



If at First You Dont Succeed . . .

After 8 attempts, Erin Mulcahy became the
2016 St. Patricks Day Parade Queen

. . . story page 3

photo by Dean Battaglia



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About the Cover

Persistence Pays for Erin Mulcahy

By Frank West

Congratulations to Erin Mulcahy, the Queen of the 2016 St. Patrick's Day Parade

(Editor's Note: As Erin Mulcahy prepares to pass her crown to the next Queen of the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Chicago on January 15th, we think it's fitting to run this article written by our columnist, Frank West, right after her crowning last year.)

I interviewed Erin after a long workday, yet she was lively and a delight to talk with.

Erin impressed me as being confident, generous-of-heart, strong-willed and genuine. She is a vital person, with great strength of will. Qualities very much like our ancestors must have had to endure a long sea voyage and then cope with life in a new land.

Erin has participated in the St. Patrick's Day Parade Queens Contest for eight years. She fondly remembers that her aunt, Raelene, drove her to plumbers' hall the first year she entered the contest. Erin has been part of the Queen's Court for five years. And now she is the 2016 Queen. Erin has loved being a part of this tradition. It has built up her confidence and professionalism. Her favorite part has been the lasting friendships that she has made with other contestants and court members.

Erin Mulcahy grew up in Orland Park and has immense south side pride. She proudly remembers how her parents encouraged her at school and in sports. Her parents' only request was that she do her best.

Erin is proud to represent her family as the St. Patrick's Day Parade Queen this year. She is excited that her family will be part of this journey with her. Her father, Thomas, is a union pipefitter and a former Marine. He set a very high standard of achievement for Erin, but she warmly remembers his constant encouragement and that of her

mother too. Her mother, Norah, is an RN, but always found time to be Erin's volleyball coach. As Erin says "She was an absolutely perfect mom." No wonder Erin is so passionate about her family.

Her father's roots in Ireland are in Co. Waterford, and her mother's are in Co. Tipperary. Erin proudly told me how she is the first person in her family to return to Ireland for a visit. She enjoyed her trip and loved the country.

After graduating from school in Orland Park, she attended Columbia College, where she studies Marketing and Communications. Erin praised Columbia's emphasis on current aspects on the topics studied and being taught by persons actually working in the field. That education well prepared for her work with Human Resources at Leo Burnett Co.

When Erin has time to read, Erin likes to read shout history. She has had a life-long fascination with history. There is an Irish proverb about that: "You can't know where your are going if you don't know where you have been."

Erin enjoys the outdoors, especially fishing and hiking in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. She loves the quiet surroundings and the peace that comes with no cellphone reception.

In Chicago, Erin enjoys volleyball and belongs to a volleyball league. Sometimes she plays at Chicago's North Avenue and Hollywood beaches. She also plays indoor volleyball to stay active year-round.

Congratulations to Plumbers UA Local 130 for sponsoring the 61st St. Patrick's Day Parade. In 1955, Mayor Richard J. Daley asked Stephen Bailey and the Plumbers Union to sponsor the Parade. The Plumbers have faithfully done this ever since.

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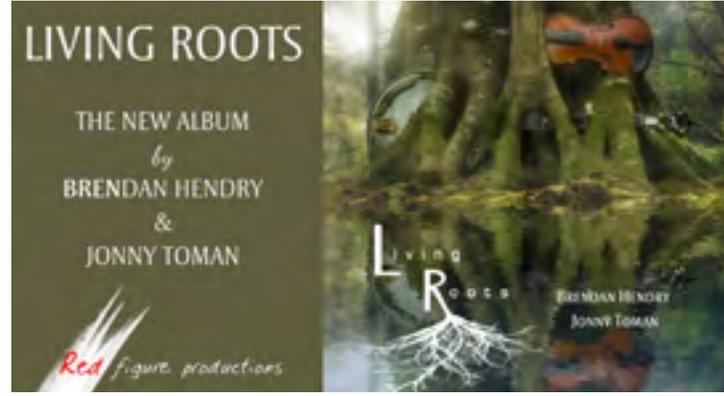
Tradition In Review

Bill Margeson



Top Tir Awards

2016 was a terrific year for Irish music. The Top TIR Awards (Tradition in Review) reflect a number of much younger acts this year. These artists are doing what has always been done in



Irish music—changing it and keeping it at the same time. This year's Award winners reflect that perfectly. If ever there were a year where the old saying "Youth must be served" is evident, 2016 was the one. In any case, all seems well in a very healthy real Irish music scene. Let's get to our 26th list of annual Awards winners, in what we are now told is the second oldest, established Irish music awards. Are they? Let's go:

Instrumental Album of the Year – *Living Roots* – Brendan Hendry and Jonny Toman

These two artists from Northern Ireland have created what will be sure to become a classic. *Living Roots* features Brendan Hendry on fiddle and Jonny Toman on banjo, guitar, and dobro. Years ago, Brendan told me that he had started working with Jonny, and the results were going to be special. He was absolutely right. There were a lot of terrific instrumental

albums this year, but this one magically mixed traditional Irish, Americana, and other folk idioms in what is a true gift of an album. Two Irish master musicians make one masterpiece.

Female Singer of the Year – *Cassie and Maggie MacDonald*

The MacDonald sisters gave us *The Willow Collection* this year. When it comes to both vocal and instrumental work, these two are really worthy of a major spotlight. Hopefully, this Award is it. Their instrumental work is just about as brilliant as their singing. The reason we are recognizing both is that with their vocals, they offer the perfect sibling blend. You know. Think of the Everly Brothers and the Mills Brothers. Same accents, same vocal qualities, same physical vocal attributes. Perfect harmony. There is so much that goes on in each of their tunes and great live performances, it is easy

to miss their beautifully offered harmonies. Perfection.

to miss their beautifully offered harmonies. Perfection.

Instrumental Cut of the Year – *Bad Boy* – *The Dardanelles*

This group exploded on to the stage of Irish Fest in Milwaukee last summer. Based out of Newfoundland, they are virtually unknown in the States. But, go on iTunes and download *Bad Boy*. Try to sit still. Try not to smile. It's a great polka. There are some spectacular musicians in the Dardanelles, and they all came together with this cut. Imelda and I play no tune more on our LiveIreland.com weekly radio show. We probably play it too much, but we can't seem to get enough. You won't be able to, either.

Concert of the Year – *We Banjo 3*

Irishfest in Milwaukee saw the fifth birthday party for WB3 as a group. A fab concert from the hottest group in real Irish music. Of course, they blend Americana and bluegrass in abundance—just making each show the best. This one was emotionally special, as well. WB3 was clearly saying thanks to Milwaukee for launching their career. Very, very special, indeed! Well done, lads!

Female Musician of the Year – *Michelle and Louise Mulcahy*

– *The Reel Note*

These two musicians are so wonderful, we are often at a loss for words. Their new album, *The Reel Note*, shows two young women rapidly rising with a very unique and talented approach to traditional music. Their father, Mick, raised the girls well, and all three of them have given us blessings disguised as cd's for years. Be it Michelle on harp (there are those who say she is the best in the world), or Louise on any other musical instrument in the universe, they too have a sibling blend. Just as Cassie and Maggie Macdonald have vocals that blend seamlessly and perfectly, so do the Mulcahys in their



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instrumental work. The perfection of it all has to be heard to be believed. There are few honors the two haven't won in Irish music, and rightly so. Fantastic.

Male Vocalist of the Year - Donal Clancy - On the Lonesome Plain

We always liked Donal Clancy. You know he is part of the iconic Clancy family. He co-founded the super group, Danu and went on to a lot of other musical projects including performing with his Dad and the wonderful, Robbie O'Connell. His latest album is *On the Lonesome Plain*. Here are the two important bits. His voice has really matured beautifully in the last two years on from his album, *Songs of a Roving Blade*. Second, his guitar playing has improved through the stratosphere. Totally tasteful, his voice and guitar blend perfectly in a thoroughly delightful album that showcases him perfectly. His voice doesn't overpower you like some. It comes and sits comfortably by your side and warms your heart, just by being there. This is mighty stuff!

New Group of the Year - The Hydes - Green & Blue

Iain and Joanna Hyde are from Denver. Heretofore, we haven't thought of Denver as any kind of hotbed of Irish music. These two change all that instantly. Iain is a creative and superb guitar player in support of his sister Joanna on fiddle. They had some guest stars sit in on this album, and there is no more rapidly rising act in the business than these two. To say the least, they are gathering a lot of attention - and Alan O'Leary's Copperplate Group in London has taken them on to introduce them to the British Isles. He and I agree—this album instantly establishes The Hydes in the forefront of our music. This is a magical duo to watch, and major talents are lining up to play with them.

Vocal Cut of the Year - Kate Power -

Portland Romance

You may have heard Kate Power sing before. She has a miraculous voice. It has been too long since she and her musical partner, Steve Einhorn's last album. *Portland Romance* brings us Kate singing Paddy's Lament and it completely revolutionizes the song, and reminds us all what a gift that Kate is. Dear God, this woman can sing. So can Steve. What a terrific duo! But, this time, it is for Kate!!

Male Musician of the Year - John McSherry - Seven Suns

John McSherry is one of the founders of Lunasa and a wonderful uilleann piper and whistle player. *Seven Suns* is a tour de force of an album and John McSherry is a tour de force of a musician. He has won a Top TIR before, for his work with Michael McGoldrick. While there are plenty of guest stars on this cd, McSherry stands alone right now. Wow!

Vocal/Instrumental Album of the Year - Conmla - River Waiting

This young group out of Northern Ireland has exploded on the music scene, and will be coming to America on tour next summer. The quintet's first cd immediately establishes them as a major force in the Irish music scene. Their instrumental work in support of vocalist Ciara McCafferty sets them apart from just about everyone else. This is not a group to watch in the future. This is a group to find and treasure today. They are set for a long run, and have the potential to be one of the very best ever. Stunning.



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Irish Books and Plays in Review

Frank West




Trouble is Our Business

Declan Burke, *New Island Books Amazon*

This is a spectacular introduction to Irish crime fiction. Irish crime fiction is new, vital, and refreshing. *Trouble is Our Business* is an anthology of 24 crime fiction stories created by some of Ireland's best writers. Everyone doesn't have time to read long novels, hence each example of their work is only about 12 to 15 pages long.

Some of my favorite writers are here: like Ken Bruen, Brian McGilloway, Paul Charles and Adrian McKinty. There are so many others that could have been included but as the editor says, "had we included every writer we would have liked to include, the book could easily have ballooned to twice its size."

What is Irish crime fiction? Declan Burke describes it: "it encompasses thrillers and private eye stories, urban noir, who and why dunn it, psychological thrillers, police procedurals...historical mysteries, conspiracy thrillers, comedy crime capers, domestic noir, spy novels..." In short there is something here to suit anyone's interest.

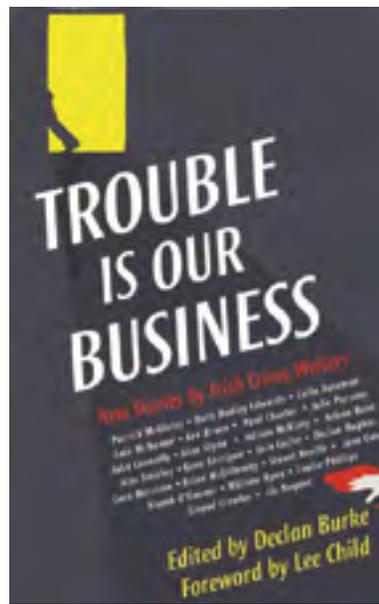
The edition of this anthology is Declan Burke. He was born in 1969 in Sligo; graduated from the University of Ulster in 1994, and was the radio reviewer for the Sunday Times.

Quoting from the press release; he "is a writer, editor, journalist, and critic. He has published six crime novels, several of which were shortlisted for the Irish Book Awards, and edited Down Theses Green

Streets: Irish Crime Writing in the Ulst Country..."

Ken Bruen says about Burke: "I have seen the future of Irish crime fiction and it's called Declan Burke."

The great expansion of Irish crime fiction began about twenty years ago with Ken Bruen's "The Guards" and Stuart



Neville's "The Ghosts of Belfast." These books won many prizes and were widely published.

Factors that might explain this fast development: the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 that ended the civil war in Northern Ireland; Ireland becoming a modern country with well-educated people; the collapse of the stifling power of the Church; and a new confidence among young people. About these Stuart Neville says: "This new generation...feels free of Ireland's long and august literary

tradition.

I personally enjoy noir fiction. The word 'noir' is used several time in this book and review. What is noir fiction? Webster's Dictionary describes it as "crime fiction with hard-boiled, cynical characters, bleak, sleazy settings and a dark, almost hopeless view of life."

The result is pessimism about life in a world of shadows and fog. But despite cynicism, the noir detective continues the struggle against evil.

However, noir writing is curiously optimistic. It shows that occasionally, one person can defeat evil and bring good into the world.

Quoting from the press release: "As Emerald Noir blossoms into an international phenomenon, there has never been a more exciting time to be a fan of Irish crime fiction." And this suspenseful and well-written book is a great way to enjoy it.

Life in the Country House in Georgian Ireland

By: Patricia McCarthy, Yale University Press. Amazon

This book is about the Grand Georgian houses that dot the Irish landscape. It contains gorgeous pictures that lovingly show the interiors and exteriors of these houses, their gardens, and their geographic settings.

It contains original architectural plans. And there is even a glossary of terms used by architects during that period. I have gone to several sources for information and all agree that this book is the most authoritative source.

"Patricia McCarthy is an independent architectural historian based in Dublin." She graduated from University College Dublin from Trinity University.

Mary Greene of the "Irish Daily Mail" Says McCarthy "has drawn on plans for dozens of great Irish houses, as well as



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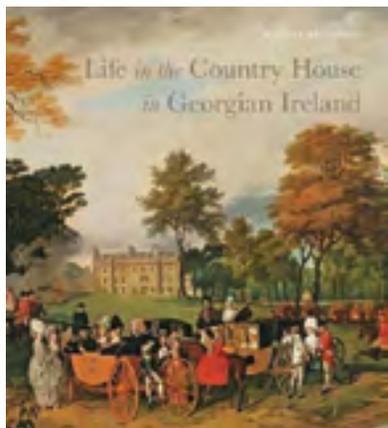


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family documents, letters and novels, to discover how people lived in Irish country houses..."

The time period covered is "from the building boom that followed the Act of Union between England and Ireland in 1800 to the Great Famine (1845-1850) and the subsequent sharp decline in building activity. The houses were built for a serious purpose. They were to demonstrate "the power, wealth, and ambition of their owners." For that purpose, their owners hired the best architects and most talented designers.

Probably, the ancestors of most of us reading this review, were working and sweating out in the fields of these estates.



The owners of the Great Houses were part of the Ascendancy. It was a kind of aristocracy built on wealth, power, and religion. Only members of the Church of England, or its sister, the Church of Ireland could belong. Those were state religions that recognized the king of England as their head. Presbyterians, Catholics, and other Christians could not be a part of The Ascendancy.

How did The Ascendancy begin? Oliver Cromwell was a Puritan fanatic. His army was victorious in the English Civil War.

Cromwell was the hero of the Puritans and in 1649 they sent him to invade Ireland. By 1654, he had killed 600,000 Irish and sold 60,000 more into slavery in Bermuda and Barbados. He justified this savagery by saying "I am persuaded that this is a righteous judgment of God upon these barbarous wretches."

He took the land of Irish Catholics and gave it to The Adventurers (English businessmen who had funded his wars). To Puritans and paid off his soldiers with land taken from the Irish.

Author and historian, Juilene Osborne McKnight writes that "by 1660 Cromwell had redistributed 6 million acres of Irish land. His followers had stripped the country of all its forests, half the population was dead, and only 8% of Catholics

owned any land.

She goes on to say, "The Irish who remained were poverty stricken, homeless, or tenants on their own previous land."

Rents for the tenants increased during the period 1710 to 1730. "More rented income occurred in the 1740's and again during the last quarter of the 1700's. With more money at the owner's disposal, houses were built or remolded."

Today, The Great Houses, are seen as proud and valuable parts of Ireland's heritage. But this was not always the case.

During the war for Ireland's indepen-

dence (191-1921), and then during the Irish Civil War (1920-1923) many of the Great Houses were destroyed.

Historian, John Dorney, says "a total of 275 were burned out of blown up during that period."

About these national treasures, author and historian, Tim Pat Coogan, says, "they form an important part of Ireland's architectural heritage, these homes contain valuable libraries, furniture, and artwork..."

These homes are lovingly shown in Life in the Country House in Georgian Ireland.

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Castro

It's impossible to let his death pass without comment. Lest I be derided for Skibereen Eagle-type comment, back in the day, at the end of the Sixties, a decade when Castro was an important bit player, my Master's Degree was on the Cold War, my dissertation on the Cuba Crisis.

Fidel Castro was a survivor. The revolution he led in 1959 has lasted against all the odds, including half-a-century of US hostility and a crippling trade embargo. Today, a decade after Castro relinquished power to his brother Raol, despite modest reforms and a beginning of détente with the USA, Cuba remains a single party Communist dictatorship with severe restrictions on personal liberty, which over fifty years has imprisoned and killed thousands of people.

For several decades Castro was the darling of the Left throughout the West, his fiery anti-Americanism and dogged adherence to undiluted Socialism matching

the mood of that Sixties generation which demonstrated against US involvement in Vietnam and its support for reactionary or dictatorial rulers throughout Latin America and the Middle East. That generation was meanwhile quietly dismayed and progressively disillusioned at the mendacious and repressive Communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, particularly after the crushing of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

Cuba was seen as somehow different – pure, inspired by ideals other Communist regimes had abandoned. That purity was personified in the enduring images of the revolution, of a bearded cigar chomping Castro, and of the Lost Leader, Che Guevara, summarily executed in Bolivia in 1967 while attempting to foment revolution there. Indeed for most people then, and today, the image of the Cuban revolution that comes first to mind



From the Motherland

By Sean Farrell



is Jim Fitzpatrick's iconic rendering of the 1960 Korda photo of Che. It conferred a type of romantic immortality on Guevara – another hardened Marxist revolutionary and murderer – and for the Cuban revolution where he cut his teeth. As the years passed it was possible to ignore the spectacle of the fading and aging Castro while cherishing that preserved sanitised image of Che.

The Left might be uneasy at the political murders, the denial of democracy, the repression and the frugal living standards imposed on the Cuban population by Castro's regime but could point to what was happening elsewhere in the hemisphere, where there was, and continues to be, an ongoing battle between the haves and the have-nots. In a continent rich in natural resources, the gap between the minority wealthy ruling elite, who control the security forces, and the poorer majority, is huge. Corruption, poverty and disease are endemic, politics and society polarised in what is seen as a zero-sum game. Reforming governments have been routinely resisted and overthrown, often with overt or covert US support. The conflict often generated armed resistance movements, such as Castro's, provoking military coups and savage repression in response.

As Latin American dictators and murderers go, apart from longevity, Castro was scarcely the heaviest hitter. The regional roll call of murder and misery is depressing. Since Castro seized power, there have been periods of military or authoritarian rule or violent political unrest in every Central and South American country except Costa Rica. Generally the body count elsewhere has greatly exceeded Castro's tally.

Take the main examples. In Argentina, seventeen years of military dictatorship and murder; the thousands of "Disappeared". In Chile the brutal fifteen year

Pinochet dictatorship (I witnessed the murder of the ousted Chilean Foreign Minister Letelier outside the Irish Embassy in Washington D.C. in September 1975). In Columbia the only very recently concluded treaty between the government and the FARC, after an estimated 200,000 deaths. In Nicaragua the Somoza dictatorship until 1979, followed by the Sandinistas and the Contras. In El Salvador the Death Squads and a twelve year civil war. Bolivia, Brazil, Venezuela, Uruguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic and Panama (where U.S. military invasions toppled the incumbent regimes); the list goes on. And in many countries, additionally, the murderous ghoulies of the drug cartels, compounding the misery of the general population. None of which excuses Castro's human rights record but goes some way to explaining and contextualising it.

Castro was unique. Casting a cold eye, ideology apart, he succeeded in toppling the incumbent ruling elite, replacing it with a different elite – his own and that of his henchmen – and then hanging on, unlike other leftist regimes. Crucial to his survival was that Cuba is an island, and easier to control its population, easier to defend, and harder to attack, that its fragile economy was kept on life support by the Soviet Union for over a generation and, later by support from Chavez' Venezuela, and that the USA stayed its hand at military invasion after the 1962 Cuba Crisis. Cocooned by this island security Castro was free to experiment.

And experiment he did. Apologists point to the impressive advances in health and education, and contrast these with the situation for the general population elsewhere in Latin America. Valid achievements certainly, as are the efficiencies of the Cuban intelligence services and its armed forces, hired out with an impressive record, particularly in Angola in the seventies. The attendant police state, economic hardships, food rationing, severe restrictions on travel and communications and

Pinochet dictatorship (I witnessed the murder of the ousted Chilean Foreign Minister Letelier outside the Irish Embassy

on political dissent and free speech have all been justified as necessary for the regime's survival, with the US a convenient, albeit real, bete noire and scapegoat.

Western supporters even assured us that the Cuban people are/were behind Castro. Perhaps they are, but in the face of an able and media-savvy repressive regime it is impossible to know. Whether the regime has any more legitimacy than the grudging acceptance given to the East European police states by their intimidated populations before 1989 is unclear. Those with loaded guns tend to stifle dissent. There is also the reality of national pride to be factored in (particularly facing the USA), something which totalitarian regimes of whatever hue are adept at milking. At times, outside support for the Castro regime has bordered on the unreal. I have heard apologists defend the lengthy queues for basics and occasional luxuries, explained away as social occasions and that "Cubans like queuing." Still, Castro's Cuba is hardly the "North Korea with Rum" as characterised by some critics.

Some glister began to rub off in 2014 with allegations/revelations that Castro had amassed a personal fortune. If he did he would not be unique. It's what dictators do. Now that he's gone – in reality for a decade – will the regime survive? Raol Castro should beware the axiom that overthrows tend to happen not when repression is at its worst but when authoritarian rule has been relaxed and reforms introduced. Check back in a decade.

A footnote on the Cuba Crisis. Information which came to light after the USSR collapsed reveals how close the world's brush with Armageddon was. The Soviet military build-up was larger, more rapid and lethal than the USA knew and included the deployment of 100 battlefield nukes to resist any ground invasion. And only a cool head on a Soviet submarine prevented the launch of a nuclear missile. Meanwhile Castro was urging Kruschev to launch a nuclear attack while afterwards Guevara deplored the Soviet back down. With allies like these.....

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Boyle the Kettle

We'll Have A Sup Of Tea

Tom Boyle



Chiraq, Trump called the city a war zone, and he is the arch villain. He took more flak than Spike.

th' dimmycratic party, Hill been' wan iv them an' wan iv th' worst. 'Gintlemen,' says Willum Jennings, "I admire David Bennett Hill. No wan,' he says, ' is a second to me in affection f'r that gr-great an' good man,' he says. 'I shall never fail in me devotion to him till,' he says, 'th' place heals up where he sunk th' axe into me in ninety-six. But,' he says, 'I cannot ask him to speak at ye'er bank it. I cannot bear to hear him talk, Ivry time he opens his mouth I want to put me fut into it,' he says. 'Moreover,' he says, 'if ye ask him I'll take me meal at home,' he says, 'f'r the sight of that gallant dimmycrat turns me from food,' he says. So that ends Hill. We can't go with any wan that our sainted leader can't ate an egg with without sin.

Resolutions

How to begin the new year?

1. Wash all the political laundry and hang it out to dry.
2. Lose weight without dieting.
3. Go some place warm.
4. Visit Blago at Leavenworth, bring him a cake with a file in it.
5. Keep digging up the past.
6. Get ready for the St. Patrick's Day Parade.
7. Go to the corned beef and cabbage dinner.
8. Volunteer for some worthy cause.
9. Read more books.
10. Mind your own business.

Inner Sanctum

Congressman Luis Guitierrez seems to be always angry . . . Now he won't attend the inauguration of Donald Trump. Tough crap Luis!

He is surfing the same liberal wave as Mayor Rahm Emanuel, off Oak Street Beach. Champions of justice truth and freedom, anointed with the oils of tax and spend.

How about taxing candy? Chicago was once the candy capital of the world. A new tax on candy would fund the sanctuary city expenses like health and welfare. The candy tax might kill off a few companies, or they'll just pack up and leave Illinois.

Frango mints are now made by Cupid Candies. All other Frango candy and cookies are being made by Gertrude Hawks Chocolates in Pennsylvania.

Giant Pig Balloons

To cover up the Trump Tower sign, the architectural firm, New World Design, has suggested that they put up four giant pig balloons to hide the Trump Tower sign. A testimony to sheer stupidity. The street signs designating "Trump Way" were removed by the city council. Petty crap! Does anybody think about all the union jobs that were created when that building was built, not to mention all the people who now work there? Were all the members of the city council foot stompers and pouters when they were kids? Did they ever grow up?

The new administration will have the upper hand. Spike Lee made the movie,

Time Mag

Time magazine named Trump, Person of the Year, however the caption under his picture read, "The President of Divided States of America." Ooh the Poor media. Trump gave them more than a few lumps. Now they are busy conjuring up Russian conspiracies. Cancel your subscription?

Mr. Dooley

Finley Peter Dunne, a Chicago newspaper man, created a Mr. Dooley, a political pundit if ever there was one. He recreated the dialect of an immigrant from County Roscommon. In his book titled, Mr. Dooley's Opinions, he wrote a chapter titled, Discusses Party Politics

"I WONDHER," said Mr. Hennessy, "if us dimmycrats will ever illicit a prisidint again."

"We cud," said Mr. Dooley, "if we cud but get an illegible candidate."

"What's that?" asked Mr. Hennessy.

"An illegible candidate," said Mr. Dooley, "is a candidate that can't be read out iv th' party. 'T is a joke I med up. Me find Willum J. Bryan reads th' Commoner to them an' they pack up their bags an' lave. They're as many dimmycrats out iv th' party as they are in, waiting' on th' durestep thread themselves back an' th' other la-ads out. Th' loudest r-reader wins.

"No, sir, th' dimmycratic party ain't on speaking' terms with itself. Whin ye see two men with white neckties go into a street car an' set in opposite corners while wan mutters "Thraiter" an' th' other hisses 'Miscreent' ye can bet they're two dimmycratic leaders therein' to reunite th' gran' ol' party. 'T is on'y th' part iv th' party that can't r-read that's true to th' principals iv Jefferson an' Jackson.

"Me friend William J. is not a candidate. He's illegible as an editor but not as a candidate. Anyhow, he don't want it or at last he don't want to want it an' not get it.

All he asks is some good man, some third and' thirsty dimmycrat that can lead th' party on to gloryous victory. But he can't find him. Ye say Hill? Well, me friend Willum J. was last to ask me friend David Bennett to go out f'r to make a speech as a dimmycratic bank it on th' traditions iv

St. Patrick's Day Parade

Don't forget to support our great parade by attending the St. Patrick's Day Parade Queen Contest January 15, 2017 and/or the Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner on January 26, 2017 at Plumber's Hall, 1340 W. Washington Blvd., Chicago IL 60607-1980. The parade theme this year is, "Irish Immigration: A New World of Opportunity." The website is chicagost-patricksdayparade.org.

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**David McDonnell:
Our Sports Man
on the Irish Street**



Can Frampton Rematch With Santa Cruz be a Sweet?

By David McDonnell

Twelve months ago, the pugilistic career of one Carl Frampton was reaching a make-or-break year in terms of deliverance and legacy.

And the Belfast boxer produced on his promise to post one of the most memorable and impressive years as anyone who has embarked and travelled on a career path in the sweet science.

Last February, he accounted for his long-held nemesis, Scott Quigg, in a fight that the British and Irish public had long been awaiting to see.

Fireworks were expected but such was the ease that Frampton out-thought and out-maneuvred his opponent in the opening eight rounds, it left little appetite for a rematch. Quigg rallied late after the scorecard was already weighted too heavily in the Northern Irishman's favour and Frampton, who is managed by Barry McGuigan and trained by his son Shane, won the match-up convincingly on points.

In hindsight, we shouldn't have been all that surprised.

For the tale of the fight was spoon fed to us by the protagonist in the weeks preceding the bout when the pair sat down for a face-to-face sparring session of words on Sky Sports' 'The Gloves are Off' programme.

The episode was refereed by former Cruiserweight World Champion Johnny Nelson and Frampton's verbal digs at Quigg seemed to land as cleanly as his shots in the ring.

When asked about the Englishman's weakness, Frampton was frank in his response.

"His main weakness is his boxing brain. You're smiling but I don't think you have one. I think your level of intelligence outside the ring reflects in the ring. That's how I see it."

Quigg retorted: "Do you honestly believe I can only box one way?"

"Yeah," came the response.

When Nelson quizzed him about his tactics Frampton took aim again.

"I'm not going to tell you what I'm working on Johnny. I'm not that daft. Maybe if you had asked him, he would tell you.

"I think he is going to be very tight and keep his hands glued to his chin. He is going to be stiff and rigid but as

the fight goes on and he gets further behind on the scorecards because he is a proud man, that is when he will take risks and open up and that will be his downfall."

And that is how it came to pass with Frampton dominating the early rounds.

Quigg seemed unnerved and unsettled, and when he tried to go toe-to-toe with the



Jackal, he got his jaw broken in the fifth. To his testament, Quigg carried on but by the time he regained himself to exert some influence on the fight, he needed a knockout from a long way out that never looked like coming.

Santa Cruz I

The victory saw Frampton add the WBA belt to his IBF Super-Bantamweight title and in was not long before the exciting news came that he would step up in weight to fight Leo Santa Cruz for the IBF Flyweight title at the Barclay's Centre in Brooklyn, New York last July.

Both fighters were two highly regarded unbeaten world champions who were putting their unbeaten records on the line against what was generally regarded as the best opponent in their weight class.

It is hard not to admire Santa Cruz.

He is a highly skilled boxer with an outstanding work-rate and he had made short work out of his last handful of opponents in impressive fashion. That he was highly favoured in America for the fight was no surprise.

There was no doubt that Frampton was underestimated in the USA as he failed to perform to his optimum in his first working visit in El Paso, Texas in 2015 when he was knocked down twice before winning on points against unheralded

Mexican boxer Alejandro Gonzalez Jr, who tragically was gunned down last month in Guadalajara, Mexico.

It was believed that Leo Santa Cruz, who had remained unbeaten after 33 fights, would wear Frampton down with his barrage-of-punching boxing style and that would be even if the Belfast boxer got the upper hand in the boxing exchanges.

What happened on the night will certainly live long in the memory for those

who has the pleasure to witness a bout high in boxing skills and tactical prowess.

It was a contest that had everything and undoubtedly, one of the fights of the year.

It had quality exchanges, with both fighters getting the upper hand at different times, often in the same round, and there were some great toe-to-toe battles intermingled with some great strategic boxing.

The rounds were so close that it was very much what the judges preferred, the

incisive head and body shots of Frampton to Santa Cruz's continuous onslaught of punches and high work-rate. That one judge had it a draw came as no surprise and neither did the fact that the two other judges awarded the victory to Frampton.

It was hard-earned and a triumph to savour.

The Jackal needed to be at his imperious best to get past a terrific opponent and on the night, he was. It was to date the

defining moment of his special career where Frampton has become the first two-weight world champion boxing out of Northern Ireland.

Straight after the fight there was hope and talk of a rematch, which thankfully will come to fruition at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas on Saturday, January 28.

If it is only half as good as the first encounter, it will be unmissable sport in which to start 2017.

Are You the 2017 Chicago Rose of Tralee?

What a YEAR! I keep telling everyone that whoever becomes the 2017 Chicago Rose going to the Rose of Tralee International Festival in Tralee, Ireland this year will surely not be disappointed.

Why?! Because Chicago is all the BUZZ over in Tralee! Maggie McEldowney was crowned the International Rose in 2016 and the last time Chicago won the crown was 29 years ago. The 2017 Chicago Rose and her family will enjoy watching the 2016 Chicago Rose finish her reigning year, while she competes to quite possibly take the crown again herself!



LOOK OF THE LASS



And, you may be thinking, "Is that possible?" WELL, yes it is! In 2009 the London Rose took the crown in Tralee and then the following year in 2010 London walked away with the crown again. So, it is possible for Chicago to win two years in a row!

Taking place from 16th to 22nd August, the 2017 Rose of Tralee International Festival will run for seven days featuring 70 Roses, loads of entertainment, street festivals and more!

Again, this year, all the Roses who travel to Tralee will take part in all the parades, Rose Ball, public engagements, Rose Tour and qualifying interviews from which 32 Roses will be chosen to appear in the

live televised selection broadcasts. The organizers in Tralee want to make sure that all the Roses from all over the world experience the full excitement that the festival has to offer!

So, now that the holidays are over, make a New Year's Resolution to enter the Chicago Rose Selection in 2017.

Never before has it been easier to enter the Chicago Rose Selection. Young Irish

women aged between 18 and 27 are being encouraged to fill-out a preliminary application form at www.chicagoroseoftralee.com. The preliminary application is free! Just fill it out online and hit submit, it's that simple.

The 2017 Rose of Tralee will be crowned live on RTÉ 1 TV in the Dome on Tuesday 22nd August. And who knows, Chicago could be named the 2017 International Rose again this year!

Please fill out a Preliminary Application as soon as possible. Once the 40 spots are filled, we will not be able to take any more applications! For information Mary Kay Gavin-Marmo or our 2015 Chicago Rose and 2017 Selection Host, Maeve McSweeney at info@chicagoroseoftralee.com.



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Daly Investor

By John P. Daly



that its savings can be drawn down abruptly. That danger is heightened if a couple's investments start to perform poorly. A spending plan may help retirees guard against this kind of crisis.

Another case occurs when a retiree household becomes overconfident in its decently performing portfolio and its middling level of savings.

A decade or so into retirement without a spending plan, that household finds its investment and bank accounts dwindling mysteriously fast. Sunday brunches give way to \$3.99 bacon-and-egg specials, and the golf clubs stay in the garage all year. A plan for drawing down retirement savings in moderation when retirement starts might help such a couple maintain its quality of life longer.

There is no standard retirement drawdown strategy. Each retired household must arrive at one specific to its savings, investment mix, income requirements, and age. There are some basic principles, however, that may help in configuring the spending plan. It makes sense for many retirees to tap their taxable brokerage accounts as a first step in a drawdown strategy. This allows assets held within tax-advantaged retirement accounts (such as IRAs) more time to grow and compound. By doing this, a retiree can effectively realize a tax break – money coming out of a traditional IRA

is taxed as regular income, whereas long-term capital gains are taxed between zero and 20%.

Of course, Roth IRA withdrawals are never taxed, provided you have followed IRS rules. That brings up another factor in planning retirement spending – what can be done with regard to asset location and tax efficiency before retirement. A retiree with a larger traditional IRA may want to consider a Roth conversion of some or all of those IRA assets before age 70. In the fifties or sixties, an IRA owner may be at or near peak earnings, so handling the tax bite that comes with such a conversion may be comparatively easier than it would be during retirement.

Retirement spending should never be treated casually. The proper spending strategy can play a crucial role in preserving a retired household's wealth and quality of life.

John P. Daly is a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ and President of Daly Investment Management, LLC. John has been working with retirees and people planning for retirement for over 18 years. John can be reached at Phone: 224-347-2623 or Email: john@daly-investment.com

Website: www.dalyinvestment.com 2016 "Five Star Wealth Manager" Chicago Magazine.

Retirement Spending Plans

Every day, articles appear urging people to save for retirement. These articles are so prevalent that it may seem like retirement planning is entirely about getting people to save. Actually, retirement planning concerns much more than that. It has another aspect well worth discussing: the eventual spending of all of that money that has been accumulated.

Too few Americans coordinate their retirement spending. A recent study asked more than 1,300 savers aged 55-75 if they had a drawdown strategy in mind for the future. Nearly two-thirds of the pre-retirees surveyed did not. A third of the retired respondents to the survey also lacked spending plans.

In retirement, inattention to household spending can have serious consequences. A newly retired couple can travel too much, eat out too frequently, and live it up to such a degree

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Terry From Derry

by Terry Boyle



The Centre Cannot Hold

W.B. Yeats in his poem *The Second Coming* describes a chilling, apocalyptic, view of the future. The poet, appalled by the radical nationalism of his time, and the war in Europe is confronted with a world that seems unfamiliar and out of control. None of us ever think that the world can suddenly change before our eyes. We slumber, doze off, while all about us the monster takes begins to take shape and before we know it all is irrevocably changed. And we wonder how did it happen. We, like Yeats, feel at a loss as to how things became so fragmented, and disconnected from what we thought we knew so well. How did those things fall apart? How did we wake up to this nightmare that is the new age?

For anyone who knows this poem they will know that Yeats sense of disbelief is compensated with his need to rationalize such profound changes. How can the world change so dramatically? For the poet/prophet the answer is simple; we have allowed it to happen. We, the best of our generation lack all conviction. We have not put voice to our conviction and allowed those who are full of passionate intensity to bully us into a brave new world marked by violence, racism, and intolerance. This new age is in part our responsibility. We have allowed ourselves to be silenced, and believed such changes impossible.

Everything around us is connected to events that we have created either by our ignorance, or lack of diligence. We have cannot let ourselves off the hook and plead innocence. The blood dimmed-tide has been loosed, and our naivety drowned in a political revelation that is almost too much to bear. We must watch

while the monster we've created begins to dominate our lives in ways we cannot fully comprehend. What Yeats felt was true for his day is also true for us who must now bear the brunt of the responsibility for dull, spineless, liberalism. What we thought could be controlled will destroy us. The center cannot hold; mere anarchy is loosed upon the world. We may find ourselves bereft of hope when we contemplate what we have let happen, and it's perfectly understandable why we should feel such despair.

Once the reign of belligerence begins we must shake off our political apathy, and unite against the corporate agenda that will destroy those who have foolishly believed in it. When the true colours of the worst are exposed there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth by those who believed in the beast's empty promises. As the dream becomes the nightmare many will lose hope and regret their decision. Having been hoodwinked into a fantasy, the beast will feast on those who have fed its ego. Soon we'll be hearing the voice of regret, but it's too late to go back.

The democratic system has failed its constituents by not taking their fears seriously. The falcon cannot hear the falconer. Our politicians have lost touch with those they represent. They have slumbered through de-

acades of stony sleep only to be rudely awakened by their worst nightmare. There is no way forward except to deal with the beast, and in order to prove their mettle they will have to cease being remote, and removed from those who count. In order to prove their effectiveness, they need to heal the rift between the hallowed halls of policy making and the electorate. The common person has been disappointed, let down, by those who should know better, and now we're all going to have to deal with the ramifications of such neglect.

We failed to read the signs of the times. The shifting sands under our feet have not dislodged the belief that such things could ever take place in our lifetime. We have been asleep while the world fell apart around us. It is at this point that I leave the poet/prophet to bask in his misery, and bleak foretelling, since I think recent world events should be our 'call to action'. I cannot accept that we are powerless to effect change despite the growing tide of fascism, financial exploitation, and political greed. It is never too late to stand up to the bully. The self-satisfying beast who is uncaring towards the needs of those who have empowered him has to be confronted at every turn. Every command, every policy, or utterance issued by the beast must not go unchecked otherwise we will be submerged under a tsunami of hatred, and destruction. We will let the world go to hell if we do not fight the good fight, and put an end to the apocal



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Trade in Gifts You Don't Want for Tickets You Do!
Bible Bingo: An Act of Charity in 2 Acts at the Royal George Theatre



Re-gift something in January, get a \$10 ticket!

Trade that unwanted item for a \$10 ticket to the hit comedy, Bible Bingo: An Act of Charity in Two Acts, which is returning in January to the Royal George Theatre, starting January 6.

As part of their annual campaign to help nuns, Vicki Quade and Nuns4Fun Entertainment are once again trading tickets for presents.

For the entire month of January, bring in a holiday gift that someone was sure you wanted, but would make a perfectly good item to re-gift. Items collected will be donated to the Little Sisters of the Poor in Chicago, who operate St. Mary's Home at 2325 N. Lakewood, Chicago.

Call the Royal

George box office at 312-988-9000, use the code REGIFT for your \$10 ticket.

Bring your item to the theater at 1641 N. Halsted, Chicago.

Bible Bingo is a comedy written by Vicki Quade about the Catholic culture of fundraising and bingo, featuring the character, Mrs. Mary Margaret O'Brien, a former nun who now heads a fictitious archdiocese fundraising department.

The Chicago Stage Standard calls the show, "A fresh new twist on bingo." New City Chicago raves, "The show is filled with Catholic humor."

Now in its 6th year, the comedy started in 2011 and opened at the

Royal George in November 2013.

The role is shared by four performers: Vicki Quade, Kathleen Puls Andrade, Liz Cloud, and Cheryl Roy.

In this interactive comedy, the parish needs money and Mrs. O'Brien is ready to help! Bring the two together and you have a night of bible trivia, audience interaction, improvised moments, and the funniest quiz about the Holy Family you've ever seen.

Add to that a box of wacky prizes, fun bingo cards, and a lot of Catholic humor. In this interactive bingo show, you'll actually play bingo, and still learn a little something about what it means to

be Catholic! The show gets the audience talking about everything from Adam & Eve to modern sins.

You'll be laughing so hard, you'll have to be careful watching your bingo cards!

"Bible Bingo is a really good show," says Theatre by Numbers. "A number of people get together to have some munchies and drinks. They play a few rounds of Bingo while they laugh, sing, chat, and goof around.



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Bible Bingo will return to its open run on January 6, 2017.

Fridays at 8 p.m. and Saturdays at 8 p.m.

Late Nite Catechism is on the schedule at 5 p.m. Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays.

Royal George Theatre, 1641 N. Halsted, Chicago. Tickets are \$30. Group discounts are available. For ticket info, call the box office at 312-988-9000.

For more information, check out our website, www.nuns4fun.com.

A Word With Monsignor Boland

The Voice of Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Chicago

Rev. Monsignor Michael M. Boland

Administrator, President and CEO



"Among our tasks as witnesses to the love of Christ is that of giving a voice to the cry of the poor." Pope Francis' powerful words are an important reminder during January, designated as Poverty Awareness Month. As we begin a new year, Poverty Awareness Month encourages us to do just that—become more "aware" of poverty.

To be sure, we are all aware that poverty exists. We see the poor on the street, or we hear about the latest poverty and income statistics in the news. However, Pope Francis has been urging us to become "aware" of poverty on a much deeper, more personal and spiritual level. He has asked us to open our hearts to solidarity with the poor, standing side-by-side with them and taking action to eliminate human suffering because they are our brothers and sisters in Christ.

His Holiness has repeatedly asked the faithful to defy the growing trend of indifference—of seeing poverty, but acting as though it is not our problem. Like the Good Samaritan, we should step in with concern to help those whom we may have never met, but are united to us in the Kingdom of God.

Our relationship with the poor takes on new meaning when we realize that Christ often comes to us cloaked in poverty. We find Him in the homeless man, the hungry child, the vulnerable senior, and the single mother who struggles to make ends meet. We find Him in the disabled veteran looking for a place to call home, the refugee starting over in a strange land, and the troubled youth who needs guidance and support. Behind each cry for help is a person that evangelizes Christ to us. Welcoming and caring for those in need is a beautiful way to bring us closer to Him and uncover all the good He has planned for us.

In September, Pope Francis canonized St. Mother Teresa. I can think of no more powerful example of how to be "aware" of poverty with all of one's heart and soul than this beloved saint. Everything she did, she did with great love. She cared for the very least among us, seeking out those who had been cast aside and having nothing apart from their poverty. She provided much-needed material as-

sistance, and did so with profound compassion that restored human dignity to those in desperate need.

One of my favorite excerpts from St. Mother Teresa's writings inspires me more each time I read it: "...Christ (comes) in distressing disguise—in the hungry man, in the lonely man, in the homeless child, and seeking for shelter. God has identified himself with the hungry, the sick, the naked, the homeless; hunger, not only for bread, but for love, for care, to be somebody to someone; nakedness, not of clothing only, but nakedness of that compassion that very few people give to the unknown; homelessness, not only just for a shelter made of stone, but that homelessness that comes from having no one to call your own." Yes the poor need our help, but they need our love and acceptance as well. Everyone is worthy in God's eyes; no one is to be left out or forgotten.

During this Poverty Awareness Month, let us take up Pope Francis' challenge to stand in solidarity with the poor, offering not only our charity, but also our compassion and love. Let us become truly "aware" of poverty, recognizing Christ in those with great needs. As we lift up our impoverished brothers and sisters, maybe we'll even become aware that they are actually the ones lifting us.

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March
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Proof Positive!

By Rita Emmett

Increasing the Joy In Your Life

We cannot cure the world of sorrow, but we can choose to live in joy. ~ Joseph Campbell

Every December, a friend and I meet to review the previous year and talk about our vision for the coming year. Last time, she asked

to brainstorm ideas to add joy to her life.

I said, "Before you can add joy, you need to identify what's blocking joy - maybe clutter?"

She sputtered, "How could clutter possibly be blocking joy?"

Getting to Know the Irish

By Tina Butler



This month I'd like to highlight an area/site in N. Ireland (Co. Antrim) called, "The Giant's Causeway". By the locals it's referred to as the, "8th Wonder" of the world. It's a natural rock formation that has a mythological story connected to it. It's a region off the coast of about 40,000 interlocking basalt polygonal columns. They formed there about 60 million years ago as a result of a volcanic eruption. Many hills and towns in Ireland are remains of extinct volcanoes. For ex. Croghan Hill in Co. Offaly erupted 200 million years ago. But Ireland is far from some countries that have active volcanoes such as Hawaii, Philippines and Japan. It was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1986 and a national nature reserve in 1987. The tops of the columns form stepping stones that lead from the cliff foot and disappear under the sea. Most of the columns are hexagonal. The tallest are about 40 feet high and the solidified lava in the cliff is 92 ft. thick in places. Every year the Causeway gets about 350,000 visitors. Much of the area is owned by the National Trust of N. Ireland. It's one of the most popular tourist attractions in Ireland. Unfortunately, it has caused many shipwrecks. In 1558 1,000 men were killed when a Spanish ship sank. (it's known as Spaniard rock) Causeway is home to Europe's first hydroelectric train, it opened

in 1883 between Portrush (seaside town in Antrim) to the Causeway (3 miles from Bushmills).

According to legend, the columns are named after a quarrel and are the remains of a causeway built by a giant. The Irish giant was named Finn McCool, he was challenged by a Scottish giant named, Benandonner. Finn accepted the challenge and built the causeway across the N. Channel so the two giants could meet. In one version of the story Finn defeats Benandonner. In another Finn hides from Benandonner when he realizes that his opponent is much bigger than he. Finn's wife, Oonagh, disguises Finn as a baby and tucks him in a cradle. When Benandonner sees the size of the baby, he thinks that his father must be much bigger and the king of the giants. He runs back to Scotland in a fright, destroying the causeway behind him so that Finn couldn't follow him. Across the sea are identical basalt columns (apart of the same lava flow) at Fingal's Cave on the Scottish side of Staffa. I wonder what the argument was about...maybe land

Overall, I think the moral of the story is Finn isn't a giant but a hero nonetheless with supernatural abilities. Or maybe his wife was the hero with her clever idea and creativity. In Irish folk tales over time 'the pagan gods of Ireland grew smaller and smaller until they turned into fairies. The pagan

I replied, "You complain that it surrounds you, you hate it, and wish it was gone. Why not approach clutter in terms of joy? Take each item that you don't need or use, and ask if it brings you joy.

If not, donate, recycle or toss it.

You'll decrease your clutter which will make you happy AND

you'll stop being surrounded by clutter

that doesn't bring joy and that you wish was gone."

She said in a surprised tone, heroes grew bigger and bigger until they turned into giants.

The uncovering of the Causeway was announced in 1693 by the presentation of a paper to the Royal Society from Richard Bulkeley, a fellow at Trinity College. However, the true discovery was from the Bishop of Derry who visited a year earlier. The site first became popular with tourists during the 19th century after the opening of the Giant's Causeway Tramway. And only after the National Trust took over it's care in the 60's where some of the traces of commercialism was removed. Travelers can walk over the basalt columns which are at the edge of the sea, a half mile walk from the entrance of the site. The Causeway's visitor center burnt down in 2000. The new visitor center was officially opened in 2012, funding was raised by N. Ireland's tourist board and public donations.

There was a bar in Chicago named Finn McCools but it has since closed. There are children's animated videos on you tube about the Causeway and National Geographic has made a movie on the topic as well.

Gaelic for the Month:

big-mor
ocean-farraige
myths-miotais
volcanoe-bolcan
coast-costa
Seanfhocail

There is often the look of an angel on the devil himself: is minic cuma

aingéal ar on diabhal fein

If you have any questions or comments please Email me at: Molanive@yahoo.com

"That actually makes sense!" (which made me wonder....do I usually NOT make sense??)

We discussed that to make time for joy we needed to explore how she uses her time. She said she never has time for family, friends or fun.

I asked, "What do you do on weekends or during any relaxing time?"

She said, "Watch TV, play video games, Facebook, Twitter, the usual stuff ... and occasionally I go out with a group."

Me "Why not go out with them more often?"

She "They are negative, whining and complaining.

Me "OK, so that's not a source of joy. Well, does watching TV & that other stuff bring you joy?"

She "Not really. It's more something I'm addicted to so I can relax.

Me "Sounds like those activities are of no value to you so they're just wasted time. Think of it as clutter in your calendar. You need to ponder what truly brings joy and see if anything can be added to your busy schedule ... maybe by eliminating pastimes that don't bring joy and aren't necessary."

At this year's get-together, she announced it's been a great year. She joined a volleyball team and plays once a week, gets enormous satisfaction from volunteering for a great cause, has gone back to playing her flute and consciously plans time with family and friends who are positive and uplifting.

She doesn't miss the small amount of social media and TV

time that these new activities sometimes replace because the fun of these new ones invigorate her and add joy to her life. PLUS she actually has deleted a portion of her clutter and loves the new, clear space. She says she feels "lighter" with it gone.

If you want to add more joy to your life this coming year, here are 3 ideas to begin:

1. Get rid of stuff you don't need or use and that does not bring you joy.

2. Identify ways to add fun or joy to your life.

3. Consider how you spend your spare time and where possible, eliminate anything that does not bring you joy. You can't delete your job, cleaning your home, things like that, but maybe there are some activities that are not necessary, that use up your time or are boring. Are you happy reviewing the amount of time you spend on games & social media, etc.? If that brings you joy, great. But if it's keeping you from family, friends or fun, you might want to re-think your use of time.

Wishing you all a Happy ... nope...make that ... a

JOYFUL New Year!

Warmly,

Rita.

Rita, a recovering procrastinator, an author, and in demand public speaker on the topics of eliminating clutter, negativity, and procrastination in your life.

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A Cháirde

We extend a big welcome to the new team now in place at the Irish Consulate in Chicago, Consul General Brian O'Brien and Vice Consul General Ragnar Almqvist. They cover a large territory, but I believe that the Irish Community in Chicago will keep them very busy all by itself. I trust that Brian and Ragnar will find their time here to be rewarding, and that they will truly enjoy our fine city and its people.

After we rang in 2017 at our Family New Year's

Eve Party at Gaelic Park, we started getting ready for Women's Little Christmas (Nollaig na mBan), which will be held on Friday night, January 6th. If you are reading this very early in January please let a woman in your life know that she is very welcome to join us for the craic that night. There is no cover charge.

We look forward to a busy year, and hope to see you at the Park.

Cheers,
Bill O'Sullivan, President

2017 CGP Calendar of Events 2017

JANUARY

1/4	Monthly Musical Luncheon* with Joe Cullen	
1/8	Classic Carvery with Garry Haughey	3:00pm
1/15	Classic Carvery with Ray Gavin	3:00pm
1/15	Classic Carvery with Joe McShane	3:00pm

Ladies Auxiliary - No Meeting in January-Next Meeting February 8th

Monthly Musical Luncheon* - Doors open at noon, hot lunch served at 1pm for just \$15 per person

*Reservations Required 708.687.9323

Monthly Mass and Breakfast is the 2nd Sunday of the Month

Pub Trivia are Tuesday evenings 7:30pm

Monday Evenings Set Dancing 7:30pm

Tuesday Evenings Ceili Dancing Lessons 7pm/Ceili 7:30pm

Sunday Evening CGP Radio Live WCEV 1450 AM 7:05-9pm



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Fri	Jan 6	Ray Gavin and Friends	7:30pm
Sat	Jan 7	Jerry & Kara Eadie	8:30pm
Wed	Jan 11	Frank Rossi (Rib Night)	6:00pm
Fri	Jan 13	Fabtones	7:30pm
Sat	Jan 14	Mulligan Stew	8:30pm
Fri	Jan 20	Bernie Glim	7:30pm
Sat	Jan 21	Nick Gonzalez & Brian Thoma	8:30pm
Fri	Jan 27	Joe McShane	7:30pm
Fri	Jan 28	DJ John Gill	8:30pm

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Chicago Gaelic Park Irish Radio Show WCEV 1450 AM Celebrates 30th Anniversary

As of November 27th, 2016, Chicago Gaelic Park hosted its own Irish Radio Show for 30 years. The first show was broadcast in November

1986. The show is broadcast every Sunday evening from 7pm to 8pm on radio station WCEV 1450 AM, hosted by Harry Costelloe and Mary Riordan (pictured) for all of the 30 years.

Mary Hackett also co-hosted the program for some years.

Congratulations for keeping the community informed of all upcoming events. May it continue for many more years.



Harry and Mary Riordan and Mary Hackett



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Women's Little Christmas at Gaelic Park

Friday January 6, 2017 7:00pm

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The cast and crew of *St. Patrick's Gift* and all

the Gaelic Park Players wish everyone a Happy New Year! We look forward to seeing you at our spring play. Also, watch for news for our annual trivia night sometime in February.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Gaelic Park Players, the meetings are held the second Wednesday of every month at 7:30 pm at Gaelic Park. Anyone who is interested in either auditioning for our spring play production or being a part of the crew, please join us for a meeting or contact us via the website gaelicparkplayers.org.

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Appearing at
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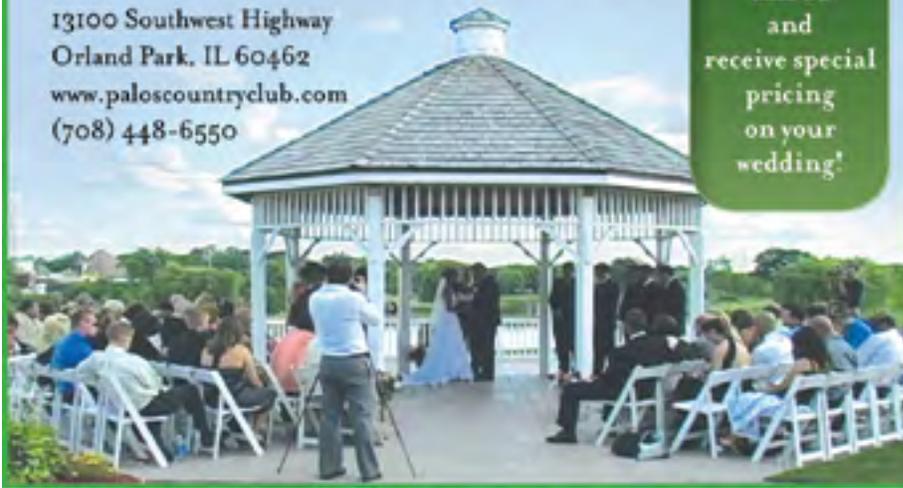
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An Immigrant's Musings

Michael Leonard



Remembering and Hoping

The day following the fifty-third anniversary of the assassination of JFK, I visited the museum located in the sixth floor book depository in Dallas. For one who grew up in rural Ireland in a home bearing a picture of President Kennedy on our kitchen wall, it was a sobering experience.

Before leaving the museum, I signed the visitors book and in doing so I quoted Kennedy's famous words, spoken in an address to the UN: "Mankind must put an end to war - or war will put an end to mankind." I followed the quote by saying that this message of JFK's is as relevant today as it was when he first delivered them.

The sad fact remains, that humanity has not yet learned how to put an end to war. Some may say that it is wishful thinking to have such lofty thoughts. I disagree. I think that as a species made in God's image we need to do everything we can and never stop working to achieve a world where war is no more.

By the time you get to read this my respected reader, you will have witnessed the inauguration of President Trump. The torch has now passed to a man who has pledged to ever increase our arms and expand our military capabilities.

As the Trump administration begins to outline its budget proposals let's hope that they will have an intelligent approach to this important issue. The fact that we as a nation are currently spending in excess of \$600bn per year is something that we need to seriously examine. Now, I can hear the pro-armaments lobby saying that the bigger issue on the spending side has to be on welfare and entitlements. I am not denying that we also need to examine our welfare outlay, but the point remains, that our military spending is more than the rest of the major world's budget combined and there is something seriously wrong with that picture.

Let's hope that our new President reflects deeply on JFK's thought provoking words, which I quoted at the beginning of this reflection and lets continue to pray for an end to war and violence in our world.

Peace of Mind

Once Buddha was walking from one town to another town with a few of his followers. This was in the initial days. While they were travelling, they happened to pass a lake. They stopped there and Buddha told one of his disciples, "I am thirsty. Do get me some water from that lake there."

The disciple walked up to the lake. When he reached it, he noticed that some people were washing clothes in the water and, right at that moment, a bullock cart started crossing through the lake. As a result, the water became very muddy, very turbid. The disciple thought, "How can I give this muddy water to Buddha to drink!" So he came back and told Buddha, "The water in there is very muddy. I don't think it is fit to drink."

After about half an hour, again Buddha asked the same disciple to go back to the lake and get him some water to drink. The disciple obediently went back to the lake. This time he found that the lake had absolutely clear water in it. The mud had settled down and the water above it looked fit to be had. So he collected some water in a pot and brought it to Buddha.

Buddha looked at the water, and then he looked up at the disciple and said, "See what you did to make the water clean. You let it be ... and the mud settled down on its own, and you got clear water... Your mind is also like that. When it is disturbed, just let it be. Give it a little time. It will settle down on its own. You don't have to put in any effort to calm it down. It will happen. It is effortless."

What did Buddha emphasize here? He said, "It is effortless." Having 'peace of mind' is not a strenuous job; it is an effortless process. When there is peace inside you, that peace permeates to the outside. It spreads around you and in the environment, such that people around start feeling that peace and grace.

Should you have any comments, questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at: sliabhanoir@gmail.com

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Our Take on Social Services

By Paul Dowling



Senior Group Meetings

Each month Chicago Irish Immigrant Support hosts senior group meetings at IAHC and Gaelic Park. See below for specific details on upcoming events. All senior meetings begin at 10am. There is no cost and refreshments are served. All are very welcome. If you need further information, please call our office on 773-282-8445.

Chicago Gaelic Park

Wednesday, 11th January 2017
- Reeling in the Years

Join us for a video tour of 1970's Ireland as we flip through the headlines to look at the political and social events of the decade.

Wednesday, 25th January 2017
- The Great Irish Bake Off: Rematch

Two years ago we held our first Great Irish Bake Off when group members were asked to bring along the Irish bread recipes you've been bragging about. Now it's time for a rematch so bring along their own homemade Irish breads (white, soda, brown - whatever!) to be shared with the group. There will even be some prizes for those who really wow us!

Irish American Heritage Ctr

Wednesday, 18th January 2017
- Older than Ireland

At Chicago Irish Immigrant Support, we're still celebrating the Centenary of the 1916 Easter

Rising. Older than Ireland is a documentary that tells the story of a hundred years of life as seen through the eyes of thirty Irish centenarians. 'Older than Ireland' explores each centenarian's journey, from their birth at the dawn of Irish independence to their life as a centenarian in modern day Ireland. These centenarians have lived through it all.

Returning to Ireland

Do you know anyone who has moved back to live in Ireland in the last two years? Crosscare Migrant Project - a Dublin based service - is collecting information from those who have decided to return to live full time in Ireland. Their survey asks questions related to returning emigrants' experiences across a range of different topics including employment, education, family, and what prompted them to decide to move back home overseas. The survey is a tool to better understand what challenges returning emigrants have struggles with most and in what ways they can be better supported as they make what is very often a difficult transition back into what may once have been a very familiar environment. Those who want to find out more about the survey or about Crosscare Migrant Project and the services they provide should visit their website at

www.migrantproject.ie

Be Winter Ready

Harsh winter weather can make daily life a challenge for all of us. Snow, ice, and winter winds can be particularly problematic for those of us who are a little older. Surviving the winter without mishaps or even tragedy is all about preparation! Below are some guidelines you can follow so you aren't caught unawares.

- Being snowed-in isn't exactly an uncommon occurrence in the Midwest. Be prepared to be holed up for an extended period of time in case that blizzard hits. Keep non-perishable, nutritious food in stock and be sure that you keep at least a week's worth of medications on hand.

- Sometimes the best way to avoid slips and falls during the winter is to stay inside. This isn't always possible or desirable. If you do have to get out of the house be sure that you have the appropriate footwear for the winter weather. Non-skid boots with rubber soles will probably work best.

- Make sure to have your furnace serviced before the coldest winter months to decrease the chances of something going wrong when you need your furnace the most.

- At the best of times driving can be a hazardous activity and the chances of accidents and breakdown increase significantly when the weather is unfavorable. Get your car serviced before wintertime hits -- or ask a family member to bring it to a garage for you. Checking things like the oil, tires, battery and wipers can make a big difference on winter roads. Also make sure your AAA membership is up-to-date in case of emergencies.

- Make good use of family and friends by asking them to help you out with anything that might be a little more dangerous for you to do. Have a friendly neighbor shovel your snow or have a family member run your errands at the weekend. Whenever you get the chance stay cozy by the fire and remember that spring is just around the corner.

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Culture Corner

Winter at the Center is filled with concerts, programs, activities and social events. Learn how you can get in on the action this season and enjoy all of our offerings.

Tea with Mamie Eisenhower

Have tea with former First Lady Mamie Eisenhower at another in the Saturday Morning Tea Series. Historian Ellie Carlson portrays Mamie Doud Eisenhower, wife of President Dwight D. Eisenhower and White House hostess. This one-woman performance showcases Mamie's fascinating and stylish life; her long marriage to Ike, time as an Army wife and Hostess in Chief of the White House.

Tea with Mamie Eisenhower is Saturday, February 11 at 11am. Tickets are \$25 for adults and children 12 and under are \$8.

Na Gaeil Irish Language Classes

Learn the Irish language with Na

Gaeil, the Center's ongoing Irish classes.

Saturday classes are from 11am to 1:30pm and begin on January 28.



Wednesday classes are from 7pm to 9:30pm

and begin on February 1. Tuition, which includes class materials, is \$100 for returning Na Gaeil students, and \$125 for new students. Spring classes pick up where the Fall term ended, although students who know some

Irish are also welcome to join the winter semester. Beginners to the Irish language can register for the Fall 2017 term, beginning in mid-September.

Crossover Watercolor and Acrylic Class

Learn the art of painting at an art class incorporating acrylics' versatility and watercolors' beauty.

This six week cross-over class is designed for all levels of expertise, and students will create still lifes, landscapes and portraits. The acrylic class is taught by Chicago artist and graphic designer,



Laura Coyle and artist and teacher, Kathleen Kelly.

The class is Wednesday night from February 1 to March 8 from 7pm-9pm and is open to adults 18 and up. Tuition is \$130 for IAHC members and \$140 for non-members.

Social Scene

Quiz Night

Show your smarts with the Granddaddy of all Quiz Nights.

On the third Friday of each month through May, test your trivia skills at one of Chicago's longest running Quiz Nights.

Quiz Nights are January 20, February 17, March 24, April 21 and May 19 at 8pm. Registration is \$30 per team, with no more

than 6 players per team and prizes for the top three teams.

Concert Corner

Makem & Clancy: The Tradition Continues

Dónal Clancy and Rory Makem come to the Center this February for a night of unforgettable music.

Continuing the family tradition started by their fathers in The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem,

acclaimed musicians Rory Makem and Dónal Clancy take the stage with



Donal Clancy and Rory Makem

charismatic takes on songs and stories of the Irish folk tradition, mixed in with original music and interpretations of the modern folk era.

Makem & Clancy is Friday, February 17 at 8pm. Tickets are \$20 for IAHC members and \$22 for general admission.

Solas Anniversary Tour

2016 marks the 20th anniversary of quintessential

Irish-American band, Solas.

The band brings its fresh arrangements

of age-old tunes, compelling originals and covers, and unparalleled musicianship for a stop at the Center during its year-long anniversary tour.

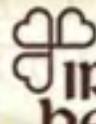
Solas will reunite all past and present members of the band, featuring Seamus Egan on flute, tenor banjo, mandolin, whistles, guitars and bodhran, Winifred Horan on violins and vocals, Eamon McElholm on guitars, keyboards

and vocals, Mick McAuley on button accordion and vocals and Moira Smiley on vocals and banjo.

Solas in concert is Saturday, March 4 at 8pm and tickets are \$30. To purchase tickets for all Center programs, visit www.irish-american.org, call 773-282-7035, ext. 10 or buy at the door.



Solas



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President's Message

Hoping you all had a joyous and happy holiday season, as we rest up and plan our diets and our resolutions for the New Year.

I am happy to report a very successful and active Christmas season at the Center.

A special thank you to all of our musicians at our Thursday Night Irish Music Sessions, Salon Concerts and our Irish Heritage Singers, who had a record crowd at their November concert.

An extraordinary team effort was displayed by the Christmas Bazaar Committee. It was a successful day, with Mass by Father Mick Madigan, vendors selling their wares, a sold out breakfast by Harrington's Deli and Catering and live music into the evening.

A special thank you to all of our



supporters of our Annual Appeal Campaign. We have raised \$57,000 of our \$75,000 goal. We thank Pat and Peggy Burke for their annual gift of \$25,000 and to all of you who donated to the campaign, which continues through March.

Things are looking good at the Center with the help of our members who continue to visit and support our efforts. There is such a strong sense of togetherness and strength from our volunteers and their efforts. In 2017, we will continue renovations in our building, and have set our sights on improving our one-of-a-kind Auditorium. If you have an interest in volunteering for such projects, contact the Center.

Happy New Year from the IAHC Board of Directors.
Eugene M. Cooney
President

Annual Appeal

Below are the names of donors to the 2016 Annual Appeal who have given through December 16, 2016. The campaign runs through March 2017 and donations will be listed in *Irish American News* through the March issue. Each year, Patrick and Peggy Burke generously pledge \$25,000 in matching funds for the Appeal. We thank them, and you, for your generous support.

Center Champion (\$1000-\$4,999)

Timothy and Pamela Taylor
Anonymous

Benefactor (\$500-\$999)

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Patron (\$250-\$499)

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James Hayes
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Advocate (\$100 - \$249)

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Marie C. Lally (O'Donnell), in honor/ memory of Dan & Mary O'Donnell

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JANUARY ENTERTAINMENT

- 1/6 Francis O'Neill Ceili Mor
- 1/7 Joe Cullen
- 1/13 Seamus O'Kane
- 1/14 St. Patrick Fathers Social
- 1/20 In Spite of Ourselves
- 1/21 Cash for Kids
Johny Cash Fundraiser, 6pm
- 1/27 Jeff Ward
- 1/28 The Dirty Wellies



Thursday Night Irish Music Sessions: Jan. 5, 12, 19, and 26; 7pm-9pm

January 2017

Jan 1	Happy New Year	Building Closed	
Jan 6	Francis O'Neill Club Ceili Mor	Fifth Province	8pm
Jan 7	Shamrock American Club 25 Card Game	ShamAm Room	7pm
Jan 8	Library Great Books Club - <i>The Dork from Cork</i> by Chet Raymo	Library	1pm
Jan 14	St. Patrick Fathers Social	Fifth Province	8pm
Jan 17	Celtic Women Meeting	Room 304	7pm
Jan 18	Tara Club Senior Meeting	Room 304	10am
Jan 20	Chicago Irish Immigrant Support Casino Night Quiz Night	Erin Room	7pm
Jan 28	Celtic Women's St. Brigid's Day	Room 109	8pm
Jan 29	Genealogy Workshop	Room 306	???
		Library	1pm

Regularly Scheduled Events

Mon-Fri	Gift Shop	First Floor Lobby	4pm-8pm
Tues	Nimble Thimbles	Room 208	9am-Noon
	Set Dancing	Room 111	7:30-9:30pm
Wed	Traditional Irish Music Session	Room 311	7pm
	Nimble Thimbles	Room 208	7-10pm
Thurs	Taping of The Craic Radio Show	Fifth Province	6:30pm
	Thursday Night Irish Music Session	Fifth Province	7pm
	Irish Heritage Singers Rehearsal	Room 306	7pm
Fri	Francis O'Neill Club Ceili	Room 111	8pm
Sat	Gift Shop	First Floor Lobby	10am-8pm
	Na Gaeil Irish Language Class (starting 1/28)	Library	11am

Library Hours:

Tuesday and Thursday 10am to 2pm | Wednesday 4pm to 8pm | Saturday 10am to 2pm

The Heritage Line Staff Kathleen O'Neill, Editor

Contributors: Meg Buchanan, Theresa Choske, Gene Cooney, Laura Coyle, Ellen Folan, Catherine Kelly, Kathy Kelly, Sheila Murphy, Mike Shevlin, Becky Tatz

Life Happens

By Caroline Weber

"This is a moving tale from a new and exciting writer. Caroline Reber is an old-fashioned storyteller, drawing you in little by little. Utterly gripping."

— Sian Smyth, Director of Dalkey Book Festival

"This is a story that i couldn't pass up. It's

an emotional tale and truly strikes a chord with me in many ways. I want to read more even though I know I will need to keep some tissue nearby. I can see this one as a sad but inspirational story that I highly recommend others to buy and get a good understanding of what a person can go through when an illness comes into your life"

— Joshua Griffith, author

"Brave storytelling that will benefit a great cause"

— Billy O'Keefe, author

About the book
They were like sisters, until everything changed one summer night. Fourteen years later, they find themselves living in different countries with no communication. Anna has landed her dream job and is living a fast-paced life in Dublin, Ireland. When she's diagnosed with a serious disease, she is forced to take on the biggest challenge she has ever encountered. Mia has found the love of her life and is living a glamorous life

in Vienna, Austria, when she finds out what happened to her old friend. Circumstances bring the two women together again, but is it too late for them to rebuild what they had? What really happened all those years ago? Together they embark on a journey to confront their pasts, and on the way they acquire life-changing insight and new perspectives. Life Happens is a touching story

about friendship, career, and the biggest question of them all—why do so many of us avoid change until faced with hardship?

About the author

Caroline Reber works as an account strategist for Google and is based in Dublin, Ireland. She is originally from Sweden and graduated from the Stockholm School of Economics in 2013. After being diagnosed with cancer, she

decided to fulfill her childhood dream of writing a novel. Through her writing, she hopes to inspire others to value their everyday lives and to keep a positive mind-set through even the hardest of times. Fifty percent of all profits generated from Life Happens will be donated to the Irish Cancer Society.

Inkshares Hardcover
ISBN: 9781942645122
Email: caroline.reber87@gmail.com
Price: \$15.99
Pub date: Jan 10th, 2017



The Best of Billy Keane

By Mattie Lennon

"The Best of Billy Keane" is a collection of 59 articles by one of Ireland's best loved columnists, authors, after-dinner speakers and genuine gentleman. The blurb describes this all-rounder from Listowel Co. Kerry, as "... The discerning sinner turned confessor." In this collection Billy covers most aspects of human life from "Born Again Virgins" to the tragic death from cancer of teenager Donal Walsh. Donal died from cancer as a teenager. In the months and days leading up to his death he pleaded with anybody contemplating suicide to change their mind. He wanted to live but knew he couldn't. On his deathbed he asked his Parish Priest what was on the other side. The priest said, "I don't know Donal, but it'll be a far better place with you in it." Billy writes, "The boy who changes lives has changed mine. Donal's message is easy to get. Live. Live and make the most of it."

John B. Keane had the most balanced approach to the Catholic Church of anybody I ever met. Billy is following in his footsteps. He has no problem criticising the approach of the Church to certain matters. But when writing about pure Christians like his old school Mate Father Pat Moore and Father Padraig Walsh the spiritual side of him is very evident. He can even turn Agony-aunt dishing out advice on how to cope with the "... Imaginary but sometimes barbed-wire border under the duvet. From the swallows returning to Listowel (their old homes demolished during Celtic-tiger years) to "Born again Virgins" it's all there.

Bill is a publican but he always modestly describes himself as "a barman." His father once said that you can write a thousand words about anything. His son took him at his word. Who else could pen a lengthy article on the installation of a stainless steel urinal in the gent's toilet of the pub. When he initially suggested the new urinal his 86 year old mother and the barmaid, Phil, claimed that "There's nothing wrong with the old toilets that a bucket of water couldn't fix" they were informed by Billy, that they were going on about something that they knew nothing about "... because neither of ye are men." Billy got his way. The gleaming stainless convenience is in position. I tested

it. Making a sound like a hosepipe being played on a hubcap.

And there is the story of Paddy Joe Keane from Killnard, Co. Laois. In late 2011 Paddy Joe was diagnosed with lung cancer and told that he had only a few months to live. He said, "I don't want everyone to be at the wake when I can't be there myself." He planned, and held, his own wake while he was still alive. A typical Irish wake was held in the Thatch pub. He died on February 16th 2012. His son Paddy said later, "My take is Paddy Joe was saying to his family and friends, 'the memories of the last stand will keep me alive and keep ye happy'. Billy Keane sums it up, "Paddy Joe Keane, the clever handyman from Killnard, might just have figured out a new and better way of dying." Which I'm sure would be a good thing."



Billy doesn't confine his observations to this little island. An eye on international affairs. He was delighted when Donald Trump got the

Republican nomination in 2015 his joy knew no bounds when The Donald was elected. Why. Well, according to Billy, if Trump hadn't made it to the Whitehouse he had his eye on the position of Taoiseach here. Eamon DeValera, who was an American, ran for the British House of Parliament, as a candidate for County Clare, in 1917. He was elected by an overwhelming majority. He eventually became Taoiseach and later President of Ireland. If Trump followed the same route the author reckons he would have built a wall around County Clare, "to keep the Tipperary hurlers out."

He also has some revelations about "The Man Who had it All Figured Out". He paints a comprehensive picture of this individual but doesn't tell us who he is.

In a valuable piece to men who are reluctant to visit a doctor about ailments of the reproductive organs he quotes a character from one of his father's works; "I'll let no man look at my apparatus until I'm being washed for the grave." Billy is a man who can get a bit of humour into almost any piece of writing and come up with titles like, "Who Needs A Man When You've Got Your Pension Book?" but he can dish out some valuable advice. His writing about his own vulnerabilities have, in my opinion, saved lives.

Great writing from a great man.

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Piping It In

Jack Baker



A Good Start to the New Year

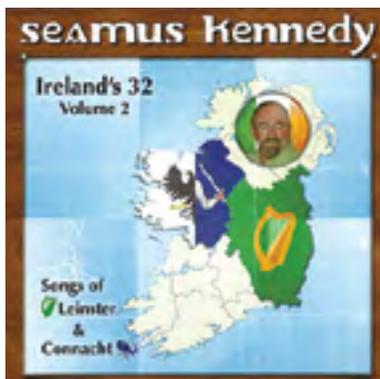
We have started the new year and everywhere I look I see encouraging signs. Many of our talented musicians are giving one-on-one lessons, the music schools are turning out talented young players, more pubs are sponsoring regular sessions and music fills the rooms at the Irish American Heritage Center and Gaelic Park. CD sales are still slow and while I expect they'll never come back to where they were, new and exciting CDs are being produced, usually by the artists themselves. Personally, I'm sitting on a nice wee stack of CDs that will, I guarantee, warm up a January afternoon no matter how frigid.

Before I get to the new CDs, I want to backtrack a bit to mention a lovely Christmas CD that came in too late to be reviewed before Christmas. The Gothard Sisters (www.gothardsisters.com)

Recorded a Christmas album that was released around the first of December and it was truly a joyful piece of work. Now the Gothard Sisters, when I mention their name I can tell if folks have seen them from the dreamy smile that comes over their face, are three sisters from the Pacific Northwest who've been playing together since they

were babies. They are lovely in every way that one can be and their vocals are delightful. Their Christmas CD, "Falling Snow" is sure to be a favorite and hops into my top ten Christmas recordings immediately.

I'll remind you all about it next year at the right time, but it deserves comment now because it is just that good. Keep your eyes open for any shows featuring the Gothard Sisters and you too can develop a dreamy smile thinking about them, a delightful and unique vocal group that I sincerely hope to see more of this year.



I have a buddy, Ken Onstad, who owns New Folk Records, where he records and distributes Celtic CDs. A brave man, in this time of declining CD sales but Ken soldiers on, recording damn fine music and getting it out there so folks like me can feed our souls and keep listening to great music.

Recently Ken unloaded a pile of CDs on me that included one of the best guitar albums I'd ever heard. The artist is Patsy O'Brien (www.patsyobrienswebsite.com) and the album is simply called "Irish Guitar". The extent of this man's ability to draw music out of a simple guitar is befuddling. I sat listening to this recording one whole afternoon and was delighted and speechless. It's simply great! I don't know much about him but I know that I could sit and listen to this boy play guitar all day long. I hope that we'll

be seeing more of this lad in the coming year.

The best singer of Irish songs is, for my money, Seamus Kennedy (www.seamuskenedy.com) and he has just released "Ireland's 32, Volume 2", an outstanding collection of songs from Leinster and Connacht. Aply assisted by a handful of top notch musicians, Seamus employs his strong baritone to complete the musical tour of all the counties that he began in "Ireland's 32, Volume 1". Nobody can craft a song or arrange and perform a song like Seamus Kennedy, He is simply a master. I have always enjoyed Seamus' recordings, my kids grew up singing along with his recordings and him. My heartfelt advice is to never pass up an opportunity to watch Seamus Kennedy perform and never pass up a chance to obtain his recordings.

There are a number of artists that seem to have the ability to turn a recording to gold simply by adding their input. One of my favorite artists in this class is Nathan Gourley, who's fiddle has enlivened and elevated many a recording. So it's no wonder that I was tickled to receive his new album "The Truckley Howl" in the post recently. In this recording, Nathan is joined by the inspired concertina of Mairéad Hurley from Sligo and the wizardry of John Blake on guitar, flute and piano. Together these three artists create a musical tapestry wondrous to behold, just joyful and passionate in their musical spirit. It moves you and chases away sour thoughts and feelings and that's what great music is supposed to do. I defy anyone to keep their feet still while listening to this collection of tunes, can't be done.

Stay warm and support you independent musicians. store@rampantlion.com see you back at the store in March. Slainté

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Irish Author Ken Bruen, winner of the iBAM! Literature award 2016, and Cliff Carlson

Rip O'Dwanny and Cliff Carlson have been to Ireland a combined 206 times - but who's counting?
Cliff is the publisher of Irish American News in Chicago and Ohio and has been putting out the paper monthly since 1991.
From Green Bay south to Kenosha Rip owns 5 popular Irish Pubs And 4 Irish Hotels, and has been taking folks to Ireland for 20 years!

Join us on a journey of a lifetime to the beautiful West Coast in Co. Clare, Ireland and spend a full week having a good time. You will be lodging at the **Old Ground Hotel** at Ennis City Center. This manor house dates to the early 18th Century, and its magnificent ivy-clad exterior retains the splendor of a by-gone era with all the conveniences of a modern hotel inside.

Enjoy the

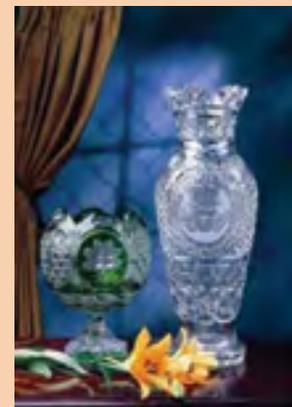
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Irish Theatre of Chicago Presents The Weir Thru 1-22

Irish Theatre of Chicago is pleased to launch its 2016-17 Season with Conor McPherson's haunting and humorous Irish classic THE WEIR, directed by Siiri Scott, who helmed last season's critically acclaimed one-woman show My Brilliant Divorce. The Weir will play through January 22, 2017 at The Den Theatre, 1333 N. Milwaukee Ave. Chicago. Tickets are available at www.irishtheatreofchicago.org. The press opening is Friday, December 16 at 7:30 pm.

THE WEIR features ensemble members Brad Armacost*, Jeff Christian*, Dan Waller* and Sarah Wellington*, with guest artist Bradley Grant Smith.

An enigmatic young woman from Dublin finds herself the center of attention at a local pub. Pints in hand, the local barflies recount ghostly yarns of the supernatural to impress and entertain her, but it is the visitor herself who relates the most unsettling story of all. McPherson wrote the hauntingly beautiful and humorous play The Weir at the age of 26, winning the Olivier Award for Best New Play,



(l to r): Bradley Grant Smith, Dan Waller, Sarah Wellington and Brad Armacost

and the Evening Standard Award for Most Promising Playwright.

Curtain Times: Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 pm; Sundays at 3 pm. Please note: there will be added performances on Wednesday, December 21 at 7:30 pm, Monday, December 26 at 7:30 pm (industry night) and Wednesday, December 28 at 7:30 pm; there will not be performances on Saturday, December 24 (Christmas Eve), Sunday, December 25 (Christmas Day), Saturday, December 31 (New Year's Eve) and Sunday, January 1 (New Year's Day).

Tickets: Previews \$12. Regular run: \$26 Thursdays/Fridays; \$30 Saturday/Sundays. Seniors/students \$5 off. Tickets are available at www.irishtheatreofchicago.org.

Irish Theatre of Chicago (formerly Seanachai Theatre Company) is supported in part by The Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelly Foundation, The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, the Illinois Arts Council and The Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs: City Arts Program.

Love Ireland? Enter Love Your Irish County Multi-Media Contest

Share your stories of the Irish Diaspora. Share your stories of the Irish Counties.

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And remember to clearly specify the County in question! (Please... only one entry per person.) **There are prizes too.** Because this is about individual Irish Counties --and your individual stories of those counties-- there will be 32 categories and 32 prizes. One prize per county! Prizes are kindly provided by Nagle Forge & Foundry and are pins inspired by the Counties of Ireland. The retail value of each pin is approx. \$37.-USD. see the ad next page in this paper!

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PLEASE JOIN US AS WE PULL TOGETHER FOR THE MIKE RUDDY FAMILY BENEFIT

On March 5, 2016, our friend Mike Ruddy passed away suddenly, leaving behind his wife Tern and three young children. To those of us who knew him and to those reading this story, it must be said that we lost one of life's finest.

A funny, carefree, genuine, happy, consider, intelligent and decent man are but a few words to describe him. We all knew firsthand that as soon as he set foot on American soil, he took immense pride on his roots—as we often heard him recite the well versed tune of "The Carrick Smashers". He was also beyond grateful for the opportunities that came his way as he made a life for himself here in this great country and married his best friend Tern.

During his time playing for the Chicago Wolfe Tones, his passion for the game and for his teammates was extraordinary. He won both Chicago and North American Championships playing with and against distinguished inter-county players and did it all with exceptional skill. In the years to follow, he remained an outstanding supporter to the GAA community all the while maintaining his sense of humor and mischief. In his professional life as an electrician, he didn't just take on projects; he took on a mission as if it were for family and finished it with professionalism and pride. He made life long friendships with those who employed him and never asked for more than what was fair.

We are asking that you help us in *their* mission for every great ship that sails has a captain and its crew: This family has lost their captain but they must keep sailing, keeping life on course. We as a community must help to keep them sailing because as much as Mike was given in this world, he gave back 10 fold, never with a pause or a question, it was his nature. While our hearts are gripped with sadness as we think of this huge loss to this family and our community, we are reassuringly reminded by his carefree, lighthearted attitude to constantly live every moment of life to its fullest!

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 Judged By: Oisín Mac Diarmada and a few other people to be announced....

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Acclaimed international bestseller Catherine Dunne's thrilling US debut is the story of two wronged women bent on revenge at all costs.

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imagine that her whirlwind courtship would lead to a dark and violent marriage. But Calista learns to survive. She knows she will find peace when she can finally seek retribution.

Madrid. Pilar grew up with very little means in rural Spain and finally escaped to a new life. Determined to leave poverty behind her, she plunges into a life of working hard and saving money. Enchanted

by an older man, Pilar revels in their romance, her freedom, and accruing success. She's on the road to achieving her dreams. Yet there is one thing that she is still searching for, the one thing she knows will make her truly happy.

Sweeping across the lush European backdrops of Spain, Greece, and Ireland, *The Years That Followed* is a gripping, modern telling of a classic story. As two wronged women plot for revenge, their intricately crafted schemes send shockwaves through their families that will echo for many generations to come. Available in October, 2016 (bn.com. (all books available online and at amazon.com)

The Call

By Peadar O'Guilin

You have 3 minutes to save your life . . .

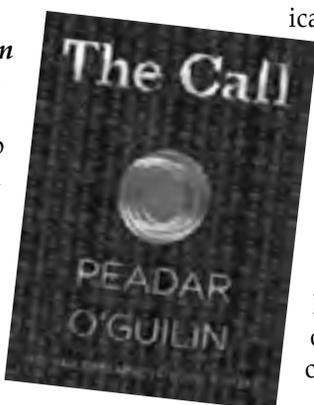
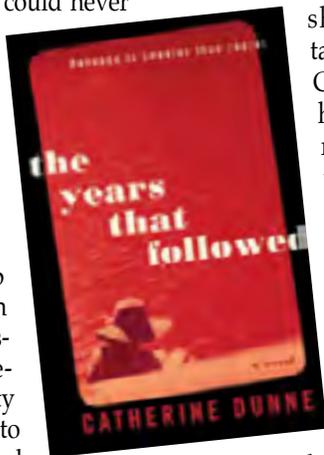
3 MINUTES: You wake up alone in a horrible land. A horn sounds. The Call has begun.

2 MINUTES: The Sidhe are close. They're the most beautiful and terrible people you've ever seen. And they've seen you.

1 MINUTE: Nessa will be Called soon. No one thinks she has any chance to survive. But she's determined to prove them wrong.

TIME'S UP: Could you survive the Call?

A genre-changing blend of fantasy, horror, and folklore, *The Call* won't ever leave your mind from the moment you choose to answer it.



Wedding Bell Blues

By Maggie McConnon

Are they tying the knot?

Belfast McGrath has spent the last fifteen years avoiding her big, bustling, brash Irish family. But when her five-star culinary career goes up in flames, she retreats to Foster's Landing—where she's immediately tapped as her cousin Caleigh's maid-of-honor. It's a perfect recipe for disaster...especially when Bel learns that the wedding preparations included Caleigh having one last one-night stand.

Or the noose?

When Caleigh's lover plunges from the second-floor balcony during the reception, Bel can't help but think his death was no accident. Soon

Detective Kevin Hanson, who just happens to be Bel's long-ago love, arrives on the scene—looking hotter than ever. Heartbreak and homicide hardly help Bel to feel more at home, but if she is going to make a new beginning for herself, including putting the past behind her, she must first steer clear of a cold-hearted killer.

City of Dreams

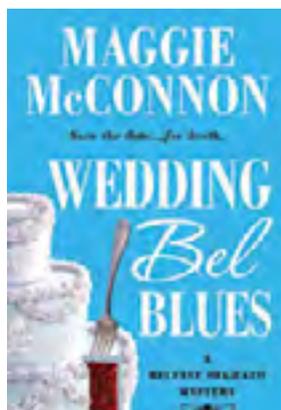
By Tyler Anbinder

A defining American story, never before told with such breadth of scope, lavish research, and resounding spirit

With more than three million foreign-born residents today, New York has been America's defining port of entry for

nearly four centuries, a magnet for transplants from all over the globe. These migrants have brought their hundreds of languages and distinct cultures to the city, and from there to the entire country. More immigrants have come to New York than all other entry points combined.

City of Dreams is peopled with memorable characters both beloved and unfamiliar, whose lives unfold in rich detail: the young man from the Caribbean who passed through New York on his way to becoming a Founding Father; the ten-year-old Angelo Siciliano, from Cal-



abria, who transformed into Charles Atlas, body-builder; Dominican-born Oscar de la Renta, whose couture designs have dressed first ladies from Jackie Kennedy to Michelle Obama. Tyler Anbinder's story is one of innovators and artists, revolutionaries and rioters, staggering deprivation and soaring triumphs, all playing out against the powerful backdrop of New York City, at once ever-changing and profoundly, permanently itself. *City of Dreams* provides a vivid sense of what New York looked like, sounded like, smelled like, and felt like over the centuries of its development and maturation into the city we know today.

TYLER ANBINDER is a professor of history and former chair of the History Department at George Washington University. His first book, *Nativism and Slavery*, won the Avery Craven Prize of the Organization of American Historians. His second book, *Five Points*, won the New York City Book Prize of 2001. He served as a consultant to Martin Scorsese for *Gangs of New York*

Last 4 Days of Paddy Buckley

By Jeremy Massey

A dark and unexpected novel about a Dublin undertaker who finds himself on the wrong side of the Irish mob. Paddy Buckley is a grieving widower who has worked for years for Gallagher's, a long-established—some say the best—funeral home in Dublin. One night driving home after an unexpected encounter with a client, Paddy hits a pedestrian crossing the street. He pulls over and gets out of his car, intending to do the right thing. As he bends over to help the man, he recognizes him. It's Donal Cullen, brother of one of the most notorious mobsters in Dublin. And he's dead. Shocked and scared, Paddy jumps back in his car and



drives away before anyone notices what's happened.

The next morning, the Cullen family calls Gallagher's to oversee the funeral arrangements. Paddy, to his dismay, is given the task of meeting with the grieving Vincent Cullen, Dublin's crime boss, and Cullen's entourage. When events go awry, Paddy is plunged into an unexpected eddy of intrigue, deceit, and treachery. *The Last Four Days of Paddy Buckley* is a surprising, compulsively readable debut novel.

The Girl From the Savoy

By Hazel Gaynor

The Girl From The Savoy is as sparkling as champagne and as thrilling as the era itself.

'Sometimes life gives you cotton stockings. Sometimes it gives you a Chanel gown ...'

Dolly Lane is a dreamer; a downtrodden maid who longs to dance on the London stage, but her life has been fractured by the Great War. Memories of the soldier she loved, of secret shame and profound loss, by turns pull her back and spur her on to make a better life.

When she finds employment as a chambermaid at London's grandest hotel, The Savoy, Dolly takes a step closer to the glittering lives of the Bright Young Things who thrive on champagne, jazz and rebellion. She must exist on the fringes of power, wealth and glamor—she

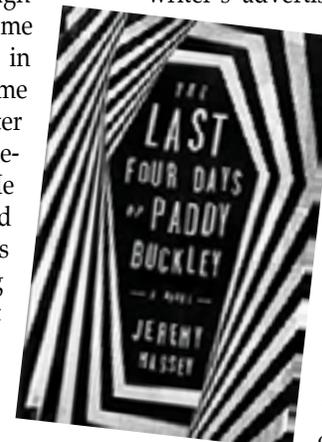
must remain invisible and unimportant.

But her fortunes take an unexpected turn when she responds to a struggling songwriter's advertisement for a 'muse' and

finds herself thrust into London's exhilarating theatre scene and into the lives of celebrated actress, Loretta May, and her brother, Perry. Loretta and Perry may have the life Dolly aspires to, but they too are searching for something.

Now, at the precipice of the life she has and the one she longs for, she must make difficult choices:

between two men; two classes, and everything she knows and dreams of. A brighter future is tantalizingly close—but can a girl like Dolly ever truly leave her past behind?





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It Starts With A Song

By Joe McShane



Hello everyone,
I spoke to Margo, on the phone recently. She has been through some health issues lately. She asked me to pass this message on to you. Margo - "I would like to thank everyone who sent text messages, Mass cards, flowers and most of all your prayers. I am doing really well after major surgery on my shoulder. My sur-

geon advised me to take things easy and rest plenty. That's hard for me to do but I guess I have to look after myself. The frosty weather is making it easier for me to rest by the fire and enjoy the company of my friends who come visit. Happy New Year to all my friends in Chicago and the USA".

Margo, we wish you God speed with your recovery from us all here in the USA especially in Chicago. And a Happy New Year to you also.

A little while back, actually, it was just before last summer, I was talking to Joe Cullen and he mentioned the Wild Atlantic Way (coastal road in Ireland). Joe said "We should write a song about it." I said, "There already is a song about it and it's a good one." I had heard it on the radio when I was in Ireland the year before.

I'm going to digress a little here because I just remembered

something funny on the radio that day, as I was driving. I was listening to an interview with one of the cast from the newly released movie of Mrs. Brown. The interviewer said to the actor "You really played the part of a gay person so well" and the actor said "It was so easy for me because I am." This man was so funny, he then went on to say. "One day I was in the kitchen with my mother and decided I should tell her, so I said, "Mother I need to tell you something, I'm gay". His mother replied "Oh God that's great son, sure I'm as happy as Larry meself". I had to pull the car off the road with the tears running down my cheeks from laughing so much.

Anyway back to the Atlantic song idea. Then I thought about Joe's idea for a while and said, "you know maybe you're right, there's more than one song about a lot of things". There are so many great songs about Joe's home county of Donegal and indeed every county in Ireland has a bunch of great songs. So we put some ideas together and wrote this month's song titled "Wild Atlantic Way". Nathan Carter also joined us on it. We did some research and I was amazed.

Given the fact that Ireland is -485 km (302 miles) at it's greatest length and is 304 km (189 miles) at it's widest point. The Wild Atlantic Way is around 1,600 miles long (the Great Barrier Reef in Australia is 1,200 miles long). I have travelled many parts of the Wild Atlantic Way but never the whole journey. I now want to do it as an extended vacation and just get lost in time. This beautiful scenic route, not surprisingly, is helping to bring more tourism to our country. The music, topography and history etc, that exists along Ireland's coast, is an experience to behold. Another fact about The Wild Atlantic Way is, it's the longest coastal route in the world. Certainly an Irish treasure and it's waiting there for you, with a smile and open arms.

When it comes to song writing, I am my own biggest critic. I do believe that this is one of the songs I've been involved in that will stand the test of time. It's now available on iTunes sung

by Nathan's younger brother Jake Carter. It's part of a three song E.P. It's not the main track on there but I wasn't surprised to see it's the most popular one on this recording. Jake is being helped on his road to success by my brother Nicky James and of course his own brother Nathan. He's a talented young man and I wish him great things for the future. I also thank him for recording the song. I have three songs now that have appeared on first albums. Daniel O'Donnell, when he recorded one I wrote called "My Side Of The Road". Next was Nathan Carter with a song called "Love Me One More Time". And now there's Jake Carter. "Jake, I hope you have as much success as Daniel and Nathan have had."

As I write this, I'm on a flight to Jamaica. Ya Mon!

A Very Happy and Healthy New Year Wish to Everyone!

As always, be good to one another, Joe



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"The Wild Atlantic Way"

Written by Joe McShane, Joe Cullen and Nathan Carter

Verse 1

The folks are fine, you'll stay and dine then leave from Malin Head
From the B & B with a flask of tea and homemade Irish bread
The heartbeat of the people, is the rhythm of the land
Come stay awhile spend some time and walk the golden strand

Verse 2

Along the coastal highway were the waves kiss Ireland's shore
The music of the ocean, sings your welcome home
You'll see the Untamed beauty, where nature came to play
The past will come to meet you on the Wild Atlantic Way

Chorus

And your heart feels the rhythm and sweet musical sounds
As the sun is setting beyond the western strand
You will dream ever after of the friendships you have made
Memories will linger of the Wild Atlantic Way

Verse 3

Over 15 hundred miles of winding coastal road
Some old ruined castles from a time so long ago
Mountains high that reach the sky where Eagles build their nests
Fishermen sail home as the sun sinks in the west
Chorus

Verse 4

So come along and join us and feel the ocean spray
See the Dolphins feel the friendship let troubles drift away
We'll drive along the tide by rugged mountain peaks
Its beauty takes your breath away along the shining sea



A Slice of Ireland

By Cathy Cooney-Millar

Volumes of Columns Since 1977

2017 will see me writing about our Irish American News columnists who help bring you interesting stories and news each month! We start off with our longevity awardee, Frank West.

At a young age, Frank West loved reading and language arts. He valued words, their meanings and how they could be used. Reading was a way of freedom. As a child he was encouraged by his parents to read and use his imagination.

His Irish upbringing conjures memories of storytelling, poetry readings, lots of conversations and banter.

Frank's background as a school teacher, and avid reader fed his desire to review books and plays for the Irish American News. Regular readers of these pages have enjoyed Frank's insights, almost since the papers inception on March 17, 1977!

Frank grew up in the north side of Chicago, IL, attending St. Sebastian School. His parents were first generation Americans. His Irish history can be traced back to Sligo, Ireland. Sligo is a coastal seaport and the county town of County Sligo, Ireland, within the western province of Connacht. His Great Grandfather was in the Irish Brigade in the Civil War of 1857. His Grandfather, Walter Sheridan was a Policeman in 1905 in the Royal

Irish Constabulary. The Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) was the armed police force of Ireland under British rule from 1814 until 1922. It was during that timeframe that Walter Sheridan was asked to spy on his own people while working on the force. At the age of 23, Walter resigned from his post rather than be a spy against his co-workers and peers. Frank is proud of his Grandfather's decision and hangs his picture prominently in his living room today.

Growing up, Frank's daughters; Maureen and Margaret participated in Irish dancing and family story telling. As a family, Frank would explain to his children that reading was the power to knowledge and imagination and often reminded them that a poet would sit on the right side of a King. A poet on the right side of the King would be considered a place of honor and trust. Frank continued his teaching not only to his children but for 42 years as a Chicago Public School Teacher. He taught Social Studies and History at Lake View, Simeon Academy and Clemson. Frank also facilitated the Friends of Irish Literature Book Club for 25 years. For 25 years, every month, the group would read and review a book together. They would discuss the author and details of the book. That comes to 300 books - no slacking or procrastination, there!

Frank respects every author and considers some as especially talented who he highly recommends to the readers. Here are some of them: Brian McGilloway and Conor Brady who are mystery writers and John McAllister from Ballymena, Ireland. McAllister's publications include *The Fly Pool and Other Stories* (2003) and the novel *Line of Flight* (2006). He also contributed to the anthology *Requiem for the Departed*.

Frank emphasized that since the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 which brought peace to Ireland, there has been an enormous increase in phenomenal writers from Ireland. He states the writings are fresh and vibrant with a large increase in Irish female authors.

A must read by Frank is by crime writer and editor Declan Burke. *Trouble Is Our Business* showcases the absolute best in Irish crime writing today.

Another must read is anything by William John Banville, who writes as John Banville, and sometimes as Benjamin Black, an Irish novelist, adapter of dramas, and screenwriter. Recognized for his precise, cold and forensic prose style, he is described to be one of the most imaginative literary novelists writing in the English

language today. He has published a number of crime novels as Benjamin Black, most featuring Quirke, an Irish pathologist based in Dublin.

Franks love of words lead him to not only review books but Theatre. He is an avid theatre-goer and

Theatre Company in Chicago, Illinois was awarded the 2009 Joseph Jefferson Award for Best Production of a Play. *"The Seafarer,"* at the Seanachai Theatre Company (Irish Theatre of Chicago) was nominated for a 2014 Joseph Jefferson Equity Award for Midsize Play Production.

Another favorite of Frank's is Martin McDonagh an English/Irish playwright, screenwriter and film director, born and brought up in London, England with both British and Irish citizenship. He has been described as one of the most important living Irish playwrights.

Frank stated a must see *Ah, Wilderness!* is a comedy by American playwright Eugene O'Neill that premiered on Broadway at the Guild Theatre on October 2, 1933. It varies from a typical O'Neill play in its happy ending for the central character, and depiction of a happy family in turn of the century America.

We thank Frank West for his almost 40 years of contributions in his column, Irish Books and Plays in Reviews. However, he says he is the lucky one and is thankful for the opportunity he has had writing his column and wouldn't write for any other newspaper. We look forward to all the future reviews!



Frank, at his home in Wrigleyville.

enjoys all different types of plays, poetry readings and repertory's.

An extraordinary playwright is Conor McPherson, born on August 6, 1971 in Dublin, Ireland. He is a writer and director, known for *The Eclipse* (2009), *The Actors* (2003) and *I Went Down* (1997) His play, *"The Seafarer"*, at the Steppenwolf

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Swimming Upstream

By Charles Brady



Snapshots from an Ordinary World

"Belfast has a tradition of murals celebrating victories and losses, and its political struggles on both the Nationalist and Loyalist side of the divide. Some of them take up complete streets. Some honour the dead, and others make martyrs of local people. Emblems and slogans proclaim frequently provocative claims.

"These murals are an example of the historical divides between the Nationalists and Unionists. Whilst the murals may be colourful and historically relevant, they are also very insular in their

narrow outlook. Neither side can move on until they respect each other's traditions, cultures, and values."

Neither side can move on... In the dramatic week that saw Gerry Adams thrust once more into a harsh limelight for all the wrong reasons, these words from Mary Lane Heneghan's short piece 'Pictures on the Wall' resonated with me.

I'm not going to go into the latest trouble that Adams has gotten himself embroiled in. My views on him have gotten me

more than the occasional chunk of abusive mail over the years (and keep them coming – I love it!); and sure, I wouldn't exactly be his biggest fan.

Still, whilst totally understanding why a family would need answers to the murder of their father, this has quickly descended into a particularly loathsome case of political point-scoring, courtesy of that repellent duo, Misters Kenny and Martin. Well, them and every other supposedly squeaky-clean, living-in-an-intact-glass-house politician that this little island ever threw up. 'Threw up' being the operative words, here.

They are STUNNED – STUNNED, I telz ye! -- to hear of blacked-out vans and clandestine meetings with terrorist figures. Why, they never heard the like!

Dear Lord, do they ever tire of plumbing the depths of their own vile cynicism? If any two chancers can make Mr. Adams look good to me, it's these two.

Some of the younger members of Sinn Fein have a lot of sensible things to say and decent work to do, and they strike a chord with many younger voters; but for older codgers such as myself the likes of Adams and a handful of others will always carry with them that sharp stench of brimstone. And that won't go away any time soon, especially as our lot use SF's past as a handy deflection and distraction every damned time something comes up that paints THEM in a bad light. Which, needless to say, is quite often.

So coming across Mary Lane Heneghan's quiet piece of reflection served to remind me of the very long way that we have come. Yes, we may despair at times and gloomily mull over the fact that little seems to change; but when it comes to Northern Ireland things are a damned sight better than they were.

'Pictures on the Wall' is part of a short story collection from a creative writing group that has been operating out of the area of the County Galway village of Loughrea for the past twelve

years, producing an impressive collection titled 'Razzle Dazzle' every December. In a world where the short story isn't exactly as revered as it once was, this is fair going indeed.

And those who shun the form are missing out. As the late, great J. G. Ballard put it:

"Short stories are the loose change in the treasury of fiction, easily ignored beside the wealth of novels available, an over-valued currency that often turns out to be counterfeit. At its best, in Borges, Ray Bradbury and Edgar Allan Poe, the short story is coined from precious metal, a glint of gold that will glow forever in the deep purse of the imagination."

Perfectly put; although I would add to that the name of Ballard himself.

Here in 'Razzle Dazzle 2016' are snapshots of the world around us: fascinating glimpses of things we see every day but which are here given new shapes and meanings from the observations of a talented group of people who appear to be kept on top of their game by the Master of Ceremonies Liam Nolan, author and ex-TV anchor, who edits and encourages them.

Some of these are just plain solid stories, such as Veronica Creavin-Newill's 'The Ventriloquist's Dummy' which gives us an unexpected twist on a depressingly familiar scenario; and yet somehow manages to walk a very tricky tightrope that stretches between child abuse and – dare I say it? – something that is ultimately uplifting.

With others we get shaken out of our complacency and come away thinking that we've actually learned something. Were some of these minor historical figures – mostly forgotten by that same history – actually real? Did the robust figure of 'Mary Anne Malone' of Pat Lawless's yarn of the same name really tog out with the Kilconicny parish hurling team; really live that life of stoic endurance; finally find herself at rest in 1973 beneath a headstone that read:

'Here lies a fine lump of an agricultural Irish girl who achieved

a lot.'

The charm of these stories for me – as it has been in years past – is in all of a sudden recognizing people and places that in our busy, pseudo-important lives we dismiss as nothing out of the ordinary. Yet dress them in the words of some of these writers and they come to life in the most remarkable manner.

There's a scene in one of my favourite movies – 'Smoke' – where tobacco shop owner Auggie Wren (Harvey Keitel) is explaining why he hasn't taken a vacation in four years. And that reason is because he has to be outside the shop at exactly eight o'clock each morning in order to take a single photograph of the street. The same thing every morning, but different every time.

"It's just a little part of the world," he explains; "but things happen here too."

There is the quietly harrowing story of a man asked to make an impossible decision in Liam Nolan's moving 'Ghost on Climbing Rose' alongside the nostalgic charm of Lane's 'The Telly'. Elsewhere Noreen Garrihy gives us a shocking look at an unwelcome slice of modern-day Ireland with 'The Story of Precious McKenzie', which rubs shoulders with Eamonn McNally's 'The Brothers' – a tale from a lost time when young fellas could swim, box and cycle instead of having to be forcibly peeled from their iPhone or afraid to climb a tree for fear that the Health and Safety Gestapo will land on top of them.

As is unavoidable with any anthology there are some tales here that I didn't care for and some where I even failed to get the point of their existence. On the whole, though, they come across like that comment from Auggie Wren: they are simply observing a small and often unremarkable part of the world.

Yet things happen there, too.

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You can email me at chasbrady7@eircom.net or visit my blogs through www.cbsays.com

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Counties of Ireland

Dublin part 4

Over the last three months I highlighted some issues and covered topics in relation to Co. Dublin and yet I have to say I ran into some friends from the "Hibernians club" over the Thanksgiving holiday. While they enjoyed my column they said I should wrap up with Co. Dublin. I hope everyone had a good Thanksgiving.

As the Capital city of Ireland Dublin is the seat of our National Parliament of Ireland, The Oireachtas, it is composed of the president, Seanad Eireann as the Upper House and Dial Eireann as the Lower House. The president's residence is Aras An Uachtarain in the Phoenix Pk. While both houses of the Oireachtas meet in Leinster House, a former palace on Kildare St. It has been the home of the Irish Parliament since the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922. The old Irish house of parliament of the kingdom of Ireland is located on College green. Government buildings house the department of the Taoiseach, the council chamber, the department of finance and office of the attorney

general. One of Dublin's newest monuments is the spire of Dublin or monument of Light. The spire is constructed of stainless steel and is located on O'Connell street it replaced Nelson's pillar. Speaking of Nelson's pillar, it was put up to honor, Nelson was an English admiral and was credited with defeating Napoleon.

The IRA blew up the pillar in 1966 to mark the 50th anniversary of the Rising. I had my picture taken next to the pillar in 1964 as many did. The explosion of the pillar didn't fully succeed, it left some remains of the pillar. So they hired professionals, ironically the experts attempt to clean it up and in the process they damaged the whole block and many buildings were destroyed but IRA's bombing, they didn't damage anything apart from the pillar.

The Dublin zoo is located in Phoenix Park, some say the zoo is the 3rd oldest zoo in the world. My oldest son lives close by the park. Phoenix Park is also home to the US Ambassador Kevin O'Malley.

Dublin has had its share of ups and downs



book, Twitter, Accenture and Pfizer have European headquarters and or operational bases in Dublin.

There was a famous lady from Dublin, Biddy Mulligan and this song was written about her.

"You may travel from Clare to Co. Kildare from Francis St. back to the Coombe but where would you see a fine widow like me, Biddy Mulligan the pride of Coombe "me boys" Biddy Mulligan the pride of the Coombe..."

There is also a famous Dublin song, Molly Malone, "In Dublin's fair city where the girls are so pretty, I first set my eyes on sweet Molly Malone as she wheeled her wheelbarrow through streets broad and narrow crying cockles and mussels alive, alive-o... I will wrap up this month with this thought. I rode my bicycle seven and a half miles to my secondary school, St Joesph's Christian Brothers school in Kilkenny, there is an old saying: life is like riding a bicycle only when you stop peddling you fall. My wife Mary and I want to wish you the best for 2017 and good things in the New Year for one and all.

Kilkennycat1@yahoo.com Tom Butler

Singing for the Choir!

By Judith Loevy

The holidays have past. We've sung our last concert at the Heritage Center for 2016. It was a successful year for us. The November concert was special. The Erin Room was packed. It is the reward for all the hard work of our Director, Paul Matijevic that goes into preparing the choir. We ended the year on December 4. We sang Advent Mass followed by our annual bake sale and singing Carols in the Pub. The bake sale happens because of the hard work and generosity of Michael Griffin. I would be remiss if I didn't also thank Kathy Werning for all the work she put in organizing all of us so that we all knew what to bring and where to be. It was a huge task and she deserves a round of applause.

Most people don't realize that the choir is governed by what we call The Committee. The Committee is comprised of a Chairman, a Marketing Director, a Finance Director, and the Secretary. The Music Director also sits on the Committee. The members are, John Mahal marketing, Mary Catherine Rhyce, finance, Kathy Werning, secretary and me, Judy Loevy, the chair. We may sing but we also function as a business. All of the money we earn is given to the Center so the mission and vision keeps moving forward.

John Mahal the marketing guy works

harder than any two people in the same position. He's always out there beating the bushes looking for performance possibilities for the choir. He's certainly a major player in making the choir a successful venture. I asked John to give me a bit of his history with the choir. He sent me the following piece. I give you John Mahal.

"Twas a fateful day in 2003 that with the encouragement of Sheri Wills, a member of the choir then and now, that I stopped in for a listen at a Thursday night practice. After hearing the singers, meeting some of the members, and hearing of their trip to Sligo, Ireland later in the year that I was hooked! Prior to the IHIS I sang in the St Peter's church choir in Skokie. After leaving St Peter's Sheri knew I missed singing that's how I wound up in this choir. Eleven years later and after retiring Paul asked me to be the Marketing Director, oh boy!

Now the singers are returning to Skokie to perform at the Skokie Theatre for the third time. Mark your calendar for March 5. It's the kick-off to the St Patrick's Day performances. After that concert we'll all visit one of our sponsors, The Skokie Curragh. Check out the HIS schedule at <http://irish-american.org/tradition.irish-heritage-singers/>

As time goes on you'll meet other members of the committee and choir. I've said it before, try out. We have a lot of fun!

through its history. In 1348 a lethal plague, which had ravaged Europe, took hold of Dublin and took the lives of thousands of people over the following decades. The City had a population of 21,000 in 1640 before another plague, 1649-1651 wiped out almost half the city's population. However the city prospered again soon after as a result of the wool and linen trade with England. It reached a population of over 50,000 in 1700. Many of Dublin's traditional industries such as food processing, textile manufacturing, brewing and distilling have gradually declined, although Guinness brewery has been in business since 1759. Economic improvements in the 1990's have attracted a large number of communications, technology companies to the city area.

Companies such as Microsoft, Google, Amazon, and eBay, Pay Pal, Yahoo, Face-

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WHY DID Ireland's Consuls General oppose Irish-America and side with Britain during the campaigns

to free the tortured-into-falsely-confessing Birmingham Six and Guildford Four? (International outrage and Attorney Gareth Peirce forced their exoneration and release sixteen years later.) Why did Ireland's Consuls General oppose Irish-America's campaign to free ex-IRA-volunteer Joe Doherty from eight years of Federal imprisonment without trial? Why did they oppose Irish-America's

For The Republic



Chris Fogarty



MacBride Principles for Fair Employment in Northern Ireland? They and Britain lost; Irish-America won in State Capitols and City Councils across the U.S., later making it Federal Law. Why would an "Irish" government permit international banksters to enter Ireland? Why, when the banksters' predatory bets proved foolish, did Ireland's government make the banksters whole by

foisting their €75 billion losses onto Ireland's taxpayers? Why were Ireland's €billions in offshore Mayo hydrocarbons handed to Shell and Norway's StatOil at wildcat prices when the vast reserves were already discovered at significant expense to Ireland's taxpayers? Why are Irish patriots imprisoned not only in British-occupied Ireland but also in supposedly-free Ireland? Why do Ireland's government wink at Britain's massacres of Irish citizens (Omagh, Bloody Sunday, Dublin/Monaghan, McGurk's Pub, Loughinisland, the Miami Showband, Ballymurphy, etc.)? Why immunize the named perpetrators?

THE ANSWER: Ireland's government is The Royal Dáil; imposed by King George V on December 6, 1921 after he declared Dáil Éireann, Ireland's elected government, "an illegal assembly." The Royal Dáil exists, as its actions prove, to promote Britain's interests, not Ireland's. Dáil Éireann was founded on January 21, 1919 upon the landslide, island-wide 1918 election. Only upon abolition of the Royal Dáil and reinstatement of Dáil Éireann will Ireland's Consuls General cease opposing Ireland's and Irish-America's interests. Meanwhile, have fun: ask "Irish" government officials; "When is Ireland's national birthday, its 4th of July?" (They can't honestly answer; "January 21;" because the birthdate of George V's Royal Dáil, which they represent, is on December 6th.)

The following is from a reliable source in Ireland.

"1916-2016: THE PROMISE and Challenge of National Sovereignty" was the theme on November 10-12 at National University of Ireland (NUI), Galway. Már chuid lárnach de Ag Cur is ag Cúiteamh faoin gComóradh Céad Bliain, Gaillimh beidh comhdháil mhór acadúil in OÉ, Gaillimh, dar teideal 1916-2016: Dóchas agus Dúshlán na Ceannasachta Náisiúnta.

A public event; its main speakers included Taoiseach Enda Kenny, Cabinet members Seán O'Foghlú and Heather Humphreys, NUI Chancellor Maurice Manning, Oxford U. Vice-Chancellor Louise Richardson, and Profs. Phillip Pettit (Princeton) and Roy Foster (Oxford). Irish/Fenian Republican Brotherhood (IRB) President William "Billy" McGuire attended.

NUI Galway President Jim Browne chaired the first session. Backdrops were the Sovereign Seal of Éire, Tricolor Flag, and a copy of The 1916 Proclamation. After introducing himself, Billy stated that the I.R.B. had not been invited to attend. "You're here now" retorted Chair Nicholas Canny. Billy pointed out that the Tricolor is the National Flag of the Sovereign Republic of Éire founded in 1919 by the wish (expressed

through election) of all the People and that the Proclamation is an IRB document; that the Seal onstage is that of the Sovereign Republic established in the Mansion House on the 21st January 1919. He explained that Enda Kenny was not Taoiseach of Dáil Éireann but only a provisional Taoiseach, that in 1919 King George V had declared Dáil Éireann an "illegal assembly." The second session was chaired by Nicholas Canny of NUI Galway; the main speaker was Prof. Pettit. Later, questions were invited.

THE EVENING SESSION, chaired by Royal Irish Academy President Mary Daly, was addressed by Taoiseach Kenny. Plenary speaker (and revisionist historian) Roy Foster referred to "The Elephant in the Room." Daly interrupted Billy, saying: "You were on before." but Billy pointed out his obligation to protect the symbols of Ireland's sovereignty. To Roy Foster's "... Elephant..." comment, Billy responded; "In this room there are three "Elephants:" the Proclamation, the Tricolor Flag, and the Sovereign Seals. He urged the panel and attendees to study the Irish/Fenian Republican Brotherhood's history and asked: "Who raised the Tricolor Flag on the GPO in 1916?" No answer. University President Dr. Jim Browne, apologized to Billy for not being invited

Billy was well received by attendees though the panelists proved to be Royal Dáil adherents. For example, Heather Humphreys stated in her address "We have taken back the National Flag from the Dissidents." Her address over, she departed. Billy followed and gave her a photo of Dáil Éireann members from 1919 and discussed meeting her last year at the University of Limerick, the former home of the McGuire family. Taoiseach Kenny greeted McGuire with "Hello Billy, What did you want me to do for Easter Monday?" Billy explained that he had requested that Vaughan's Hotel, former GHQ of the IRB, be cleaned and painted for the centenary year. Enda Kenny denied ever getting any letters from Billy nor ever receiving an invitation to attend the Annual Turning of the Sovereign Seal of Éire and the claiming of the natural resources and the Sovereignty of Ireland at the Mansion House on the 21st of January, Independence Day.

(The letters section of billymcguire.com show the registered letters and replies from offices of Taoiseach Kenny.)

THE NUI(G) EVENT OVER, Taoiseach Kenny travelled to Rosmuc for the opening of Ionad Cultúrtha an Phiarsaigh, Conamara at Pearse's Cottage. Though Pádraig Pearse was a key IRB member, the IRB were again omitted from the guest list. Contact fogartyc@att.net or 312/664-7651.

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View From Ireland

By Maurice Fitzpatrick



Irish Youth on the Silver Screen

Ireland's premier film festival, the Galway Film Fleadh, was this year torn between awarding "Best Film" to two films that feature stories of Irish youth. The work-around was to award them both the top accolade jointly, trumpeting this as the year of youth for Irish cinema.

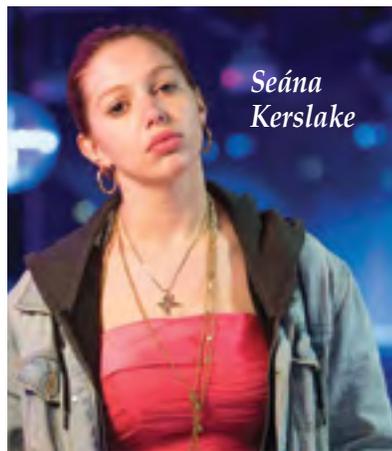
In one of the winning films, *A Date with Mad Mary*, the protagonist, Mary, is released from Mountjoy Prison, unassisted by any discernible prisoner rehabilitation programme, and promptly trundles into her old ways: drinking, starting ker-fuffles at discos, being turfed out by doormen, and then on to more drinking and violence.

The credibility of Mary's penchant to lash out depends on the actress Seána Kerslake's ability to convey pure rage and release from all care in executing it.

Yet, what is more interesting in Kerslake's performance, is how she conveys Mary's struggle to curb her intemperance; and how the memory of the suffering she perpetuated still haunts her. For example, in a searing moment of pure cinema, Mary serves fast-food to a young woman who has a gaudy scar on her face: the audience learns through Mary's response of embarrassment and remorse, and the customer's response of recognition and hurt, that the woman received the scar from a knife wielded by Mary, who consequently served a prison sentence for the assault.

Similarly, in *Young Offenders*, we have young characters from working class backgrounds trying, in their own way, to gain their redemption from poverty and hopelessness. Two street Cork City toughies, full of teenage bravado, try to act beyond their age in seeking to assert control over their destinies. When the lead, Jock Murphy, learns that

a seven million euro cache of cocaine has washed up in West Cork he and his sidekick are off like a fuse to get their hands on it. Off on their bicycles that is, to a part of Ireland that is even remote to reach by car. Murphy, the older and more 'street' of the pair, consequently has the better (stolen) bicycle. But the Corkonian



Seána Kerslake

Gardaí have been cracking down on bike thefts and have a tracking device underneath the saddle, so a Garda Sergeant follows them in hot pursuit, also on a bicycle. Instead of a car-chase, we have a couple of juvenile bicycle thieves and the hard-peddling Sergeant Healy bearing down upon the young offenders. Healy—played by Dominic MacHale, Brendan Gleeson's peer in his depiction of a wacko Irish guard—grows increasingly embittered as they keep giving him the slip.

The stash represents a castle in the air to young lads who have hope in scant supply back at home—they come from alcoholic and violent backgrounds and the wondrous landscape of West Cork is a glimpse of an alternative for them. For the film, the freedom of the countryside provides a lyrical otherworld that enables the comedy to flow. The youngsters meet great eccentrics along the way who give them refuge and never inquire too deeply about the pur-

pose of their odyssey. It remains comic because they, particularly the younger of the two, Conor MacSweeney (who is more apt to be governed by his conscience) pulls back from doing something dehumanising. There are screen titles throughout titles that are pure Tarantino, and the slapdash caper could rank with some of Tarantino's work too. The heist device works very well to structure the film. Will they get the cocaine, and will they keep their heads screwed on to trade it? Will they become big-time gangsters or simply remain young offenders?

If a heist plot structures *Young Offenders*, it is the device of a countdown which frames *A Date with Mad Mary*. The wedding of Mary's childhood friend, Charlene, is forthcoming; Mary is the Maid of Honour and she needs a "plus one" to bring along to the occasion. Problem is nobody wants to go on a date with Mary. Some of the men she encounters endearingly do not even know what a date is; when it is explained to them they are appalled at the prospect. Chaperoning Mary to a wedding for the sake of show is even more incomprehensible to them. The irony of Mary explaining dating to these bozos is that Mary herself is also unconvinced. To buy herself time, Mary invents a boyfriend, John Carter, and Charlene is determined to meet Mary's new boyfriend, not to share in Mary's

happiness, but to vet his worthiness to attend her wedding.

A peculiarity of the dynamic between Mary and Charlene is that Charlene no longer wishes to

spend time with Mary. Charlene has forsaken her old friends for a heady dose of bourgeois snobbery and Mary's custodial sentence makes her too great a risk to social respectability for a climber like Charlene to associate with. Because Mary has been abandoned by her old friends, she gradually discovers things about herself and her being in the world. What she finds out about herself and her sexuality does not suit Charlene, revealing a chime with the times for this film.



Chris Walley and Alex Murphy

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But *A Date with Mad Mary's* accomplishment is more than a response to the times: it belongs to a tradition that extends beyond

minds and sexuality, or to the Swedish film, *Show Me Love*. It also launches the acting career of Kerslake, who has spoken of the inspiration she drew from John Cassavetes films.

Both *A Date with Mad Mary* and *Young Offenders* were directed by directors making their first features films, Darren Thornton and Peter Foott. While *Room* and *Brooklyn* got the headlines for their Academy Award nominations this year, 2016 could well be seen in the future as a hugely formative year for developing new Irish cinematic talent. This truly was a great year for Irish cinema.

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Careers



By James F. Fitzgerald, CPA



What Will Your Personal Interactions Be In The New Year?

Your business skills, knowledge and abilities are vitally important to your success. But frankly your ability and skills to interact in a respectful and pleasant manner might be even more important to your success. As Charles Swindoll said in his Attitude piece: "Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than money, than circumstances, than failures....than what other people think or say or do." To be successful it is imperative that you recognize how your attitude and social skills define you. Here are nine thoughts for interacting in a positive manner with others during the New Year and beyond.

1. Don't be afraid to speak up and engage people in conversation. Why should you start a conversation with the person ahead of you in line at some public place, perhaps the post office or grocery store? Why not? Professor Bernardo J. Carducci, professor of psychology and author, says that 40 to 45 percent of adults say that they are shy. So there is a chance that the stranger you talk to may be a shy person who will welcome you starting a discussion with him. We know that once a conversation begins most people will chime in. There is no better way to learn about people than by talking to them about their interests, no matter how provincial they may be. If you are really fortunate your introductory comments will be well received.

2. When you meet a stranger you have a choice-smile, or you can present a distant, angry or totally disinterested façade. I certainly believe that most people would rather

see a smiling face than an angry one. Over the years, we have all heard that smiling requires a lot fewer muscles than frowning, so it seems that smiling is a lot easier than frowning for most of us. Try it. If you just smile at a stranger, s/he will likely return your smile. It doesn't work every time, so don't be turned off if the individual turns away from your smile.

3. Develop a technique that will help you remember a person's name. We all love to hear our name mentioned. Some people say hearing your name being spoken by another person is the sweetest sound to anyone's ear. Do you recall experiencing that feeling?

4. If it doesn't come naturally to you, practice being friendly. Looking on the bright side of things, that stranger is just someone you haven't met before. Taking the initiative can introduce you to some very interesting people.

5. Try to genuinely like the people you meet. Inquire about their favorites: the CHICAGO CUBS, their communities, schools, or sports heroes. Your listening skills can provide you with a lot of data about an individual or a situation, which will facilitate further conversation.

6. Keep your comments positive. Most people don't want to hear negative things in an initial discussion with a stranger. Be sensitive to the opinions of others. If you disagree with another person, consider that person's point of view and that both or neither opinions may be valid. Also recognize that you don't yet know who this person knows; negative comments have a

way of putting your foot in your mouth. And if that is not persuasive to you, simply remember it is more polite to strike an upbeat tone.

7. Be willing to be of service to any other person, even if only by providing them with some minor help. I am often struck by the generosity shown by some individuals only to learn that they feel the need to repay someone for an act of unexpected kindness that another person provided them.

8. Practice trusting the other person. Only as President Reagan said, "trust but verify." So don't let a relationship dictate your sense of openness as it develops.

9. Maintain a good sense of humor; not every problem is of epic proportions. Keep your focus on the important, not necessarily the urgent. Remember, a bit of humility goes a long way. As a good friend told me when I was in the hospital years ago, be patient.

These nine suggestions will enhance your reputation within almost any organization. So regardless if you are a long time employee or a new one, these traits will be seen as desirable ones. There are a lot of reasons why some people advance and others don't, but I am convinced that our social ability is a key ingredient to our success. May the good Lord provide you with a happy and prosperous New Year. CARPE DIEM.

For Your Consideration As we start another New Year, consider this quote by Daniel Burnham. "Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir our blood. Make big plans. Aim high in hope and work, for a noble diagram logically recorded will never die."

James F. Fitzgerald is the president of James F. Fitzgerald & Associates, Inc., a Naperville, IL-based Senior Executive Coaching and Career Transition firm. #630-420-0362. Jamesffitzgerald.com Jamesffitz37@hotmail.com

2017 Chicago St. Patrick's Day Parade Queen Contest

James F. Coyne, General Chairman of the 2017 St. Patrick's Day Parade, today announced plans for a city-wide search for "Chicago's fairest Colleen." She will represent the Chicago Irish community as the Queen of the Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade.

The Queen and her court of four will be expected to attend civic, neighborhood, parish, and Irish events on behalf of the parade committee.

Any girl of Irish ancestry, never married, 18-28 years old, is eligible to enter the contest. Entrants should send a snapshot with name, age, address, phone number and brief biography and explanation on why you want to be Queen.

Application fee is \$25.00. Download a copy of the application and pay fee online by visiting our website at

www.chicagostpatricksdaysparade.org.

Checks will also be accepted. Please make checks payable to Chicago St. Patrick's Day Parade. If mailing application, send to Chicago St. Patrick's Day Parade, Attn: Queen Contest, P.O. Box 16215, Chicago, Illinois 60616. Contest finals will be held Sunday, January 15, 2017, in the Stephen M. Bailey Auditorium, 1340 W. Washington Blvd., Chicago, Illinois 60607. Deadline for entries is Tuesday, January 10, 2017.

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Shamrock Shuffle 8K

Set your resolutions

Thinking about New Year's resolutions? Get a head start on the New Year by signing up for one of Chicago's best running celebrations.

Sunday, April 2, 2017

Register now at shamrockshuffle.com