



Irishman Mike Tobin Reports from the Danger Zones for Fox News
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The Rise of the Far-Right in Ireland?

On Thursday November 23rd, an Algerian-born man went berserk outside a school in Dublin city centre, knifing four people, including three children. The man had been arrested in 2022 and 2023—the first time for possession of a knife. Mercifully nobody has died from his assaults. A few hours later, rioters mustered in the streets around O'Connell Street. Riot police largely prevented them from entering the main street of the capital city. However, the police did not impede them from burning buses, a tram and other objects; nor from looting shops, smashing windows and petrol bombing. It was a night of shame for the country and the fallout from it has been huge.

Thursday November 23rd was also

the day when the Dutch general election results became known. The election saw the long-term political failure, Geert Wilders, win 37 seats with his Freedom Party (PVV), making it the largest party in Holland for the first time in its history. Wilders is best positioned, in the consequent coalition negotiations, to become Holland's next prime minister.

Just four days before the riots in Dublin and the results of the Dutch election came in, Javier Milei was elected president of Argentina. The menagerie of Milei's idiocies is too long to list. Suffice to say his core ambition is to take a chainsaw to the (already infirm) Argentinian state—its structures of government, its school system, to trading partners and anything else that pleases him. He is even apt to wield a chainsaw on the podium to publicly

reinforce his commitment to that great instrument of political reform. Yet if Argentinians seem to have embraced nihilism, it is worth recalling that they have had to accept inflation that has made their monthly salary worth 10% less at the end of the month than it was worth at the beginning. So, they have taken a punt on 'El Loco' as Milei is known, the Madman.

How are these three events connected? In a word, the rise of the far-right across the globe. From Modi's India to Trump's America, from Putin's Russia to Netanyahu's Israel. In Europe, the far-right has risen too, particularly through Kaczyński's Law and Justice party in Poland and Orbán's rule in Hungary. For a time, Hungary and Poland were outliers in the

EU, restrained by the other member states through conditional budgetary measures. Now several Western European countries have turned turtle and espoused the ideology of the far-right, edging their populations towards learning (again) the hard way from the mistakes of the past. The Alternative for Germany party, for example, continues to gain ground, and it has apparently no issue with its members advocating that Germany needs 'to make a 180 degree change in their politics of commemoration'. The far-right Sweden Democrats are in government and have 20% support. Marine Le Pen is a strong contender to succeed Emmanuel Macron as president of France in the 2027 election. Giorgia Meloni, who describes herself as 'a right-wing woman' who has never repudiated Mussolini, is Prime Minister of Italy. Europe, the continent that spawned the three fascist dictatorships (German, Italian and Spanish) that enveloped the world in the bloodiest war in history from 1939-1945, is once again hospitable to far-right politicians whose populism entails ridding their countries of 'undesirable' elements and ideologies.

While Ireland has remained relatively resistant to the empty promises of far-right politics, the country is far from immune to them. The organisation of Ireland's far-right is as yet rudimentary. Still, it would be naive to assume that it cannot morph into a force comparable to parties in other countries. Indeed, the swing to the far-right elsewhere lends cover to those who advocate it in Ireland.

In March 2023, this column detailed the political fallout from a far-right march staged in Dublin City on February 6th, involving around 2,000 people, which targeted politicians as well as media organisations. That march was the progenitor of several subsequent nasty demonstrations. On September 20th, 200 people gathered in front of government buildings to greet politicians, who were then returning after the summer break, with hatred and menace. Images of politicians were painted on mock gallows; protestors also blocked some politicians from entering government buildings.

View From Ireland

By Maurice Fitzpatrick




A key focus for the main opposition party, Sinn Féin, in response to November 23rd, was the removal of Justice Minister Helen McEntee and Commissioner of the Garda Síochána (police), Drew Harris. McEntee and Harris could hardly claim that there



was no build up to November 23rd. Nor could they attest that the response time and mobilisation that night was sufficient to police the rioters. Sinn Féin tabled a motion of no-confidence in Minister McEntee in the Dáil on December 5th, which the government comfortably won, and Harris remains in his job as well.

Sinn Féin condemned the marches on the grounds that they sponsor hatred and racism. Yet the marches were distinctly uncomfortable for the party. Sinn Féin leader, Mary Lou McDonald, was one of the main targets of the February march—described as a 'traitor' by posters. Unfortunately, that demonising language has been widely adopted over the past month by critics of the rioters, and that is profoundly wrong-headed. Fintan O'Toole wrote in the Irish Times: 'we're better than the scumbags...These pitiful thugs are not us'. Have self-styled liberals entirely failed to reflect on the disastrous consequences of Hilary Clinton's labelling people (from whom she should have been seeking a mandate) a 'basket of deplorables'? In a governmental hearing into the riots, Senator Lynn Ruane, a leader from a working-class background and author of a memoir entitled People Like Me, took issue with the Gardaí using such terms as 'scumbags' or 'thugs'. She urged them, and society, to 'play the ball not the player'. Police Commissioner Harris conceded that the Gardaí should do better. By contrast, Minister for Justice, also appearing at the governmental hearing, refused to retract the word 'scumbag', which she had used in the Dáil, though she helpfully added that that is not language she 'would normally use'.

We counter the embrace of intolerance and bigotry by retaining our sense of identity and by refusing to resort to dehumanising language. And by celebrating the following. Caio Benicio, the Brazilian man who intervened to stop the attacker in Dublin, has received over 365,000 euro (400,000 USD) in donations through a public campaign to reward his courage. He plans to use the money to bring his wife and children to Ireland to start a new life.



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Roaming in the Gloaming

By Estelle Shanley

As the eldest in my family I grew up saturated with the notion the eldest girl in an Irish family is in charge of the house and the people in it. The theory was not always accepted, actually I'm lying, it was never accepted, but did not deter my determination to develop into a bossy but cultivated older sister and daughter.

As I recall Christmas in Ireland was a lovely time filled with excitement since we all believed in Daddy Christmas, as we called Santa. No we didn't go down the town to a big furniture store to sit on his lap and whisper into his ear the name of the game, or the doll, or the book we hoped to receive from him on Christmas morning.

We actually took pen to paper and wrote Santa a letter, hand carrying it down to the Dundalk Post Office on Clanbrassil Street where the snooty Miss McCann sent all our letters to Santa's

address way up in the North Pole.

My letters always welcomed him down our chimney and the reindeer remained on our roof until Santa left our presents and my father swept out the fireplace so soot would not dirty Santa's clothes and he could finish eating the home made biscuits our aunt made specially just for him.

Looking back I am not sure how the idea of having a Christmas tree took shape, maybe it was because I saw one littered with lights in a shop window down the town and thought it a good idea for our house. I am happy to report that we had the very first Christmas tree in our front room than anyone on our street.

The morning it went up it was fresh, just cut in a field up the road a bit and we decorated it with ribbons and tied bows and someone suggested we purchase little candles, the kind

the churches charge a penny for if you light one. It was all a marvel!

The word spread and neighbors and children flocked to our front window to see the spectacle of a real Christmas tree decorated and lit by candles in our home.

We were not worried that the tree would catch fire because it was soaking wet when it was brought into the house. What we didn't expect was we'd be the talk of the town and even the Dundalk Democrat sent a photographer to photograph it from the outside. The photo man asked to enter the house and we all sat around the tree.

That picture appeared in the next issue of the Democrat and to this day, decades later, I take that framed picture out and hang it up for Christmas. It's yellowed from age but never fails to bring me back to the memory of that particular Irish Christmas.

As most of the Irish American Readers know, in an Irish household the preparation for Christmas begins in earnest with the preparation of the traditional bill of fare of puddings, fruit cakes, with

marzipan and white icing, and of course the preparation for the traditional Plum Pudding, all of which herald the yuletide season.

Somewhere along the line, several weeks before Christmas and the last Sunday before Advent, time is dedicated to stirring up all the plum pudding ingredients and all those present take a turn stirring and making a wish.

All of us young and old participated in what we believed was an outstanding ritual in our lives. The role my brother and our same age cousin were assigned for years was to take the large glass jug from the kitchen cupboard and a few shillings and walk to the Windsor Bar down the Dublin Road to purchase a jug full of Irish porter.

That was a necessary ingredient for the plum pudding. Every single year they returned with a half-full jug and a made-up story about a wild dog, or a wolf chasing them and the porter spilled as they ran for their life. If the seniors in the house noticed the boys were reeking of Guinness, Stout, or Ale, nothing was ever said.

Back then unlike current times there were few if any shortcuts in cooking. Almonds were brown and had to be blanched in hot water which took time. The marzipan icing was hand-made with sugar and crushed almonds. They also had to be chopped. The raisins were washed, dried, and checked for size and the butter for the cake was whipped tirelessly by hand in a large bowl up close to the fire. The fire's heat was a great asset to soften the butter that required nonstop whipping until it turned a lovely white color.

The plum pudding as I recall took hours to cook, its ingredients held together in a large ball tied in a white cloth and boiled for hours in our biggest saucepan.

On Christmas day the pudding was heated and brought at the right time to the table, doused with warm brandy and set on fire to wild applause. Only the adults were allowed to taste and eat. The rest of us waited for a week or more 'till the brandy and other liquors died down.

I am astounded and almost embarrassed to write that once in the US year after year I made fruit cakes to give as gifts to friends and colleagues. Those fruit cakes were treated weekly with splashes of Irish whiskey to add luster and deeper taste. Sometimes in dispensing the cakes I got feedback but often silence. How well I recall a neighbor phoning and explaining that since I'm Irish I obviously was not aware that people in the United States use fruit cakes as door stops! I bet you guessed she's long off my friend list! The fruit cakes actually lasted a long time.



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 and molasses. The pudding
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Gregory Porter Announced as Headline Act for Guinness Cork Jazz Festival 2024



Just in time for a last-minute Christmas present, the Guinness Cork Jazz Festival has announced its first headline act for 2024 - the incomparable Gregory Porter. A double Grammy Award winner and renowned worldwide as one of the greatest jazz artists of our time, Porter is set to captivate audiences at the Cork Opera House on a night that promises to be nothing short of spectacular. Tickets go on sale tomorrow Wednesday 20th December at 12pm.

Fresh off his mesmerizing performances on The Late Late Show and the Graham Norton Show, where he enthralled audiences with his soulful voice and charismatic stage presence, Gregory Porter is making a triumphant return to Ireland after a seven-year hiatus. His last show in Dublin was in 2017, and this much-anticipated appearance at the Guinness Cork Jazz Festival is sure to be a highlight for jazz enthusiasts and music fans attending over the weekend.

Porter's announcement as the first headliner for the Guinness Cork Jazz Festival 2024 comes on the heels of the festival's immensely successful 2023 edition, which left audiences buzzing for more. This early announcement is a great sign that the festival, which will celebrate its 46th year, is gearing up for an even more extraordinary celebration of jazz and music in 2024.

Guinness Cork Jazz Festival is one of the biggest and longest running events on the Irish music calendar, and its electrifying performances attract almost 100,000 people to the stages and streets of Cork city centre and beyond annually. The festival features over 1000 musicians from more than 20 countries, and a Guinness Music Trail in over 70+ pubs, theatres, clubs and hotel venues across the city, Douglas and Kinsale.

Festival Director Mark Murphy said, "We are absolutely thrilled to announce Gregory Porter as our first headline act. His talent is extraordinary and sets the bar as we create another stellar weekend line-up which will feature jazz greats and Irish and international musicians and emerging talent who are pushing the boundaries of the genre. We're also again planning pop-up surprise events, late night parties, collaborations and brass bands marching through the city streets, so don't miss out."

Rory Sheridan, Head of Partnerships at Diageo Ireland said: "Our aim is to continue to raise the profile of the event nationally and internationally, building on the phenomenal success of the 2022 and 2023 festivals. Expect five days of thrilling entertainment."

Gregory Porter has also just released his first-ever Christmas album, "Christmas Wish," a heartwarming tribute to the festive season and the timeless works of legendary artists such as Stevie Wonder, Ella Fitzgerald, Marvin Gaye, Dinah Washington, and Nat King Cole. The album, featuring three original tracks, showcases Porter's signature class and sophistication. Recorded in iconic studios including Sear Sound Studio in New York

City and London's Crossways Studio and Abbey Road Studios, "Christmas Wish" is out now on Blue Note/Decca Records.

Joining Porter on stage at the Cork Opera House are his talented ensemble, including longtime pianist Chip Crawford, Emmanuel Harrold on drums and percussion, Gregoire Maret on harmonica, Jahmal Nichols on bass, Ondre Pivec on Hammond organ, and Tivon Pennicott on flute, soprano saxophone, and tenor saxophone. Backing vocals by Stephanie Fisher-Alvarenga, Chris Ashley Anthony, and Sheherazade Holman, along with orchestral contributions from the Kingdom Orchestra, promise an unforgettable musical experience.

Tickets for Gregory Porter's headline performance at the Guinness Cork Jazz Festival 2024 will go on sale tomorrow Wednesday, December 20, 2024, at 12pm on guinnesscorkjazz.com and are expected to sell quickly. They are priced at €55 + booking fee €60 + booking fee for seats. Don't miss the chance to witness the magic as Gregory Porter takes centre stage, marking a historic moment for the festival and jazz enthusiasts across Ireland.

Guinness Cork Jazz Festival will take place again over the October bank holiday weekend in 2024. Keep an eye on guinnesscorkjazz.com or follow the festival on @GuinnessCorkJazz so you don't miss out when more electrifying performances go on sale next year! The Guinness Cork Jazz Festival is supported by Diageo, Fáilte Ireland, Cork City Council and Cork Airport. #GCJF24 #GuinnessCorkJazz #GregoryPorter

About Gregory Porter

Gregory Porter is a double Grammy Award-winning singer-songwriter celebrated for his distinctive voice and soulful interpretations. With a repertoire that transcends genres, Porter continues to enchant audiences worldwide with his



timeless music.

About Guinness Cork Jazz Festival

The Guinness Cork Jazz Festival is an internationally acclaimed music festival held annually in Cork City, Ireland, over the October bank holiday weekend. Founded in 1978, 46 years ago, the festival has become one of the most prominent and prestigious jazz events worldwide, attracting jazz enthusiasts from around the globe and top-tier jazz legends from Ella Fitzgerald, Herbie Hancock, Dave Brubeck, BB King and Dizzy Gillespie, to Ronnie Scott, George Melly, Cleo Laine, and Sonny Rollins. The festival offers a unique blend of world-class performances, fringe events, and a vibrant cultural experience, all set in the picturesque city of Cork.

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

Responsibility of Homeowners for the Removal of Snow and Ice

By: John P. Scanlon

Now that we are in the heart of winter, it seems like it would be a good time to discuss the responsibilities of land owners for the removal of snow and ice. The general rule in Illinois is that the owner of a residential property is not responsible for negligent snow or ice removal. The Illinois Snow and Ice Removal Act only imposes liability on a homeowner or the tenant of a homeowner when the snow and ice removal actions or omissions rise to the level of willful and wanton conduct. 745 ILCS 75/1 & 2.

In the City of Chicago, the Municipal Code under Section 10-8-180, requires that every owner, occupant or tenant of a home or building remove snow and ice from a sidewalk area and generally this should occur within 3 hours of a snowfall. However, as with the

Illinois Snow and Ice Removal Act, the Municipal Code only imposes liability on the property owner, occupant or tenant if the snow or ice removal



actions or omissions amount to willful or wanton conduct.

Both the Illinois Statute and Chicago Municipal Code Provisions apply to the natural accumulation of snow and ice caused by winter storms. It is important to note that those laws and the courts that interpret them draw a clear distinction between snow fall and ice accumulation that naturally occurs due to a storm versus unnatural accumulations of snow and ice. Krywin v. Chicago Transit Authority, 238 Il.2d 215 (2010).

An example will help illustrate the

distinction made by Illinois courts: If a property owner has a gutter downspout that is constructed so that the water from the downspout directly discharges onto a sidewalk area and this sidewalk area subsequently becomes frozen over due to falling temperatures, Illinois Courts will likely look at this type of scenario as an unnatural accumulation of ice caused by the property owner's gutter downspout and this will trigger

they negligently perform their contract duties. Mickens v. CPS Chicago Parking, LLC, 131 NE 2nd 1168 (1st Dist., 2019).

In Mickens, the Illinois Appellate Court distinguished the duties of a contractor who assumes responsibility for snow removal compared to the owner of the property who has no such general duty. Specifically, contractors who undertake to provide snow removal services will be responsible if they negligently fail to perform their contract duties.

As set forth in the statutes and cases noted above, the general rule is that a homeowner is not liable for the negligent removal of snow and ice outside of the family residence. However, property owners must ensure they don't create dangerous situations that allow for the unnatural accumulation of ice through poorly placed gutters and downspouts or improperly pitched walkways that create a greater probability that someone will slip on ice.

All of us at our firm hope that you will stay safe in the following months when snow and ice are present.

Healy Scanlon Veugeler Gannon is comprised of seven trial attorneys and four "Of Counsel" attorneys, one of whom is a solicitor from Ireland. We are located downtown at 111 W. Washington Street, Suite 1425, Chicago, Illinois 60602 (800-922-4500 or 312-977-0100) (overlooking Daley Center Courthouse). www.HealyScanlon.com. The firm concentrates in the representation of injured victims of all types of accidents.

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Hi, I'm **Annie Nestor**. I was born in Ireland and have family from Galway, Mayo and Kerry. I'm a locally owned Home Care Agency founded in 2015.

After 50 yrs in early childhood education and owning several child care centers, I decided to pass the baton. Our children are the third generation in our family to start schools and after seeing their success & passion I decided to venture into another area of caregiving, **seniors!** I thought, I'm not going to retire I'm going to RE-FIRE!

Working with seniors reminds me of my wonderful years teaching children loving, laughing, and appreciating the joys of life. HAPPY SENIORS singing old favorite tunes is music to my ears. Now I get to continue doing what I love with a new generation.

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Chicago Gaelic Park Presents Hooley in the Park

A Weekend of Dance and Music - March 22-24, 2024

Chicago Gaelic Park has a three-day weekend of Irish social dance and music on tap to keep the March fun going after its 2024 Ireland on Parade and St. Patrick's Day Celebrations. The weekend features, direct from Ireland, dance master Gerard Butler and musicians Stuart Moyles and Jack Keogh. The Hooley in the Park promises to be a great weekend of music, dance, and fun in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere!

Butler, a County Roscommon native

band plays a mix of Irish and country-western favorites.

All country jive dance workshops and music/dance sessions may be purchased separately at \$20/each (\$10 for the youth workshop), OR you may purchase the full weekend pass for only \$90 if purchased by March 1st or \$100 afterward. All events are open to all ages. Gaelic Park has secured a special weekend rate for accommodations for the Hooley 2024 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Chicago - Alsip: www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/chicagogaelpark2024/.

Attendees will want to check out Gaelic Park's Carraig Pub for food and beverage purchases. For more



Myles McVeigh & The Hoyle Brothers

information about Hooley in the Park, contact Chicago Gaelic Park at 708.687.9323.

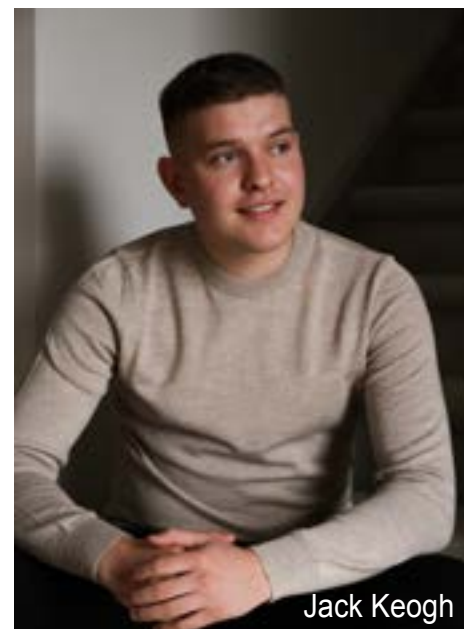
Submitted by Gaelic Park Board Directors Noreen Hagerty and Brendan Houlihan



Stuart Moyles

who makes his home in County Tyrone, is a nine-time All-Ireland Dance Champion, and his dance classes in Ireland are hugely popular. On his last visit to Gaelic Park, Butler had dancers of all skill levels improving their footwork and moves while thoroughly enjoying themselves. Butler's musical accompaniments, Mayoman Stuart Moyles and Wicklow man Jack Keogh are highly regarded on the Irish social dancing scene. Singer/guitarist Moyles won the Hot Country TV "Best Social Dancing Artist Award," and 19-year-old Keogh is making a real name for himself in Irish music circles as a singer/songwriter.

During Hooley in the Park, Butler will hold country jive dance workshops on Friday at 7 pm, Saturday at 2 pm, and Sunday at noon. Butler will also hold a special youth country jive workshop on Saturday morning. Each evening of the Hooley weekend will feature the music of Moyles and Keogh, and the Saturday night dance promises to be extra fun with local favorites, Myles McVeigh and the Hoyle Brothers joining the line-up. McVeigh hails from Donegal, and the



Jack Keogh

Mary Pat Flanagan Sr. VP North American Sales

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The Voice of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago



Partnering with schools to get children and families the care they need.

By Laura Kuever, Associate Vice President, Behavioral Health

Behavioral health refers to the emotions and behaviors that affect a person's body, mind, spirit and overall well-being. Just like physical healthcare providers, trained behavioral health providers offer specialized services and case management support to identify the root causes of clients mental and behavioral conflicts and offer solutions for a more positive path forward.

Last year, Catholic Charities' Behavioral Health teams served 2,400 adults and children across Lake and Cook counties. Anyone in need of mental health services is eligible to receive our counseling services regardless of their faith, race, ethnicity, or economic status.

Our therapists help individuals from ages three and up with no limit on age. We meet with our clients in a variety of settings, whether in person or online via a secure and confidential telehealth platform. (Online therapy is a popular choice for those who have limited access to transportation, tight work schedules, or caretaking obligations.) In addition, we partner with 27 Catholic and 14 public schools in Chicago to provide behavioral health counseling and other

witnessed extensive physical abuse and domestic violence between his parents. But even after his mother and siblings stopped living with his father, trauma from those experiences remained. Liam started having trouble controlling his emotions, growing more physically defiant, particularly with his peers at school. He was often pulled from class because of his behavior and his school attendance suffered.

Knowing his history, counselors at Liam's school connected him with Catholic Charities therapists. His assigned therapist worked with him individually and provided family therapy to understand his emotions and behavior and develop strategies to support him better at school.

Since beginning therapy, Liam, his family, and his support network are seeing new hope take hold, and they are optimistic for future progress. They continue to work with therapists at home and in school to address Liam's challenges, helping him recover from the trauma he experienced and learn positive ways to process his emotions. His mother says she feels she better understands Liam's behaviors and uses the tools and insights she's gained to help him self-regulate.

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supports to children and staff. We expect to add new partner schools in early 2024.

Being embedded in school environments helps ensure that children and the adults who care for them get the supports they need as soon as possible. This is done in a variety of ways, including: offering individual and group therapy for students; advising principals and staff on crisis response; providing professional development for teachers about trauma-informed practices; and holding workshops for parents.

When we serve minor children, we must get the consent of their parents or guardians before providing any services in their care. We also know that it's virtually impossible to serve a child or adolescent independent of the adults who care for them, so we welcome and encourage regular contact with them. If the parent or guardian also wants individual or family counseling, we can provide those services as well.

This was the case for Liam and his family. At just six years old, Liam's wellbeing was already bending to the weight of trauma. As a baby, he

child's school to get help. Anyone in Lake or Cook counties can contact our specialists to learn more about our services, whether for a child, a family member who may be struggling, or themselves. We accept commercial, Medicare, and Medicaid insurance plans, and fees can be subsidized based on household and income size for uninsured individuals. You can request an intake appointment by calling 312 655 7725 or emailing counselingintake@catholiccharities.net. Services are offered in English and Spanish Monday through Saturday.

Please note: Catholic Charities does not provide emergency crisis assistance. If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health emergency, call 911 or 988 for immediate help.

Catholic Charities offers trauma-informed, strength-based individual and family counseling sessions, as well as art therapy, dance movement therapy, and play therapy. Our team helps the people we serve identify needs, connect with community resources, apply for appropriate assistance, and advocate for other services.

Music from an Irish Cottage Series Streaming Now!

Irish fiddler Kevin Burke brings together some of Ireland's foremost traditional musicians in his new video series, "Music from an Irish Cottage." Guests include Sharon Shannon (The Waterboys), Seán Smyth (Lúnasa), Mick McAuley (Solas), Nuala Kennedy (The Alt), and Seamie O'Dowd (Dervish), among others.



Each of the six episodes features two guests along with Burke in relaxed, unscripted evenings of music and conversation, filmed in his 120-year-old County Mayo cottage in the West of Ireland.

Other artists in the series include John Carty (Patrick Street), Josephine Marsh, Mick Kinsella, Leonard Barry, Rick Epping, Rosaleen Stenson Ward, and AJ Roach.

"Music from an Irish Cottage" is streaming now on Vimeo at <https://musicfromanirishcottage.vhx.tv/>. The pay-per-view video series is available in full or single episodes. "They make lovely holiday gifts as well!" says Burke.

"The cottage is reminiscent of where I learned so much of my music and spent so much of my childhood in the late 1950s," recalls Burke, who was raised in both London and County Sligo. "There have been many changes since then so I invited some of my musician friends for an 'old style' evening of fireside music and chat."

Burke is best known for his membership in Ireland's fabled Bothy Band, which has recently reunited for a number of upcoming concerts in Glasgow, Belfast, and L'orient in Brittany, France. An NEA National Heritage Fellow and Ireland's TG4 Traditional Musician of the Year, he's also worked with Tim O'Brien, Kate Bush, Arlo Guthrie, Paul Brady, Andy Irvine, and his groups Patrick Street and Celtic Fiddle Festival.

"Music from an Irish Cottage" is out on Burke's Loftus Music label. Additional funding has been provided by the Irish Arts Council. More information is at kevinburke.com.

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Trinity Irish Dance Company: Remaking History Part One

This March 3rd at Chicago's iconic Auditorium Theatre, Trinity Irish Dance Company's founding Artistic Director, Mark Howard and Associate Artistic Director, Chelsea Hoy will unleash their most ambitious world premiere to date.

Their first collaboration in five years, *Taking The Mick* has been incubating in the studio for more than six months. A monster of a dance with never-before-seen range and a strong theatric bent, it will most certainly launch their choreographic careers and the company they love so well into another dimension.



With a vaudevillian era narrative that dances amongst the madness between immigrant insecurities, social mobility, one upmanship and assimilation into American culture- the artists of the undaunted Trinity Irish Dance Company will take the Auditorium and it's already well-sold audience back in time to a whimsical and formative time in show business. Co-choreographer, Hoy has described the new piece as "whimsy at breakneck speed."

The seedlings of ideas surrounding *Taking the Mick* began taking shape on a month-long tour of Japan last summer when Howard and Hoy, with a company of dancers and musicians in tow, purposefully utilized the backdrop of a familiar yet magical foreign place to awaken their creative stylings.



"We were excited to up the ante for what was possible and knew that a change of scenery was needed to induce significant alternative thoughts," said Howard. "From the backdrop of a mountainous temple in Achi Village to the cos-play-zoku (costume play gangs) in Shibuya, Japan proved to be the perfect inspiration for playing with time and space inside of *Taking the Mick*. It allowed us to dream up our own universe of characters," he explained.

Trinity's Japan summer tour was their 8th in the last two decades, making them the most toured foreign dance company in Japan's history. It is in great part their modus operandi mission to elevate communities that makes them so popular and impactful.

They connected with packed houses of wildly enthusiastic audiences, spanning 12 cities and 1,500 miles. They invited local Japanese Irish dancers in the major cities to share the big stage, many who received their start in Irish dancing thanks to Trinity's decades-long presence in Japan, giving birth to the country's first Irish dance schools. They visited schoolchildren everywhere in whatever spare time was afforded to conduct workshops, and re-engaged with friends in towns where Trinity had raised money to help earthquake and tsunami victims. They were even joined by 200 high school ballet students in Osaka, 10 of whom won the honor of training as Irish dancers for six months to join the company for a few life-changing moments on a famous stage.

But it was their unforgettable three days spent in Achi-Village, a remote, mountainous town that had the biggest impact on Howard, Hoy and company - engaging in an evening of shared song and dance with a Taiko drummer, calligraphy artist, and hundreds local community members, and a surreal daytime visit with a monk in a hilltop temple.

After dancers, musicians and crew were invited to a cultural exchange and the host monk led a brief zazen meditation, Howard asked dancers to share an impromptu gift in exchange: a performance of his

classic dance "Communion," which is in part inspired by his Chicago Irish Catholic upbringing and 16 years of Jesuit education. "The Company's heartfelt performance on that sacred mountain moved the monk to tears," said Hoy. "When your art form can make a monk cry, you know you're on the right path."

The monk then gave Hoy the honor of ringing out the Gonsoho (temple bell), the sound mixing with the echoes of TIDC's rhythms on the side of the mountain. The next day, Howard sent his sound engineer back to record the bell sound and promised the monk and villagers that he would embed it in all of our future performances so that its ripple effect would spread far beyond their town. Villagers drove five hours to witness this at TIDC's final performance in Yokohama.

The sound of that Gonsoho now lives inside of 'Black Rose,' Howard's classic work that was originally inspired by Japanese Taiko drumming. It has already created a significant impact on audiences, gaining reactions through Fall shows in St. Louis and Los Angeles, and can be experienced through this re-envisioned classic, centered by the sound of Achi-Village, at the Auditorium Theatre this spring.

TIDC's ability to connect and integrity-filled vision is revered in Japan as much as it is across the United States. In the midst of their 17-city USA tour, you have a rare chance to experience their power right here at home this spring. With special appearances by children from the Irish Music School of Chicago and the Trinity Academy of Irish Dance, and All-Ireland flute and tin whistle player Larry Nugent, it will be an afternoon you won't soon forget.

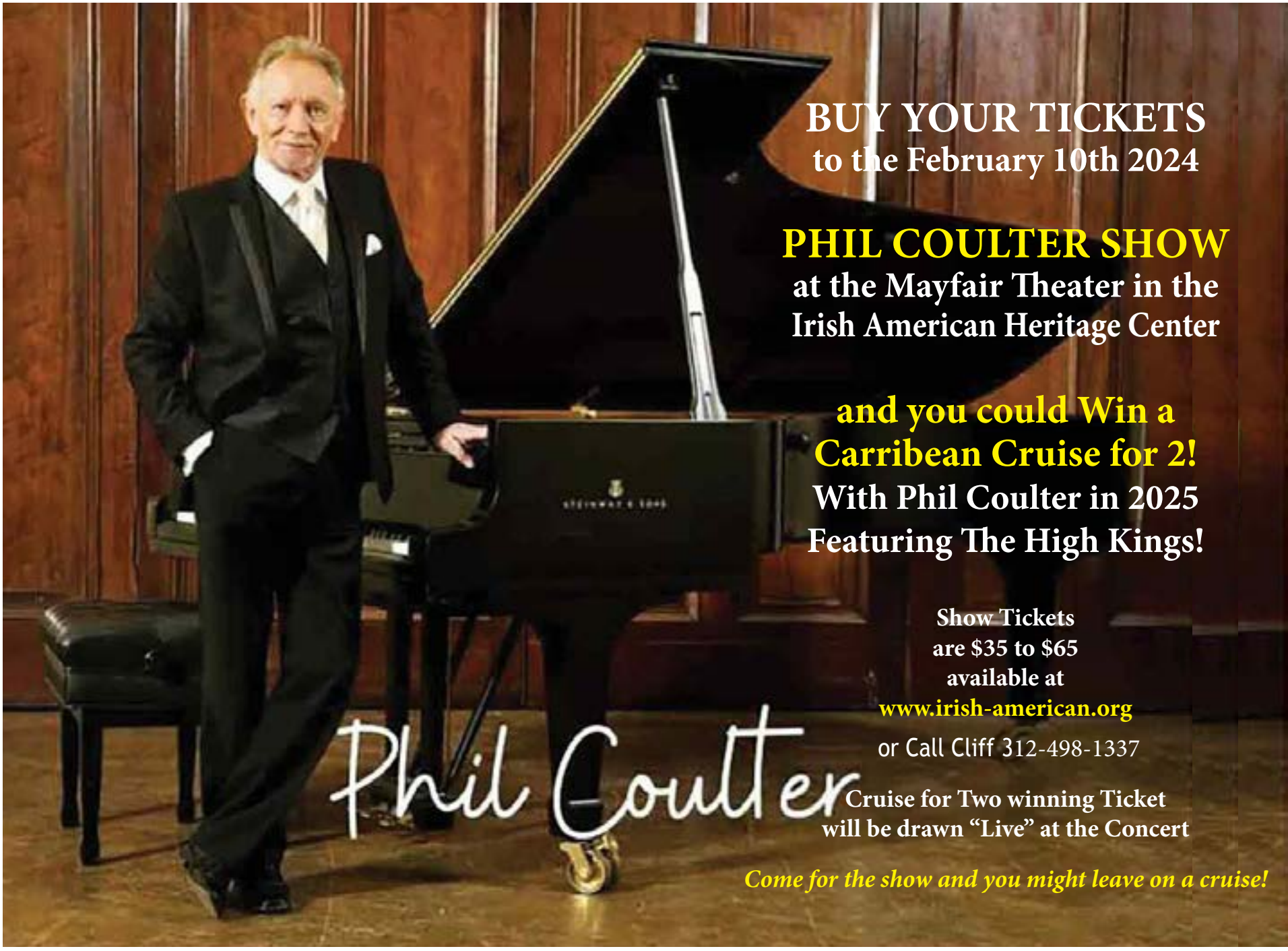
Learn more about TIDC's world premieres in part 2 next month, but grab your tickets for March 3 now. The fastest selling Chicago dance performance of 2024, Chicago is already proving to be coming out in force to celebrate what Trinity has in store for the future of this beloved art form.

March 3, 2023 - 3pm

Auditorium Theatre - 50 E Ida B. Wells Drive

Tickets - auditoriumtheatre.org





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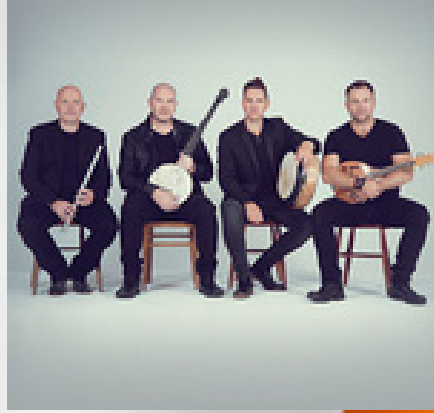
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Fine print for the Coulter giveaway: "Open to legal residents ages 18 and above. Participants enter by purchasing a ticket to Phil Coulter Warms A Chicago Winter! One entry into the giveaway per ticket. Prize includes one interior cabin for 2 people on the Phil Coulter/High Kings sailing only from Jan. 11-18, 2025 (hotel, airfare, transfers, taxes and gratuities are not included; if the trip gets cancelled, there is no cash value and prize cannot be transferred to a different sailing). Winner will be selected by random drawing and odds depend on the number of entries. Winner will be notified by phone. If unresponsive, an alternate winner will be selected. Winner must accept the prize as is, with no cash equivalent and prize is non-transferable to another party. Organizers are not responsible for any loss, injury or damage related to the prize or participation in the giveaway. Organizers reserve the right to modify or cancel the giveaway for any reason. By entering the giveaway, participants agree to these terms and conditions."

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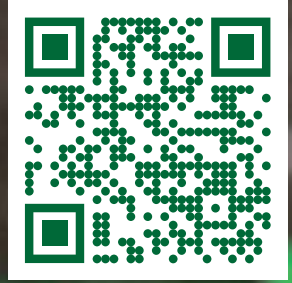
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3rd Grand Prize - 4 Round Trip tickets to Dublin Ireland, courtesy of Aer Lingus

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Winners will be announced at the Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner

Queen Contest

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Any girl of Irish ancestry, never married, 18-29 years old is eligible to enter the contest. Applications will be accepted through January 5th Apply at www.chicagostpatricksdaysparade.org



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Ticket holders will be eligible to win a Caribbean Cruise for two with Phil and the High Kings! The winner will be drawn the night of the concert.

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AOIFE SCOTT

MARCH 2 | 7:00PM

Join us for an evening of the best Irish traditional and folk music as Aoife Scott plays at the Irish American Heritage Center. Award winning folk singer Aoife Scott is a songwriter based in Dublin, Ireland. Born into the legendary Black Family (Aoife's mother is Frances).

Tickets: \$20 IAHC Members | \$25 non-members



ST. PATRICK'S DAY 2024 WITH THE SCREAMING ORPHANS!

MARCH 17 | 7:00PM

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day with this unbelievable show! Chicago favorites The Screaming Orphans will be in the Mayfair Theatre at the Irish American Heritage Center on Sunday, March 17th! Don't miss the opportunity to see these superstars! The pub will be open and the craic will be on!

Tickets: \$35



EMMA LANGFORD

JANUARY 26 | 7:00PM

Join us in welcoming award-winning songwriter and performer Emma Langford to the IAHC for the first time this January!

Tickets: \$20 IAHC Members | \$25 non-members



RUNA

FEBRUARY 18 | 7:00PM

RUNA breathes fresh life into traditional Celtic music by digging into the songs and tunes to find the universal thread that binds past to present!

Tickets: \$20 IAHC Members | \$25 non-members



BOW TIDES

MAY 17 | 7:00PM

The Bow Tides are back in the Mayfair Theatre on May 17, 2024. Don't miss the fiddle frenzy! Their second appearance at the IAHC, this will be a can't miss performance!

Tickets: \$20 IAHC Members | \$25 non-members



PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Dear Members and Friends of the Irish American Heritage Center,

Happy New Year! I hope you were one of the many who enjoyed our Christmas Bazaar. It was a festive start to the holiday season at the center, with over 70 vendors enhanced by lively music and dancing throughout the day. Many young families attended and kept Santa Claus very busy in the library.

The spirit of the season was further heightened by the performance of Chöe Agnew, creating warm memories we'll carry into the New Year.

Our 2024 membership and annual appeal drives are in full swing. Your engagement and generosity are pivotal to sustaining your Center and our traditions. It enables us to host Irish and Irish American artists in our Mayfair Theatre year-round. This year, a portion

of the appeal will contribute to the much-needed resurfacing of our parking lot, ensuring a safe and welcoming space for all who visit.

Below this letter, you'll find a rendering of the plan, a visual representation of our collective effort to enhance our Center. Every contribution brings us closer to realizing this vision and strengthening our legacy for future generations.

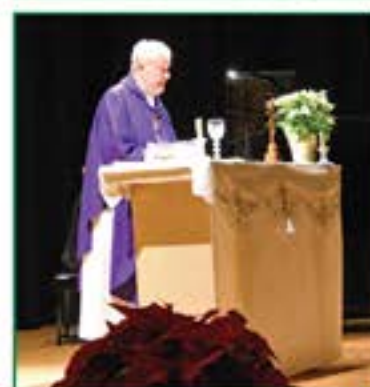
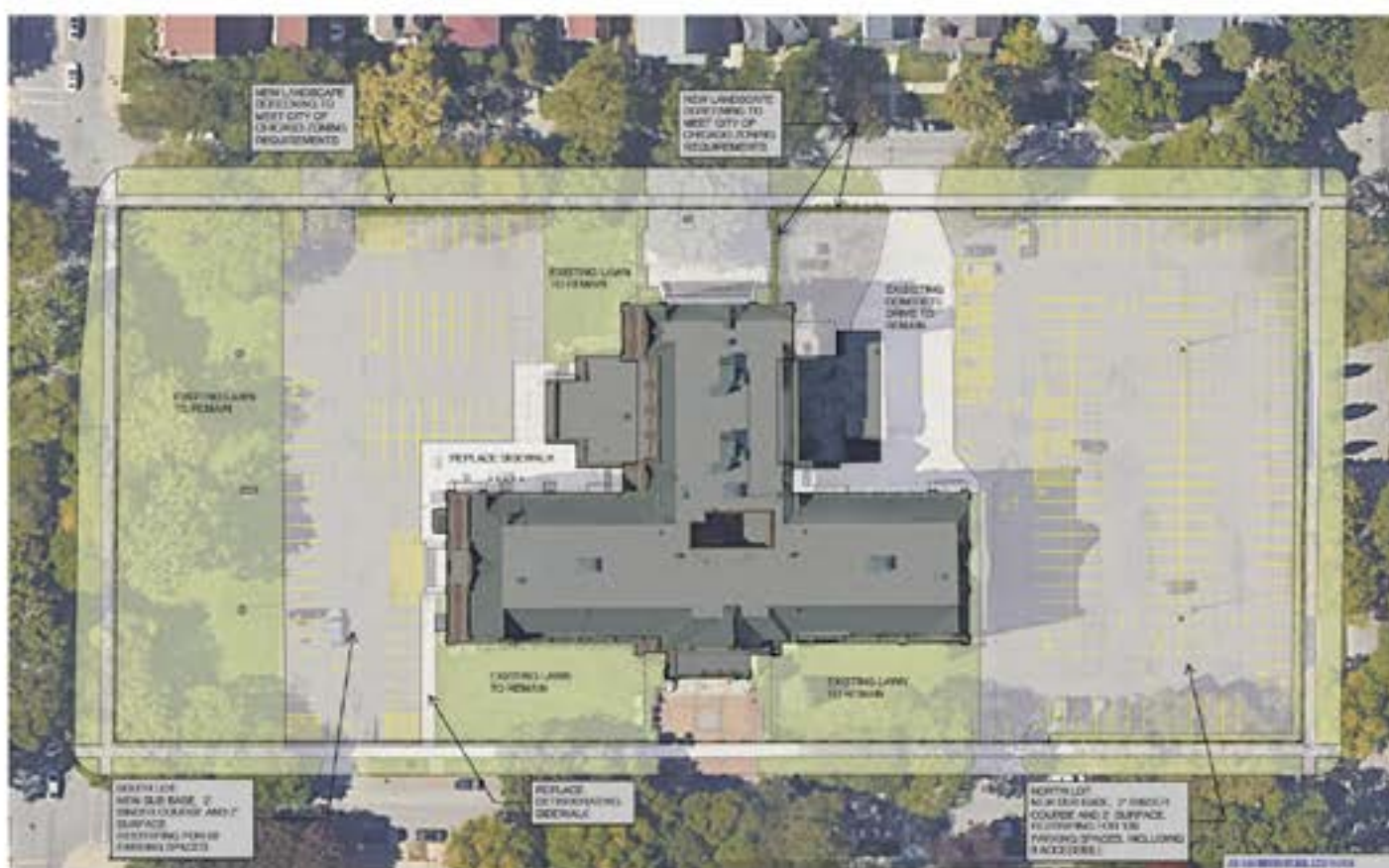
Please join us in supporting your Irish American Heritage Center by becoming a member or contributing to our annual appeal. Let's embark on this journey together, paving the way for a vibrant and thriving Irish American community at our Center.

Wishing you a prosperous and joyous New Year,

Tom Chambers

COMING in 2024!

After decades of regular maintenance, the time has come for a full replacement of the North and South Parking lot surfaces. This project will include full depth removal of the old surfaces, stablization of the base, new asphalt surface with optimized parking configurations, sidewalk repairs, and added landscape shrubs. The IAHC is excited about this major improvement that is sure to add to our visitor's experience for years to come!



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Your Center to gather with Family and Friends.

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-Tom Chambers, IAHC President



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IRISH AMERICAN HERITAGE CENTER

ANNUAL APPEAL

Time is marching on, and we at the Irish American Heritage Center find we're at the beginning of another Annual Appeal.

Throughout our history, and particularly over the last several years, the dedication and generosity of our members and contributors has seen the IAHC through some challenging times. Thanks to the 2022 Annual Appeal, which was one of the most successful in memory, we were able to invest in building maintenance and upgrades, and to increase our overall cultural programming. There were more concerts in the building and in the Mayfair Theatre than ever before!

This year, we're asking for help with a higher goal than last year to help us raise additional funds for a specific need. **The Irish American Heritage Center will be replacing both the north and south parking lots in 2024.** Anyone who has been to the Center over the last few years knows how important this project is for the long-term health of the organization. The costs for this project will be approximately \$400,000. While we have successfully raised most of the funds, there are additional needs and unforeseen expenses. Can you help us fund this vital improvement? Your contribution can help us reach 100% funding to replace the lots!

As President of the Irish American Heritage Center, it is my honor to thank our benefactors, Peggy and Pat Burke. As always, their generosity in matching the first \$25,000 in donations makes the Annual Appeal more successful every year. The support of the Burkes is one of our great traditions.

We understand that there are many deserving causes, and we appreciate your consideration of the Irish American Heritage center when making your charitable contributions.

To make a donation please visit our website at irish-american.org, use the mail-in form attached, or call our office at 773-282-7035, extension 10.

Best regards,

Tom Chambers

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About Altan
On one of his many visits to the Donegal Gaeltacht of Gaith Dobhair, Belfast born flute player Frankie Kennedy met fiddler and singer Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh, sparking off a deep musical connection, marriage in 1981, and a journey that took them all

over the world. Their vision was to bring the unique repertoire of Donegal music to the world and that mission is still as strong as ever.

In the mid 80s, Mairéad and Frankie recruited bouzouki player Ciaran Curran from Fermanagh, whose intricate counterpoint is at the centre of the Altan sound, and guitarist Mark Kelly from Dublin, whose mastery of a wide palette of guitar styles and harmonic vocabulary add a breadth and depth of colour. As a band, Altan played their first concert on June 1st 1985, in St. John's Church in Listowel, Co. Kerry at the famous Listowel

Writers Week.
Their first album, simply titled Altan was released in 1987 and quickly followed by Horse with A Heart, which saw the inclusion of Paul O'Saughnessy on fiddle. Paul had joined the band on its first US tours, lending his stunning virtuosity and in-depth knowledge of the Donegal style. He performed on the subsequent three albums. In 1992, the album Harvest Storm brought with it Dáithí Sproule on guitar, himself one of the pioneers of guitar in Irish traditional and folk music, having played with the wonderful Skara Brae with the O'Domhnaill family and Buncrana native



the death of founding member Frankie Kennedy. His vision, artistry and sense of fun is still at the heart of Altan and his legacy is carried and celebrated in every note.

A record deal with Virgin Records followed in 1996, which catapulted the band on an extensive touring schedule over the subsequent decade. This period saw them working with many of the great American performers such as Dolly Parton, recording on her album Heartsongs (1994) and its follow up, Little Sparrow 2001; she returned the favour on the band's record The Blue Idol in 2002 by dueting with Mairéad on the song "The Pretty Young Girl".

The band have traveled with President Mary MacAleese and President Michael D. Higgins on state visits abroad to Japan, North Korea and Italy. President Higgins invited them to join him in his residence, Áras an Uachtaráin in 2018 to celebrate their 30 years as a band. The Donegal County Council held a civic reception in their offices to mark the occasion in May 2018. In 2006 the Irish Government also honoured Altan by putting them on an official postal stamp to celebrate their contribution to the Irish culture one of the highest honours to be bestowed on an Irish citizen.

Martin Tourish, a past TG4 Young Musician of the Year, took the accordion seat in late 2013 and the band recorded their album The Widening Gyre in Nashville with many of the great Bluegrass and American performers, such as Mary Chapin Carpenter, Jerry Douglas and Alison Brown. This album explored the connections between Irish and Bluegrass music, a particularly special moment of which was performing at The Grand Ole Opry with Ricky Skaggs in 2016.

In 2017, the band released their first book, Altan: The Tunes, based on a collection of 222 melodies that they collected recorded over their 30 year history. Martin Tourish transcribed the dance music and meticulously interviewed all the band members for additional stories and background information. Containing a detailed commentary on each of the tunes, it is the only collection of Donegal music currently in print.

The latest album celebrates the roots of their music in Donegal folklore. It was recorded in the Attica Studios in the mountains of Donegal which contributed to a wonderful atmosphere which permeated throughout the recording. The title refers to that 'gap' or 'door' between this and the 'other world.' The older fiddlers, whom they got their music from, always associated with the "other world" as the source for their music and inspiration. They would describe poetically about encountering the fairy folk or listening to tunes on the wind or on the shore listening to the sound of the waves. In creativity the "Gap of Dreams" is never shut.



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Game On!
By Chris Wheaton

With Christmas and the New Year's celebrations in the rear-view mirror it is that time of year when a young boy's thoughts turn to the upcoming hurling campaign. It promises to be an exciting season ahead both here in the Chicago area and in the homeland as Limerick begins its historic "drive for five."

Locally, the Naperville Hurling Club is gearing up for what will be a fun indoor season, beginning in mid-January with some fitness training and player assessments. Our club will have a different feel this year as we move away from a "pub league" to what we now refer to as a "social league." The skill level will not be any less than year's past, but the club is stressing the importance of keeping it fun. Players of any ability are welcome to turn up and give this incredible game a try. Naperville is hoping to increase its numbers from last year and will hopefully field four competitive teams during the indoor season, serving as a catapult into the outdoor campaign. We are trying to model our club after the Milwaukee Hurling club which is the gold standard for how to run an American club. Obviously, we are not anywhere near the numbers that Milwaukee's gets but we are taking small steps in our development. Formed in 1996, Milwaukee proudly supports the largest club in the United States and has ten teams in its city league.

As for the league across the sea, the upcoming season will be pressure packed with all eyes focused on the end of the year and Limerick's quest to make history by becoming the first team to win five consecutive All-Ireland Senior Championships. Who will stand in the way of the "green monster." Many

pundits believe Kilkenny has the panel to snatch the Liam McCarthy Cup out of Limerick's grasp after taking a back seat to Limerick the past two years. Others feel that Galway might have the mettle to make the leap and win it's first title since 2017.

For what it's worth Limerick is too strong from top to bottom both on and off the pitch to be dethroned. From upper management down to the towel boys, Limerick does everything right. They are simply the highest skilled, most conditioned, and tactically superior to any other county panel. Some teams rebuild after a period of time but Limerick matter-of-factly re-tools. The Limerick Underage Hurling Academy keeps a steady stream of top-notch hurlers on the ready, waiting for the call to the senior panel.

In other sporting news the "Knees That Craic" over-40 hurling, and football tournament will be held on February 3rd in Las Vegas. As mentioned in prior editions it is a fantastic tournament which serves as a fundraiser for the National Collegiate Gaelic Athletic Association. This very morning, the kits were revealed for the participants, and they are unique to say the least. Follow the NCGAA on Facebook or head over to ncgaa.org for a peak at each team's jersey and information on the tournament. The jerseys are one of the wonderful things about the tournament. A team from across the pond is joining the fun this year and I am sure the Tipperary/Kilkenny combo team will be a force to be reckoned with. The teaming up of those two counties to play as one is a topic for another day! I will tell you all about the festivities in the March edition, that is, if I survive.



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The Irish Cottage: Under New Management & Better than Ever!

By Ryanne Gallagher Johnson
Although the building embodies the old world charm of a cozy home nestled in the green hills of Ireland, with all of the warmth and hospitality you'd experience in one of the small towns dotting the Emerald Isle's countryside, the Irish Cottage Inn and Suites in Galena, Illinois has carefully and thoughtfully modernized it's guest experience, preserving the hotel's authentic feeling while improving the overall state of the rooms and grounds for visitors and travelers looking for a luxurious and comfortable place to stay.

Built in 2002 and previously owned by Jack Coulter and Basil Conrey, the inn, which also boasts Frank O'Dowd's Irish Pub & Grill, changed hands in late 2020, and since then has



property," explains General Manager Krystle Hewitt.

Offering seventy-five warm and inviting guest rooms and suites, and favorite amenities such as a

that presents a gorgeous view, reminiscent of Glendalough valley in Ireland, including a charming fairy ring.

Details of the property that were brought in by the original owners, such as art pieces, woodwork, and items imported from Ireland, have been preserved and reincorporated throughout the rooms during the renovation process.

"It's all still here. We did repurpose some of that artwork back into the guestrooms and throughout the lobby and public spaces. All of the rooms got a makeover to more of a modern Irish look, brightening up the colors a little bit. We updated carpet, vinyl, drapery, and plumbing, to keep the working condition," Krystle says.

But the twenty year history of the building is still almost

to honor that and keep that," says Joshua Roberts, Director of Food and Beverage for The Irish Cottage.

The construction of the back patio was the first addition, which not only added eighty seats along with that of the restaurant and lounge, but now affords outdoor seating with a gorgeous view of the landscape. It's also a new and fantastic place to hold a meeting or event.

"We've done a number of rehearsal dinners here, utilizing the deck. . . The first wedding that we did here was [in] October. It went really well. We used the faerie ring as the setting for the ceremony and pictures, the ballroom for the reception. We were excited about it," says Joshua.

Modifications to the hotel have also included culinary changes

lot of culinary techniques and preparation, but keeping it casual and fun and approachable.

"We kind of went the direction of a gastropub with an Irish flare, trying to represent some of those dishes that are staples but may not necessarily get the attention that they deserve. Fish n chips may be on a lot of menus, but we wanted to make sure that we started with quality products. We treat the fish right. We do a salt brine so it holds its moisture during the frying process. We put thought into the batter, making it with Guinness. Fresh kale slaw with our own dressing. Tartar sauce fresh. Really making sure that we highlight the flavor profiles that those are supposed to represent. . . [We wanted to] exceed expectations on what people traditionally find in a pub



undergone a gentle but thorough \$1.5M renovation.

"We still wanted to embrace the ambiance and the homage to the Irish culture that the original owners brought to the

pool, hot tub, and fitness center, visitors can take advantage of the on-property day spa, party rooms, and ballroom, as well as the restaurant and pub. The inn also has a spacious back patio

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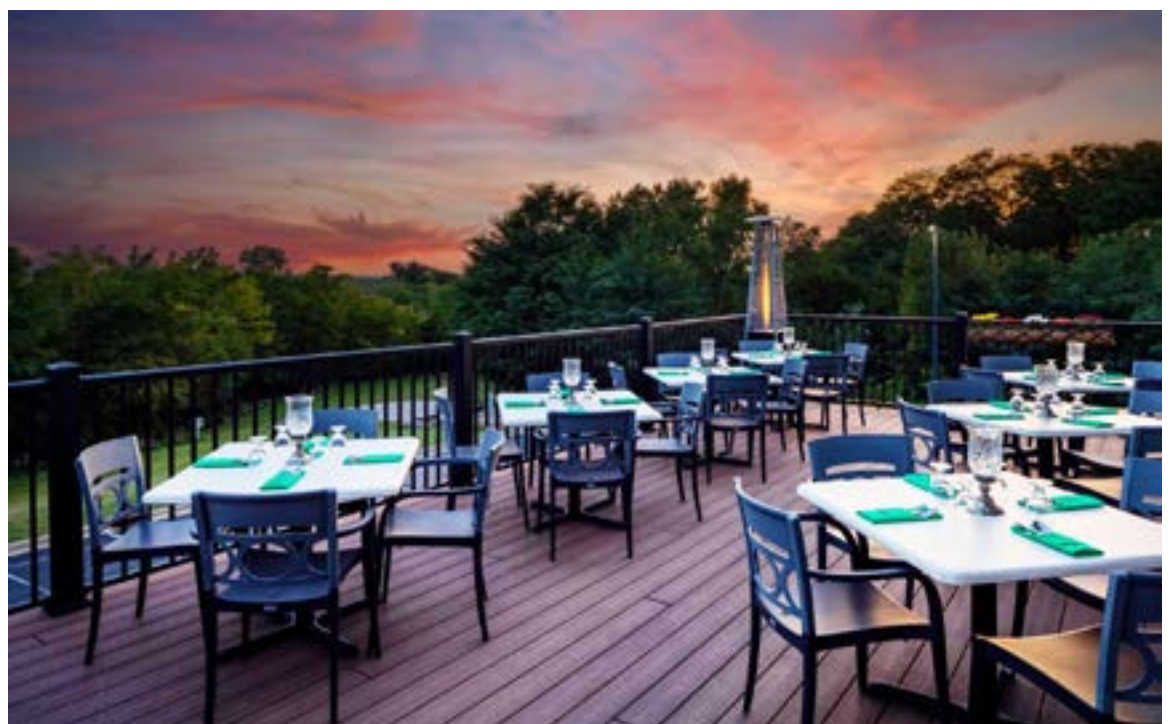
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completely in-tact. And the brightened spaces have enhanced the overall atmosphere and experience of the hotel.

"From the ownership down to Krystle, I think everybody understood what the original owners [wanted]. A lot of hotels can be built with price in mind, but this was a passion project that they did, and I think everybody has in the back of their mind, with every decision we make for the hotel, to try

and menu enhancements, which Joshua explains was one of the original goals of the renovation.

"The ambiance really lended itself to creating an authentic Irish experience and that feeling [of being in] Ireland in a pub. The hospitality, the home cooked food. The menu wasn't representing that, and I think that was one of the biggest areas of opportunity to really start making a difference. We tried to tackle the menu by using a

in general in the United States."

The hard-earned menu changes have reaped big rewards for the hotel.

As Krystle explains, "In the two and a half years that we've had the menu in place, we've moved our Trip Advisor ranking from twenty-seven to number two. And if you look at those reviews, it really is the culinary experience. So, very proud of the team that we've been able to make those accomplishments."



It doesn't hurt that The Irish Cottage is nestled in the adorable town of Galena, just a few hours northwest of Chicago.

"It's a truly magical little city. It kind of reminds you of a Hallmark movie sometimes," says Krystle. "Galena has so much to offer. Golf, you can do a distillery tour with Blaum Brothers, you can go out to Chestnut (Mountain Resort) and ski in the winter or in the summer you can do a zipline experience or a Mississippi Boat Tour. . . Dubuque is just right across the river and there are some casinos to take advantage of if you're a gambler."

For the guests looking to experience the charm of the city without having to worry about finding parking, the inn offers a shuttle service to and from Main Street seven days a week.

"We really want to become a destination, for people to come into Galena, experience the Irish Cottage and Frank O'Dowd's. Make it a one-stop shop. They can get married in the faerie ring, they can have the catering aspect of Frank O'Dowd's, have the views and the rooms, and the spa downstairs. Have that kind of total resort type of experience," Krystle adds.

The Galena Day Spa, which offers massages, body treatments, and facials, is a number one Trip Advisor-rated spa. For relaxation and rejuvenation, or to pamper a party for a special occasion, the spa services its guests without having to leave the property.

For some later-night options, the restaurant and pub hours

are also being slowly expanded.

"I've always had the vision in my head of the place growing into a fun pub, so the restaurant stays open until nine, the pub stays open until ten," says Josh. "Our service staff knows that we're kind of lax with those hours. If people are enjoying themselves, we don't 'last call' them, we kind of accommodate. Being part of the hotel, we make sure that the guests have a great experience."

"Fridays and Saturdays we stay open until one a.m. to keep building on that after-dinner experience."

And what would an Irish establishment be without music and revelry. Frank O'Dowd's offers live music on the weekends, with local musicians performing on Thursdays, Irish music Fridays and Saturdays, and starting next year, they'll be offering live music on Sundays as well.

"That'll be a mix of sea shanty weekends, local Irish music. Kind of a hodgepodge of what fits the time of year. We're going to experiment with outdoor, acoustic, that kind of stuff."

They are also intending to bring back Irish dancers, which were a staple before COVID. "The goal is every Saturday at 5pm."

While the hotel, restaurant, and Galena already offer so much for visitors to come and enjoy, the staff at The Irish Cottage want to be able to give a wider variety of activities to their guests.

"We're always looking for different opportunities to

offer different experiences, to enhance the overall experience of the Cottage," says Joshua. "One of the things we started last year and we've committed to doing next year, because it was really well received, is a monthly pairing dinner. We coordinate with either a vineyard, brewery, or distillery, and then feature anywhere from five to ten courses. Anywhere from a very casual, fun drinking atmosphere and food, to a more refined fine dining setting."

"The concept is that people come in and they sit down with representatives from the distillery or winery [or brewery], and that person has the experience with everybody. . . It becomes an interactive learning experience."

"We've done a tour of Ireland where we used our hotel as that tour base. We talked about the history of Irish pubs, had a cocktail and went out to the dolman in the parking lot and talked about the folklore behind [it]. . . Came into the library and talked about some of the famous Irish writers and poets, and we concluded out at the faerie ring where we discussed the lore behind the faerie rings, and had dinner outside. It was done by one of our Irish musicians who is also an Irish historian, Andreas Transø. He plays for us every month, once a month in the pub."

A quaint getaway, a unique adventure experience, a corporate retreat, a gorgeous wedding, or a relaxing vacation. Whatever it is you're

looking for in the little slice of scenic beauty that is Galena, you will thoroughly appreciate your trip accommodations at The Irish Cottage Inn & Suites.

To book at the Irish Cottage, or for more information on what they offer, please visit theirishcottageboutiquehotel.com.

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First let me start by wishing everyone a Happy New Year! January starts my 74 trip around the Sun. It is also a time full of hope and good intentions. I'm sure you have all thought about your New Year's resolutions and all the

changes to your life that you are going to make. Lose some weight, quit smoking, cut back on alcohol consumption, be more tolerant, perhaps even start going to mass.

In a short six weeks we have probably consumed enough turkey, ham, mashed potatoes, desserts and booze for an entire year, and it's starting to show. That's what the Holidays are for, over indulging.

But if you're serious about being successful you are going to need a plan. It's not only the impact that the food you eat has on your health but also on



Ireland's Darren Kiely Performing at Carol's Pub January 23



his inherited love of traditional Irish music, intertwined with modern influences such as The Lumineers and Dermot Kennedy. After winning numerous honors at a national level in Irish traditional music, Darren found his way to New York in 2022 to continue developing his own music and sound. The singer-songwriter has accumulated 3 million total global streams independently and has sold out headlining shows at Rockwood Music Hall and Mercury Lounge in New York. Due to overwhelming demand in Chicago with a sell out at Schubas Tavern on January 22, Darren will take the stage with Kyndal

Hailing from a quaint town in Co. Cork, Ireland, Darren Kiely's folk-infused pop sound originates from

Inskeep on Tuesday, January 23 at Carol's Pub. Tickets are on sale now at carolspub.com.

this little rock we live on called earth.

Methane is a greenhouse gas that warms the atmosphere 80 times more than carbon dioxide. With 94 million cows in the U.S., and 1 billion globally, beef and dairy cows account for the vast majority agricultural methane emissions, and will account for half the atmospheric warming in the next two decades. Scientists are working on reducing methane emissions that come from manure and burping cows.

Now don't get me wrong I love a good steak or cheeseburger as much as the next guy. Maybe more, but we may want to think about eating a more plant based diet from locally grown produce whenever possible.

So how do you start introducing more plants into your diet and why? Having more energy, living longer,

overall health improvement, just wanting to go out and buy some new clothes and feeling good about it, and not waiting for your doctor to make the decision for you should be all the motivation you need.

Right! Easy for you to say. Nobody said it was going to be easy. Lifestyle changes never are. But they are not impossible, and the benefits can be life changing.

Like everything else you need to approach this with a positive mindset, and if you are not ready you are not ready. If this seems like an overwhelming goal to achieve, so start small and go from there. It's not all or nothing. Having support really helps with sharing your goals and accountability. Friends, family, and groups can increase your chances of success.

Start by looking for seasonal produce preferably locally grown. You will be surprised at what is out there in the marketplace. You don't have to eliminate all animal based protein, just cut back on the portion size and eat more veg. Try a meatless Monday.

You are not limited in the selection of fruit and vegetables available in your local supermarket. In a recent visit to my local Jewel I found apples, beetroot, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, leeks, cauliflower, parsnips, turnips, rutabagas, potatoes, mushrooms, onions, kale, spinach, most of them on sale!

Over the course of the year I will feature a seasonal vegetable dish in my column.

Here is a simple baked dish that can be a satisfying side dish or hearty entree.

I made this gratin with vegetables I had on hand. You can substitute any vegetable to suit your taste.

Fennel or leeks would be great as well as celeriac (celery root) and shitake or Portobello mushrooms. You can use the same recipe substituting different squashes.

Ingredients:

- 1 large beet root
- 1 Large parsnip
- 1 Small rutabaga
- 1 Medium turnip
- 1 Medium sweet potato
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1 1/2 cups heavy whipping cream
- 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoon thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon granulated garlic
- Salt
- Pepper
- 1/2 cup Gruyere cheese

Peel all the vegetables with the beets last. Cut into 1/4 inch slices and put in separate bowls. Quarter the larger vegetables so all the slices are similar in size. Season the vegetables with salt, pepper, garlic, and parmesan cheese. Add 1/4 cup heavy whipping cream to each container and mix. Butter a heavy oval or rectangular baking dish or gratin pan. Arrange vegetable slices in the pan in rows. Pour heavy cream left in the bowls over the vegetables. Pour the additional heavy cream over the vegetables and sprinkle with parmesan. Cover with foil and bake at 350 for forty minutes. Carefully remove the foil and check for doneness with a fork. Fork should easily pierce the vegetables. Sprinkle with Gruyere cheese and return to oven uncovered for 10 minutes. Top should be nicely browned. You could add a layer of spinach and another layer of vegetables by spreading them out to make lovely lasagna.



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Letter From McGonigals in Barrinton, IL

Memories, memories, memories! In August 2010, a few months after we opened, the Irish American News published a great article on the Pub and featured us on the front page of their monthly newspaper/magazine. The picture itself was taken when we were just opening, and we had to gather as many people on premises as possible for the photo. This may still look like a relatively large group of employees, but it was much, much bigger than shown here. When both the Pub and the neighboring Park Avenue Wine Bar first opened we had 106 total people on staff... and to be honest we needed all of 'em at the time! Back to the Irish

American News - for all that you need to know that's Irish, this free monthly newspaper is available in most Irish Pubs throughout the Chicagoland area - we've been carrying it since we opened - and over the years it's also spread through much of the nation. Their website <https://irishamericannews.com/> and the Facebook page also includes links to the publication and of course up-to-date news. By the way, the Pub has been advertising with the Irish American News for the entire time we've been open. They've been a great friend to us and the Irish communities.

To view the article (and this photo) in PDF format, here's the link: <http://www.mcgonigalspub.com/files/IAN-Pub-082010.pdf>



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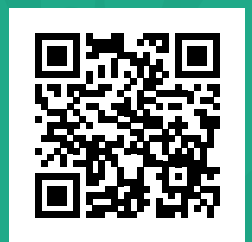
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Allyson Crowley-Duncan is a worldwide phenomenon for her pushing a MacLellan Great Highland bagpipe to the limits and beyond, in every tune from heavy metal and country to rock and Star Wars movie tracks. For her, the business of reaching success came easy on talent and hard on finding her unique place while overcoming a number of challenges.

In the crucible of the Covid shutdown and the resultant loss of her retail day job, the classically trained musician stood up in her upper bedroom studio, sometimes with painful back aches, and sent out a sound of music that is incredibly compelling. So much so that millions have watched her viral short videos, for which she is best known online as Ally the Piper.

While homebound music fans soaked up her takes on modern songs like a thirsty sponge, the 28 year old Irish American from upstate New York, adopted by a Scottish father at 12, moved forward into music videos, an album and first tour.

Ally's virtually instant success in viral videos led to the PennWest Edinboro University graduate meeting a fellow internet sensation, Mia Asano. The 24 year old was in her junior year at the Berklee College of Music in Boston. And each was already a mutual fan of the other.

Mia's supersonic strutting of her electric violin is born of a love for the fiddle. "I've had a deep love for Celtic music ever since I was a little kid," says Mia. And present day? "I've always had a deep love for bagpipes--and that added a lot to me being a fan of Ally's when we met."

"Mia and I have both very much struggled with a lot of similar things," Ally says with insight and import. "We both play instruments that are deeply rooted in tradition. And we both have a trajectory that we took with our instruments that was very strenuous... and very intense."

Like Mia, in youth she faced down the incredible pressure of playing classical instruments while literally being judged in harrowing competitive school settings.

The Midwest leg of their U.S. and Canada tour includes a Feb. 16th stop at the Park West in Chicago and the next night traversing north behind the Cheese Curtain to just east of Madison. They will be at the Stoughton, Wisconsin Opera House with a talented trio from Scotland named Talisk.

The new album is called Mia x Ally: The Viral Hits. It features both new hits as well as their famous cover songs blessed by the original musician acts from the country Charlie Daniels Band and Metallica to Lynyrd Skynyrd. And yes that means a spectrum from The Devil Went Down to Georgia (cue Mia's electric violin on a power surge overload) to the iconic Freebird.

In the official music video Ally is slinging both a tin whistle and bagpipes with equal back bending gusto mirrored by Mia, whose endless energy would make the Energizer Bunny exhausted.

There is nothing these two

can't handle. And that talent comes with a price paid early in youth competitions and now the hard-fought adult business of establishing a new brand name...and band name.

"Just because you have a million followers doesn't mean they'll all come to your show," Mia notes.

But what a product to be pitching.



The eclectic astonishment of watching two talented women strenuously yet effortlessly making music for everyone. Everyone.

As Ally relates from what she experienced in their spring tour that started in Chicago last April, "People did tell me personally that my music has helped them through some very difficult times." In addition, "there were tons of children there too and people with their whole families."

The family feeling is encouraged by the classiness of the eloquent, openly transparent and thoughtful pair I had the pleasure of interviewing at length. No F bombs or swearing then nor any at all in this tour...it's sure to be beloved by all from age 8 to 88. Not bad for two mavens of heavy metal one minute and soft soothing numbers the next to make both a melody and a point.

In our interview there was heart and depth of feeling in Ally's love for others. She has been an awardee from the United States Army for her empathetic music soothing families escorting the bodies of fallen service members.

"Mental health awareness is really



important to both of us, as well as our entire band and team. Many of us have lost those close to us, and watched friends and loved ones struggle as a result of mental illness. We believe it's an important topic to discuss, and are grateful to have a platform to do so," Ally says.

And so the high energy tempo of the set list switches to a calm reflection and call to action.

"During our show we perform an instrumental rendition of What Was I Made for by Billie Eilish, and we take the moment of the show to promote a special sticker we made together. 100% of those proceeds are donated to mental health organizations," Ally explains.

"For this tour we're supporting the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and To Write Love on Her Arms. We also take any

opportunity to remind those who are struggling that they're loved, and never alone, and we have crisis resources linked on our website."

Mia and Ally's compassion is deep, their odds of becoming a household name for all demographics in the future seems even deeper.

For the present, don't miss them performing live in concert!

I strongly encourage you to see Mia x Ally In Chicago, Stoughton or wherever this column finds you with their live U.S. and Canada tour beginning this first week of January.

You're in for a two hour thrill ride of fun framed by love and talent and paid for with persistence and triumph in a sometimes cold, cruel and competitive music world. Their skill, energy, and connection with those needing help makes them an unmatched duo with a boundless future ahead of music that is unforgettable and unique.

For more info and Mia x Ally tour dates visit www.MiaXAlly.com

Contact Jim at IrishRoverJim@gmail.com

Scotland's Skerryvore Releases New Holiday Song

Scotland's award-winning group, SKERRYVORE, released an original holiday song "Angel of Christmas" on December 1st

All proceeds from the sale of the single and Christmas ornaments to benefit Cash

winners of Scotland's 'Live Act of the Year' award and one of the country's leading forces in a thriving live music scene. With a mix of bagpipes, fiddles, accordions, and whistles, alongside guitar and vocals, underpinned by driving bass, drums and keys, this 8-piece group represents the best in contemporary Scottish traditional music.



For Kids in the U.K

Vocalist and composer Alec Dalgligh says, "With 'Angel of Christmas' I wanted to write a song for the season which was reminiscent of the Christmas songs I remember as a kid. In a world of consumerism and self-absorption, I hope

that the message of the song and our tie with our chosen charity encourages us all to be more altruistic. Christmas can be a beautiful occasion for celebration and community but it can become a more difficult and lonely time for many others. We're probably all guilty of focusing on the trials and tribulations of our own lives, and Christmas is a great opportunity to look outward and think about what we could do to help those less fortunate even in the smallest way possible. It's for this reason that we want this song to support Cash for Kids 'Mission Christmas' campaign."

Hailing from Glasgow, Skerryvore (pronounced Sker-e-vore) are three-time

Since 2004, Skerryvore has released 7 studio albums. Their most recent, Tempus (April 2023) went to # 1 in both the Official Scottish Album and UK Folk Albums charts and entered the top 40 in the Official UK Charts.

Skerryvore has brought their high energy performances to audiences across the globe performing in major venues and to festival crowds in the USA, Canada, Australia and throughout the UK and Europe. Skerryvore's wide range of influences and talent produce a musically expansive, immersive yet intimate set, that excites and captivates audiences.

U.S. Tour Dates

- Feb 21-24- Folk Alliance International, Kansas City, KS
- Feb 29 & March 1-Thrasher Opera House, Green Lake WI
- March 2- Schauer Arts Center, Hartford WI
- March 3 - The Bur Oak, Madison WI
- March 4 - City Winery, Chicago, IL
- March 12 - The Dakota, Minneapolis, MN
- March 14 - Beaumier U.P. Heritage Center, Marquette MI
- March 15-Historic Temple of Viroqua, Viroqua, WI
- www.skerryvore.com

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December Irish Fellowship Club Christmas Luncheon News

A sell-out crowd celebrated the start of the Christmas season at the Irish Fellowship Club Annual President's Luncheon on December 1 at the Hilton Chicago. The members and guests enjoyed Christmas carols from the St. Ignatius College Prep choir during cocktails and the distinguished guests were led into the Ballroom by the Shannon Rovers. Many guests created their own Guinness glasses thanks to the support of Guinness Chicago.

The Luncheon also serves as the Annual Meeting of the Irish Fellowship Club where the membership honors the President and elects new officers. Said Luncheon Chair, Bob Reiter, President of the Chicago Federation of Labor, "I want to thank all of the generous sponsors, table buyers and guests who made the 2023 Christmas Luncheon so successful. Your support enables the Irish Fellowship Club Foundation to provide support for Catholic education across the Chicago area. I was delighted to honor my friend, Bob Flood of Flood Brothers, as he completes his Presidency of the Irish Fellowship Club. Congratulations to Bob and to Jim Coyne of Plumbers Local 130 who will succeed him."

The program began with a blessing from Cardinal Blase Cupich, Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Chicago. Nominating Chairman, former IFC President Chris Kozicki, presented the slate of officers and new members for 2024. The membership elected Chairman Bob Flood, President Jim Coyne, Fr. Jack Clair as the 1st Vice President, new Vice Presidents: as well as 9 new members.

In his remarks, new President Jim Coyne said, "Thank you to the members and Directors of the Irish Fellowship Club for electing me. I am looking forward to a great year including an outstanding Chicago St. Patrick's Day Parade honoring the Club's own, Peter and Mimi O'Brien as the Grand Marshal and bringing light to the importance of mental health with Patrick Kennedy and the Kennedy Forum as the Guest of Honor. As President, I am committed to continuing the support for Catholic High Schools as well as the Irish cultural organizations in Chicago. Thank you to all the members and guests at our events who support the Irish Fellowship Club Foundation. Here's to a great 2024!"

After a delicious lunch, Irish Fellowship Club Chairman, John Wrenn, presented an award to outgoing President, Bob Flood of Flood Brothers Construction. He saluted Bob's leadership saying, "Bob is a committed Chicagoan and strong Catholic who has built a successful career and more importantly a strong family on the key values of our Irish Catholic traditions. In his years on the Irish Fellowship Club board, Bob has been a key leader and it has been my pleasure to work with him over this past year. His passion for our mission is impressive and on behalf of the Irish Fellowship Club board and membership, I thank you for your service to the Club."

In his remarks, Bob Flood commented, "I have been very honored to serve as the 123rd president of the Irish Fellowship Club of Chicago. Through the years, I have striven to carry on my Irish Heritage and my Catholic faith within my family and share my Irish roots with our Irish Fellowship Club. I am delighted that my wife Sue and my children (all graduates of Catholic high schools) are here today to celebrate with me and the Irish Fellowship Club. As I leave the Presidency, I can think of no one better than Jim Coyne to lead the Club and Foundation to greater success."

One of the highlights of the Luncheon is the Raffle and the Club is grateful to Katina Panagopoulos and her volunteer team from Wintrust. Thanks to their help and the generosity of our Raffle Donors, the Raffle was a huge success.

Executive Director Kathy Taylor concluded, "The luncheon was a wonderful celebration of the Irish in Chicago. We are grateful to Bob Reiter for his leadership of the event and to all of our sponsors and guests. Thank you to Bob Flood for his leadership this year and we are looking forward to 2024 with Jim Coyne as President."





STUDENT SCHOLAR RECEPTION

The Irish Fellowship Club Education and Cultural Foundation celebrated our Student Scholars at a special reception at DePaul College Prep.

The Student Scholars, their families and school administrators joined Irish Fellowship Club board members to recognize the importance of Catholic education across the Chicagoland area. The Irish Fellowship Club Foundation provides scholarships to 40 Catholic high schools to support students during these formative years.

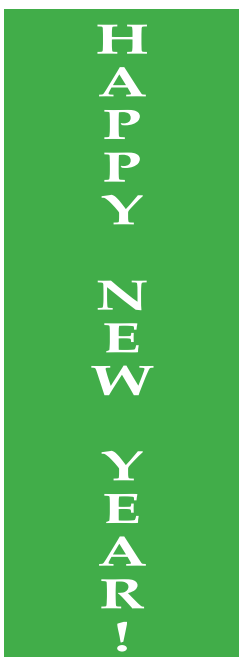
Irish Fellowship Club President Bob Flood, of Flood Brothers, thanked Mary Dempsey, President of DePaul Prep for hosting the celebration and addressed the audience saying, "As a graduate of Catholic High School and the parent of seven children who have benefitted from their Catholic edu-



Students & Administrators from Leo High School



Mya Weatherspoon, Cristo Rey St Martin College Prep



Jim Coyne, Mary Dempsey, Bob Flood



The Gallagher Family from DePaul Prep



Student Group photo



education, I am delighted that the Irish Fellowship Club Educational and Cultural Foundation continues to support the Catholic High Schools. I salute all of the Student Scholars across the Chicagoland area and their parents who have committed themselves to a strong, faith-based education. It is our pleasure to recognize that dedication tonight.”

Mary Dempsey and Josh Hale, CEO of The Big Shoulders Fund also saluted the students and parents and commented on the value of Catholic education, thanking the Irish Fellowship Club Foundation for its unwavering support of Catholic high schools.

Student Scholars Mya Weatherspoon from Cristo Rey St. Martin College Prep in Waukegan, Jimmy O’Malley of Notre Dame College Prep and Kate Gallagher of DePaul Prep shared their perspectives with the audience and thanked the Foundation for its support. Said Mya, “I grew up with a single mother who had always taught me to dream big. When I was younger there was always that worry of if college would be affordable or the possibility of whether or not I would have been able to go. Now that the time has come I couldn’t feel more prepared and ready to face my future. Cristo Rey has provided me numerous opportunities to prepare for the future. ... I know college will determine my future but I feel more excited than anxious about what’s in store for me, and it’s all thanks to Cristo Rey. Without the help of the Irish Fellowship Club I wouldn’t be where I am today so I would like to give one final thank you.”

Thanks to the generosity of Access One and the

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Flood family, each Scholar received a Tumbler.

Jack Hartman, President of the Foundation, said “The Irish Fellowship Club Foundation relies on the generosity of our event attendees, sponsors and members to provide these important grants. We are grateful to support outstanding the Student Scholars who attend Catholic High Schools.”

The Irish Fellowship Club would like to thank photographer Michael Kardas for all of his great camera work at our events. As he says, “My interest in photography developed as a child when my favorite uncle gave me my first camera (a Polaroid Swinger). I have been passionate (o.k.a a little obsessed) about Kapturing precious moments and ‘writing with light’ ever since. Nothing feels better than when I AM able to ‘Kapture the Light & Love’ of a moment in time and share that with the World.” Thank you Michael for bringing smiles to the world through your gift of Photography.



Notre Dame students & alums



Kevin & Bob Flood



Irishman Mike Tobin Reports From the Danger Zones for Fox News

By *Ryanne Gallagher Johnson*

Fox News International Correspondent Mike Tobin, who has reported on wars in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Lebanon, and in the Israeli and the Palestinian territories (twitter.com), has almost always known that he wanted to go into broadcasting.

"I grew up listening to the Chicago greats. . . I listened to so much radio, my brothers would pressure me at Lent to give up listening to the radio. Radio was my first love."

Raised in Barrington, Illinois, Tobin's Irish roots stem back to when his great-grandfather came over during the famine in Ireland. "He started out as a household servant, and he saved enough money and bought a big enough house. He had a proper public house, but instead of living in the back, the Irish folk lived on the top."

Tobin's grandfather, Cornelius Lynch, was the first in his family to be educated. He became an accountant, but passed away when Tobin's mother was very young. His grandmother, in turn, took the family reins and ensured her four daughters were raised well and married good Irish men.

"My parents met in an Irish-American version of an arranged marriage," he says. "[My grandmother] was an assistant to the executive at Dow Chemical.



James Carol Tobin



Mary Catherine (Molly) Tobin nee Lynch

Whenever promising young men with Irish last names came through, they were invited home to dinner at the Lynch house. All my Mom's sisters married young execs from Dow, and my Dad was one of them."

Tobin's own upbringing outside of Chicago, listening to the great broadcasters on the radio, led him into college radio shortly after being cut from the gymnastics team at The University of Illinois.

"After losing my status as an athlete, I was a bit of a lost soul. So I left U of I

and I came back and I got [a] job at The Snuggery," he explains of his deejay job at the now permanently closed commuter sports bar in Chicago. "It really solidified that I wanted to go into broadcasting."

From there, he went to Arizona State, where he enrolled in the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication; a program that is geared toward TV news.

"I had one teacher, a guy named Dave Marquis, who did the local news in Phoenix, and he had great stories of adventure in the field. That started to

get very attractive to me, the idea of adventure for a living. Then I applied for internships in both television and radio, and I got approved for two of them on the same day. . . One was in radio and one was in TV, and it dawned on me that that was going to chart the path for the rest of my life, whatever I chose at that moment.

"I'd be lying if I said I was very pious or an observant Catholic, but I said a prayer. I said, 'I need a little help making a choice,' and the next day I was in the bathroom at the Walter Cronkite school, and some old guy comes up to use the porcelain next to me, and it was Walter



Cronkite. That was my sign from God." But his intense and rather dangerous field reporting didn't really start until that fateful day when the twin towers fell in New York City.

"When 9/11 happened, I was in the Dallas bureau, and I did the follow-ups to reporting there. American Airlines had [one plane] that was involved in that. . . but pretty soon, that reporting dried up. I called one of the VPs in New York, and asked if there was anything else I could do, and they sent me to Pakistan.

"From Pakistan, we crossed the border into Afghanistan and were some of the first crews into Kandahar. I think they liked the reporting I did in the rough spots. As soon as I got back, there was a





Julia and Mike on their Wedding Day



LIVE NOW FOX VIDEO: REPORTER NEARLY HIT BY MISSILE



There's all the intensity, and then you come back to— right now we've got a remodeling project going on at the house, so I went from covering a war to plastic and tape all over the house."

Outside of broadcasting and reporting, Tobin has a passion for climbing. "I've knocked out most of the big mountains in South America, and climbed the sixth highest mountain in the world. The one right next to Everest. It's called Cho Oyu. . . At the end of August, early September, I went to Bolivia and climbed four mountains out there."

He also got married recently. Coincidentally, his one year anniversary fell on the day after the attack in Israel this October. "I spent my anniversary doing whatever I could to get into Israel, as most airlines had stopped flying into the area."

He did make it up to his wife when he returned, though.

You can find Mike Tobin reporting for Fox News, or check out his account on the social media platform formerly known as Twitter by his handle, @miketobinfox.

bombing at the Park Hotel in Netanya in Israel. . . I went and covered [that]. . . By the time I got home from Israel, the ramp-up to war in Iraq was on its way, and I went back and covered Israel's response to that.

"I was a Dallas-based correspondent, but I wasn't in Texas very much. Then an opportunity came in Jerusalem and I took it. That set me on that path. I lived six years full time in Jerusalem. I would sometimes live in Gaza for weeks or months at a time and cover stories."

Adjusting back to civilian life can undoubtedly be difficult, given not only the differences in cultures, but also the fact that Tobin was often going from a war zone to the peace of his own home on American soil. "You have a different perspective when you come back.

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CHICAGO GAELIC PARK

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

Happy New Year!

Thank you for being with us during December and adding to the liveliness and warmth of the holidays here at Chicago Gaelic Park. Our two Irish Christmas shows were very entertaining, and our tastefully decorated rooms and pub were used for many holiday celebrations, including Mingle & Jingle and High Tea. Your generous participation in our Giving Tree program helped make Christmas brighter for children in need.

We've been making plans and we're convinced that we'll be offering more in 2024 — more concerts, more events and more chances to be part of the Gaelic Park community, where we celebrate Irish culture and heritage every day of the year. Our Irish concerts for 2024 include Irish Heartbeat (sold out), Merry Ploughboys (Dublin), and Green Road (Wexford). Our Nollaig na mBan celebration will be held a day early this year (January 5th), and all ladies are most welcome.

We're entering the Home Stretch in our Win a Chicago Home Raffle. Someone will win a life-changing prize. If you've already purchased a ticket, thank you. Please tell your friends how incredibly easy it is to use the QR code or to visit the website to buy a ticket.

Cheers!
Bill O'Sullivan



CGP Queen, Maggie Schwarz, with musical sister duo Cassie and Maggie MacDonald

NEW YEAR: NEW HOUSE OR \$450,000 FOR YOU?

We are heading for HOME with our **Win a Chicago Home Raffle**. The construction is complete, and a beautiful house now sits on a lovely tree-lined street in Mount Greenwood. Will the winner of our Raffle put down roots at 10430 S. Sawyer Avenue or opt for the cash prize? In 2.5 months, we will know the answer to this exciting and much-debated question. In the meantime, our push to sell tickets continues with our sights set on raising vital funds to upgrade our GAA facilities and strengthen our cultural heritage programs.

The sooner you purchase a ticket the better as we have more Early Bird drawings on tap in the lead-up to our Grand Prize Drawing on March 24, 2024. And if you have already purchased your ticket, you are automatically entered into any future Early Birds.

As we go to print, the Chicago GAA just released a House Raffle promo video. Thank you to the "Voice of Chicago GAA" John Quinn as well as Chicago GAA PRO and USGAA PRO Mary Redmond for sharing their time and talents with our **Win a Chicago Home Raffle**. We also thank our generous donors and the many ticket sellers/buyers who have supported this effort thus far. Now let's keep it up and see this Raffle HOME!

-Noreen Lennon Hegarty and Maureen Gill O'Reagan



Mrs. Kitty Conroy with Carmel Conroy and her ticket



John Quinn at his site visit to the new Chicago home

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Upcoming Events

Visit chicagogaelicpark.com and follow us on social media for more information on upcoming events.

- January 3rd - MONTHLY MUSICAL LUNCHEON
- January 5th - WOMEN'S LITTLE CHRISTMAS (EVE)
- January 7th - BOOK CLUB
- January 14th - MASS AND IRISH BREAKFAST
- January 20th - AN IRISH HEARTBEAT: VAN MORRISON TRIBUTE (SOLD OUT)
- January 21st - CHICAGO IRISH SINGERS CLUB
- February 4th - RALLY 4 REYNOLDS
- February 9th - ALL-IRELAND TRIVIA WITH THE GAELIC PARK PLAYERS
- February 10th - MERRY PLOUGHBOYS CONCERT
- February 16th - FAMILY FEUD

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- January 4th - TRAD THURSDAY
- January 5th - LIAM DURKIN
- January 6th - SETH MERCER
- January 12th - RAY GAVIN
- January 13th - ST. JAMES GATE
- January 18th - TRAD THURSDAY
- January 19th - BERNIE GLIM
- January 20th - KIERAN BYRNE
- January 26th - KEVIN ROWAN
- January 27th - GOTHAM RAMBLERS



Kieran Byrne at The Carraig



Gaelic Park Players ALL-IRELAND TRIVIA

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9TH AT 7:30PM

SUPPORT THE GAELIC PARK PLAYERS AND JOIN THEM FOR A NIGHT OF FUN AT THE ANNUAL ALL-IRELAND TRIVIA NIGHT!

\$60/TEAM OF 6.
\$10/PER SINGLE PLAYER.
SINGLE PLAYER WILL BE PLACED ON A TEAM.



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- 8:00pm - Music & Dancing, \$20 with Stuart Moyles and Jack Keogh



GERARD BUTLER

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- 11am -12:30pm - Youth Country Jive Workshop, \$10
- 2 - 4pm - Country Jive Workshop, \$20



JACK KEOGH



STUART MOYLES

- 7pm - Music & Dancing, \$25 with Stuart Moyles, Jack Keogh, and Myles McVeigh & The Hoyle Brothers



MYLES MCVEIGH & THE HOYLE BROTHERS

SUNDAY, MARCH 24TH

- 12 - 2 pm - Country Jive Workshop, \$20
- 3pm - Music & Dancing, \$20 with Stuart Moyles and Jack Keogh
- 6pm - Live music in The Carraig

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TICKETS & INFO



THE MERRY PLOUGHBOY CONCERT

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10TH



\$26.50/TICKET
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Named after the ballad of the 1916 rebellion, The Merry Ploughboys are a traditional folk group from Dublin, Ireland, who have been "singing it like they mean it" for 30 years, with gutsy and engaging vocals backed by arrangements of fiddle, mandolin and guitar and often joined by uilleann pipes, whistle or tenor banjo.

A Look Ahead at St. Patrick's Day Season

We're Irish 365 days a year, but March is extra special for us! Take a look at some of the fun we have planned. Stay tuned to our website and socials for more detailed updates about all of our St. Patrick's Day events. All are welcome to celebrate with us at Chicago Gaelic Park.

Events + Concerts

- March 4th - Ireland on Parade begins
- March 9th - Greed Road Concert
- March 10th - South Side Irish Sunday
- March 17th - St. Patrick's Day Celebrations

Parades

- Save the date to march with the CGP community!
- Saturday, March 9th - Oak Forest Parade
 - Sunday, March 11th - Tinley Park Parade
 - Saturday, March 16th - Downtown Chicago Parade
 - Sunday, March 17th - South Side Irish Parade





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Athletex	11+ years	Irish Times Pub	28 years	Shannon Law Group	3+ years
Berhshire Hathaway	15 + years	Joe McShane	13+ years	Sheehan Group	3+ years
Bissell/Sexton Floors	24+ years	Johnny's Kitchen	9 years	Sheehy Funeral Hm.	28+ years
Catherine O'Connell	21+ years	Larkin Brothers	19+ years	Sheila's Carpet Clean	4+ years
Celtica Gifts	9+ years	Late Night Catechism	25 years	St Patrick's Parade	8+ years
Cntrl MetalRecycling	4+ years	Law - Thomas Lynch	5 years	Tourism Ireland	27years
Chicalba Bagpiping	18 years	Lizzie McNeil's	18+ years	Trinity Irish Dance	28+ years
Clancy's Pizza Pub	10 years	Marquette Bank	21 years	Unforgettable Edibles	28 years
Considine, Mary Ellen	28 years	Martin Healy Law	25 years	Vaughan's Rest/Pub	23+ years
Coogan Gallagher	3 years	McEntee Law	5+ years	West Suburban Irish	22+ years
Corrigan Financial	27+ years	McGonigal's Pub/Rest	13 years	Whiskey Mick Music	2+ years
Fiddler's Hearth	13+ years	McNulty Dance	29 years	Winston Sausage	28 years
Flood Brothers	10+ years	Mel Dermody Hearing	6 years	Wolfhound Bar/Kitchen	2 years
First National Bank	3+ years	Mickey Finn's	10 years		
Gadabout Travel	27+ years	Miller/McGing	3 years		
Gaelic Imports	26+ years	Milwaukee Irish Fest	28 years		
Gaelic Park	27+ years	Mystic Rogue	3 years		
Galway Arms	19+ years	Old Orland Insur.	20+ years		
Gibbons Funeral	22+ years	Old St. Pat's Church	23 years		
Hair by O'Hara	10 years	Old Twn School Music	21 years		
Harp & Eagle Hotels	28 years	Paddy Homan	16+ years		
Houlihan, Mike	27+ years	Palos Country Club	28 years		

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'Out In Rugby' Conversation with Nick McCarthy January 18

Jan 18 - 4 pm - 7 pm Save the Date for 'Out In Rugby' Conversation with Nick McCarthy, the newest recruit of Chicago Hounds rugby team and formerly a player for Ireland. Nick will share his personal journey, triumphs and challenges, offering



valuable insights into the LGBTQ+ community's experiences in the world of professional sports. While wrestling



with his decision to publicly divulge his sexuality, McCarthy admitted that he contemplated "walking away from rugby altogether" because he didn't believe he could be openly out in the sport.

However, the support from Cullen and Lancaster was "unbelievable" and motivated his decision to come out to his team. Invitation to be issued Dec 6th. Hosted at Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP.

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Brendan Gardiner's Irish Legal 100 Honor a Fitting Bookend to Parents' Journey from Ireland

In 2015, as Brendan Gardiner walked up the steps of the residence of Irish Ambassador to the United States Anne Anderson to attend a reception celebrating the Irish Legal 100 - a group of the top Irish American lawyers of



which he was recently selected to join - he thought of his parents.

"My parents came from Ireland to the United States as young people - my mother was 18, my father was in his early 20s," Gardiner reflected. "I couldn't help but think that this was a long way from where their journey started."

Beginnings

Gardiner's father's journey began in County Mayo, from where, after stops in Dublin and London, he emigrated to the United States, joining his brother in Boston in 1959. His mother, the oldest of four siblings, hailed from Sligo and emigrated a year later, joining her aunt and working at a bank in her adopted home. The two of them met at what was then the quintessential matchmaking event of Irish immigrants in the United States: the community dance, this one on Dudley Street in Boston.

The two were married, welcomed three children, including Brendan the youngest, and raised their family in Dedham, just outside Boston, which Gardiner recalled as a "great place to grow up, filled with other first-generation immigrant families from all over the world." His parents made it a priority to return to Ireland regularly, and Gardiner fondly remembers summers spent in the rural west of the country.

As a high school student, Gardiner was planning to follow his siblings to attend in college locally, before the mother of one of his friends encouraged him to look beyond Massachusetts to continue his education. This piece of advice changed his path forever, as he applied and was accepted to attend the University of Notre Dame. At the age of 18 - the same age that his mother was when she left Ireland - he moved to South Bend, where he would spend the better part of the next decade.

South Bend Years

Gardiner spent his second year of college studying abroad in a familiar country - Ireland - where he matriculated at Maynooth University.

"I remember my father asking me why I wanted to go back to Ireland. After all, it hadn't been that long since he left," Gardiner said. "But it was a great experience to see a different part of Ireland than the one I had seen during my summer visits growing up."

His year studying in Maynooth saw him change his major from Business to English, and it was also formative for him in another significant way. While there, he met his wife Meaghen, a nursing student from St. Mary's College who was in the same academic program.

Upon graduation, Gardiner put his English degree to work as a high school teacher before enrolling at Notre Dame Law School.

Professional Success

Armed with his law degree, Gardiner took a job as a law clerk in Jacksonville, Florida, the first of many moves he would make over the next two decades. After his clerkship, he moved to Chicago, where he worked at Sidley Austin for four years, then accepted an in-house legal position at Caterpillar, starting at the company's headquarters in Peoria and eventually transferring to San Diego and Brussels before returning to the Chicago area, where he has lived since 2014. In 2017, he made a career move that did not require a change in zip code, joining the Archer Daniels Midland Company (ADM) as Chief Litigation and Regulatory Counsel and Director of Insurance and Risk Management. Gardiner describes his position as advising the company on litigation and corporate risk.

In recognition of his impressive list of professional accomplishments, in 2016 Gardiner was nominated - he still does not know who actually submitted his name - to join the prestigious Irish Legal 100, an organization that honors distinguished legal professionals in the United States, including attorneys, legal scholars and senior members of the judiciary. After attending his first Irish Legal 100 reception in 2015, Gardiner said he makes it a point to participate each year and has been active in growing the organization to broaden its membership to more effectively reflect the diversity of the Irish diaspora.

"The members are a varied group of people from across the legal profession, but we all have a shared connection

with being Irish. I still remember at my first reception, Ambassador Anderson spoke beautifully about the history of Irish America and the legal profession," said Gardiner, mentioning that for many years, the law was an attractive profession for newly-arrived Irish immigrants who would become police officers or attorneys. In fact, Gardiner is currently working with other members of this organization in developing a book about Irish Americans on the Supreme Court.

Giving Back

Ask Brendan Gardiner for the "secrets of his success," and he will point to three factors: his education, the value of hard work, and the importance of treating others well. Each one of these factors was instilled in him through his parents.

"My dad didn't go to high school, but he was very smart. As a kid I saw that education is a huge opportunity, which motivated me to take advantage of the opportunities I had. He also taught me the value of a hard work," Gardiner recalled, pointing out that his father worked six days a week operating a forklift truck. He credits his mother, who he described as incredibly thoughtful, kind, and welcoming, for showing him how to treat people well, acknowledging that "no one treated people better."

For Gardiner, these values - education, hard work, and treating people well - laid a foundation for his success as an attorney, a profession not known for its cordiality.

"I learned to be effective with my personality. As a lawyer, you need to lead others. You can't get anything done alone. My strengths lend themselves to serving in the in-house position that I have."

Throughout all of Gardiner's success, his connection with Ireland never weakened. He has continued to take his family on trips to Ireland, and his daughter Grace (one of his and Meaghen's three children) attended Trinity College Dublin and currently works for the Irish American Partnership in Boston. More recently, he has become more involved in the Irish Chicago community, most notably in his role as President of the Board of Directors of Irish Community Services (ICS), a post he has held since 2021.

"I knew I wanted to contribute extra time to a nonprofit organization," Gardiner said, "and I wanted to do something connected to immigration, as it's a part of who I am, education, and something with a global connection. ICS ticked all those boxes, and its senior programming particularly stood out to me, as at the time I joined the board, my father was at the same stage of life as many of the people who ICS serves."

Gardiner sees his role in helping ICS deliver on its mission as a bookend to his Irish Legal 100 recognition, in that for every story of thriving Irish Americans, he acknowledges that other immigrants, particularly those of his parents' generation, have not found the same success. At the same time, as he has become more involved with the Irish community in Chicago, he has seen how the new generation of Irish and Irish Americans has helped to create a new identity that is thriving and modern, pointing to the success of organizations like Ireland Network-Chicago.

When Brendan Gardiner returns to the Irish Ambassador's residence in Washington, DC to attend this year's Irish Legal 100 celebration, his thoughts will likely return to his parents and their immigrant journey. Hopefully he will also pause to reflect on the contributions he has made, and continues to make, to the ever-evolving Irish American story.



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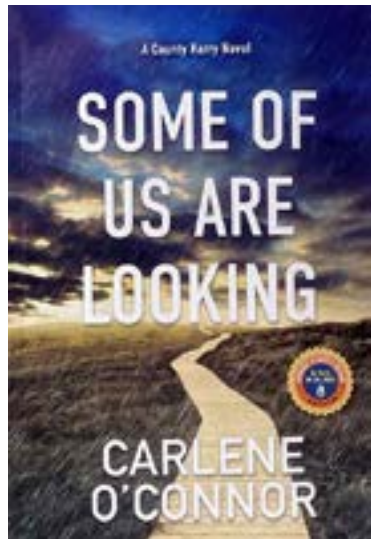
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Some of Us are Looking

In late summer, the Dingle peninsula is thronged with tourists drawn to County Kerry's dark mountains and deep, lush valleys. For Irish vet Dimpna Wilde, who has returned to run her family's practice after years away, home is a beautiful but complicated place—especially when it becomes the setting for a brutal murder . . .

In Dimpna Wilde's veterinary practice, an imminent meteor shower has elevated the usual

gossip to include talk of shooting stars and the watch parties that are planned all over Dingle. But there are also matters nearer at hand to discuss—including the ragtag caravan of young people selling wares by the roadside, and the shocking death of Chris

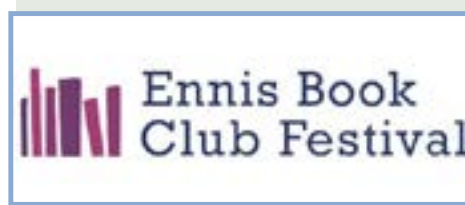


Henderson, an elderly local, in a hit-and-run.

Just hours before his death, Henderson had stormed into the Garda Station, complaining loudly about the caravan's occupants causing noise and disruption. One of their members is a beautiful young woman named Brigid Sweeney, and Dimpna is shocked when Brigid later turns up at her practice, her clothing splattered in blood and an injured hare tucked into her shirt.

Brigid claims that a mysterious stranger has been trying to obtain a lucky rabbit's foot. Dimpna is incensed at the thought of anyone mutilating animals, but there is far worse in store. On the night of the meteor shower, Dimpna finds Brigid's body tied to a tree, her left hand severed. She has bled to death. Wrapped around her wrist is a rabbit's foot.

Brigid had amassed plenty of admirers, and there were tangled relationships within the group. But perhaps there is something more complex than jealousy at play. The rabbit's foot, the severed hand, the coinciding meteor shower—the deeper Dimpna and Detective Sargeant Cormac O'Brien investigate, the more ominous the signs seem to be, laced with a warning that Dimpna fears it will prove fatal to overlook.



Ennis Book Club Festival 2024 Book 5 Key Events for €55

Ennis Book Club Festival's Christmas offer is back this year and will make a great gift for readers and booklovers alike. Under the guidance of the festival's Artistic Director Martina Durac, the team have been busy putting together a vibrant programme of events for EBCF 2024, which takes place from Friday 1st - Sunday 3rd March.

As part of the 5 for €55 Christmas offer audiences will get to enjoy the following 5 key events taking place as part of EBCF 2024: Claire Kilroy and Sinéad Gleeson in conversation with Edel Coffey, (Friday 1st March, Templegate Hotel); Denise Mina, Andrea Mara and Doug Johnstone discuss crime fiction with Andrea Carter; (Friday 1st March, glór); Michael Magee, Lauren Mckenzie & Colin Barrett talk about writing your first novel with Peter Murphy, (Saturday 2nd March, glór); in a Saturday night special event Pulitzer-nominated writer, Rebecca Makkai joins Belinda McKeon in conversation, (Saturday 2nd March, glór) and the ever popular Sunday Symposium returns, this year exploring the theme Breaking the Cycle of Poverty: A crisis of imagination?(Sunday 3rd March, glór).

Claire Kilroy and Sinéad Gleeson will join in conversation with Edel Coffey to talk about the creative work they're each drawn to and its inspirations. Claire Kilroy returns with her first novel in 10 years, Soldier Sailor, a beautifully immersive foray into the chaotic early years of motherhood. Sinéad Gleeson, essayist and journalist, whose soon-to-be released debut novel, Hagstone, draws us deep into the power of folklore, landscape and the feminine.

EBCF has assembled a stellar line-up for the crime fiction event, overseen by Andrea Carter, herself a writer of note. Described as "crime-writing royalty", Denise Mina has published many fine novels, with rich storytelling and a clear seam of social

history running through them. Doug Johnstone's work is varied and touching, with a series of books that brim with wit and tenderness, whilst Andrea Mara has always had "dark stories rattling around" in her head and she's had great success turning them into layered and unsettling thrillers.

In Writing your First Novel, three authors chat about their experiences of writing their debut novels. Michael Magee has created a vivid and complex world of a young man trying to find his place in the world with his first novel, Close to Home. In Couples, Lauren Mackenzie explores what keeps the heart beating in our loving, close relationships when life takes an unexpected turn. With Wild Houses, from the acclaimed short-story writer Colin Barrett, we are in a world where outsiders collide, and unexpected events bring chaos. Peter Murphy, novelist and musician, steers this trio through what will surely be an absorbing discussion.

On Saturday evening, EBCF is delighted to welcome Chicago-based writer Rebecca Makkai to Ennis for an in-depth conversation with Belinda McKeon. In her extraordinary book, The Great Believers, Makkai delivered an enthralling and emotionally riveting story about what it's like to live during times of crisis. Rebecca's books fizz with piercing wit and humour, great characterisation and complex plots. This will be a riveting conversation with Belinda McKeon, also an acclaimed novelist and non-fiction writer.

The final event in the 5 for €55 is the ever popular and hugely entertaining Sunday Symposium, this year focusing on poverty. While most of us don't want to think about or ever experience it, poverty is a very real part of life in Ireland. Join writer and broadcaster Justine McCarthy along with lecturer and commentator Dr Rory Hearne whose work explores housing rights and inequality, for a timely and necessary debate about what we mean when we talk about poverty and how can we change the narrative. They will be joined by two other guests for a lively and challenging event.

Tickets on sale from Monday 11th December.

A limited number of 5 for €55 events can be booked online or by phone or in person at glór Box Office or online at www.ennisbookclubfestival.com. The 5 for €55 package offer runs until Friday December 29th.

A booking fee applies. The Ennis Book Festival would like to thank its many supporters and partners, including The Arts Council and Clare County Council and Clare Library service

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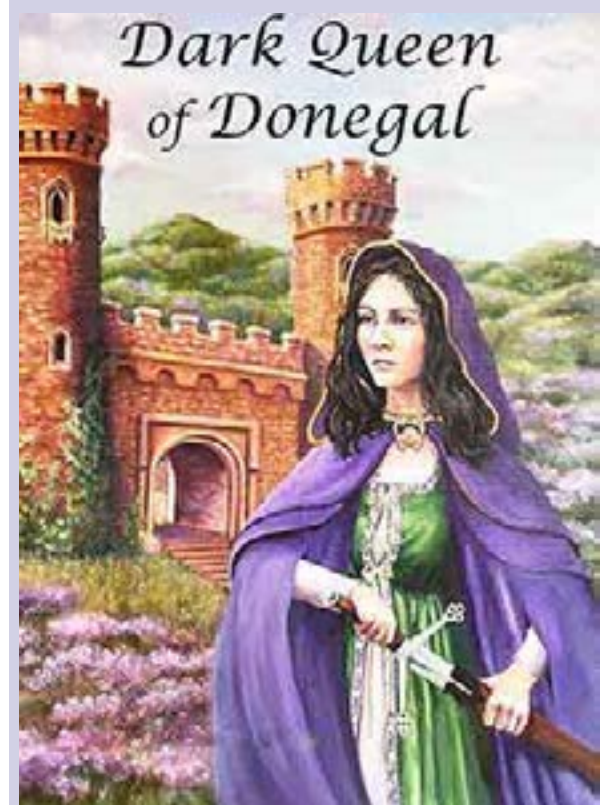
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Books Under Review

By Sabina Clarke



another baby coming into his impoverished household that struggles to make ends

“Why did he leave without so much as a good-bye?”... Soon she discovers that in the strangers’ house she finds warmth and affection she has never known. There is also for the first time --abundance. She is now in a house “where there is room and time to think. There may even be money to spare.”

Eventually a secret is told. Keegan is a master at capturing the jealousies and pettiness of the Irish locals who don’t refrain from criticizing even the corpse in the casket at a wake. With compliments, there is always the double-edged sword—a local she encounters in town says to the Kinsella woman. “Ah, isn’t she company for you all the same, God help you.”

When summer ends, the girl is returned home---but it is not the same-“My sisters look at me as though I’m an English cousin, coming over to touch my dress, the buckles on my shoes. They seem different, thinner and have nothing to say.”

The story ends with a crescendo—that though tempted to tell I will refrain. It is as powerful an ending to a novella as I’ve ever read.

Foster... A Quiet Tour de Force

This novella set in rural Ireland by Irish writer Claire Keegan was the inspiration for the award-winning movie The Quiet Girl--- in Irish : An Cailín Ciúin, a 2022 Irish coming of age drama written and directed by Colm Bairread in his feature film debut.

Keegan’s novella is narrated through the eyes of a 9 year-old girl . She is one of many siblings in a household with few amenities and another baby on the way ; with an overwhelmed mother and a somewhat disinterested father.

When the girl is sent off to a distant relative’s farm in County Waterford without much fanfare - seemingly so there would be one less mouth to feed--- she experiences for the first time a loving home with a married couple -- and more.

The story opens at a languid pace as the girl whose name we are never told is being driven from her home in Clonegal, County Carlow to ‘deep into Wexford towards the coast where my mother’s people came from.”

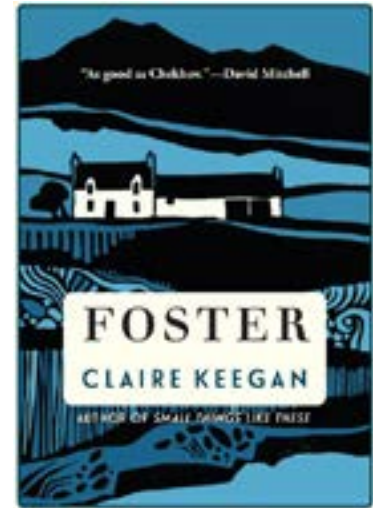
Along the way, lying flat in the car’s backseat staring into the treetops through the rear window she wonders what this new place belonging to the Kinsella’s --- a childless couple ---will be like.

Her father does not talk on the ride; his manner is perfunctory. He delivers her in the clothes she is wearing—tattered and worn --and with her in need of a good scrubbing. He is anxious to leave as soon as he arrives but decides to stay for the ‘bowl of tomatoes and onions, a fresh loaf and a block of red cheddar.’

There is idle chit chat in the Kinsella’s kitchen about his expectant wife -the girl’s mother—who is having yet

meet. The woman Kinsella inquires

“And what way is Mary? She’s coming near her time. . I suppose the last baby is getting



hardy?” “Ah, it’s feedin them that’s the trouble”--- the girl’s father replies.

This sets the stage for the new world the girl will enter. She has already begun questioning her father’s feelings for her-

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Honoring Sacrifice: A Comprehensive Look at the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs”

The Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) stands as a testament to the commitment of the state of Illinois to honor and support its military veterans. Established with the mission of providing comprehensive and quality services to veterans and their families, the IDVA plays a crucial role in ensuring that those who have served the nation receive the recognition and assistance they deserve.

History and Mission:

The IDVA was created to consolidate and coordinate the various state programs and services for veterans, streamlining the support process. Its inception marked a significant step towards recognizing the sacrifices made by the brave men and women who have served in the United States Armed Forces.

The primary mission of the IDVA is to empower veterans and their families by connecting them with the benefits, programs, and resources they have earned through their service. This includes assistance with healthcare, education, employment, housing, and other essential aspects of life post-service.

Key Services Offered:

1. Veterans' Homes:

The IDVA operates several Veterans' Homes across the state, providing long-term care for veterans. These homes offer a range of services, including skilled nursing care, rehabilitation, and specialized care for those with Alzheimer's disease or related conditions.

2. Veterans Service Officers:

The IDVA employs Veterans Service Officers (VSOs) who work directly with veterans to help them navigate the complex process of accessing federal and state

benefits. These officers provide guidance on disability claims, pension benefits, and other entitlements.

3. Educational Assistance:

The IDVA assists veterans in pursuing education and training opportunities by administering the Illinois Veterans' Grant (IVG) and the Illinois National Guard (ING) Grant programs. These initiatives provide financial support for qualifying veterans and their dependents. The Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs - State Approving Agency has approved Aishling Care Academy to offer federally funded programs of education and training for veterans and their eligible beneficiaries. U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs Education Benefits Assistance: 1-888-442-4551

“GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). More information about education benefits offered by VA is available at the official U.S. government website at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill>.”

4. Employment Support:

Recognizing the importance of a successful transition to civilian life, the IDVA offers employment services to veterans. This includes job search assistance, career counseling, and support in connecting with veteran-friendly employers.

5. Military Funeral Honors:

The IDVA ensures that every eligible veteran receives the military funeral honors they deserve. This includes the folding and presentation of the United States flag and the playing of Taps at the funeral service.

Community Engagement and Partnerships:

The IDVA actively engages with local communities and partners to expand its reach and impact. Collaborations



with veteran service organizations, non-profits, and educational institutions enhance the support network available to veterans. Community outreach programs help raise awareness about the unique challenges faced by veterans and connect them with the resources they need.

Challenges and Future Initiatives:

While the IDVA has made significant strides in supporting veterans, challenges persist. Adequate funding, addressing the mental health needs of veterans, and adapting to the evolving demographics of the veteran population are ongoing priorities.

Looking forward, the IDVA remains committed to evolving its programs and services to meet the changing needs of veterans. This includes leveraging technology to improve accessibility, expanding outreach efforts, and advocating for policies that enhance the well-being of Illinois veterans.

The Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs stands as a cornerstone of support for the men and women who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. Through a comprehensive array of services, community engagement, and forward-thinking initiatives, the IDVA continues to honor the sacrifices of veterans while helping them build fulfilling lives beyond their military service. In doing so, it exemplifies the state's commitment to ensuring that no veteran is left behind.

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Barred: Short Stories

by Derek O'Gorman

This collection of short stories presents a varied cast of protagonists, some hardened by life and some still vulnerable. The stories explore how fate can shape the path of life-life's ups and downs, peaks, troughs, and redemptive moments. The dreamers in these stories look to forge better lives for themselves.

There is Sean, the failed student in "Barred," who sees himself as a victim and whose self-indulgence and rage in response to rejection leads to serious

consequences for those around him.

Eamon and Sarah, in "While Maintaining Social Distancing," form their unlikely connection against the backdrop of a pandemic.

"The Blue Line" has Clare as it's hero, a mother taking stock of her own life on a train journey following the death of her brother in America.

There is also Daniel, a young inmate in "Winged," struggling to survive in an unrelenting and uncompromising world.

The factory floor workers in "Dreamers" are trying to establish futures for themselves in 1940's Ireland

"A Family Affair" explores the life of a Cork family from three different perspectives.

These are just a snapshot of the dreamers contained in this collection. Dip in and allow yourself to be transported, moved, and inspired.

<https://www.amazon.com/Barred-Short-Stories-Derek-OGorman-ebook/dp/B0CGTLMXL>

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BARRED

SHORT STORIES

Derek O'Gorman

Have you ever seen the film Barry Lyndon? Or the Gangs of New York? Or Treasure Island? Braveheart? Well, if you have, then you need no introduction to the Chieftains or founder Paddy Maloney.

But if nothing rings a bell, read on.

Paddy Maloney was a Dub. Master of the Uilleann Pipes. And the Tin Whistle. And the Bodhran.

He was a mystical man. Prophetic. Primeval. I used to think he was a time-traveller. One of those Irish who remembers in his soul the details of life before time. At ease in the unfolding of the Bronze Age, an era of Celtic hegemony thriving in the expression of the arts. Song. Saga. High Poetry. Epic tale. Life-altering music. Sweeping dance.

PADDY MALONEY, Musical Chieftain, died in Dublin at 84, just three years ago in 2021. The date cannot pass for me without a great memory of him. His funeral at St. Kevin's in Glendalough, County Wicklow. And his burial in Doney Carney just north of Dublin.

Speaking on behalf of a mourning nation Irish President Michael D. Higgins led the tributes at Paddy's funeral saying: "Paddy, with his extraordinary skills as an instrumentalist, notably the uilleann (elbow) pipes and bodhrán (one-sided sheep skin drum), was at the forefront of the renaissance of interest in Irish music, bringing a greater appreciation of Irish music and culture internationally.

"He brought a love of Irish music not just to the diaspora, but to all those across the world who heard his music and appreciated it for its own sake as it transcended all musical boundaries."

Long ago my educational refinement in Ireland's magical rediscovery of itself was due to a mentoring uncle, once at school with Sean O Riada, the man who dug up ancient Celtic traditions like treasure buried in a bog.

As a young man, in Ireland, my late night post pub crawls at Gabe Hannon's or Nell Levis' were filled with listening to recordings of "new" music, as old as circled stones and dolmens on the landscape. My wise, lyrical, banker-Uncle Tom Canty (a St. Brendan's in Killarney classmate of O Riada) taught me to listen to the unfamiliar sounds that were ancient. Twice a thousand years. Airs and dances hidden and lost in the treachery of eight centuries of foreign occupation. Sounds with which few American tourists identified.

Sounds unleashed by a sense of new Irish nationalism as demonstrative as the return of our ancient language. Europe's best cultural re-discovery since the Renaissance. Just in time for the 50th anniversary of the Irish final push to

independent nationhood in 1966. Commemorating, then, the Easter Rising in the rear-view mirror of history.

The sounds and melodies of that hidden, forgotten cultural tradition were visceral and intoxicating. They seized the imagination and patriotism of the nation and ushered in the dawn of a new Ireland. Well beyond the trappings of familiar immigrant culture. But they revived a cultural imaging that has only grown. Now, another 60 years on, the traditions, once lost, have poetically and politically transformed Europe's far western Isle.

Around the scholarly O Riada was a coterie of young Celtic musicians whose artistic abilities were only matched by their restored understanding of real Irish traditions. Bronze Age rhythms merged with historic lyrical hegemony. These lads went on to live a lifetime after their mentor's early death. And congealed as "The Chieftains" for their transformative cultural expression.

In my Ireland of the early 1970s, after a bit of a local pub crawl, my Uncle Tom and I might carve something off the earlier dinner roast, a leg of lamb or a ham sent up from the family farm in Tipperary. With steeping mugs of Barry's Red Label tea. Finishing with a Port brought over from a visit with Hugo O'Neill, the Prince-Chief of Rosie O'Neill's tribe.

In the wee hours we'd recall Paddy paying a visit to our village, Ballydehob. Or lurching closer to Dublin at a Desmond Guinness feast with fine wines provided by Rosie. No one was more faithful and creative in that cultural pursuit than Paddy Maloney who now has returned to God with gifts and accomplishments to make heaven filled with envy.

It's hard to imagine the cultural landscape of authentic Irish life without him. The music he gathered from antique and ancient sources recalibrated time in Ireland. Who will forget tunes like "O Carolan's Quarrel with his Landlady"? Or Women of Ireland?" "Carrickfergus?" or "Raglan Road?" Ancient airs that are just the start of music that stirs the heart eternally.

There are no "Who Threw the Overalls in Mrs. Murphy's Chowder?" Paddy Maloney now lives more expansively in the tempos and traditions of Celtic Chieftains whose lives and exploits he lifted to our vision. The ancient noble patriots from golden eras of history whose lives are light to Irish people still. O'Carolan, the blind 18th century harpist. The O'Neill and his fellow Irish princes who knew dignity and freedom on Irish soil plundered by our foes.

Paddy Maloney's contribution to Irish life is far beyond music making. He brought a critical renaissance to pass. In that we found the cultural power of the true ancient Irish arts that still can transform and renew our lives in the present. Paddy's personal friendship was a grace and a gift I will forever cherish. Made more life-giving shared with our pal, Desmond Guinness, at Leixlip Castle. Now



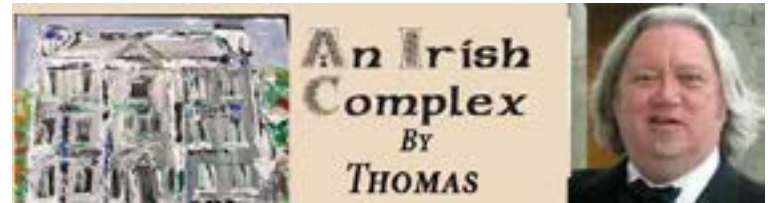
gone himself.

Whether on Dublin streets. In West Cork pubs. Or in the great concert halls of the world to which Paddy carried traditional Irish music. Such romance and confidence told us we were more than shallow nomads, but rather the poetic chiefs of an ancient continent, even now transformed by our pipes and whistles to enduring tribal ways.

As the world plunges once again into conflicting tribalism so forcefully demonstrated by the Russians, it is healing to see the nurturing lessons that ancient Irish music begets. Lifting scars from the landscape of our souls. Thanks to Sean O Riada and Paddy Maloney and his whistle of tin.

William Butler Yeats, Ireland's Nobel poet laureate, Lady Augusta Gregory and that long line of epic poets, playwrights and dramatists believed that if you could present the Irish with images of themselves that were true and honest, it would entice them to unite for Ireland's cause of independence.

I believe they were justified in their expectations. But the music produced by Paddy Maloney goes beyond even their expectations. Creating a vibrant world of dynamic,



deep rooted human enjoyment. Four notes and your toe is tapping. Six notes and you're whirling across the dance floor. Without premeditation, the music of Paddy Maloney and the Chieftains seems to release the heart from its usual self-conscious perceptions. People hear the invitation to let go. To let themselves become the music. Embrace the art into which they have plunged with abandon and the soul of an Irishman.

The music of Paddy Maloney transported all who listened into a timeless episode of being human. Not a very far reach for the Irish. Music that touches the deepest

aesthetic of the humanity of man. It lifts us beyond the mundane. Into a sacred space of artistic destiny. We feel the life of the music in our hearts. We are lifted to those hidden moments in life when the essential past was near enough to touch. In our case the Bronze Age of three millennia ago. A high moment for the Irish. A time when we were free politically. Generous economically. Robust intellectually. Devout religiously. And deeply successful commercially. In the music, I believe we can hear soft traces of that harmony and achievement from before we were enslaved. Vilifying our neighbor to the east.

A different Europe. A different Ireland.

So it's true then, in our great music from the past we hear the possibilities for the lyricism of the future. With the Chieftains came a fresh expression of musical and cultural sophistication. The familiar rhymes and rhythms of everyday Irish songs and ditties reflecting the struggles of immigration and the settlement of assimilation abounded in the twentieth century.

Irish immigrants, often uprooted in their adolescence lost touch with the Ireland of

their birth. In new places, like America, they often sought to stay in touch with what they saw as their past. Music often reflected the pain and distance of immigration without any knowledge of the Celtic past or history with the oppressive measures laid down by the British. Lyrics seldom reflected the deep poetic dramas of the Hibernian ideal. In much the same way as Irish people were prevented from having access or use of their native language. Ireland was stripped of it defining Celtic truths. The revival of ancient music rekindled interest and use of the traditions of Ireland's heroic past.

Music of the ancient times has put breath back into the understanding and identity of being Irish. Ireland's dynamic musical traditions freed the nation to embrace life changing concepts and conceptions of the nation's heroic ideal. The music unearthed by Paddy Maloney and the Chieftains is among the most bold and redefining elements of cultural renaissance in eight centuries.

In ancient Irish poetry, Marbán the hermit, brother of Guaire, King of Connacht, says this about such music:

Fogur gaithe fri fid fleascach, forglas néol; essa aba, esnad ala, málainn céol.

"Sound of the wind in a branching wood, grey cloud; river-falls, cry of a swan - beautiful music."

Thomas O'Gorman is a Chicago writer, a columnist at Skyline publishing. A 20 year veteran speech writer at Chicago City Hall. A former Managing Editor at Hibernia magazine, and an editor at Town&Country magazine. The author of some dozen books on Chicago, as well as a biography of Frank Lloyd Wright, and End of Watch, Chicago Police Killed in the Line of Duty 1853-2006. He is also a fine arts painter, a self declared Irish Impressionist with Fauvist tendencies.



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Hello Everyone! I hope you are doing well. This story is about a friend of mine. I met Jim Mallon when I first arrived in Chicago. He's a long-time volunteer at the IAHC, currently on a creative journey. Born in Killeavy, S. Armagh on July 3rd, 1942, he authored 'Frightened Pilgrim: From Ireland to America with a Miracle in Between'. Jim aims to self-publish his book on Amazon.

In rural Ireland, like many boys of my generation, Jim had an active outdoor lifestyle. However, his life took a turn at the age of eight while playing with his brother, Eddie, near an old vacant house. A rusty bucket pierced his skin, causing an infection in the lower half of his left leg. Despite efforts, the wound resisted healing. He found himself in Daisy Hill hospital in Newry,

where doctors, fearing gangrene, proposed amputation. Thankfully, his parents arrived just before he was to be wheeled into surgery. Their presence altered the course of events.

Instead of consenting to amputation, his parents opted for a pioneering treatment—Cobalt radiation at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast. Though he spent six weeks there, the growth on his leg persisted. Daisy Hill applied a cast, but the bump remained. Eventually, neighbors pooled resources to send him, accompanied by two sisters from Salthill Galway, to Lourdes in France. Despite returning with the bump, it miraculously disappeared after a few weeks.

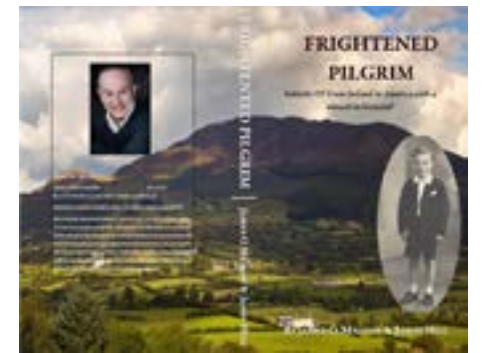
In March and April of 2023, Subtext Theater Co. in Chicago staged 'A Bump on the Leg,' chronicling his journey to Lourdes. Written by Leigh Johnson, directed by Rocky Haglock, and produced by John Oster, the play to shed light on his childhood experience.

Jim Mallon's play, which I attended at Chief O'Neill's a few years back, revealed the uncanny parallels between his childhood injury and mine. Whether the cure stemmed from radiation or divine intervention at Our Lady of Lourdes remains a mystery, but Jim Mallon stands today, alive, kicking, and relishing life.

Like Jim, I encountered an accident in my adolescence. At fourteen, while excitedly serving as a nanny for friends' children in Galway, a car crash in County Roscommon changed my life. There were no seatbelts in the cars back then. While driving to my nanny job we collided with a bridge due to a broken down truck stuck in the bridge. My face broke the windshield, leaving scars on my chin, neck, and the side of my face. Amidst the chaos, I recall waking in an ambulance, unable to see, with a priest administering last rites. I was finding

it hard to breathe. I wanted to scream and tell someone to put me on my side.

The next time I woke up I was in the operating theater in Saint Mary's hospital in Roscommon, a doctor was removing glass from my face. The next thing I remember was my parents standing by the ward door. My mother rushed over with rosary beads in her hands and wrapped them around my fingers. I saw my father behind her but he had a look of horror on his face. He then turned and walked out. I still



remember the look on their faces today. Having children myself now I realize the anguish and fear they must have felt. I did not realize the severity of my wounds until much later in my life. My father actually came with me to my first plastic surgery appointment and then three more after that. He used to joke that it made me better looking but that was just him trying to lighten the situation.

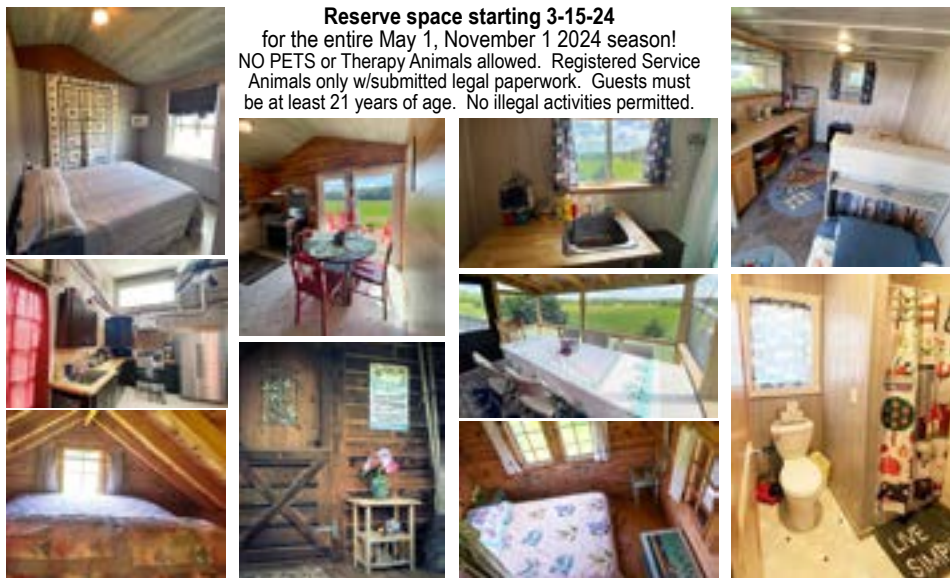
This experience never held me back. I made sure to never wallow in self pity. As a teenager I sang, I was nursing, and teaching. I then left Ireland for London and then eventually on to Chicago where I settled down and adopted my kids with my County Roscommon husband. My story, like Jim's, embodies resilience and hope. As the new year is coming up I wish everyone a healthy and happy new year. Remember, never give up.



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Inaugural St. Brigid's Day Lecture

Michele Dillon, PhD
 Thursday, February 1, 2024 at 7 pm | Zoom
 Dr. Dillon is a professor of sociology and Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at the University of New Hampshire. Her research focuses on religion and cultural change, autonomy and authority in the Catholic Church, and how to use Catholic traditions to build an inclusive Church.

Pause for Peace

With Solas Bhríde Christian Spirituality Centre, Kildare, Ireland
 Thursday, February 1, 2024 at 12 pm local time | Worldwide
 A global, rolling, one-minute pause for peace at 12 pm local time on St. Brigid's Day. Inspired by St. Brigid, a woman of peace, pause alone for one minute of silent prayer or with others before Old St. Patrick's daily Mass. <https://solasbhríde.ie/event/pause-for-peace/>

St. Brigid's Day Mass

Thursday, February 1, 2024 at 12:10 pm | OSP Church
 Weekday Mass to acknowledge the Feast Day of St. Brigid in preparation for the celebration at Sunday's Mass and Festival of Service

Sunday Mass & Festival of Service

Hosted by Old St. Patrick's and "The Friends of St. Brigid"
 Sunday, February 4, 2024 at 11 am | OSP Church, Hughes Hall
 Mass for the Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time with special prayers celebrating St. Brigid, followed by opportunities to serve with OSP's Outreach Ministries, craft St. Brigid's crosses, explore art featuring St. Brigid in the church, and share stories of modern-day Brigid.

A Lenten Day of Reflection Celebrating St. Brigid of Kildare

"Undoing the Knots & Weaving the Cross"
OSP Contemplative Community & The Well Spirituality Center
 Saturday, March 2, 2024 from 8 am to 4 pm | Morton Arboretum, Lisle, IL
 Undo the knots of winter and weave new crosses into spring with contemplative prayer, outdoor wandering, and shared reflection. Rita Minehan, CSB, and Phil O'Shea, CSB, from Solas Bhríde Christian Spirituality Centre will join via Zoom from Kildare, Ireland.

25th Annual Siamsa na nGael

Monday, March 11, 2024 at 7:30 pm | Symphony Center, Chicago
 An exploration of St. Brigid — unifier, healer, and inspirer — through song, dance, and story. Tickets will be available from cso.org.

Spirit of St. Brigid Pilgrimage

Encounter Young Adult Ministry
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What can beat an invigorating swim in open waters, other than one surrounded by breathtaking natural beauty. Here are nine to tempt you.

1 Keem Bay, Achill Island, County Mayo

Keem Bay was named the number one wild swimming spot in the UK and Ireland and it's easy to see why. The beautiful golden sandy beach sits at the feet of rugged terrain and is washed by clear Atlantic waters. The beach also played a supporting role in the award-winning movie, The Banshees of Inisherin.

2 Carlingford Lough, County Louth

This glacial fjord is the ultimate icy dip but the views of the majestic Mourne Mountains, which inspired C S Lewis's Narnia, are equally breathtaking. It's one for a wetsuit but afterwards you can warm up in a cosy café in the medieval town of Carlingford.

3 Ballintoy Harbour, County Antrim

There are loads of great wild swimming places along the gorgeous Causeway Coast but a favourite of the local wild swimming community is a secluded beach next to Ballintoy Harbour, where the clear waters are sheltered by basalt islands. The harbour itself is now best known as a shoot location for Game of Thrones in which it featured as the Iron Islands.

4 Mounthannon, Lough Derg, County Clare

The calm, sparkling waters of Lough Derg are perfect for a swim and one of the best places to access them is from Mounthannon beach. The lough is part of Blueways Ireland, a network of trails alongside the lakes, canals and rivers of the scenic Hidden Heartlands.

5 Portsalon Beach, County Donegal

Portsalon Beach on Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way is a secluded 1.5km stretch of golden sandy beach that was voted the second most beautiful beach in the world. It is just one of many first-class beaches and swimming spots in the county. Other gems include Carrickfinn and Portnoo.

6 Lough Erne, County Fermanagh

Gorgeous Lough Erne in the Fermanagh Lakelands offers plenty of wild swimming

opportunities. You can seek out a gentle shoreline and step into the water or take advantage of the many jetties to climb down or dive into deeper waters.

7 Killary Fjord, County Galway

Dramatic mountain scenery hugs this sheltered fjord where the waters are always calm. To make the experience even more magical you might encounter dolphins and seals as you swim. For those who relish a challenge, why not sign up for the Gaelforce Great Fjord Swim.

8 Helen's Bay, County Down

Helen's Bay Beach on the edge of Belfast Lough is a popular spot for wild swimming and is a short drive from Belfast city. It's one of two first-rate beaches found on the edge of Crawfordsburn Country Park, which, with its meadows and wooded glens, is also a

great place for a walk.

9 Poll Gorm, County Sligo

Poll Gorm is a natural saltwater swimming pool formed by rocks and a



purpose-built wall. It's the perfect way to sample a swim in the Atlantic Ocean but with still clear waters rather than unpredictable waves.

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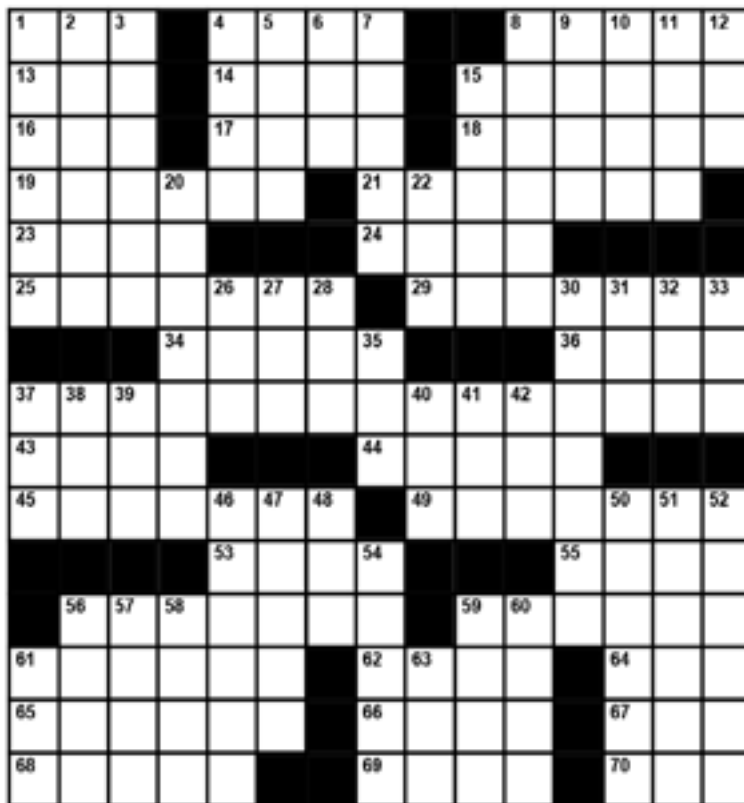
BREWERY SINCE 1994







Joan Moody, shown here with the Bexar County Sheriff's Department Santa Claus. Joan used to write for this paper in the 1970's through 1990, and is a member of the Harp and Shamrock Society of Texas.



by Myles Mellor

Across

- 1. Typography widths
- 4. Land o' blarney
- 8. Irish boxing great, goes with 59 down-2 words
- 13. Born as
- 14. "Dynamic" prefix
- 15. Most domesticated
- 16. Pitch
- 17. Paper amount
- 18. U.F.O. crew
- 19. "Desire Under the Elms" dramatist
- 21. Initially, 2 words
- 23. Voyageurs Natl. Park l

ocale, abbr.

- 24. "Lizzie McGuire" star, Hilary
- 25. Stein, 2 words
- 29. Forerunner to You tube and Zynga
- 34. Sight related
- 36. Alphabet opening
- 37. Is a loving person, 4 words
- 43. Downhill racer
- 44. Companions of radii
- 45. Christmas treedecorations
- 49. ___ seat: advantageous spot

- 53. Louse babies
- 55. Remedy for dry toast
- 56. Political graft subject
- 59. See 8 across
- 61. Oscar winner Brody
- 62. Coin word
- 64. Package deliverer
- 65. Indian preparation
- 66. Prime-time time
- 67. "We're off to ___ the wizard ..."
- 68. Irish athlete who is the world's fastest Paralympian, Jason ___
- 69. Bollywood superstar actor, last name
- 70. Tonsillitis MD, abbr.

Down

- 1. Bury
- 2. Hardly Mr. Nice Guy
- 3. Composed
- 4. Jason Lee TV role
- 5. Angler's buy
- 6. "I Got Rhythm" lyricist Gershwin
- 7. Wanderer
- 8. Muslim leaders
- 9. Commander, in Arabic
- 10. Golfer's bagful
- 11. Negative question
- 12. Aliens, abbr.
- 15. Chewy candy
- 20. Progress
- 22. Short for stomach
- 26. Dashboard abbr.
- 27. Adaptable truck, for short
- 28. Supermodel Carangi
- 30. Certain errand runner, 2 words
- 31. Blood-typing system
- 32. Half of D
- 33. Hall who announced for Jay Leno
- 35. Wine class
- 37. Presidential monogram
- 38. The greatest boxer
- 39. One in 100, abbr.
- 40. Nurse's quality, abbr.
- 41. ___ roll, 2 words
- 42. Stout
- 46. Catch
- 47. Jungle plant
- 48. Bering, for example: Abbr.
- 50. Maltreat, 2 words
- 51. Go back into business
- 52. Thomas Hardy county
- 54. One raising a stink?
- 56. Dutch cheese
- 57. A type of armed service
- 58. Knee-slapper
- 59. Yellowfin
- 60. "Absolutely!"
- 61. Burro
- 63. Org. studying viruses, abbr.

December Answers



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Terry From Derry
by Terry Boyle



sign of weakness. He has no time for compassion. Those who regard him as their saviour will be damned by his gospel of me first. The green-eyed god has smiled favourably on this man of no standing. What else can he want? Perhaps he would like to dominate the world. He certainly has admired and envied other well-known dictators known for their absolute corruption. His envy is palpable. Driven, as he is, to be the centre of attention, he's willing to shove the Ukrainian and Israeli conflict whenever the media forgets to post some of his

this country that has become my country of choice will not disgrace itself. With sorrow, I would also ascribe to this man the colour red. His hateful rhetoric has spurred many to violence. We only have to look at the actions of those who attacked the nation's capital on January 6th to understand how his words are bloodied. Some have testified that this man's words incited them to actions they would not have normally undertaken. Let's not forget that blood was spilt on that day of infamy. Members of law enforcement have suffered because this man has shown little or no regard for their safety. Given the opportunity to intervene and bring peace to the

cases to answer to in which he claims to be innocent. Given his track record, white is not a colour he deserves. Even Oscar Wilde's protagonist, Dorian Gray, subconsciously acknowledges his guilt after killing his artist friend, Basil, by ordering orchids but refuses to take any white ones. This Orange Jesus is without a conscience. His innocence is as damning as Cain's after he's vanquished his rival. If we listen to the voice of reason, we will get rid of the fake Orange Jesus. Put him in an institution where he can wear a nice orange jumpsuit and proclaim his innocence to anyone who cares enough to listen. If we want to make a serious change in the world, let's drain the

Coat of Many Colours

We've come around to that time of the year again when we think about new beginnings. There are any number of advocates to push us to reflect on the past to improve things in the coming year. I'm going to be one of those voices who is going to encourage you to take a good look at the madness of last year and work towards bringing some kind of sanity and peace into 2024. It doesn't take a genius to highlight the monsters of the last 12 months. We've witnessed endless attacks on our democracy. The former president has taken it upon himself to become the 'orange Jesus' offering us salvation through his vindictive dictatorship. He has shown his true colours and they are more than orange. His yellow streak of cowardice shines through in his deliberate attempt to distract us from seeing his actual insidiousness.

This man who would be king cares nothing about this country. He wants to make America corrupt again. In diddling his taxes, he has revealed a blatant disregard for those of us who have shown due diligence. He is a mockery to those of us who believe in the rule of law because he believes he is above the law. While you and I would be forced into silence, he has shown no humility with no sense of accountability, displaying only a coward's approach to guilt, blaming someone else, anyone else he can find to act as a fall guy. We've watched numerous others who have believed this man's lies about the 2020 election fall on their swords for him. Others have had their eyes opened to his egotistical ravings, and chosen to honour their conscience instead of his lies.

I would ascribe the colour green to this man. His envy of others who have gone before him is grossly demonstrated in his dismissal of their good works. Obama has made many changes for good, and has shown a humility that is beyond this man's comprehension. He despises the Beatitudes since he regards humility as a

ravings and become even more despicable. The Orangeman is not such a great image for a Northern Irish Catholic who has become used to the annual march to celebrate the Protestant King William's defeat of Catholic James in 1690. Orange signifies for Northern Irish Catholics, domination, and punishment. The Orange Jesus is a suitable moniker for a man who longs to dominate and control. A reign of dictatorship and retribution is what we can expect should the majority of voters lose their common sense for a second time. The adage comes to mind, fool me once, shame on you, fool me twice shame on me. I would like to feel that



Irish Community Services board members and staff gathered at the Fifth Province following their Annual General Meeting in November.

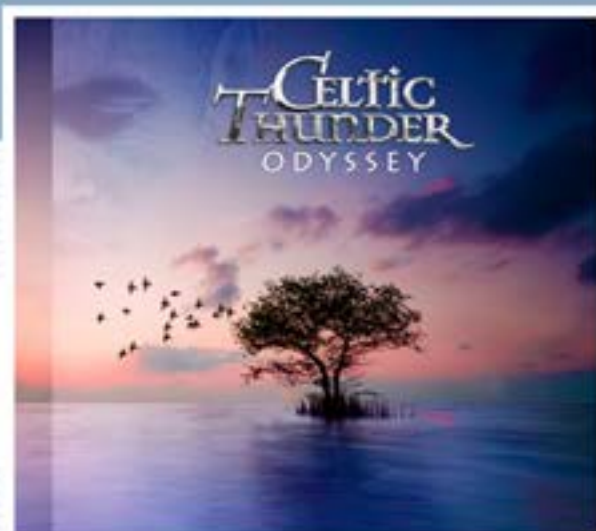
situation, he sat back and watched the proceedings with glee. He has insulted the men who have dedicated themselves to serving and protecting us with his trivializing of the rioters' actions. When it comes to who he will defend, don't expect it to be those in law enforcement. Let him ridicule veterans who have suffered to protect his cowardly soul, and play games with state secrets. Some still love him regardless of his hatred of them. He has privately called some of his strongest supporters' pieces of shit, and still, this doesn't deter them from their allegiance to him. This man has several major court

swamp of the father of lies. This country deserves better than the far right-wing idiots who embarrass us all with their fake facts, and overt racism. We have a country that used to be a sanctuary for those who were different, now it's become a haven for fascists. Books are banned, drag queens are seen as a threat to morality, despite the immorality of those espousing such ideals, and the currency of the day is bigotry. Is this the land of the free or the land of the deceived? If the colours of red, white and blue are meant to mean anything let's hope it is tolerance, diversity and truth.

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Who was C.S. Lewis?

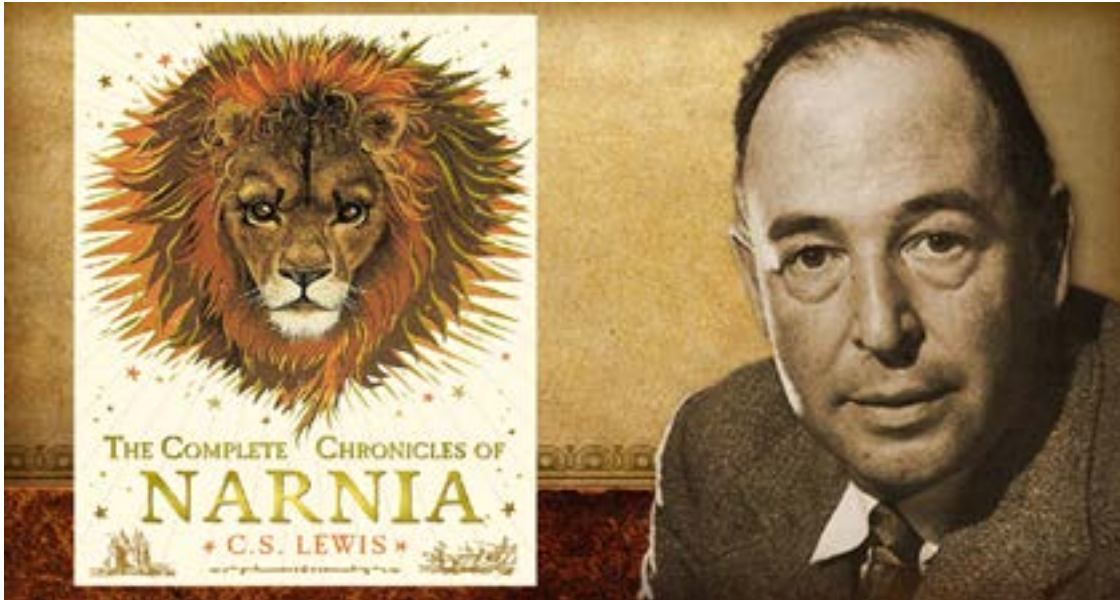
(Clive Staples) known to his friends as Jack. He was an Irish writer, scholar and protestant theologian. The World Wide

Cambridge is a university with a city around it. But Oxford is a city with a university in it... Lewis is famous for being the author of The Chronicles of Narnia and other works, "The Screwtape Letters (30 letters

think, it is very clear someone who was meant to share a wider message. However, I believe, every life is of equal importance. We are all here for a specific purpose. Some of us are on Earth to make tasty



GETTING TO KNOW THE IRISH!
BY TINA BUTLER



Web states C.S Lewis was English, that is incorrect. (fake news, I'm sorry to use Trumps word) Lewis was also a radio broadcaster during WWII. He was from Belfast, Co. Down, Ireland. He has been confused for being English because of his association with Oxford. He taught at Oxford and Cambridge. He earned two degrees from Oxford.

in defense of the Christian faith) and The Space Trilogy. The Chronicles of Narnia have been adapted to stage, TV, and radio. In the beginning of his career, he would donate all his proceeds. He has said, he never thought he would be famous and he just wanted to write poems, stories and teach. He uses allegory in his writing, he was a prolific writer. He was extremely talented, I

desserts, some of us to fix cars and some of us to spread the good news. Lewis' dear friend was writer J. R.R. Tolkien. The author of the Lord of the Rings. Lord of the Rings was similar to Narnia, in that they are both fantastical stories that want to save the world from evil. Both men taught at Oxford. Tolkien was born in S. Africa. He was also a philologist. A philologist studies language by

looking at Literature.

Lewis was an atheist for many years. He unfortunately lost his mom to cancer at a young age. He was very firm in his atheist views, but he would eventually return to God and get baptized in the Church of Ireland. He would speak about his faith and its importance for the rest of his life after his conversion. Lewis married an American Jewish woman named Joy. She converted after meeting Lewis and unfortunately a few years after they married, she died of cancer as his mother succumbed to.

was assassinated. I don't think C.S. Lewis got the attention he deserved on the day he passed, so I hope I did him some justice! Quotes by Lewis: "Everyone thinks forgiveness is a lovely idea until he has something to forgive." "Don't let your happiness depend on something you may lose." "You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending." "There are far better things that lay ahead than we leave behind."

Lewis vacationed every year in Ireland and said, "heaven is Oxford lifted and placed in Co. Down." In his radio war time broadcasts in 1940's England, he would say, I'm Irish not English, in case you can't tell by my accent. Throughout his life he sought out the company of other Irish people living in England. His honeymoon was in N. Ireland.

There is a movie about Lewis' life, "The most Reluctant Convert". In honor of his life and legacy there is a bronze statue of him in Belfast. Lewis passed away coincidentally on the same day that former President JFK

"Someday you will be old enough to read fairy tales again. Smidin of Irish Writer-scribhneoir, teacher-muinteoir, Christian-criostai I'd like to mention a woman named, Dineen Grow. Unfortunately, I never met her, but I have heard about her over the years. She was an Irish language teacher, librarian, and president of the Celtic Cultural Center in Madison, WI. Ar dheis De go raibh a nam. (May her soul be on God's right hand) If you have any questions, please email me: Molanive@yahoo.com

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Swimming Upstream

By Charles Brady



Thurnberg-sized sneer at their elders and betters who are apparently responsible for all the woes of the world.

Christmas/ New Year is a particularly bad time since it is a favourite period (along with St. Patrick's Day) for the twice-a-year-drinker. God love them, they're not used to being let loose and yet there they are with their Santa jumpers on, swigging back the double brandies that they've saved up for all year;



and as the unaccustomed alcohol hits them they feel for some bizarre reason that you want to know all about their last holiday or how much they have in the bank, talking in telephone numbers, while they get louder and louder and the arms wave more and more expansively. And always they will reach a point where they just HAVE to

tell you - nothing else will do - about the electric car they've just bought and how many solar panels they put on their roofs during the year.

And it's at this point that I find it necessary to stop them by saying:

"Personally, I don't give a toss about the environment OR climate change OR whatever you're having yourself. I'll be dead before it's really out of control, so who cares? I'm selfish; but then so are you behind all this look-at-me nonsense you're spouting. Didn't I see you throwing away some litter last week when you thought no one was watching?"

"And anyway, I've done more for the environment than you ever have. How? Simple. I never had kids. How many have you filled the place up with? Three? Four? Shame on you. We'll never sort the environment out if we keep breeding like that. The childless are the real heroes when you stop to think of it. We are selfless.

"Do I worry about human extinction? Are you joking? We have enough of the necessary stored away in sperm banks to last for generations. And if we DID become extinct, so what? Hundreds of species become extinct every day. Worthier species than us, if it comes to that. Species that don't think it's a bright idea to bomb their own kind, or to build better and better weapons in order to make fewer and fewer people obscenely wealthy while simultaneously making poorer and poorer people extremely dead. Species that don't get tied up in knots wondering if they should be called 'he', 'she' or 'they'; who don't get confused about whether they should identify as a man, a woman or a dolphin. I don't think the universe would miss us much if we did go the whole hog and put our miserable selves out of the picture with a bloody great nuclear bomb or a laboratory-created plague. Bring it on, I say! And another thing..."

"Eh? Where did everyone go? The bar's empty. Bartender? What are you scowling at me for? Ah well, I think I'll have another cranberry juice, thanks very much. Now, as I was saying..."

A peaceful, empty bar. Happiness.

On a more serious note, it's getting harder to wind people up by asking questions about how far out of control the economic immigrant/ genuine refugee problem has gotten. Because too many people now realise that a real problem is what it is.

And it was always going to come to this, because we have politicians from all parties whose first and foremost priority is to make themselves look good and to look after number one. If another country said that they would take in 50,000 refugees, our self-serving toadies would immediately offer to take in

100,000. (And, in fact, that is the current number of Ukrainian refugees alone. Nor will they be leaving, no matter what lies you're being told.)

But our politicians will always take more, with one eye on that possible big-money-and-give-me-those-perks European job that might just be coming up farther down the line. Hedge your bets, boys and girls; always hedge your bets because that European pig trough is even more full of natural flavoursome goodness than the home-built one that you're currently slurping from. Oink! Oink!

And of course, then there are the even more contemptible ones who simply enjoy tugging the forelock to their unelected masters in Europe - and I can't think of many who are more detestable than that breed. Look at us, we're taking more refugees than anyone else. Don't mind that it's going to be to the ultimate detriment of both the refugees themselves and to our own...we're taking more. Pat my head one more time, what a good poodle I am.

It's because of our political crawlers and sycophants that while many countries give approval to 20% of asylum applications, Ireland gives 80%. In 2022 applications into the whole of the EU went up by 64%, with Ireland it was 400%. And the benefits are twice as generous here as Germany, which is the NEXT most generous country. We are a laughing stock.

And when a hotel in Galway that is due to take in yet more refugees mysteriously burns to the ground as it did yesterday as I write this (on 17th December), our politicians are stunned. Amazed, I telz ye; who could have seen that coming?

Well, you did, politicians one and all; you did. You saw it coming and so did everyone else. Because when people are ignored by the ones that they elected to look out for their interests and when they are told that they are selfish 'far right' racists because they have real concerns, then yes - we should not be surprised and are not surprised that a small minority takes things into its own hands.

The Irish are a giving, welcoming, warm and generous people; and they DO NOT deserve to be dismissed as selfish racists simply because they have a few legitimate questions to ask before we take in our next round of immigrants. And certainly not by those who are their enemy and who hold their own political ambitions dearer than the allegiance to those people that they are supposed to put first. So...I'll lower my blood pressure by thinking of those little pygmy goats, doing no one any harm out there on the fringe of the Atlantic. Bothering no one and giving back only one thing.

Happiness. Just like me.
charleybrady@gmail.com

Happiness is a Warm Pygmy Goat in an Empty Bar

So, there I am in late October, taking a couple of weeks to explore part of the Wild Atlantic Way, embarrassingly aware that when we live in an area, we often miss the natural wonders that are right on our doorsteps. The weather is as magnificently blustery as you would expect on Ireland's west coast at this time - a delight, in fact, for the many surfers who haunt these parts. And you know what they say: there's no such thing as bad weather, just unsuitable clothes.

On this particular day I'm on the western edge of The Burren in County Clare, contemplating Doolin Cave and the entrance to an underground world of magical stalactites, when my attention is taken with some queer looking, cute little animals that are wandering around and even - inexplicably

- up on the roof of the visitor's center.

"What the devil are these?" I ask the fella who is selling tickets for the guided tour.

"Ah, they're pygmy goats", he replies. Well, in the past few days I've been getting used to some unusual sights and have learned that everything is there for a purpose. So back I go to contemplating these marvelous pygmy goats.

"And what do you get out of them?" I ask.

He looks at me for a moment. "Happiness", he eventually says.

Happiness. Well, we can all do with a bit of that as the old year closes and a new one begins. And one of the things that makes me happy is winding up sanctimonious jackasses who like to flaunt their Green credentials while having a

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“Man from Clare” PJ O’Dea Passes

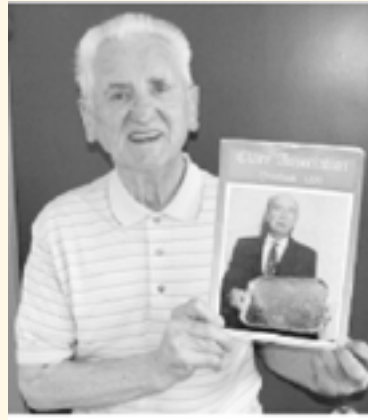
PJ O’Dea, “the man from Clare”, has left this earthly plane. He was a GAA legend who played with 2 clubs in 11

cities and in four countries. He won his first county medal in 1939 and represented Clare in minor, junior, and senior

hurling and also played senior football with Clare and with the Munster teams in 1951 and ’52. He won an All-Ireland hurling medal and then emigrated to the US where he played hurling



Pj and his Wife, Mary



P.J. O’Dea honored by GAA

and football in Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, and was the proprietor of the Notre Dame Inn here in Chicago for years. He is the narrator of the Irish film, Our Irish Cousins.

Ron Tamplin Selected as the Dallas, Texas, USA Irish American Society (IAS) 2024 “Irish Person of the Year.”



(Left to Right) at the December IAS Christmas Party at Arthur’s Restaurant, Addison, Texas, are Larry Balagna (2023), Dr. Leo M. Crowley, and Ron Tamplin (2024)

Let Trans People Dance

Last month, right-wing media outlets focused their boundless but transient fury on a truly unique and new target: Irish dance. You see, it was recently revealed that a transgender girl (i.e., a person born with male sex chromosomes, but whose gender identity corresponds with that of a female) won a regional Irish dance competition in a division for girls 14 and younger. By winning this competition, that



parents are projecting their concerns about the abilities of their own children onto an innocent tween. Trans kids have been allowed to compete in the style, category and gender of their choosing for years. That has never been a problem. But now that a transgender person has won, their fury is palpable.

how transgender people should participate in sports, is and always has been about distracting folks from the beneficial, noncontroversial work of liberal and progressive politicians to benefit EVERYONE.

Remember when Donald Trump campaigned on a platform of repairing the nation’s crumbling infrastructure? Yet, despite Republicans controlling every branch of government, they never passed an infrastructure bill. Within a year of his inauguration, Joe Biden drafted and passed a bipartisan infrastructure bill that will set the nation’s roads, bridges, broadband, and water up for rejuvenation and success.

Yet many, if not most, people don’t know that this law was passed. The same can be said of the CHIPs Act, which will bring microchip manufacturing to the United States, or the Inflation Reduction Act, the biggest single investment in combating climate change in global history.

Rather than celebrate these national accomplishments, the right wing media’s focus has been on the green M&M’s high heels, gay nutcrackers, and what transgender kids do for fun.

I fervently hope and pray that this dance champion and her family are well-shielded from the inevitable onslaught of hate, vitriol, and death threats that they are inevitably facing now that this has hit the right wing mainstream.

And while the future of this girl remains unknown, I know that she will do amazing things—in Irish dance and in every other part of her life. Her confidence and strength emanates from her sense of self, and that is worth celebrating and cherishing. Why can’t people let her be a kid, and let her succeed at what she loves?



**Back from L to R: Ruari Van Santen, John Van Santen, Conor Van Santen, Mairead Van Santen
Front from L to R: Breege Looney, Siobhainn O’Connor Van Santen**

girl qualified for the Irish Dancing World Championships, which will take place in March 2024.

Once it was revealed that this girl (who is quite literally a child) was transgender, statements of outrage abounded. Petitions addressed to An Coimisiún le Rinci Gaelacha (CLRG), the main governing body for competitive Irish dancing, demanding a ban on transgender participation in competition began circulating.

By freaking out about a trans kid winning a competition,

Lumped into this group of overzealous dance moms are evil people who genuinely want this child to suffer because of who she is. I know this from personal experience—when I worked for a state legislator in 2022, our office became a target for conspiracy theorists, anti vaxxers, and literal neo-Nazis because of a misreading of a bill my boss had proposed in the Illinois General Assembly.

The right’s hyperfixation on niche social questions, including

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The Passing: A Memoir Excerpt

By Michael Corrigan

I came home one afternoon from Mission Dolores grammar school and found the door locked. Climbing the fence, I saw the basement flooded from an overflowing washing machine. I pulled the plug and went upstairs. In the dark bedroom, Agnes lay with glazed eyes staring at the ceiling. Her face seemed to have collapsed upon itself.

"Grandma?"

She didn't speak. Occasionally her jaws worked but no sound came. The dark room was quiet except for the ticking of a clock. There was a mystery suddenly working, an intensity

that would change the family forever. I called her name but she didn't respond. At a favorite spot in Dolores Park, Grandfather played cards with retired friends. Exhausted, I still gripped her hand when Father came home from work. He called the ambulance. Paralyzed, Agnes rode to a San Francisco hospital for a brain operation.

The vigil began.

Agnes appeared fragile in the hospital bed, and I tried to remember what her voice was like, and what she had done after adopting me at three. How did this go badly so quickly? Had I helped enough in her garden that mysteriously flourished

despite cold San Francisco fog? Would Jesus heal her? Suddenly, I could hear her County Sligo voice again as she beckoned me near the Christmas tree. Mirth glowed in her blue eyes.

"Look into the tree and you'll see something wonderful, lad. Come on. Look close."

I looked close. It was an old game and fun.

"See—something wonderful is hiding in the tree. Something magical."

Her tiny mirrors turned in the branches and I saw my face.



"Didn't I tell you, you'd see something beautiful?"

At the hospital, Doctor Listretto took my father to one side. "She's diabetic and needed insulin," he insisted. "Not an invasive brain operation."

"A bit late now," Father said.

One March morning, Grandfather broke into the shared bedroom, waking me and Father, demanding in a broken voice how we could sleep with Agnes dead.

"Jesus," Father said. "How could we know?"

We got up. In the hall, Grandfather looked like an animal that had been struck a fatal blow, yet unaware it was dying.

At the wake, I stared at Agnes

Continued on next page

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in the coffin, waiting for her to move, to speak, to communicate. I imagined her a pretty Irish maiden at an Irish ball, holding a tasseled dance card, or huddled in a ship crossing the ocean to America though her name doesn't appear on Ellis Island records. I saw something pass over her dead face, a ripple, yet the rosary continued, people kneeling, sitting, listening to the droning voice of the priest. The old Irish wore black. The stale air of the chapel was redolent with flowers, full of whispering voices. Father knelt or sat bolt upright, attentive, ready to pray, but there would be no miracle. Agnes was gone. He turned and looked at me.

"Son? Are you all right?"

"Yes," I said. The murmuring voices continued.

Grandfather sobbed, leaning over the coffin as they were about to close it before her final ride to Holy Cross Cemetery after the funeral. He kissed her dead face. "I'll never see her again," he said. I had never seen Grandfather cry. Then I saw Father listening to Mr. Comisky, a childhood friend and the funeral director.

"There's a strike on," Comisky whispered. "We can't inter the deceased until it's over. I'm sorry." Grandfather stopped crying and glared at Comisky.

"Comisky? You're going to keep her on ice, for God's sake?"

That night, I had a nightmare. Wearing grave clothes, Grandma Agnes lay on ice in the Morgue. I walked down a long dark hall with corpses in closed drawers. Reaching for the drawer marked Agnes, I woke up and I saw her standing at the foot of the bed, staring at me. She was a presence against the darkness, a force

without a saintly aureole. Her eyes were kind, and I felt all the moments she had spent with me, filling the loneliness left by Mother. A barrier shimmered between us, like the river Styx in the Greek myths Father loved to read aloud. Had she come back to take me with her to the other side? The house creaked like an old ship, and her spirit faded. I finally slept without any more nightmares. They buried Agnes in April.

One night, Grandfather sat on his bed, face pale in the light, his head bald except for wisps of white hair, the once tough body suddenly frail. His breath came, slow and labored. A brown tinted wedding photo from 1914 hung on the wall.

I paved and tarred all the San Francisco Streets after the 1906 earthquake. How many times did I come home without finding any work to be greeted by five kids waiting for me to read the funnies, and Agnes with so little to feed them? But we managed."

"Tomorrow, The Lone Ranger and Cisco Kid are on television. James Dean's on the General Electric Hour tonight with Ronald Reagan."

"Reagan's an Irish Protestant and I won't be surprised if he becomes a turn coat Republican son of a bitch." He closed his eyes. "I'm not after watching television anymore."

I suddenly felt I had invaded his dark, sealed room.

"Granddad? I think I saw Grandmother."

He looked at me, his expression calm. I was expecting one of his explosions like, "For the love of six bits."

"I know," he said.

"You've seen her?"

"Every night in my dreams. Then I

wake up and she's gone." For a moment, I could see his lower lip working as he tried to suppress the tears. "It's time to go," he finally said. "One day, the ship will take us both back home."

We still had the big Irish family dinners on Sundays, with stories and songs. Aunt Kate, sister of Agnes, grew more frail, a spinster in dark clothes, always cheerful but sitting apart. Grandfather retired to his room early. The memory of Agnes filled the old house, inspiring even the less literate of our Irish clan to sing songs and recite poems. Everything began and ended with Jameson whiskey. (Bushmills was made by Protestants who didn't hire Catholics in their distillery.)

"The difference between an Irish wedding and an Irish funeral is one less drunk," Father said, toasting the guests. "To Ireland—a nation once again!"

For a year, I heard Grandfather sobbing nights in the same closed room where Agnes had her diabetic stroke. How much longer could Grandfather endure being left behind without his wife of forty years? He still lay in bed after we returned from late Sunday Mass. Father rubbed his chest with medicinal oil when Grandfather sat up and gasped for breath; from the door, I saw his face suddenly turning blue. Did he see Agnes coming to take him? Looking into his eyes I had a child's view from his shoulders as the J trolley came up the suddenly bright tracks. Then the train was gone. Grandfather's spirit struggled as time condensed and a door slammed. Father cursed and pushed me from the room, shouting out a number to call. As I dialed, I could hear his voice calling out, "Dad, Dad!" I paced in the front room, seeing only the image of a

frightened thirteen-year-old boy in the huge mirror over the embossed mantle and hearing my father's desperate voice. The number I called was for the priest house. Then Father came into the front room and said, "I think he's gone." I didn't witness the final moment of his passing. The priest arrived before the ambulance.

Later, I sat in Dolores Park before our house on 20th Street where many evenings, Grandfather had proudly stood next to the blue stairs smoking his one cigarette for the day. It was a bright sunny June day bringing the occasional warmer weather that circled the San Francisco Mission District. Why were children playing with a hose in the street, splashing each other? Didn't they know Grandfather had just passed? Had he died of a broken heart?

Outside the big church that stood next to the original adobe mission, the sun was too bright and I remembered sunlight on a palomino called Blondie. Father was suddenly reining in the horse as I walked into the road, the hooves rising up, up, the mane white in the sun. We were in Sonoma for a vacation, and Grandfather—still alive—sat inside the cabin, reading the newspaper, throwing the pages on the floor as he read. Father's startled face above the rolling eyes of the horse faded and we stood again before Mission Dolores church after the funeral. I waited for Grandfather's ghost to appear, but he never arrived.

This article was adapted and edited from a chapter in Confessions of a Shanty Irishman. The excerpt was originally read at the Rocky Mountain Writers' Festival in Pocatello.

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Get ready for a weekend of adventure and serenity at the Wander Wild Festival in Killarney - Ireland's great outdoors festival. Set against the picturesque backdrop of the UNESCO Killarney National Park, the unique adventure and wellness festival returns to Killarney from 24-26th March 2024.

Over the weekend, attendees will have the chance to explore new adventures and recharge amidst stunning scenic landscapes. Dive into the refreshing waters, embark on hikes up mountains or climbs along ridges, discover the national park by bike or horseback, swim or kayak on the picturesque lakes, enjoy a therapeutic wellness activity, or savour sustainable local cuisine on a food trail . Wander Wild Festival offers an unparalleled opportunity to reconnect with nature and indulge in unforgettable experiences. What better way to celebrate 10 years of the Wild Atlantic way than immersing yourself in wellness and new experiences in Killarney.

Thrill seekers will have the chance to conquer Carrauntoohil, Ireland's highest mountain, observe constellations, planets and shooting stars from one of the world's best stargazing

spots on the and learn all things astronomy on a Dark Sky Hike on the Old Kenmare Road, or join an outdoor classroom and master the art of navigating



to scale a mountain or refocus with a wellness event - there is an activity for you. Explore the rich history of Innisfallen Island, dating back to 640 AD, with a captivating Kayak Tour. Watch the sunrise while taking

a refreshing dip at Dundag, immerse yourself in a mystical forest bath, uncover the power of breath with a Wim Hof Method Workshop, or indulge in a soothing sauna experience on the banks of Muckcross Lake.

This year's festival introduces a range of new additions, including stand up paddle boarding, workshops, live music, stalls, and entertainment at Basecamp in the town centre, healing sound baths, and yoga nidra gaeilge and an extended children's activity programme.

Get the inside track from local experts with guided hikes, night walks, pony treks, urban orienteering, captivating photo exhibitions, and self-guided loop walks for families. The extended wellness programme includes family yoga, a herbal medicine workshop, mindset workshops and quantum touch, as well as the return of popular activities such as Yoga & Light Therapy, Reiki, Sunrise Vinyasa, Handstand workshops, Yin Yoga, and Strength and Conditioning for Hiking tailored to those over 55.

With nature playing such a big part of the festival and the essence of what Killarney is all about, the organisers are committed to making the festival as sustainable as possible. Some initiatives include encouraging people to leave the car at home as shuttle busses will bring people from the town centre to all activities outside of town. They are also working with the Killarney Hotels Sustainability Group and sustainable budget providers such as glamping and hostels to ensure that people's stay has as low a carbon neutral impact as possible.

Most events are ticketed, with some free activities also available. Many events sold out last year so book early to avoid disappointment! Tickets are now live on wanderwildfestival.com.

Wander Wild Festival is sponsored by Nature Valley and supported by Fáilte Ireland, Kerry County Council and Killarney Chamber of Commerce.

Piping It In

Jack Baker



Uilleann pipes, that most iconic of all the instruments in the cornucopia of Irish music, played well, can summon forth all the emotions known to man: melancholy and somber one moment, with a wave of the piper's magic wand, they can bring extreme joy and have you dancing before you realize what's happened. All it takes is talent, imagination, years of practice and knowledge of the instrument. Luckily for us Conor Mallon is in no short supply of any of the above and demonstrates that fact ably on his first solo album, "Unearthed". You would know Conor from his work with the band "Connla", always a great joy to watch and listen to. From Keady, County Armagh, Conor began his musical life with the Armagh Pipers Club and has since been much in demand. He is joined in this recording by a plethora of talented musicians, many from the aforementioned "Connla" and I could list them all here but you can read that for yourself when you purchase the recording, which I hope you will after I tell you more about what is included in this superb collection.

Conor starts off this piping journey with "Cape Clear" a hauntingly beautiful air that he first heard played by Paddy Keenan. His bandmates provide perfect accompaniment and the result is a fine and pensive piece suitable for calling up memories or dreams or hopes.

He follows with Kevin Crawford's "Heaton Chapel" and you can feel the movement within you as the music takes over....then he shifts gears and swings into the title track "Unearthed", which he wrote, and if there was any doubt of this boy's talent, this track

will destroy those doubts, completely and for all time.

The third track, three original pieces, is more lovely stuff which we will hear others attempt in future but we will cherish this first hearing.

M'Éireannach Bán is a traditional air that fills the fourth track with magic and wonder and visions of our past, our future and our present. All that can be is here, it's up to the listener to find it.

Rise of Macha on the fifth track starts with the traditional "Battle of Aughrim" and follows with Conor's original "Rise of Macha". Another case of a beautiful and powerful traditional piece played as it should be, with respect and love, followed by a new bit taking the original feeling and elevating it to a higher level with the strength of the composition and performance. That which music should be, followed by what music can be.

Two more of Conor's original compositions are on track 6, The "Midnight Robbery" set, a delightful exercise in storytelling using music. He scores again with complex arrangements that are sheer fun to involve your mind.

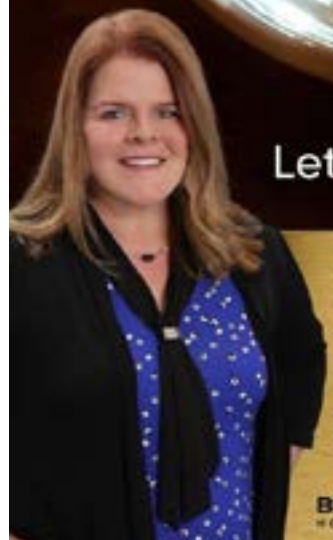
Tullycrine, a traditional tune, shows off Conor's talent in wrapping Trad pieces in his particular artistry and making them his own.

Mist from the Moyle and Face of Mananná are two more original pieces, inspired by nature and it is this ability to take the elements of nature and translate them into music that makes this whole recording simply magical.

Lake Banook, a tune composed by Jeana Leslie and arranged by Conor and Seán Óg Graham, finishes off the "Unearthed" collection and a finer cap could not be chosen for this monumental grouping of musical magic. Overall, a delightful work of art that will delight your life for years to come. Seldom have I seen a recording with so much new music of this caliber. This is one you'll sit listening to, letting it take you completely away from the rest of the world. Enjoy the trip



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Featuring Irish Traditional Singers Eimear Arkins and Brian Ó hAirt

Longing to learn some real traditional Irish songs? Maybe prepare to impress friends and family on St Patrick's Day? No better way to learn than from some of the greatest Irish singers in the World! Plan to attend "SING WITH THE ALL-IRELAND CHAMPIONS" workshop and concert, taking place Saturday Feb 24th at Chief O'Neill's Pub in Chicago, and Sunday Feb 25th at Gaelic Park in Oak Forest. Upon completion of the 3.5 hour singing workshop, participants will have learned English language songs, Irish language songs, and Liltin, and will have the option to perform these songs in concert with our champions.

Singing experience is helpful, but not necessary. And no worries if you do not speak a word of the Irish language; you will be taught phonetic pronunciations. The workshop portion is open to learners ages 12 through seniors. This event is brought to you by the newly formed Chicago Irish Singers Club (chicagoirishsingers.com), whose mission is to preserve, promote, encourage and share Irish Traditional Singing in all its forms in the Chicago area, and to raise awareness for this beautiful art form. Members of the club feel strongly that showcasing Irish Traditional Singing by singers who really know how to do it (three All-Ireland Champions) will be very inspirational to Chicago singers who are attracted to Irish traditional singing but

have limited experience, role models or teachers. Faculty guides for the day are well-known All-Ireland Champions Eimear Arkins and Brian Ó hAirt. Eimear Arkins is an Irish traditional singer, multi-instrumentalist, and dancer originally from County Clare



Eimear Arkins

now residing in St Louis, MO. She holds eleven solo All-Ireland Fleadh Cheoil titles (including Irish Singing, English Singing, and Liltin), and has toured and performed with Comhaltas National Folk

Orchestra of Ireland, Cherish The Ladies, The Paul Brock Band, Trinity Irish Dance Ensemble, Téada, and most recently Reel Housewives and Celtic Christmas. She teaches regularly at St. Louis Irish Arts and has given workshops at various festivals throughout the world including Catskills Irish Arts Week, New York. Most recently she was awarded Newcomer of the Year 2019 by liveIRELAND.

Brian Ó hAirt (Portland OR) is an Irish traditional singer, musician, dancer, and Irish Gaelic speaker, and one of the rare All-Ireland champions born



in 2002, Brian has gone on to collaborate and record with Chicago-based ensemble Bua and singing legend Len Graham of Glenarm, Co. Antrim. Proficient on concertina, accordion, and tin whistle, Ó hAirt's singing and playing have been featured on radio programs across the



Brian Ó hAirt

Program grantees from the states of Oregon and Ohio.

Both Eimear and Brian will lead workshops on Irish Singing and English Singing, Liltin, and later perform favorite songs in concert along with the workshop participants. Guaranteed to be total fun!

By the end of the day, participants will have learned at least one English language song, one Irish language song, and one lilt, and will be provided a lengthy list of traditional Irish tunes from which they can continue to learn. Typical traditional Irish songs are about love or love lost, drinking and its consequences, a river or a lake, family life, the sea, the supernatural, prison, banishment, historical figures, rebellion, emigration, humor, and separation. Good examples are The Streams of Buncloudy and Tandragee in English, and Roisin Dubh and Mo Ghile Mear in Irish. Liltin is in a league of its own, and quite fascinating to Americans. Although one of the oldest forms of singing tradition, it is seldom performed here. Workshop participants will spend time with both esteemed faculty members, and both faculty and workshop participants will perform together in concert at days end. Not a singer? Well, just attend the concert where you will be certain to hear some fabulous Irish Traditional Singing.

Questions? Call 312-972-1838. For tickets to this much needed and unusual event

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and raised in North America. United States, and Ireland. Since winning the All-Ireland Men's Singing Championship Brian is a master mentor for Traditional Arts Apprenticeship

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Brian Ó hAirt

&

Eimear Arkins

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<p>Chief O'Neill's Saturday Feb 24 Workshop 12.30-4.00pm Concert 5.30pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Feb 24 Chief O'Neill's, For Workshop & Concert \$100 (\$80 before Jan 15) call 312-972-1838, For concert only \$25 visit: https://www.chiefoneillspub.com/ ■ Feb 25 Chicago Gaelic Park, For Workshop & Concert \$100 (\$80 before Jan 15) or concert only \$25 visit: https://chicagogaelpark.com/ 	<p>Gaelic Park Sunday Feb 25 Workshop 11.00am-2.30pm Concert 3.30pm</p>
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Beloved Choir Director Announces Retirement

The Gaelic Park community would like to express its sincere gratitude and appreciation to Mary Beth Mc Dermott for her 27 years of service volunteering as Choir Director at Gaelic Park. She was extremely dedicated to the Choir, the visiting Priests, and to the monthly and special Masses during that time. Mary Beth never missed one of the Gaelic Park Masses. Even just days after giving birth to her youngest daughter, she was sitting at the piano ready to play. Her husband, Tom, also joined the choir, and when their daughters Moira, Maeve, and Bridget were old enough, they too sang at special Masses for St Patrick's Day, Mother's Day, and Christmas.

Mary Beth and Tom have been blessed with a grandson, Seamus. He is the joy of their lives. Mary Beth's retirement from her position as Choir Director will allow her more time to spend with her growing family. With grateful hearts, we wish

Mary Beth, Tom, and family all the best in the New Year!



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Pat Butler, Leader in Chicago Journalism, Passes

Patrick, "Pat" Butler, a lifelong Chicagoan who was one of the deans of Chicago journalism, passed away on December 14 at age 83.

"I was too poor to go to law school, too immoral to join the clergy, and I had a bad left eye that kept me out of the army, so what does one do in a case like that but become a newspaperman?" Mr. Butler would say, laughing. "And I haven't regretted it for a single moment."

Mr. Butler began his journalism career as a stringer with the Lerner Newspapers in 1967, eventually moving up to managing editor. In its heyday, Lerner published 54 weekly and semi-weekly editions with a circulation of 300,000 on the North and Northwest Sides of Chicago and in suburban Cook, Lake, and DuPage counties. Besides writing news, he often wrote columns such as "Pat's People" and others.

Among Lerner's titles were the Booster, News-Star, and Skyline. The Lerner papers went through several ownership changes including Pulitzer, Hollinger, and Pioneer Press. Mr. Butler continued to work for those publications and others in the chain until he was laid off from Pioneer in 2013.

"He got in trouble because he was active in union politics for the Chicago News Guild," noted his longtime partner, Kathy Hills.

Inside Publications had acquired the Booster, News-Star, and Skyline in 2009, so Mr. Butler continued writing for those publications until his passing.

He joined the Gazette Chicago staff in 2006, continuing to work there until his passing as well.

In 1987, Mr. Butler won a Peter Lisagor Award, the highest honor in Chicago journalism, for his Lerner series on how the loss of factory jobs put a strain on mental health and alcoholism services in Chicago. In 2013, he won an international Apex Award of Excellence from Communications Concepts, a journalism and publishing think tank outside of Washington, DC, for his Gazette Chicago coverage of a proposed Newman Center dormitory for the University of Illinois Chicago. He won many other journalism awards over the decades as well.

"We very much appreciated Pat's skills and experience," said Mark J. Valentino, editor and publisher of Gazette Chicago. "Having such a seasoned reporter on the Gazette Chicago team was a real asset for the decades that Pat worked with us. Even though he didn't drive and always took the CTA, he was willing to go anywhere in our coverage area to get the story. His old-school savvy and style will be missed."

Among the exciting events of Mr. Butler's rough-and-tumble journalism career were covering the 1968 riots after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. "He was still a stringer for Lerner in 1968 and they couldn't get any other reporter to cover the riots, but Pat would," Hills recalled. "They immediately hired him full time. Leo Lerner, the editor and publisher, clearly loved him."

"In my second night in Cabrini-Green covering the riots, I found myself crouched behind a squad car with another reporter and a cop as a sniper was shooting from the ninth floor," Mr. Butler recalled. "The nearest shot landed eight or nine feet away."

He also covered the tumultuous Democratic Convention in Chicago in 1968.

When Mr. Butler covered City Hall during the mayoralty of Richard M. Daley, when the mayor called on Mr. Butler during a news conference he would often sigh in anticipation of a tough question.

"Pat loved that and so did the rest of the press corps," Hills said.

During a group tour of Cook County Jail, Mr. Butler recalled the tour guide asking if anyone had the courage to sit in the electric chair. One of Mr. Butler's associates pushed him forward, and before he could protest, "two guards strapped me in the chair, took my glasses off, put a hood on my head, and read a fake death sentence," he said.

Of the experience, Mr. Butler quipped, "I got a charge out of it."

During his career, Mr. Butler noted, he met three presidents of the United States, doing a

thorough interview of President Jimmy Carter; two presidents of the Republic of Ireland; a king; a queen; and interviewed many colorful Chicagoans, local politicians, activists, criminals, and newsmakers.

Mr. Butler also served more than a dozen years as president of the Ravenswood/Lake View Historical Association and for several years anchored a cable TV news/feature show, North Side Neighbors. He also was a former president of the Kiwanis Club of Lake View.



Because of his love of news and history, he wrote several books about the North Side: Hidden History of Lincoln Park, Hidden History of Ravenswood and Lakeview, and Hidden History of Uptown & Edgewater, published by History Press. He termed his books "a kind of curio shop of people and places that time forgot. I had so much fun writing them."

Mr. Butler also was a frequent speaker about Chicago history and gave tours of historic Graceland Cemetery on the North Side. He even was part of history himself, having dated a grand-niece of Mary Todd Lincoln, President Abraham Lincoln's wife, for three years as a young man.

Born at Columbus Hospital in 1940, he grew up

in the North Side neighborhoods of Rogers Park, Edgewater, and Uptown. From seventh grade through high school, he attended Maryville Academy. "He was a grateful Maryville kid," Hills noted.

Mr. Butler worked his way through Columbia College Chicago, attending from 1961 to 1965. As a Columbia student, he liked to spend time at Bug House Square, more formally known as Washington Square Park, 901 N. Clark Street, which for many decades was considered the most celebrated open air free-speech location in America and was known for ordinary people giving speeches on whatever topics they chose.

"Pat was proud that he lasted 30 seconds the first time he spoke before he got the hook," Hills recalled. Mr. Butler also was a former honorary mayor of Bug House Square.

Of journalism, Mr. Butler said, "I liked the excitement. I liked being close to where the action is. I think 50 years from now there will still be newspapers and reporters. It may all be digital, but the news business will still exist."

"We keep the politicians in line," he concluded.

Mr. Butler was the partner of Kathy Hills; father of Kathleen Butler Greenan; father-in-law of Ryan Greenan; grandfather of Patrick (Paddy) and Declan; brother of Regina Dziewior; uncle of John Dziewior; cousin of Terry Butler and his wife, Gertrude; son of Valerie Sankauskas and Thomas Butler.

Visitation will be Wednesday, Dec. 20, from 3 to 8 p.m., at Lawrence Funeral Home, 4800 N. Austin Ave., Chicago, IL 60630. Prayers will be Thursday, Dec. 21, at 11:15 a.m. at Lawrence Funeral Home, followed by a procession to Mary, Undoer of Knots/St. Robert Bellarmine Parish, 4646 N. Austin Ave., Chicago, where Mass will begin at noon. Interment will be private.

In Lieu of flowers, donations to Maryville Academy and the House of the Good Shephard would be appreciated.

For a radio interview of Pat Butler By WGN Radio's Rick Kogan, log on to <https://wgnradio.com/after-hours-with-rick-kogan/patrick-butler-there-is-nothing-more-elating-than-to-be-shot-at-by-an-adversary-with-no-effect/>.

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Reverie Road is a fresh, eclectic celtic combination, featuring fiddler Winifred Horan and accordionist John Williams (founding Solas members) alongside former Gaelic Storm fiddler Katie Grennan and Jazz and Raga pianist Utsav Lal (Young Steinway Artist). This powerful combination is made up of four of today's leading traditional and virtuosic folk artists who have captured the hearts of international audiences from studios to stages over the last three decades. Firmly grounded in their collective Irish roots, Reverie Road embraces humor

have sought to redefine traditional accompaniment and rhythm sections amount to a compelling concert experience that will lift audiences' hearts and have them on their feet.

They will have a show featuring their new album, *Reverie Road*, at Old Town School of Folk Music Thursday, February 8, 2024 · 8:00 PM CST
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Happy New Year everybody – I hope you all have a safe, healthy and fun twelve months!

The awards season is upon us, and as ever, several Irish names are in the running. The 81st Golden Globes nominations were just announced, and top of the tree with nine nominations is *Barbie*, then *Oppenheimer* with eight, then *Killers of the Flower Moon* and *Poor Things* with seven.

Cillian Murphy, born in Cork, is nominated as Best Actor in a Drama for *Oppenheimer*, the movie about the development of the nuclear bomb, which also got nods for Best Director (Christopher Nolan), Best Supporting Actress (Emily Blunt) and For Cinematic and Box Office Achievement, a new category introduced for the 2024 ceremony which aims to give more recognition to films popular with the public.

Another unexpected nod went to young Dubliner Barry Keoghan for drama *Saltburn* (you may remember him for his stand out performance in *The Banshees of Inisherin* last year). Rosamund Pike is nominated for her work in *Saltburn* too.

So, will *Barbie* begin a juggernaut run towards the Oscars? Will *Oppenheimer*? The ceremony happens early this month, so you may well know the winners – and losers – in the various film and television categories by the time you read this. Perhaps Mery Streep, nominated for Best Supporting Actress in television series *Only Murders in the Building* will have won: it's her record 33rd nomination, believe it or not...

Awards aside, there is plenty happening abroad, and in the North of Ireland, a veil of Scandinavian mystery recently fell over Donaghadee, a small seaside location in County Down, during the month-long shoot for *The Dead From The Sea*.

The town was doubling for the remote Faroe Islands, which are some 500 miles north, and about half-way to Iceland. Road signs and shop signs were swapped from the usual English into the Faroese language, and English, German and Danish voices were heard, though cast and crew were utterly tight-lipped about the plot of the movie – until now. *The Dead From The Sea* is a murder mystery set that sees animal rights activists pitted against local Faroese whalers, whose annual killing of whales and dolphins for meat has been attracting more and more real-life protestors every summer. There's certainly going to be some controversy over this one, I would imagine.

Early 2024 brings with it the big film festivals too, and *Kneecap*, the biopic

based on the Irish rap trio of the same name, has been selected for Sundance, and will be the very first Irish language movie to screen on opening night, January 18, at the prestigious event.

Directed by Rich Peppiatt, *Kneecap* is set in west Belfast in 2019 and follows the group (Mo Chara, Móglaí Bap and DJ Próvaí, who are all part of a new generation known as the “ceasefire babies” as they come together to try and change the sound of Irish music.

Kneecap also stars Michael Fassbender,



and has been billed as a “raucous anti-establishment comedy” that mixes the group's love of partying with their strong political views. The group mostly rap in the Irish language, and their lyrics often cause controversy on both sides of the political aisle, but they have a large fan base in both Ireland and further afield, recently touring the US and Europe.

They'll be making a personal appearance to support the movie at the Salt Lake City, Utah, event – let's see how that goes!

Phil Coulter in Concert February 10



Tickets on sale now! The Irish American Heritage Center and Irish American News have teamed to bring Mr Coulter to Chicago in February. One ticket holder will win a week's Cruise in 2024 with Phil Coulter. Drawing will take place at the concert Feb. 10 The Irish American Heritage Center 4626 N Knox Ave Chicago IL 60630 Get Tickets at: <https://irish-american.org/event/an-evening-with-phil-coulter/> or Call Cliff 312.498.1337

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Counties of Ireland

by Tom Butler



actress was born in NYC but raised in Co. Carlow.

The song, "Follow me up to Carlow", celebrates the defeat of an army of 3,000 English soldiers at the Battle of Glenmalure. (Wicklow)

I will end with this story about New Year's Resolutions

I was fortunate to spend time with an interesting man named Patrick. Patrick taught me many things. He asked me to write down my New Year's Resolutions.

He said make two lists, the first is a list of all the New Year's resolutions you WANT to keep, and the second is a list of all the New Year's resolutions you WILL keep. Write the WANT List first, then write the second list on another sheet of paper.

Tell me about your two lists, Patrick

said.

The first list contains all the things I SHOULD do if I completely changed my life to be the person I wanted to be. And the second list contains all the things I COULD do by accepting my current life and taking realistic steps towards the life I want to lead.

I handed Patrick the lists he ripped the papers into tiny pieces and threw it in the nearby garbage can. In my heart, I knew the second list was a cop out, and the first list was the only one that really mattered.

I asked Patrick why did you rip up my lists? Patrick began to speak in a quiet and assured voice. What you SHOULD or COULD do with your life no longer matters. The only thing that matters, from this day forward, is what you MUST do.

He took a piece of paper from his back pocket and handed it to me. I opened it carefully, and found a single word in the middle of the white page: Love

If you have any questions, please call (708) 425-7021

This month we will cover Co. Carlow. My neighbor to the East. Carlow is the Dolmen County, as it's affectionately known. The Dolmen is a 6,000 year old megalithic portal tomb. It is in the province of Leinster and lies on the River Barrow. We had cousins that lived in Carlow, they were the Brennan family. There is also a city in Missouri named Carlow.

Carlow town was the capital of the Lordship of Ireland in the 14 century. Carlow was a noted stronghold of Irish agriculture in the early 19 century. I remember it as having one of the best sugar beet factories. The Bridge over the river Barrow dates to 1570. A house was built on the Island in the 19 century that became a Poor Clare convent. (a religious order of Nuns founded by St. Clare of Assisi)

The county has three principal geographic features the River Barrow, River Slaney and the Blackstairs mountains.

The great famine badly affected the county as all other counties and many people died of starvation...

There is a castle called Carlow castle, there was a proposal to turn the castle into a lunatic asylum. However, as they were doing some construction (with dynamite) some walls collapsed and so they abandoned that idea.

Some surnames associated with Carlow: Kinsella, McDonnell, Scully, Byrne and Brennan.

Saorsie Ronan (movie-Brooklyn) the

11th Annual Mercy Home Poker Night 1/25

Join us this January 25 as we gather for our 11th annual Mercy Home Poker Night!

Back at the Bank of America Tower, overlooking the Chicago River, Poker Night will feature Vegas-style excitement and great Gibsons food. It's the perfect mid-winter night out on the town!

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prize is a \$10,000 seat at the World Series of Poker Main Event in Las Vegas. We'll award more than \$15,000 in additional prizes as well.

As always, the biggest winners are our kids - proceeds from Poker Night support the young people at Mercy Home.

Don't wait to get in on the action. Buy your ticket today. Our \$250 Poker Buy-in goes up to \$300 after January 12. Price for the casino ticket is \$150. Bank of America Tower. 110 North Wacker Drive | 3rd Floor | Catered by Gibsons

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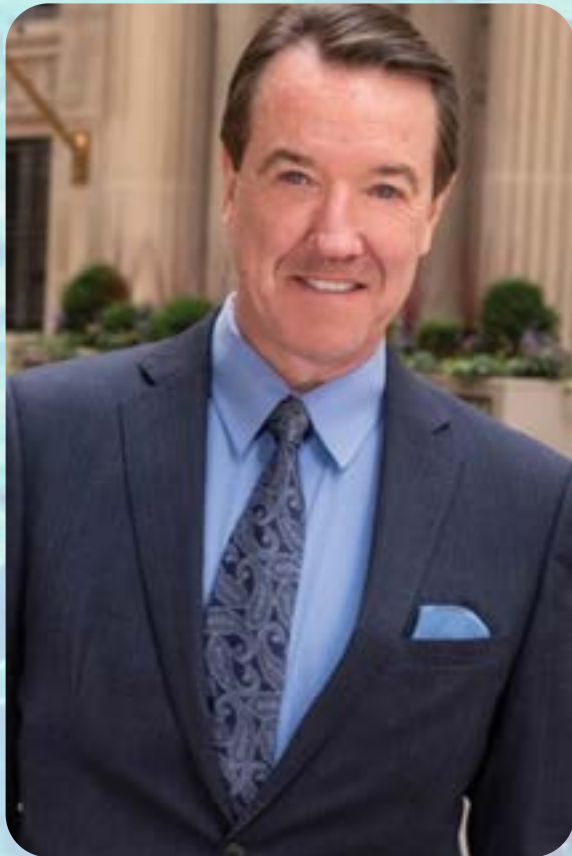
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