There is a new addition to the drive to have a trial at "Rules" in the person of Antrim's young starlet Thomas McCann, a UCD student, who caught the eye of "Rules" talent spotters this summer. Geelong are interested in the Antrim lad and he will be going to Australia next march for a trial run. There are many more young players being enticed to visit Aussie land in the hope of making it big 'Down Under.' The GAA are understandably worried about this trend but little can be done about it.

NACB 2008 Convention

By Eamonn Kelly, PRO - NACB

San Francisco will be the host city for the 2008 North American County Board GAA convention, scheduled for the weekend of December 6th at the Wharf Holiday Inn Hotel. While the NACB AGM is usually held in mid November, this year it was re-arranged to coincide with the playing of the annual GAA All-stars football game on December 7th at the new recently developed San Francisco GAA facility, Treasure Island. The game is being staged in conjunction with the official opening of the park by GAA President, Nickey Brennan.

While about 70 clubs from around the country are usually represented at the AGM a larger than normal attendance is anticipated at this year's convention because of the interest generated by the visit of the All-star teams. Given that there are few issues of controversial nature on the horizon, and the fact that only 26 motions have been submitted for the agenda, it should not be a prolonged meeting. However, since there are 26 nomination on the ballot and competition for all positions, with the exception of Treasurer, a competitive and lively convention seems to be on the cards.

As expected, the vast number of motions submitted request alterations to existing NACB bye-laws and regulations pertaining to the playing of sanction and resident players in different codes and grades. Many of them are requesting changes to existing registration dates. Most significant are two motions requesting deviations from Official Guide rules. A motion from the Boston Eire Og camogie club is requesting that all J1 visa players be not included in the sanction quota system. An interesting motion from the Sean Treacey club in San Francisco which is seeking a deviation from the Official Guide rule reference the suspension of players, requesting that misconduct punishment for Category 1 and 2 offences be punishable by missing games rather than weekly suspensions. Because of a high number of qualifying teams failing to participate in this years playoffs a motion submitted by the NACB is requesting a withdrawal deadline for teams pulling out of future playoff and much stiffer penalties for violators.

The following nominations have been submitted for election at convention:

Honorary President—Eamonn Reilly (San Francisco), Mike Moriarity (San Francisco), Joe Begley (Chicago), Bernie O'Reilly (Boston).

Chairman—Bernie Connaughton (Boston), Mike O'Connor (Boston), Joe Lydon (Boston)

Vice Chairman—Mike O'Connor (Boston), Gareth Fitzsimons (Chicago), Paul McCarthy (Philadelphia), Tom Dolan (Chicago), Liam Moloney (San Francisco)

Secretary—Howard Elbert (Pittsburgh), Harry Costello (Chicago), Liam Moloney (San Francisco), Joe Lydon (Boston)

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Central Council Delegate—Mike O'Connor (Boston)

Website article: John Hehir Dies

Due to space considerations please go to www.iannnews.com to view the complete story by Eamonn Kelly on The Passing of John Hehir—Founding Member of North American County Board

Founding Member of NACB

John Hehir Dies At The Age of 91

By Eamonn Kelly

PRO—North American County Board

The North American County Board of the GAA lost one of its founding members recently following the death of John Hehir in Boston at the age of 91. The oldest of seven children, John Hehir left his home in Ardahan, South Galway and emigrated to Birmingham, England in 1946. His passion for Gaelic games, particularly hurling, started at an early age. As a young teenager he started his hurling career in the left-half position with his parish club, Ardahan. Upon his arrival in England he played with the Clann na Gael Hurling Club in Birmingham, winning a Warwickshire County medal in 1947.

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Bill Margeson



Well, Christmas. Can these Christmases come any faster? This is the ultimate year so far to count your real blessings, such as good

health, friends and family. Tough economic times. Music is the perfect gift at all times, but this year, the best way to say Merry Christmas to your special loved ones is with the affordable gift of music. Herewith, our Top 10 recommendations for giving the real Irish music, all released in the past year and all the best. We suggest, of course, Rampant Lion in Villa Park to get any of these for you. Paddy's On the Square in Long Grove will also do the trick, as will cdBaby online—or just go to the listed artists' websites. Except for the first one, Beal Tuinne, these are in no priority order. Let's go!

1. **Beal Tuinne**—The most beautiful Irish album we have heard in 25 years of reviewing the music. Recorded live at St. James Church in 2007 in the town of Dingle, the work features the poetry of the town's Caoimhín Ó Cinéide, set to music by Shaun Davey and sung by Rita Connelly and Caoimhín's daughter, Eilís, as well as Seamus Begley. It is stunning, haunting and purely Irish to the very deepest core of what it means to be Irish. True, real magic. A gift from God, and you can have it all for the price of the cd.

2. **bo-Ho-Ho-hola** or bohola (Jimmy Keane and Pat Broaders) There is only one Irish Christmas album this year, trust us. Chicago's own powerhouse, bohola (sic), has released the holiday gift and it is a treat—as is their simultaneous release of a new bohola bit of business simply titled, *Jimmy Keane and Pat Broaders*. If you live in Chicago and are hip to real Irish music, then you will simply need the word that bohola has new albums out, and you'll get them. If you are not familiar with them, trust us, you should be. No one else can do this stuff like they do. A Merry Christmas is to be had with the lads, and bo-Ho-Ho-hola is like having them over for a private celebration of music, laughs and very special Irish Christmas memories.

3. **Sheridan's Guest House** (Dave Sheridan) Dave Sheridan is a terrific, terrific flute player. This album has a ton of guest stars, guaranteeing real variety. Really exciting Irish music. Crank this up in the car and go!! Sheri-

dan's debut is a winner all-round. A stunner.

4. **House For Sale** (David Gunning) David Gunning is a national treasure for Canadians, based out of Nova Scotia. We don't get to see him in Chicago, at least so far, but we can hear him on this gorgeous album. He is a master songsmith, as well as singer. If you love deeply felt, intelligent music lovingly offered, this one is for you. Wow!

5. **Pictures in Time** and **Out in the Fields** (Matt and Orlaith Keane) Two albums here, both treasures. *Pictures in Time* gives us Matt and daughter, Orlaith in a great duet of a vocal album. Matt has been our favorite singer of the Galway Keane family for years now, and these two albums show why. Years and years ago, we called him The Voice of the West. Still is. *Out in the Fields* is his solo album, also just out. The Keane family legacy is in great hands with Orlaith for the future and Matt for today. Matt Keane is among the very, very best singers in Ireland. Get it, and you will hear Galway, itself.

6. **First Things First** (Ailie Robertson) Scotland's Ailie Robertson joins a rare few at the top of the Celtic harp players' list like Michelle Mulcahy and Maire ni Chathasaigh. Her debut album is a great mix of trad, and Celtic fusion—trad, jazz, all-Ailie. It is absolutely stunning. Looking for a harp album this year? Here it is!

7. **The Home Ruler** (Catherine McEvoy) This lovely Leitrim girl is a wonder on the

and so will you!

8. **Tuned Up** (Brendan Mulholland, Brendan Hendry, Paul McSherry) These three lads from Northern Ireland have produced perfection with a guitar, flute and fiddle in a straight-ahead piece of pure trad. No gimmicks. No hype. No nonsense. Trad as it is meant to be played from three guys who can really play it. This is a front runner for Instrumental Album of the Year.

9. **Humours of Highgate** (John Blake, La-



mond Gillespie, Mick Leahy) Another piece of brilliance in an all-instrumental take on the tradition. John Blake was part of the Album of the Year a few years ago in *Tap Room Trio*, and this is another stunner of a wonder. Trad music may not be played better. This is a real contender for Instrumental Album of the Year. How you gonna choose between this and *Tuned Up*? Don't. Get both.

10. **Any of the Compass Re-Releases**. This is the year Compass Records in Nashville has begun re-releasing a lot of the original Green Linnet albums. We have early Bothy, Moving Hearts, Dolores Keane and John Faulkner. All music that a lot of us cut our trad teeth on. Check out the Compass website, and know that you cannot possibly go wrong with ANY of these re-releases. They are the cornerstones for today. Every single one of them a huge winner, as Compass is re-releasing only the best. Go. Go! GO to the site. You'll see!!

*Our prayers for the Joanie Madden of *Cherish the Ladies* and her family on the sudden, accidental loss of her father to a home accident. A well-loved and respected man in the Irish music family.

Listen to the Public Radio show, *Blarney on the Air*, Mondays from 7-9 on WDCB, 90.9 fm or www.wdcb.org around the world! Lots of special Christmas stuff coming, and a chance to meet The Celtic Love Doctor. Ta!

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Raised on Songs and Stories

Shay Clarke



Tony Kenny... Christmastime in Ireland

Congratulations to Tony Kenny, who last month received the Irish Music Industry Hall of Fame Award. Tony, an icon in the Irish Music Business has won dozens of awards and with the release of his 13th album coming up in Jan '09, Tony shows no signs of letting up. Tours, cruises and concert specials have Tony working hard on both sides of the Atlantic and his Christmastime in Ireland tour is coming your way again.

Tony has been bringing his Christmas show to the Midwest for 20 years now and it has become an Irish American Christmas tradition packed with variety and talent. This year Tony is joined by Ireland's master of mirth Joe Cuddy, who was recently honored by the Variety Club of Ireland, the fabulous Cavan songstress Kathy Durkin, and the totally traditional Dublin City Dancers who now boast 2 World Champion Irish Dancers... so as usual—it's a top class, top quality show. They play 20 cities on this tour including Chicago's Gaelic Park, Toledo, Milwaukee and St. Louis. Check his website for local listings www.tonykenny.com.

Tony's new album, due for release next month features some great stuff, a couple of songs from Charlie Landsborough, "An old Irish waltz" and "I will love you all of my life." A song given to him by the late and great Dermot O'Brien called "Leaving Castlebar" and a song written by John Lennon, "Grow Old with Me." Tony tells me that this song, released in Ireland as a single, has been a huge success.

Tony, with his wife Joan, will arrive back in Dublin just a few days before Christmas, in time to decorate the house for the Holidays. Most of their preparations were done before the tour. In his younger days Tony always went for the annual Christmas morning swim in the chilly waters of Dublin Bay, but nowadays his Christmas is about family and friends. On Christmas Eve the family go into Dublin for last minute shopping, to enjoy the atmosphere and then to mass at Clarendon Street or Francis

St. where Tony grew up.

No rest for the wicked, Tony then has concerts at the National Concert Hall in Dublin and The Cork Opera House before returning stateside for a Caribbean Cruise engagement and then the next US Tour, Celtic Nights, from Feb 14th till the late March. We look forward to seeing Tony on Tour and of course the new album.

During the summer Tony entertains thousands each week in his *Celtic Nights* show at the Regency Hotel in Drumcondra. *Celtic Nights*, a celebration of Irish Music, Song, Dance and Laughter is a must see for all visitors to our fair city—Dublin.

Gaelic Storm: Winter Break

After a hectic year touring Australia and the USA, Gaelic Storm are taking a short well deserved break, one look at their schedule for next year will tell you why they need one. The Gaelic Storm juggernaut continues to rock on unstoppable.

Ryan Lacey (drummer is too small a word to describe what he does), the driving beat behind Gaelic Storm has just released his second album with former Storm fiddle player Ellery Klein. Their first album for Irish Dancers was called *Stepping to the Beat* and the new one is called *Kickin' to the Beat*. Ryan who lives in Chicago also gives lessons in hand percussion and drum set from beginner to intermediate. Believe me all of you budding percussionists, Ryan could knock a tune out of an old refrigerator and make it sound awesome. For lessons contact Ryan at Ryrylacey@gmail.com

Pete Purvis is working on his second solo pipe album, this time with guest musicians. His 2007 album, *Highland Spirit* was excellent. Pete also teaches pipes and whistles.

The Goddess of Gaelic Storm, Jessie Burns, is having a ball. She was at the Ennis Trad Fest in Co. Clare and after visiting friends and family in Ireland and England is now back in Boulder, where she shares her talent and gives fiddle lessons to up and coming talent in Colorado.

Steve Twigger is in Austin, Texas writ-

ing songs. Recently Twigger performed at a concert in Austin to benefit returning troops. *Voices of a Grateful Nation*, declares a national debt of gratitude to the valiant men and women who have served and are returning from military conflicts. Gaelic Storm have recorded a song "Mother of Mercy" especially for the concert and it is featured on the album, *Voices of a Grateful Nation Vol. 1 and 2*. The project features 40 bands and is produced by longtime Clapton drummer Jamie Oldaker. Well done boys.

That rascal from Cork, Pat Murphy, well God knows what he's up to, but I know he is heading home to Cork for Mairtin De Cogains wedding at the end of the year.

Midwest fans will have to wait till February to see the band, unless you join them on one of their January Cruises, The Rock Boat or the Ships and Dips cruise. Sure it's a hard life if ye don't weaken. All the news, tour dates, etc. on their website. www.gaelicstorm.com

IAHC Christmas Bazaar

Come and visit our Blarney Fine Irish Jewellery booth at the Heritage Center on Sunday December 7th, its always a great day, starting with Mass and breakfast, then shopping everything from cakes and pastries to fine jewelry, lots of crafts and Santa too.

Mike Houlihan will be there to launch and sign copies of his new book *Hooliganism*, so grab the kids and granny too and come on down.

Blarney on Facebook

Bill Margeson and I, the Celtic Odd Couple, present our show Monday nights on WDCB, 90.9 FM and on the web at WDCB.org.

From 7 till 9 we play some great Irish music and we would love you to join us. Our Facebook page usually has the play list in advance. Check us out.

bo-HO-HO-la... Jimmy Keane and Pat Broaders

If you only have to buy one Christmas Album this year, then his is the one. It's simply brilliant and Bill agrees with me on this great album. Jack Baker says the same in his column too. We're right you know.

Fionnuala Gill

Fionnuala Gill will perform with the Boston String Quartet at New Trier High School in

Winnetka on December 9th. Of course you know Fionnuala, that beautiful voice from *Riverdance* who also sang with Anuna and Secret Garden. This should be a very special occasion.

Merry Christmas to all, keep well and please God we will see you in the New Year.

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Celtic Kitchen —Pure and Simple



By Julianna Leber

Highlighting the Holidays

When people talk about Christmases past, warm memories return and stories of special people, fragrant favorite treats, or even snapshots of Christmas scenes evoke nostalgia for the season. While some of my memories include childhood worries of Santa finding us at Grandma's and as I got older the heady incense at Midnight mass, my memories of an Irish Christmas are about the magical lights around the towns.

As my cooking school days in Ireland drew to a close around the second week in



December, a few of us students walked around downtown Cork City to shop. I was fascinated by the many, many rows of lights and decorations that lined the streets.

Even the side streets had lights wound around the fences and gates of some of the local apartment houses. Despite the hustle and bustle of the holidays, the Christmas lights actually made the vast city feel, well, cozy.

I finished school and went back to Dublin to stay with friends and do a bit more shopping. My friends decided to walk into St. Stephen's Green to eat and look at the lights. The scene I remember from the third floor at St. Stephen's Green shopping center was of the clock being surrounded by a massive wreath and twinkling lights and heavy green garlands spanning the width of the mall. It was warm and festive and regardless of the time spent shopping it caused the hurried crowds to stop for a minute. My Irish friend Steve told me they had crowds that would come in and just admire the decorations, and then move on for tea. I got the idea. We took the escalators down to the first floor, giving me time to take it all in—the glowing lights, the massive ribbons, miles of greenery and the chattering of festive shoppers.

We found a little restaurant and based on the great desserts and short line, we went in for dinner. That meal was sublime culinary contentment. Perfect broiled Irish salmon, warm brown bread with golden creamy Irish butter, rustic garlic kale mashed potatoes, and roasted winter vegetables. With long sips of hot milky tea, we were told of the puddings (desserts) for the evening. Ann Marie had a caramel bread pudding, Graham decided on the rich Irish Christmas pudding (similar to a cakey fruit cake) and whiskey sauce, Steve had a slice of chocolate tart and I had a creamy cheesecake. We all tried each others; just to be sure we each picked the best. We left the restaurant, content in our choices and overall pleased with our self gifting of a night out.

No material gifts were exchanged that evening. Instead, we made the memories of good friends together, enjoying wonderful food and conversation. That is the great gift of the season: meeting family and friends at the holiday table while sharing stories and making memories that will last forever. Have a blessed

Christmas season!

To help with dessert choices for the holiday table, I've picked three desserts that are fast and easy to make. I have a cranberry orange cheesecake that is perfect for both diabetics and original cheesecake admirers. I also have a chocolate walnut tart pie. It's a tart because of the rich filling is from a tart, yet a pie because of the ready made pie crust. To finish out the dessert tray, I have mini chocolate hazelnut and fruit crescent pastries. So easy, and so good!

Cranberry Orange Cheesecake with Phyllo Crust

Makes 10 slices

- 1 c fresh cranberries
- 6 large dried pitted plums, chopped
- 1/4 c sugar
- 2 T orange juice
- 1/2 t dried orange peel
- 1 T water
- 1 8 oz pkg Neufchatel, softened
- 1/4 c sugar
- 1 egg + 1 egg white
- 1 t vanilla
- Butter flavored cooking spray
- 8 sheets thawed phyllo dough
- 2 T toasted wheat germ (in small side bowl)

Heat oven to 350°F. In small saucepan, combine first six ingredients. Stir while cooking on medium until berries pop and mix thickens slightly. Set aside and cool. In a food processor, add cheese, sugar, egg and egg white and vanilla. Scrape sides while mixing until smooth. Set aside.

Coat a 9" pie plate with butter flavored spray. Unwrap phyllo dough, remove 1 sheet, and then cover the rest with plastic wrap. Place phyllo dough in pan, spray with butter spray once, then sprinkle 1 heaped teaspoon of wheat germ over sprayed dough. Add next sheet of dough in opposite direction and repeat the layering. Trim edges and bake for 5 minutes. Remove and cool slightly.

Spoon cheese filling into crust and then spoon the cranberry mix over top. Using knife, gently swirl cranberry around to marble.

Bake for 20 to 25 minutes until filling is set. If crust browns too fast, cover with foil. Allow to cool for an hour on rack and chill covered, at least 4 hours. Garnish with mint. Diabetic exchanges: Other carbs - 1.5; Fat - 1.

Chocolate Walnut Tart Pie

Makes 8-10 slices

- 1 pre made pastry pie crust
 - 1 c heavy cream
 - 1/2 c whole milk
 - 10 oz semisweet chocolate, chopped
 - 2 T sugar
 - 1/4 t salt
 - 2 large eggs, room temp
 - 1/2 c toasted walnuts, chopped
- Bake pie crust to directions for pre-baked pies. Set aside.

Heat oven to 325°F.

Heat heavy cream and milk in medium saucepan over low heat just until sides slightly bubble. Remove from heat; add chocolate and stir until smooth. Add sugar and salt and whisk. Beat eggs in small bowl and slowly stir into chocolate until well blended. Stir in walnuts then pour mix into crust. Bake until top is slightly set (but will still move) and glossy, 20 to 25 minutes. Watch closely at the end; if cracks appear, remove from oven; pie is over baking.

Allow to completely set and cool before cutting.

Black Cherry Crescents

Makes 6 crescents per batch

- 2 T Black cherry preserves
- 4 sheets phyllo dough
- Butter flavor spray
- Powdered sugar

Preheat oven to 375°F. Spray baking sheet with nonstick spray. Unfold dough and place one sheet on cutting board. Spray the sheet with butter spray, then layer with second sheet, and finish with last two. Lay 8-9 inch plate over dough and cut out circle. Discard remnants. Spread preserves over circle, leaving 1/4 inch border. Cut circle into six wedges. Roll inward, starting with wide edge. Place on cookie sheet. Lightly coat with butter spray and bake 12 to 14 minutes or until golden. Crescents will bubble over during baking. Let cool. Serve with sprinkled powdered sugar.

For Chocolate Hazelnut Crescents, use 2 T Nutella spread instead of preserves and follow recipe. For diabetic crescents, sub 2 T low sugar preserves. Exchanges: 0.5 carb, 0.5 Carb exchange.

Julianna Leber is a graduate of the professional food and wine courses at Ballymaloe Cookery School in County Cork, Ireland. She occasionally serves as a personal chef while also continuing her studies toward a dietetics/nutrition degree at The University of Akron. Julianna can be contacted at julileber@hotmail.com.

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Sharing a Pint

By Scott Powers



Christmas came early for me this year. New albums by four of my favorite Irish artists arrived on my desk over the past month. All four also happened to have appeared in this column before, so it only makes sense to share their new works with you.

I know money is tight for all of us right now, but if you're looking for Christmas gift or simply wanting some good music, I'd highly recommend one or all of the following albums. They'll all bring something different to your speakers, but all worthy in their own way and worth the few bucks. You can also check out all these bands on MySpace.com and find ways to buy their albums.

We'll start with the local name—The Tossers. Lead singer Tony Duggins, who has shared his share of pints with me over the years, and The Tossers recently released *On a Fine Spring Evening*.

Listening to this album, like all their previous ones, had an interesting effect on me. I wanted to slam a pint of Guinness, break a bar stool and nod my head uncontrollably... which, of course, is a good thing. They do have songs that are slow and thoughtful, but it's the fast, fun-filled ones that get me singing along and yelling out my car's windows.



The Tossers have a way of uniting Chicago and Irish like no other. Flogging Molly are supported by the West Coast. Dropkick Murphys are on the East. In Chicago, we have The Tossers and should be proud of it. They will

be hosting their CD release part on Dec. 12 at the Double Door.

Second off is a man who passed out on my ottoman after one long March evening. Of course, he's the one and only *Niall Connolly*.

I came across Niall while making a trip out to Galway. I was invited to a concert of his by a mutual friend. I knew nothing about Niall, but the venue seemed quaint enough and I was up for anything.

Two hours later, I took in one of the best shows I've ever heard. Five months later, I promoted a Chicago show for him at The Atlantic. A little after that, I visited him in New York, saw another one of his shows and shot some video that will appear in the future on our website.

Now a year later, I'm returned to where our trip together began. Just as he's about to embark on another European trip, Niall Connolly has released a live album that was recorded at The Crane in Galway, the place where I first heard him.

When I initially popped in the album, I was immediately taken back to that spot. You had to travel up a staircase to get to the concert. It was an intimate room, maybe sat 50 people, with a bar in the back. I remember sitting on a stool with a Guinness in hand at a low table beside my future wife, a few rows away from Niall and just to his left. From the start, his music caught me. The sound was catchy, but his words were also moving. There was one moment I'll never forget as a woman standing in the back joined him in a song. Her voice was amazing, and along with his, simply created an unexpected moment that brought a tear to my eye.

Fast forward to now, and I know those songs from start to finish. But even having heard

songs like "When Spiderman Turned Bad" repeatedly, this live album did them new justice. The recording is what you would hope from a live album, making it a fine place to start with for those new to Niall Connolly, and the perfect place to continue for his dedicated fans.

Hopefully, he'll soon be back to Chicago and back on my ottoman.

The day before I met Niall Connolly in Galway, I met Patrick Hallinan, better known as Hally. I had contacted him before leaving Chicago after reading in a Galway newspaper that he was releasing a new album during my trip there. I was looking for a column idea in Ireland, and this is what I was shooting for. I didn't know what his music sounded like, so I knew I was taking a chance.

As most of my Ireland stories go, I got lucky (if anyone's recalls how I thought I was going to die after being electrocuted in Doolin), and

Hally's music was top notch. He, like a lot of best indie bands I know, led me to tapping my foot, bobbing my head, sitting back and enjoying some great music.

After releasing *Onwards Out to Sea*, his debut album, when I first saw him, he's come back with just as strong a second album—*Scarab Beetle at the Window*. The song "Cynical Man," which you can find on his

MySpace page, is one that I've had on repeat for days.

Finally, I've to come to the new album by Ian Whitty. I also first met him at The Crane in Galway. Neil McCarthy, a Galway promoter, recommended Whitty's show, and like always, he was right. Ian Whitty's music is just fun. You want to get up, sing and dance.

He recently shipped me *The Lucky Caller No. 9*, and I can't stop listening to it. It will certainly be among my top in 2008, and the song "Houndstooth Shirt," which you can also find on his MySpace page, may be the best one I've heard all year. Give it a few listens, and I'm sure you'll be just as hooked. I repeated it probably 25 times on a trip home from the St. Louis area a few weeks ago. By the third time that chorus comes around, it's kind of embarrassing to say, but I'm screaming the words right along.

Share a comment or column suggestion with Scott Powers at sharingapint@yahoo.com.



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Chicago Gaelic Park Events

Tony Kenny's Christmastime in Ireland

Irish stage and television star, Tony Kenny, and his show, *Christmastime in Ireland*, are coming to Gaelic Park Sunday, Dec. 14, 2008.

This inspirational, family show takes the audience on a magical journey to the Emerald Isle at Christmas, where there is a celebration of

family in every home, a candle in every window and a song in every heart. Tony Kenny has been the star of Jury's Cabaret for over 20 years and was Ireland's Entertainer of the Year (1998).

Doors open at 7:30pm and tickets are \$20. (708) 687-9323.

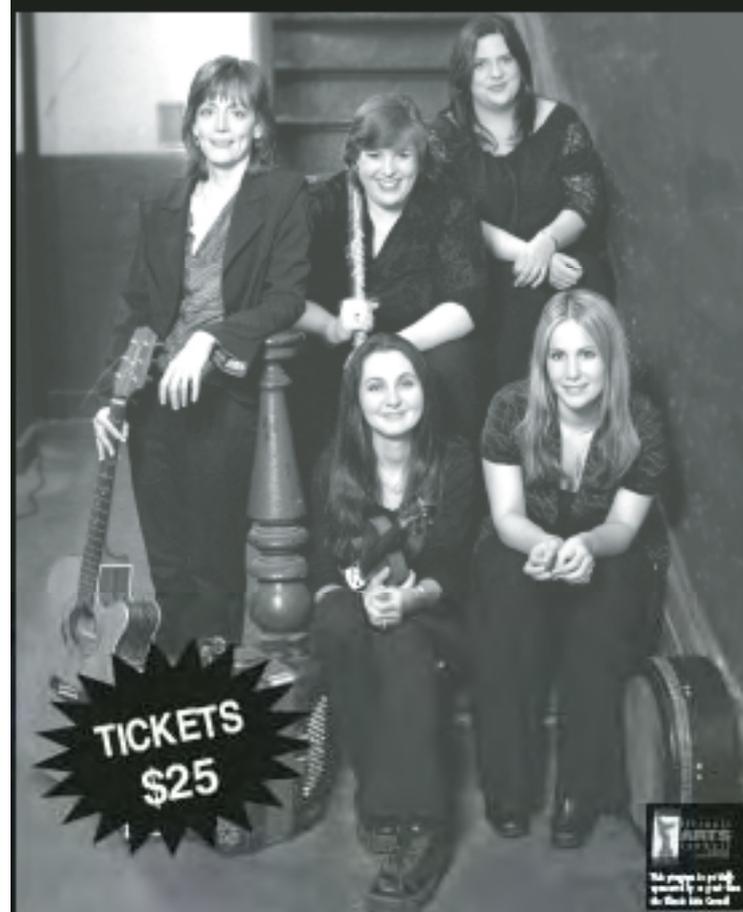
New Year's Eve Gala

Dance the night away to the delightful sounds of Sean O'Donnell, and new this year, all your favorite hits will be provided by Tone Productions, the premier DJ of the Southside at Gaelic Park's New Year's Eve Gala on Wednesday, Dec. 31, 2008. Reservations only. Tickets are \$65

per person and include a premium 4-hour open bar with hors d'oeuvres (7:30pm), an elegant 5-course dinner (served at 8:30pm), party favors and a champagne toast at midnight.

6119 West 147th Street in Oak Forest. Visit www.chicagogaelpark.org or call (708) 687-9323 for information or tickets or reservations.

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Cherish the Ladies

Friday, December 12, 2008 8:00 p.m.

Whether they are singing traditional Irish melodies and carols like *The Holly and the Ivy* and *The Wexford Carol* or holiday standards like *O Come All Ye Faithful*, *Angels We Have Heard on High*, and *Silent Night*, Cherish the Ladies reinvent the holiday songbook with Celtic instrumentation, beautiful harmonies, and world-class Irish step-dancing.

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A Conversation with Carpenter, Declan and Sue O'Kane of Doire Builders, Inc.

Who is Doire Builders? Who is the owner?

Doire Builders is a company that specializes in carpentry and general contracting. Whether the project is large or small, upscale or basic, they provide the services homeowners need to get any job done. With over 25 years experience and expertise in the industry, the owner Declan O'Kane has made the process uncomplicated and straightforward for his clients. Homeowners want someone who will BE THERE on site during construction, who will coordinate with other trades, who will even strap on a tool belt and chip in to bring a job in on time.

That's what they get with Doire Builders and Declan O'Kane.

With him in their corner, jobs are done on time and on budget. Declan O'Kane hails from Dungiven in County Derry. Third child in a family of six, he started his "carpentry career" at the tender age of 13. He lugged material, swept up, and did whatever was necessary to help his father Billy build their family home. And by the time he was 17, he was doing far more: building walls, stairs, windows, roofs, cabinets, closets, doors... you name it.

Sue, please describe for us the nature of Declan's work?

This young carpenter excelled at his chosen trade. He outperformed his peers, sometimes using only the hand tools with which he was trained. Every job was done with exacting detail... all level, plumb and square.

It made the work more difficult, but the finished product was more beautiful for its fine craftsmanship. It soon became apparent that his talent and drive was too big for his small hometown.

Bigger opportunities were calling him to America. So he came to Chicago, stayed with family and worked anywhere that would hire him. Before too long, he was being called upon by more upscale contractors requesting his services in the grand homes and lush properties along the Gold Coast and North Shore.

Fast forward past the marriage, two kids, a rough start to his business, and a few premature gray hairs, and what do you have? You have a business that thrives after nearly 10 years on referrals and word-of-mouth; a business that believes good, quality

construction the key to success; a business that is not just for those who can afford to pay; a business that provides every homeowner with high-end workmanship at reasonable prices.

Where does the name Doire stem from?

Doire Builders gets its name from the Gaelic... Doire is Gaelic for Derry, as in County Derry, where the O'Kane clan hails from. Additionally, Derry/Doire actually means oak grove, and we thought the name was an appropriate business name.

What life experiences/interests led you to your current career field?

It's a family joke that Declan "loves the smell of sawdust in the

morning." His interest in carpentry and construction has been a part of him ever since he could remember. He sometimes ditched school in order to join his Da on the job site... what better place to learn math and geometry? Nothing captured his interest as much as working with lumber and building things. While labeling his interest in the trade of carpentry "a calling," might be an overkill, it's not far from the truth.

What do you believe is most admirable about the Irish?

As to what I admire about the Irish? Hmm, I suppose I admire the fact that the Irish are a no-nonsense people, they'll tell you like it is without whitewashing the truth. They are plainspoken and candid, with a sense of humor. This quality surprises one that they are also hardworking, honest and trustworthy (at least until they start drinking... just kidding!)

Doire Builders, Inc. Serving all of Chicagoland's home remodeling needs. Phone: (847) 439-8775.

Chicago Writer Mike Houlihan at Gaelic Park

Meet Mike Houlihan, former features columnist for the *Chicago Tribune*, current *Irish American News* writer, when he visits Gaelic Park on Sunday, Dec. 14, 2008 to celebrate the debut of his book *Hooliganism*, an anthology of his best columns from *The Irish American News*, *Chicago Tribune Magazine*, and *Chicago Public Radio*. This event is set to begin at about 11:30am, immediately following the monthly Mass and breakfast.

Houlihan's *Hooliganism* captures

the best stories from one of Irish America's funniest raconteurs and is filled with Irish jokes, anecdotes, and preposterous tales.

Mike Houlihan's live production, *Goin' East on Ashland*, is a classic Chicago memoir of Houlihan's Irish Catholic childhood, shot live at the Beverly Arts Center on the southside.

Copies of *Hooliganism* along with the anniversary edition DVD of *Goin' East on Ashland* will be available at the book signing.

Family New Year's Eve Party at Gaelic Park

On New Year's Eve celebrate Ireland's Midnight Hour at Chicago Gaelic Park's Family New Year's Eve Party, Wednesday at Dec. 31, 2008 from 4-8pm in the Tara Room. A

buffet dinner will be served at 5pm, a kid's sparkling juice and adult's champagne toast at 6pm. There will also be a cash bar, party favors, and live entertainment by John Dillon. Tickets are \$27.50 for adults, \$10 for kids 12 and under; 3 & under are free.



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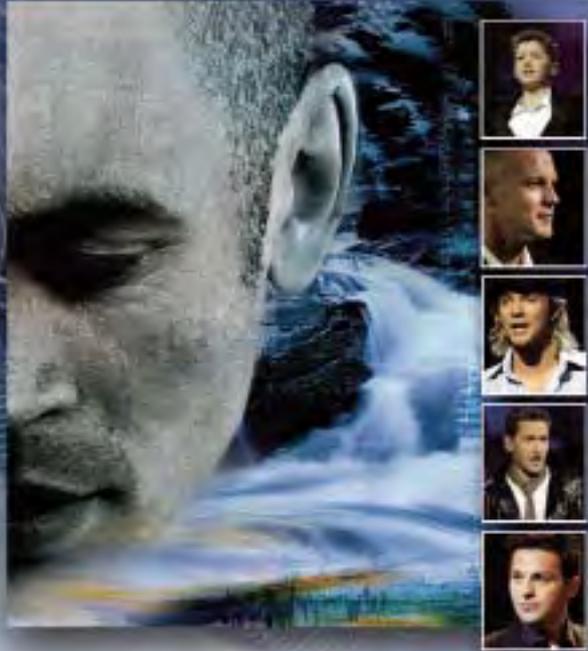
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Irish Festival Cruise

More than 40 hours of traditional Irish entertainment will highlight the 18th Annual Irish Festival Cruise aboard Celebrity Cruise Lines' *Summit* departing from San Juan on January 31, 2009.

This week long cruise to tropical ports of call—St. Maarten, Dominica, Grenada, Bonaire and Aruba—combines the best in Irish music, dance and culture with luxurious Caribbean cruising.

Performers include Maura O'Connell, Johnny McEvoy, Cherish the Ladies, The Black Brothers, balladeers Tommy Sands and Liam Tieran. Also, Don Stiffe, raconteur John Gleeson, seanachie Mike Mazur and world champion Irish dancers Donny Golden and Dan Stacey. The jig will be up when the Matt Cunningham Band takes the stage.

Mary Rowley, executive director of Irish Festival Cruises, says that "a highlight of all Irish Festival Cruises is the enjoyment guests derive from the informal socializing with the performers." In addition to the nightly concerts, there will be a variety of workshops on all things Irish... from learning to dance a jig or speak the Irish language to instructions on the tin whistle and bodhran.

Irish Festival Cruise accommodations, for January 31st through February 7th start in price from

\$1,199.00 per person (based on double occupancy, USD). The price includes all shipboard accommodations, meals and entertainment. The package can only be booked through Irish Festival Cruises, Ltd. at 1-800-441-HARP (4277). The web site is www.irishtours.com

Tony Kennedy at ICHC December 17

Tony Kenny, the star of Jury's Irish Cabaret in Dublin and an internationally-known Irish tenor, brings Christmastime in Ireland to Milwaukee. This program includes many performers who will take you on a magical journey across the sea to the Emerald Isle to experience the traditional joyous blessings of Christmas. Wit, wisdom, laughter, song and dance are tied up with a big green bow to wish you a blessed Christmas.

Fourth in the Hallamór Concert Series at the Irish Cultural Heritage Center, 2133 W. Wisconsin Ave. in Milwaukee, is the Tony Kenny Holiday Show on December 17th at 8pm. Tickets are \$19 in advance; \$21 on concert day. Doors open at 6:45pm.

Also appearing with Kenny are: Joe Cuddy-comic; Victoria Kenny-singer/dancer; Kathy Durkin-vocals and the Dublin City Dancers.

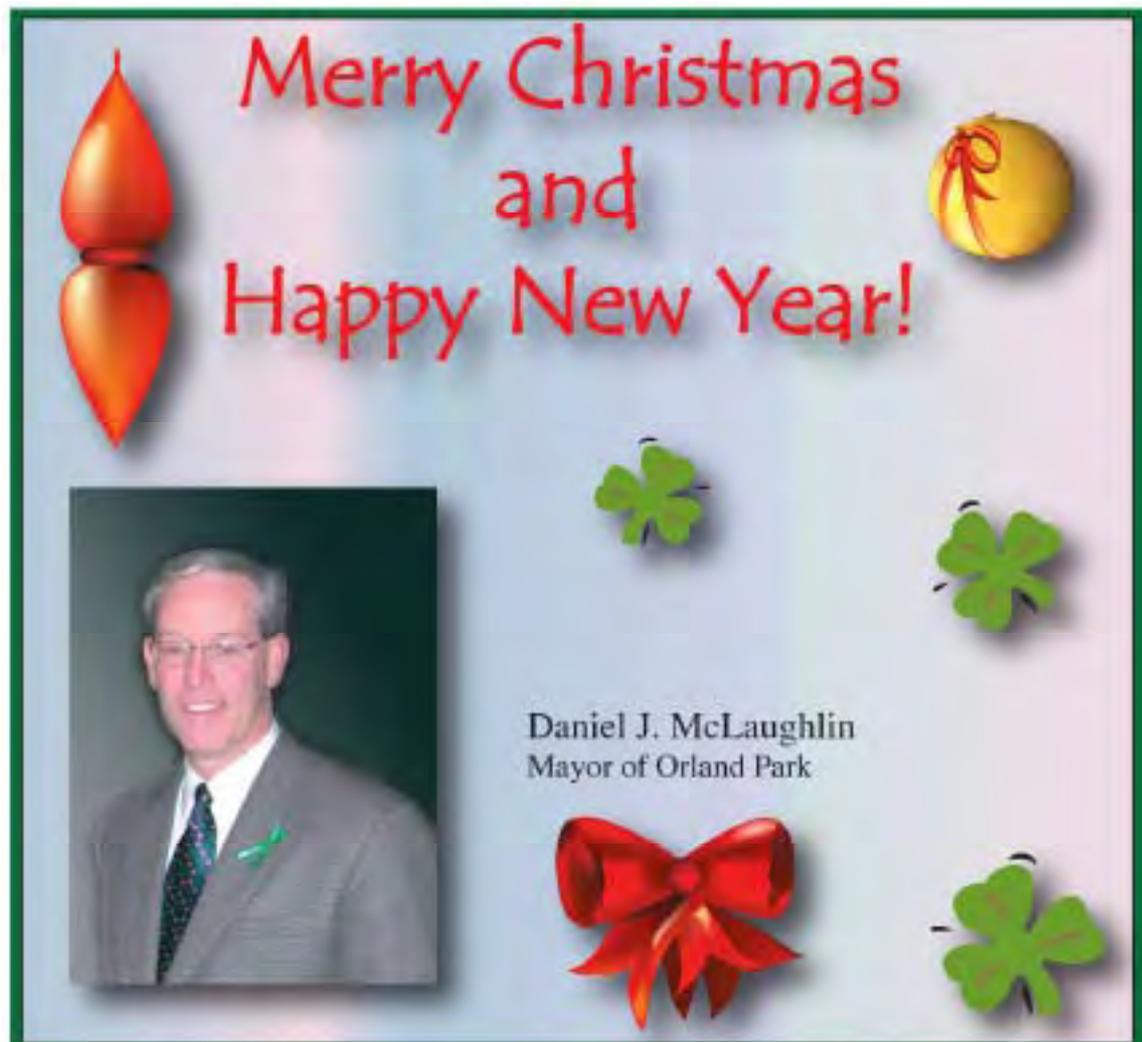
414-345-8800 or www.ichc.net.



Hazardous Waste Disposal Success

The Ridgeland Avenue Solids Waste Management Area West at 119th St. and Ridgeland Ave. in Worth held a Household Hazardous Waste Disposal Day on Oct. 11th. It afforded residents to rid their homes of any hazardous waste such as anti-freeze, auto batteries, insecticides, medicines, empty fire extinguishers, solvents, used oils, pool chemicals, etc. Many area people showed up to get rid of these dangerous items. On hand were representatives from the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago along with the Heritage Environmental Services. Pictured from left is the Commissioner and Vice President Kathleen Therese Meany and Brian Levy, MWRD Associate Civil Engineer and HWH Coordinator.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!




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The Scattering of Sliabh Ban—Part Two

In a 12 part series, this narrative examines some of the more obscure events in Irish history and the effect they had on the families of a small mountain in County Roscommon. It will also reveal the incredible chain of events that led to the discovery of these people as the winds of change delivered a blight upon their main source of food.



This clan would receive some notoriety in the Annals of the Four Masters as already being established chieftains by the year 800 AD. But it is curious that they would also keep an arms length relationship with the very people who were copying and hiding the great works of the known world.

But this isn't a review of Cahill's book, *How the Irish saved Civilization* either. It is only significant that one recognizes that we are going to address a clan with its roots in the 3rd and 4th century and quite probably much earlier.

The clan Mannachain is one of hundreds that evolved from obscurity during the early years of Ireland. At the same time in Connacht were the Flannagan, McGeracty, Mulbrenin, Finaghty, Fallon, Flin, Concanon, Mac Granan, Hanly, Heyn, and Seachnussy. The spellings are, of course, anglicized, as were most things, over time, on the island.

One can see from the earliest annals that O'Mannachain provided entries that brought the poets to proclaim their prowess in verse. And one can see that, on occasion, the Clan sometimes diminished itself through acts of barbarism quite common for the times. There is even a mention or two of some rather sordid events that brought about the most vindictive of retributions.

Annals of the Four Masters M866.9 The Age of Christ, 866

Flann, son of Conaing, lord of all Breagh, collected the men of Breagh and Leinster, and the foreigners, to Cill Ua nDaighre—five thousand was the number of his forces—against the king, Aedh Finnliath.

Aedh had only one thousand, together with Conchobhar, Son of Tadgh Mor, King of Connaught. The battle was eagerly and earnestly fought between them; and the victory was at length gained, by dint of wounding and fighting, over the men of Breagh, the Leinstermen, and the foreigners; and a slaughter was made of them.

Mannachan, lord of Ui Briuin Na Sinna, slew Flann; of which was said:

*Great the triumph for Mannachan,
for the hero of fierce valour,
to have the head of the son of Conaing in his hand,
to exhibit it before the face of the son of Tadgh.*

But we aren't here to glorify or vilify the medieval attributes of the



ClonMacNois

Clan either. The Clan, like the others, lived through a time in Ireland's history that is rich in culture. The games, the arts, the faith, the myths and legends, and even the battles were being passed down from the generations. It is sufficient to say that the clan maintained a level of prominence up to the passing in 1366 of the Statutes of Kilkenny under King Edward III which attempted to marginalize the use of Irish names, Brehon Law, and eliminate the inter-marriage of the Normans, Welsh, Flemings, and English from the Celtic Irish. They even attempted to eliminate the Irish game of hurling, due to its 'violent' nature. The island would see the first of many battles to remove the English presence. But it was the arrival of the Black Death in 1348 that removed the English and Normans from the towns and cities, leaving the Celtic Irish alone in their rural settlements.

So the Clans of the Three Tuaths, as on Sliabh Ban, while now being shuffled among themselves, were left once again

to prosper.

The 17th century however, marked the beginning of the Protestant Ascendancy. Ireland had its own parliament, but the rural Catholics would be excluded from power and land ownership under a continuing



King Edward III

legislation that would eventually come to be known as the Penal Laws. The Cromwellian conquest which ended in 1653 would have all lands taken from the Catholic population and see nearly one third of the population die or disperse.

It is here that we will first witness the break up of the Clans that had made a claim on the land for nearly 1200 years. The Celtic chieftains would surrender their rights only to become tenants to an English landlord who would be granted owner-

ship to the lands in exchange for his services during the Conquest. Those Irish that refused to surrender would be taken as slaves and sold in the West Indies. The resulting economic collapse would result in a famine of 1740 and 1741 that would kill 400,000 people.

The Irish were not allowed to live in towns and bounties were placed on the heads of the monks and priests who were executed when found.

And it is at this point, that our

interest in the Clan Mannachain is refined.

The clan, now Monaghan, still lives on Sliabh, now Slieve, Bawn. Reduced in numbers and tenants on a mountain where once they ruled,



Stroketown House

they become part of the thirty thousand acre Hartland Estate owned now granted to the Mahon family for services rendered during the Conquest.

Reduced to penury after years of punitive restrictions and arbitrary punishment, they are ill prepared to manage the disaster that would overtake them in the fall of 1845. The famine of 1847 was really five years long. And what history fails to mention is that there had been a famine 12 years earlier and another one 10 years prior to that.

But this story isn't about the famine either. It isn't about the landlords, concerned with their rents or the English Parliament wondering how to address the "Irish Question."

And while the focus of the story will eventually fall on two young, ill-fated kids, this particular story isn't about them either.

This story is about the unimaginable set of circumstances that lead to their discovery.

A quick note:

In 2002, after stumbling upon the novel *because they never do*, the story of Michael and Mary, a small group of Chicago's Southside Irish convened the first meeting of **The Scattering Project**. The sole pur-

pose was to get the story of Ireland's famine years made into a film. There has never been a film dedicated to this pivotal event in Irish-American history; perhaps because there was no good way to have it told. This series is a plea for your help.

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An Immigrant's Musings

Fr. Michael Leonard



Expanding Borders, Diminishing Rights

The November "Immigrants Musings," did not make it into print last month, but you can find it on the website at www.iannnews.com under 'columnists.'

New America Media, Commentary, Sophie Feal, Posted: Nov. 12, 2008

Border checks are no longer happening just at the border. Immigration checks are being carried out on passengers traveling domestically in the U.S. writes Sophie Feal, Supervising Immigration Attorney at the Erie County Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project, Inc. in Buffalo, NY. She is a member of the Detention Watch Network, a national coalition working to reform the U.S. immigration detention and deportation system. IMMIGRATION MATTERS regularly features the views of the nation's leading immigrant rights advocates.

Many people may believe that if they are traveling domestically inside the United States, they cannot be questioned about their immigration status. Unfortunately, this is not entirely true. Indeed, in Upstate New York, an alarming number of noncitizens who are out of status and encountered by the U.S. Border Patrol aboard buses and trains from New York City have been arrested, detained and placed in removal proceedings. Those who are not carrying proper immigration documentation with them, such as a "green card" or a passport and I-94 card, may be delayed and subjected to a humiliating interrogation while officials investigate whether they are in fact in status. Amtrak and Greyhound provide no

warning to their passengers that they may be subject to such inspections by immigration authorities.

It is clear that when a person is seeking to enter the United States at a border point, or a port-of-entry as immigration law refers to it, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers can request a passport and a visa, if required, or other appropriate identification, and can inquire in detail about the reason why one wants to come into the country. Therefore, there are very few rights at the border. The Government is authorized to question individuals to determine whether they have a legitimate right to enter or remain in the U.S. This is called the inspection process.

However, this process is not just limited to the physical border. There is a provision in the immigration law that treats a distance of up to 100 miles from an international border as its "functional equivalent." This allows Border Patrol and other immigration officials to enter and search vessels, buses, trains, and vehicles traveling inside the U.S. to determine whether those aboard are legally in the country. These searches extend to train and bus stations, and even airports which have no international flights. Recently, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) issued a fact sheet on the "Constitution-Free Zone,:" this area 100 miles from an international border, including the U.S. coastline. The organization calculates that 197.4 million people live in this zone.

In Upstate New York, the Border Patrol has generally extended its power to stop and question within the "functional equivalent of the border" to only 25 miles from the physical border. Nonetheless, since

400 miles of New York State borders Canada, this still means that all major Upstate cities, including Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Albany, are within Border Patrol's jurisdiction. Moreover, these four cities lie along Interstate 90, a major pathway for buses and trains from New York City to points westward, such as Cleveland, Detroit and Chicago and onward.

The "functional equivalent of the border" rule gives immigration authorities broad powers to conduct transportation checks farther from the actual border in order to stop and question people about their immigration status, as well as to establish checkpoints inside the U.S. However, this does not mean that one gives up all of his or her rights. The Fourth Amendment of the United States Constitution protects people from unreasonable searches and seizures by law enforcement. Therefore, a law enforcement officer must have a search warrant or the consent of an occupant to enter a dwelling. Similarly, outside of a checkpoint, immigration officials must have a reasonable suspicion that a U.S. immigration law has been violated in order to stop a car, as well as probable cause or a warrant to search the car. It is also very important for individuals to know that, if stopped by Border Patrol at a bus or a train station or at an airport, even within the area known as the "functional equivalent" of the border, they still have the right to remain silent and may refuse to respond and walk away.

Since 9/11, given the concern that terrorists might enter the United States from Canada, there has been a steady increase in agents conducting checks along the Northern border. While in 2001 only 340 immigration agents were assigned to this border, by next year, there will be 1800. These agents are aggressively patrolling the region: they board buses, trains and ferries to question people about their status in the U.S. and they operate undercover in area's airports as well. Although it has publicly denied doing so, immigrant advocates express concern that the Border Patrol is engaging in racial profiling during its transportation checks to determine who is not a U.S. citizen.

While civil rights organizations like the ACLU justifiably view the transportation checks as a broad and illegitimate expansion of law enforcement's authority to protect U.S. borders, there have been no legal challenges of the law to date. For individuals caught up in the dragnet, nonetheless, the consequences are

severe.

Christmas

I take this opportunity to wish all our friends and supporters a blessed Christmas. One of the sentiments that Christmas is meant to inspire in us is gratitude. I wish to express our sincere thanks to all those who support us whether it is in terms of time, talents or treasure. The fact is,

without your support, particularly the financial support which we receive we would not be able to provide the services that we offer.

It is my fervent prayer that you may be blessed both spiritually and materially this Christmas and through 2009.

"Christmas gift suggestions:

To your enemy, forgiveness.

To an opponent, tolerance.

Celtic Jewelry Thriving in 21st Century

By Leigh Maher

Celtic history is rich and varied, with a strong storytelling tradition and intricate artwork that retains its appeal after thousands of years. From the Book of Kells, Ireland's greatest national art treasure, to the Ardagh Chalice and the Tara Brooch, we can enjoy the mystery and spirituality of the Celtic people in museums and galleries. We can find examples of the refined knot work and other signatures of Irish Celtic design in a more modern format.

The old traditions are still alive. Modern artisans still create special pieces of Celtic jewelry by hand in the form of wedding bands, engagement rings, and pendants.

If you are of Celtic heritage, you may be drawn to these ancient symbols and wonder about their meaning and significance. It's fascinating to learn about the common symbols that reappear in today's jewelry designs.

The common thread that runs through all the symbolism in Celtic art is spirituality, the love of God, and the belief in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. From Shamrocks, with their three leaves which symbolize the Holy Trinity, to Love Knots which illustrate the endlessness of God's love and forgiveness, there is a touching faith that comes through again and again in Celtic rings and other jewelry designs.

If you share this faith, your jewelry will become a potent reminder of what is truly important in life. You may find your ring, earrings or pendant become imbued with great sentimental value over the years, and your heirloom-quality piece will be passed down from generation to generation. It is important to honor your Celtic heritage, and to remember where you came from. Celtic jewelry is an excellent way to show your pride in your ancestry.

If you are planning to buy a special gift for a loved one, you might consider a traditional Irish Claddagh

ring to symbolize your love and faithfulness. These romantic rings are a timeless way to tell someone that you care so much for them.

You can also enjoy more subtle designs that offer a little touch of Celtic design, while also employing modern design elements. An example would be a classic solitaire Celtic engagement ring that features intricate knot work on either side of the central stone. The love knots are so uniquely Celtic, and they also provide an excellent setting for a diamond. These engagement rings are classic, handcrafted in Ireland, and fully assayed.

If you do consider purchasing a Celtic jewelry design, be sure it is the real thing: find a reputable firm that operates under the highest standards of authenticity and craftsmanship. Then, you can be sure your Irish Celtic design is genuine and will retain its value over time.

If you are looking for a bolder look consider a ring that utilizes the symbols found on the Ardagh Chalice, one of Ireland's greatest historical treasures. You can find rings with carefully engraved shield symbols, modeled on those found around the base of the Chalice itself.

These Ardagh features work beautifully for men's wedding bands: they really capture the Celtic warrior spirit: faith, courage, and bravery. These rings give a more rugged, masculine feel, and they are very individual. If you are looking for something that really expresses your personality, this type of design could be just what you are looking for.

We hope you've enjoyed this overview of Celtic symbolism as it relates to modern jewelry designs. You can be sure of finding the perfect piece for you, if you consider the deeper meanings so common in Celtic art and mythology.

Leigh Maher of Irish Celtic Jewels researches and writes about Celtic jewelry as well as Irish history and Culture.



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Careers



James F. Fitzgerald, CPA



What are the traits for corporate success?

For those who have read my last two columns, you know that in July, I highlighted five “rules” that my friend, Maureen Kane Wade, shared with her elementary classes in the Chicago school system year after year. Maureen felt that close adherence to these five rules would enhance the odds that her students would be able to keep their jobs. Let me briefly restate those five rules:

1. Show up everyday
2. Be on time
3. Follow directions
4. Get along with your co-workers
5. Be able to be trusted

My October column highlighted six traits that my friend, Bob Ward, suggested are key to success for those in the job search process and ultimately in their job itself. Bob is principal in his own Naperville-based executive search firm, Ward and Associates. Those traits are:

1. Personality
2. Suitability
3. Intelligence
4. Character
5. Accomplished
6. Sense of Purpose.

For this month’s column, I asked another friend, Tim Corry, to give us his insights on traits that will help a person to be successful once they are actually working for a corporation. Tim is a senior human resources officer with Supervalu here in Chicago. He has been in the human resources field for more than 20 years. When he is assessing individuals for leadership positions within his company, he determines how they match up against the following traits:

1. Executive Presence
2. Preparation and follow-up
3. Character
4. Ownership
5. Leadership
6. Execution
7. Risk taking

EXECUTIVE PRESENCE. Does the person being assessed persuade you by his/her manner and personal appearance that they are someone to be reckoned with? Do they make direct eye contact with you? Do they have a firm handshake? In my experience, unfortunately many times companies ignore these signs because the individual brings a certain desired skill

or strength.

PREPARATION & FOLLOW UP.

Tim says that he is always impressed with the individuals who give evidence that they have prepared for a meeting. Haven’t you been in meetings where it is quite apparent that certain individuals are trying to hide themselves at the end of the table? It reminds me of the student who would hide behind the person sitting in front of him so the teacher wouldn’t call on him. The prepared individual gives evidence of his commitment and dedication to the organization. Don’t you find it impressive when someone assures you that they have done the preparatory work necessary under the specific circumstances?

CHARACTER. The studies documented by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner in their book, *The Leadership Challenge*, say that the most admired trait of a leader is honesty. Every other characteristic falls away if the individual does not demonstrate his honesty. If you don’t trust your boss, can you really give 100%? Don’t you find it interesting to see how your boss conducts himself when he feels no one is watching? According to Michael Josephson, president of Josephson Institute of Ethics in Los Angeles, “The higher up you are, the more intolerable dishonesty needs to be, and yet it almost seems the reverse.”

OWNERSHIP. Does the individual being assessed readily accept responsibility? Most of us find it admirable when someone steps up and claims responsibility for the task at hand. After just watching a million or more ads for various candidates during the recent election, don’t you crave a person who takes ownership of his/her actions, rather than simply pointing fingers at the other person or party?

LEADERSHIP. How do you assess the leadership quotient for the individual being assessed? Most people would say that you should look to the person’s past. Has the person excelled in previous, smaller leadership posts? Does a search of a person’s background give evidence that s/he has had leadership roles in school, sports, academic pursuits, community activities or the military?

In my experience, effective senior executives have commonly demonstrated their leadership acumen by climbing a ladder of increasingly more difficult positions throughout their

earlier lives. Hopefully one’s past successes are a foretelling of their yet to be achieved successes. Thomas Jefferson was quoted as saying, “On matters of style, swim with the current; on matters of principle, stand like a rock.” Some would say that quote isn’t a half bad definition of leadership. It can be a real challenge to distinguish between style and principle.

EXECUTION. Perhaps the \$64,000 question is can this person deliver on your expectations? As President Ronald Reagan used to say, “Trust but verify.” This is not a matter of being a skeptic, but simply a suggestion that you get behind a person’s claims.

RISK TAKING. Is this person capable of taking a risk? General Colin Powell stated in his *Leadership Primer*, that once the probability of success is in the 40 to 70 range, go with your gut. He says that procrastination in the name of reducing risk actually increases risk.

In the *Primer*, Powell says when he was choosing people “he would look for intelligence, judgment, and most critically a capacity to anticipate, to see around corners.” He would look also for loyalty, integrity, energy, drive, and a balanced ego.

Many successful business executives say that they do not consider themselves to be high rollers when it comes to risk. Rather they say, they are calculated risk takers. John Gardner, the former head of HEW, said, “One of the reasons mature people stop learning is that they become less and less willing to risk failure.” Does this quote speak to you?

I always feel compelled to measure myself against the criteria in articles such as this. It might be even more helpful if you had a friend assess you on each of these traits. As we begin this New Year, perhaps it would be a worthwhile exercise, which will get you ready to write a sensational list of New Year resolutions.

For those of us who are hesitant about adopting any resolutions this New Year, you might want to consider the quote from Pope John XXIII, who said: “Consult not your fears, but your hopes and your dreams. Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential. Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in, but with what it is still possible for you to do.”

Hope that 2009 proves to be a wonderful year for you, your family and our country. *Carpe Diem.*

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



William Dougherty, 1st Vice President of the Fraternal Order of Police, Chicago Lodge #7, served as Chairman of the “Annual Flu Shot Day” which was held recently at F.O.P. headquarters at 1412 W. Washington Blvd. Police Officers from all over the city took advantage of the program. Pictured is Officer Kelly Brogan.

Seven Steps To Take Before The Hammer Drops!

By James F. Fitzgerald, CPA

As we head into the New Year, it is fair to speculate that given the financial crisis more people are going to lose their jobs. Cutbacks are not normally done with surgical precision but rather they are done with a blunt instrument, so that even outstanding performers such as you can be terminated. As an experienced outplacement consultant, I have seen people who were “downsized” express great disbelief that they were being released by their employers. I have SEVEN suggestions which might be helpful to anyone in today’s work force.

1. DON’T BE NAIVE. Get your head out of the clouds. Everyone is expendable. You need to realize that the pink slip could be handed to you tomorrow.

2. BE PREPARED. Being terminated shouldn’t be cause for panic, if you have prepared for it. To start with, examine your spending habits immediately. Once you are unemployed, put your credit cards in the drawer and leave them there. Being unemployed and having a pile of debts can be a toxic combination, it can immobilize you. Being unemployed, but financially stable, is a whole different scene.

3. PREPARE A RESUME NOW. Once a person has been terminated, preparing a resume seems to take on extraordinary proportions. It’s akin to writing your will while you are on your death bed. Why not draft your sales brochure (aka resume) now? Its existence will mitigate your angst.

4. DEVELOP A SEPARATE LIST OF ACHIEVEMENTS. The very nature of preparing a resume seems to restrict people from recognizing many of their most significant achievements. If you feel that you have done a great job for your employer(s), tell the reader why they should be impressed, by detailing and focusing on your achievements.

5. START A LIST OF PERSONAL CONTACTS. I conducted a survey recently and asked current job seekers how many contacts they had when they started their job search. Only 2 out of 22 job seekers said they had more than 40 personal contacts. Several respondents said they had 10 or less. Create a system of getting back in touch with your personal contacts; try to expand your list everyday. Calling them before you need their help will probably work in your favor.

6. PREPARE A LIST OF REFERENCES. Having excellent references who will speak on your behalf can be a real morale booster. Ask them for their advice, and of course, access to their personal contacts.

7. MAKE YOURSELF VISIBLE. Get back in the flow. Go to those professional meetings that you have routinely ignored. Reconnect with your peers. Again, it is better to connect with them before you need their help.

These seven suggestions will not eliminate the possibility that you might be downsized but they will mitigate some of the negative effects. Good luck in the New Year.

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The Irish Rover

By James McClure



Four Decades, Two Sons, One Murder

It was something I felt I always owed myself as a lifelong journalist and now columnist for *Irish American News*. As I ended my regular workday as a public relations manager for a PR agency, I left our downtown office doing what every Chicago newsman should traditionally do at days' end.

So I strode out past the *Channel 5* 4:30 newscast going on in my building, walked a few steps away past the WGN radio broadcast taking place in the Tribune Tower studio along Michigan Avenue, and ducked down the steps below the *Chicago Tribune* to the ultimate hangout for *Trib*, *Sun-Times* and other newspeople: the Billy Goat Tavern.

Billy Goat's was made world-

famous in one of the first *Saturday Night Live* skits in the 1970's parodying its owner and Greek brothers shouting out orders of "CHEESBORGER-CHEESBORGER-CHEESBORGER!" at the subterranean bar and grill just under the Michigan Avenue bridge and just north of the Wrigley Building. Like any Chicago kid I'd been here a few times over the years but this time I thought... Hey, I really am a newspaperman now. Maybe I can hang out with somebody from the *Tribune* and swap war stories about great events covered over the years.

"Are you a newspaperman?" a very pretty, bright eyed woman about my age asked. Oh boy. My chance to hang and wax philosophic about the news of the day had come. "My husband is a newspaperman, and his name is O'Connell... you should meet!"

Hmmm... well as usual the good women are taken but this was still a dream... rubbing elbows with a newsman in Billy Goat's. It turns out Denise O'Connell's husband Bill is not only an editor at the *Chicago Tribune*, but also the author of a new book he was signing that night... *Fourteen*.

O'Connell is a soft-spoken, reflective man. We only had a minute or so together before the book signing started but I was moved by the nature of the book, an examination of the murder case of O'Connell's little league teammate in Joliet many

years ago. It's clear that in many ways a fourteen year old boy he barely knew was still with him today. I was also moved after reading Bill's note to me when he signed the book I purchased.

4-16-08 Jim: Thanks for taking this trip with me to Joliet, Illinois circa 1968. All the best! Peace, Bill O'C.

Peace? In the preamble to a book about a senseless murder of a young boy by two other boys? In the course of reading the book in the following weeks of summer I came to understand that this was Bill's journey toward peace, and that of so many others from the shocking events of September 16th, 1968. For on that day, in a year that saw the death of two men of peace—Martin Luther King in Memphis and Bobby Kennedy in Los Angeles—two boys aged 14 in Joliet took the life of another 14-year-old boy.

It's hard to describe in the few words I have here the impact this book had as I read it. For anyone who came of age in the late 1960's, anyone who has ever had a teenage son or grandson, anyone unfortunate enough to be touched by murder or death... O'Connell captures the time, memorializes the victim, follows the impact, and traces the paths of both the two assailants, who are still in prison, and the family of David Stukel, who carry on.

David Stukel was a quiet, happy, well-rounded boy from a well-rounded Catholic family in the working class section of Joliet. His senseless abduction, rape, and murder by two same-aged teen boys who knew only abuse and disaffection makes O'Connell's storytelling, personal reflection, objective reporting and marvelous dogged follow-up investigation of the criminal and parole process a multifaceted journey through the geography of good and

evil, pain and healing, justice and questions which may never be fully answered. "I don't think there is any sort of closure to something like this," says the reporter-author.

O'Connell, a year older than Stukel, met him when they both played on the East Side little league team in 1965. The fellow boy of summer, now in his mid-fifties, paints an apt picture of the time and place where the inconceivable slaying of a five-foot, 95 pound boy took place on his short walk home from school.

"Though we are teenagers, we are not insulated from the atrocities in Southeast Asia, the finalities of assassin's bullets, the bigotry in the Deep South, and the brutality just up the road at the Democratic National Convention," writes O'Connell. And true to his inscription in my copy of *Fourteen, The Murder of David Stukel* (ocbooks.org) he takes me back to a time when I and many of us had "infectious smiles" like David and were listening to the Beatles and The Young Rascals on our transistor radios, along with the shocking news of the day.

"Joliet circa 1968 is a city of chalices and calluses, with taverns and tabernacles seemingly on every other corner, and time clocks clicking without pause at steel mills, rail yards and refineries."

Time has not stood still since David Stukel died, and O'Connell doggedly pursued what happened up until present day to murderers Billy Rose Sprinkle and James Perruquet.

On this mid-November night in writing this column I asked O'Connell for an update, and he's clearly still affected by and following the aftermath of this event. He tells me that Sprinkle was denied parole in August and that in January Perruquet is up before the Prison Review Board for a possible clemency hearing for another murder which took

place in 1978.

"David's death stuck with me over the years," says O'Connell. "It was something I talked about for more than 30 years, and it was something I needed to write about."

O'Connell found himself back in the Chicago area after adult years in Denver newspapering. And over an exhaustive five year period of off-hours from the *Tribune* he compiled



the research, interviews and personal reflections that make this striking book part novel, part crime investigation, part personal journal. "That's what makes the book somewhat unique," he says with now familiar humility.

Along the way you feel yourself posing alongside David, as Bill did, for just one team photo. You'll sit with O'Connell in parole hearings modern day, and join him in healing present times when "just like one of the family" he sits down to share simple grilled cheese meals with David's parents Ray and Marilyn. "We eat, laugh and drink milk and juice from a set of glasses that David had given to his mom the year he died," writes O'Connell in a closing chapter titled "We've Been Blessed."

That chapter shows a 2003 gathering of the Stukel clan at Christmas, describes a central china cabinet sculpture of the letters "JESUS" and quotes David's father Ray as saying "I don't think I ever did stop seeing the beauty in the world. We have much to be thankful for."

"I think they picture David in Heaven as age 14, happy and riding on his bike," reflected O'Connell as I asked him about faith and friendship, crime and continuance. "I believe in God and I think their belief got them through it."

He himself faced defining moments as a father. Halfway through work on the book his son Kyle was diagnosed with brain cancer and just months to live. "I thought, now it's going to be my turn to learn what it's like to lose a child." Fortunately Bill O'Connell's son not only survived two surgeries but four years later, today is doing well in college in Colorado.

"We feel blessed. Every Thanksgiving is a true thanksgiving." After quietly excusing himself to head out on the town with Denise, I think of the O'Connells and Stukels, families together come what may, and families in eternity reunited and blessed.

"Peace" indeed.

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Cruising with the Clancys

Article and Photos by Jim Keating
(Michigan Correspondent's Note:
This article is written by Muskegon
Irish American Society member Jim
Keating, who grew up in Chicago
before his career as a college teacher
in Kalamazoo and retirement in
Muskegon, Michigan.)

As a youngster growing up in Chicago, my only knowledge of Irish music was the American Irish songs, like "Too ra Loo ra, Loo ra," and "McNamara's Band," that my mother taught us to sing from Bing Crosby albums. In the 1960s, the Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem changed all that, bursting on the scene with traditional Irish music. Bob Dylan called Liam Clancy the best ballad singer he had ever heard. Wanting to hear Liam's current offerings, I went to his website to see what I could suggest my children give me for Christmas. I discovered that Liam would be featured on an Irish music cruise to the Mexican Riviera in January. When I called the cruise organizer, I discovered that Liam no longer sings in the U.S., but does this yearly cruise, along with relatives Aoife Clancy, Robby O'Connell, the sons of Tommy Makem, and a host of other Irish performers.

I have never had the desire to take a cruise. My fear was that after a week of constant eating, drinking and sunning, I would spend the next two months trying to lose the weight I had gained. It didn't seem worth it. But Liam is the last man standing of the Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem, since Tommy passed away this past year, so my wife Clare and I decided to sign up.

There were more than 20 performers on board, including Danny Doyle, another favorite balladeer of mine. On seven of the eight nights, there were concerts from 9 till midnight. One night was dedicated to Tommy Makem's songs, and another was all Liam's music. In addition, there were three afternoon jam sessions at which anyone was invited to sing. With such a line up of Irish musical stars present, it was a bit intimidating, but three of us did offer a song.

If that wasn't enough music, the group sought out bars after midnight to continue informal jam sessions into the morning hours. Two of the surprises to me were Gabriel Donohue, who was an accompanist at the Muskegon Irish Festival a few years back and seemed to be able to play any instrument that makes

music, and Ciaran Sheehan, a tenor who had played the lead in *Phantom of the Opera* and *Les Miserables*. He treated us with pieces from both, as well as Dublin street songs.

Fiona Walsh, a comedienne, did a show and acted as emcee at times. One of the entertaining sidelights of the trip was the witty banter that flowed between the congenial group of performers. At an after-hours session, the crowd was coaxing one of the Makems to do a song. Just then the phone on the bar rang, and instantly his brother Rory chipped in, "See, they're even phoning in requests."

Paddy Homan to Headline Crossroads Ceili in Ann Arbor at the Ark

Michigan's premier folk music performance venue, the Ark in Ann Arbor, has announced that none other than Paddy Homan, late of Chicago, will be the headliner for its Crossroads Ceili on Saturday, December 27th and Sunday, December 28th.

The Ark's annual Crossroads Ceili is a great way to mark the turning of the year. It's a gathering of local Irish music singers, instrumentalists, and dancers, all sharing the stage with

The cruise stopped in five ports, including Acapulco, where Clare and I got to see the famous cliff divers, and Cabo San Lucas, where we parasailed at 700 feet. In addition, the stops gave us glimpses of places we

Next year's Clancy cruise is from January 18 to 25, 2009. It goes from Tampa to Key West, Guatemala's Mayan ruins, Belize and Mexico. Most of the same entertainers will be performing, but Danny Doyle will be replaced by an entertainer familiar to all of us, Seamus Kennedy. Call 888 56-IRISH, or www.irishmusic-cruises.com.

a nationally known headliner. This year's special guest is Paddy Homan, a traditional Irish singer from Cork whose powerful voice has been the talk of Chicago's Irish scene. The bard of Cork and the River Lee is now the bard of Chicago and Lake Michigan! Other performers include Wallace Hood (of the Irish Rovers); Ray McGuire; Ann Arbor native, Kelsey Lutz who is a two-time All-Ireland competition silver medal

Irish American News Michigan



Fiona Walsh, Shannon Eaton, Aoife Clancy after last show.

winner in trio and groupa ceol; The Gavin Family featuring Sean Gavin just back from a European tour of Celtic Legends; Michael Flatley Award-winner Holland Raper; traditional dancer Nic Gareiss, Colleen Shanks on flute, and dancers from the Heinzman School of Dance. Workshops (fiddle, flute, tenor banjo, penny whistle, uilleann pipes, guitar accompaniment, button accordion,

and mandolin) will be offered by advance registration only on Saturday afternoon. Call 313-537-3489 for more information and to register.

You can also get more information the Ark's website www.theark.org.

Other Irish music acts performing at the Ark in December are Teada with Karan Casey on Wednesday the 17th, and Finvarra's Wren on Saturday the 20th.

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Piping It In

Jack Baker



Happy December! I'm being politically correct here, there are so many holidays this month, celebrated by so many groups and I don't want to slight anyone by not mentioning their holiday. Sound the crotchety old man alert! All you kids get off my lawn! I don't know why the holiday season does this to me. Definitely need more egg nog, and cowbell.

Pipe Major

Ian Swinton Retires

After 34 years of leading the Midlothian Scottish Pipe Band, Pipe Major Ian Swinton has announced his retirement. Mind, this is the second time Ian has stepped down since I've known him and he's still a young man, next to me anyway. I expect he'll continue to judge at piping competitions as he is still an active member of the MidWest Pipe Band Association Adjudicator Panel. So we have not seen the last of Ian Swinton and frankly I hope we never do.

The new Pipe Major of Midlothian is Pipe Major Adrian Melvin from Dundee, Scotland. I wish him all the luck and success in the coming competition season.

Ann Arbor

Pipes And Drums

Pipe Major Robert Droppelman of the Ann Arbor Pipes and Drums is looking for pipers and drummers. Ann Arbor is a Grade 3 band and they are interested in adding a competitive grade 5 band this next year. If you're interested contact the Pipe Major at rdropp@earthlink.net

New CDs

Malinky has released a new CD called *Flower and Iron* that shows how enjoyable trad music is, when it's done right. My favorite cut? Tough call but I'm partial to track 8, "The Drunken Duck" probably for the history of the tune and the visions it inspires. This band gets better and better. Fiona Hunter's vocals are superb.

I received a play copy of a recording that I probably wouldn't have ordered had I not heard it. La Musga_a is a group from Spain that has been performing for 20 years and, I had never heard of them. They play Latin folk and traditional baroque featuring hurdy-gurdy, accordion, clay drum,

pipes, flutes and lutes. Rather like Blowzabella but from Madrid. This CD, *20*, features cuts from all of their CDs from the last 20 years. Good listening and highlights the Celtic influence in Spanish folk.

Top Ten Christmas Cds

We've sort of started a tradition of listing our top ten Christmas CDs, but, I have made a couple provisos. First off, the CD has to be in print. I've got some lovely bits in my personal collection that will never come into circulation again, what good does it do to tell you about them if you can't get a copy for yourself?

Secondly, I've got eleven that I think deserve mention, so here goes... in no particular order...

1. *bo-Ho-Ho-hola*, by Bohola, new this year from one of Chicago's finest trad bands, it has everything; laughter, tears and fine music.

2. *Goodwill to Men*, by Seamus Kennedy. I've written often about how much I like Seamus' music, is it any wonder that his Christmas CD is a winner?

3. *An Nollaig, An Irish Christmas*, by Eileen Ivers. Featuring Eileen's magic violin and the incomparable voice of Tommy MacDonnell, it was a best seller last year.

4. *Noel, a BC Christmas!*, by Brigid's Cross. The same joy that Paul, Peggy and Richie share with their audience is here on their Christmas CD. Lots of non-traditional fun and heart-felt sincerity.

5. *Christmas Carols*, by the Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin. Recorded live in the cathedral, this CD gives you the big church sound that brings a lump to your throat



and makes you resolve to be a better person.

6. *Gentle Christmas*, by Gavin Coyle. Can this boy sing! My favorite tenor, he turns these traditional carols and Christmas songs into

works of art. If you haven't heard Gavin sing, be nice to yourself and give him a listen.

7. *On Christmas Night*, by Cherish the Ladies. A CD you'll certainly cherish by one of the finest traditional Irish bands around.

8. *A Celtic Christmas*, by Iain MacHarg. One of the finest pipers in



the US, Iain MacHarg put together this lovely collection of popular tunes performed on pipes, flute and whistle. A beautiful Christmas instrumental by this Vermont piper.

9. *Tommy Makem's Christmas* by who else. Do you still feel the pain of missing Tommy's voice? I do. This lovely recording, his only Christmas CD, takes away some of the hurt and brings back great memories of seeing the man who dug the well perform.

10. *Duan Nollaig*, by Fiona MacKenzie. Here's one that could give voice lessons to the angels. This 2 CD set of carols sung in Scots Gaelic came out last year on Greentrax and it's been one of our favorites since.

11. *Bah! Humbug, the Alternative Christmas Album*, by various demented artists. Got to have some fun at Christmas and this one is the best. Contains Eric Bogle's "Santa Bloody Claus" and Robin Laing's "I'm the Man Who Slits the Turkey's Throats at Christmas" and others just as strange. It has been called "the thinking man's Christmas CD", it's also been called "bloody bizarre", you make up your own mind. We enjoy it and I think you will too.

We saw some new and wonderful things this year and some strange and not-so-wonderful things. We've got a new President who graduated at the top of his class. I wish him well. I sure wouldn't want his job. I hope that you'll all have a happy & healthy holiday season and that you'll come by and visit us in the store. Please go to the Irish American Heritage Center for the Christmas Festival on Sunday December 7th, one of the best Christmas Shopping opportunities you'll have and it all goes to help the Center. *Slainte!*

Catch up with me at Rampant Lion Celtic Traders, 47 S. Villa Avenue, Villa Park, IL 60181 or give me a call at 630-834-8108.

Dr. Hogg on Fox TV December 13

Dr. James Hogg, an Oak Lawn dentist, will be featured on the American Health Front Show, Saturday, Dec. 13, at 6:30 p.m. on Fox TV.

The show will discuss the use of oral appliance for treatment of snoring and Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA). Although previously thought to be annoying but harmless, snoring can be a red flag for a life threatening medical condition known as OSA. Snoring is caused by the vibration of the soft palate and walls of the throat. In OSA, the airway collapses forcing the patient to sit up and gasp for air. These events can occur up to several hundred times per night. The patient wakes up feeling exhausted. They are less focused at work and three times as likely to be in an automobile accident. As the condition worsens, over time, the patient is at an increased risk for heart attacks, strokes and sudden death.

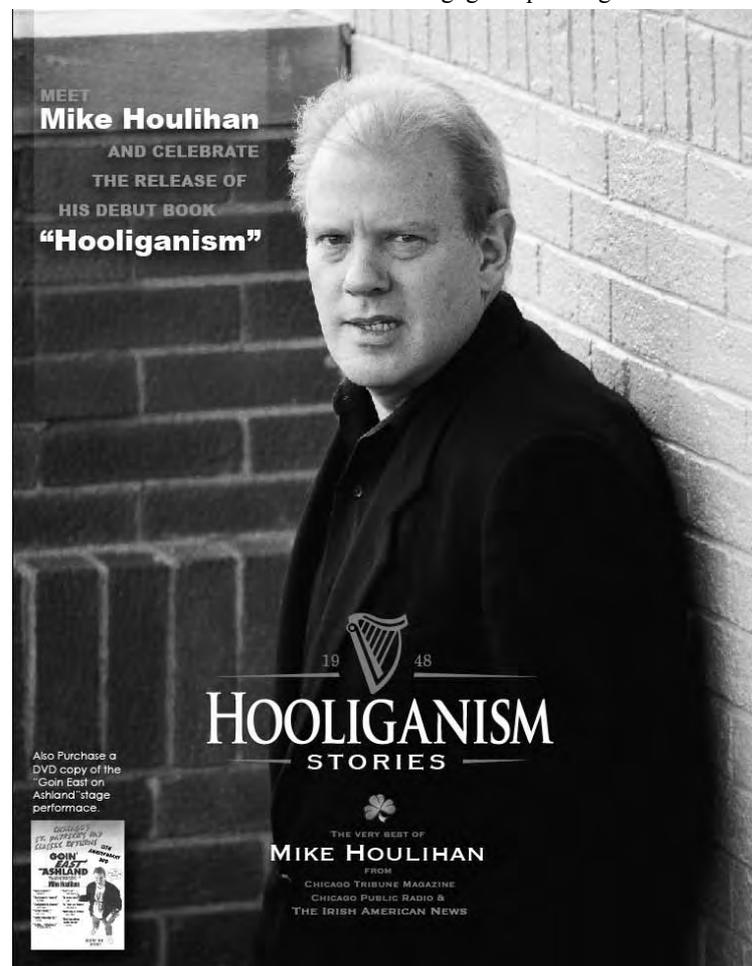
In the past, this condition was only treated by painful surgeries and/or CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) machines. These machines although effective are uncomfortable to wear and up to 50% of patients discontinued use within a year.

Dr. Hogg uses small custom fitted mouth guards to slowly move the lower jaw forward and open up the breather passage. These comfortable appliances are approved by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and are effective in two-thirds of all cases. The patients report having more energy, less headaches and less complaints from spouses. The treatment is often times covered by the patient's medical insurance. Dr. Hogg is a member of the Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine and is applying for Diplomate status in 2009. 708-422-1900.



Mingle & Jingle Christmas Party at Gaelic Park

The Mingle & Jingle, Dec. 11th and Dec. 18th, is a great way for small offices or groups to join together with others in the area for one big holiday celebration. For \$36 per person, the party, which runs from 6-10:30pm, includes a four and a half hour open bar, a delicious buffet dinner, and a live DJ. 708-687-9323 or visit www.chicagogaelicpark.org.



Mike's column

is available on
the website

this month at www.iannews.com.



Mick

Mike Morley



For The Republic



Chris Fogarty



R.I.P. Heartfelt condolences to Clifden-born Eileen nee O'Malley and Inishmore-born Patrick Joyce and family in the tragic loss of their son and brother, Mark, 24, in a recent auto accident.

THE WHITE HOUSE, constructed by slaves, will soon house slaves' descendants, the wife and children of an African-American US president. What a change! Our national claim of equality at long last approximates reality. African-America's celebrations remind us that the long night of injustice once imposed upon them is still not entirely over. Though for nearly two centuries Anti-Irish bigotry here hadn't been as brutal as what African-Americans faced we still recall our similar pride and relief when JFK won the White House.

PRESIDENT OBAMA faces greater problems than any incoming president in US history excepting, perhaps, Lincoln. Obama and the three branches of gov't must restore our Constitution and establish their own lawfulness by prosecuting those now violating it. We must abolish official torture that so shames patriotic Americans and sullies our international reputation. Simultaneously Obama must terminate Bush's Supreme Crime, the genocide against Iraq and attempt to undo it by removing all our troops and paying reparations for the 1.29

millions murdered and the 5 million made refugees and for all the damaged and looted property. He must protect the US by ending US policies that prompted 9/11.

TERRORISM. One of the most popular white supremacist blogs gained more than 2,000 new members the day after the election, compared with 91 new members on Election Day, according to an AP count. The site, stormfront.org, was temporarily off-line Nov. 5 because of the overwhelming amount of activity it received after Election Day. On Saturday, one Stormfront poster, identified as Dalderian Germanicus of North Las Vegas, said, "I want the SOB laid out in a box to see how 'messiahs' come to rest. God has abandoned us, this country is doomed."

THE FBI (evidently a non-criminal portion of it) earlier reported that death threats against Obama spiked after each time Sarah Palin demonized Obama by misrepresenting Ayers' past and Obama's connection to him. The AP reports; "Election spurs 'hundreds' of race threats, crimes." Space here precludes the lengthy and tragic details.

FOREIGN ENTANGLEMENTS. For many of us, it was mostly Obama's genuflection to the Israeli lobby that made us work for third party candidates. How prescient was congressional speaker John Quincy Adams on

July 4, 1821: "America goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own. She well knows that by once enlisting under banners other than her own, were they even the banners of foreign independence, she would involve herself beyond the powers of extrication, in all the wars of interest and intrigue, of individual avarice, envy, and ambition, which assume the colors and usurp the standard of freedom." That is what we must reestablish.

ISRAEL'S GENOCIDE of Palestine, long funded by our taxes, was promised full support by Obama (as it was by McCain/Palin) moving patriots and pro-lifers to support third parties. Obama soon confirmed our worst fears by appointing Rahm Emanuel his Chief of Staff. Emanuel is a Gulf War vet; but of the Israeli military, not ours. The day after his appointment the Israeli newspaper Ma'ariv, headlined; "Our Man in the White House." Rahm's father, Benjamin, told Ma'ariv, "Obviously he'll influence Obama to be pro-Israel. Why wouldn't he? What is he, an Arab? He's not going to be mopping floors at the White House." Benjamin, in 1948 and later, participated in the still unredressed Nakba (Catastrophe) that Israel inflicted on Palestine by bulldozing some 550 Palestinian villages and towns after murdering and terrorizing the inhabitants into flight. They remain in refugee camps awaiting justice while Israeli "settlers" occupy their property. Today Gaza's 750,000 souls are being starved to death by the Israeli gov't's blockade of UN food deliveries. A

few days ago Israel allowed fuel to enter Gaza thus ending a long power black-out.

BE HOPEFUL. Many Jews, especially those in Israel, OPPOSE US/Israeli genocidists. For years the Jewish-led group, Not in My Name (now Jewish Voices for Peace) promotes justice for Palestinians by educating passers-by on Sundays Noon to 1 p.m. at Water Tower Park at 850 No. Michigan. Mary and I participate. All justice-seekers are welcome. Odd, that Occupied Ireland and Palestine suffer from the same propaganda. While the Brits and Israelis perpetrate the vast majority of all murders the news media label their victims the terrorists.

GREAT NEWS! Patrick Cullinane phoned me from London to say that he is finally getting justice. You will remember reading here how Britain's Inland Revenue (their IRS) had falsely claimed that the ex-Limerickman had underpaid his income tax, had evicted him from his home, had sold it and kept the entire proceeds. My earlier columns named many helpful individuals and reported how all of England's relevant institutions refused to help, and when I contacted Irish Ambassador Ted Barrington in London and accompanied Cullinane to the editorial offices of the Irish World and Irish Post in London all we got were insults. Mr. Cullinane now thanks the Irish American News. Having sent copies of my column about his case to newspapers across Britain and Ireland he finally found an honest reporter and newspaper. The Guardian newspaper and its reporter, Phillip Inman, have informed Britain about Cullinane's case for the past decade, and things really began to roll when Dr. Vincent Cable M.P. invited his constituent, Dr. Sheida Oraki and a large group of non-constituents who were all defrauded by the gov't to meet in Committee Room 6 alongside the main chamber of Britain's parliament. There they informed M.P. Cable of the unprosecuted gov't crimes against them, after which he informed the entire parliament. They are treating the widespread official crime as a flaw in their system that must be corrected. They note that all British judges, lawyers, police and other Crown officials swear an oath, not to uphold the law, but to uphold the Crown; and that they thus find for the Crown in the vast majority of cases. Cullinane's valued representative, Gareth Thomas, M.P. is also championing his case.

HUMAN RIGHTS are not respected by the Crown gov't. British subjects cannot demand their fundamental rights because the British Human Rights Act of 1998 excludes Article 1 by falsely claiming it is not actionable due to being merely introductory. The excluded Article 1 is of the Council of

Europe Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms to which Britain is a High Contracting Party as treaty signatory. Article 1 is perfectly clear. It reads; "The High Contracting Parties shall secure to everyone within their jurisdiction the rights and freedoms defined in Section 1 of this Convention." That is what Britain insists upon violating. Britain's people, like Australia's heroic John Wilson, also demand jury trials as a sine qua non of democracy.

A NEEDED REVOLUTION seems to be brewing in Britain. Some 22 M.P.s are objecting to their oaths of office, demanding that their oaths be to uphold the law instead of the Crown. All patriotic Americans would recognize Phillip Inman and those rebel M.P.s as honorary Americans and wish them success in their noble endeavor to establish justice in Britain. We thank them for ending the long nightmare of injustice inflicted upon Cullinane and the many English individuals who have contacted me with their tragic stories. And though they can never be compensated for their lost years of misery, they must be reimbursed for all their other losses.

RUBBING IT IN. Now that the Adams & Co. sell-out of Occupied Ireland to Britain is fully secured, the Brits are reverting to type there. Official harassment and frame-ups of the Irish is increasing again. The Ulster Defense Reg't (UDR), the Brit regiment whose members murdered so many innocent Irish that it was scheduled for disbandment, eventually had a mere name change. Like the similarly criminal RUC's name-change (to PSNI), the UDR, in a double slap at the Irish, became the Royal Irish Reg't (RIR). Recently the Brit gov't informed Belfast that it intended to conduct a reception there for the RIR on its return from Bush's wars. It turned out that families of the dead victims of that reg't had to watch them march triumphantly down Belfast's main streets.

OTHER GREAT NEWS! Official torture in Chicago will soon end. Before US Senator Peter Fitzgerald resigned upon finding intolerable governmental corruption, he gave Illinois a great gift by appointing Patrick Fitzgerald (no relation) our US Attorney. The AP reports; "'Torture has no place in a Chicago police station;' says US Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald as he prosecuted ex-police Lt. Jon Burge. Dozens of former detectives and other officers can expect to be called before a federal grand jury as the panel digs deeper into a scandal that has haunted Chicago for more than 20 years.

WHO ARE THE TERRORISTS re Occupied Ireland? See terrorismireland.org. Tel 312/664-7651 or fogarty@att.net



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