



Chicago Gaelic Park Opens Chicago GAA - Hall of History!

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Kristan & Kevin Vaughan to be Honored with the Ireland Network IN Spirit Award pg 8



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View

From Ireland

By Maurice Fitzpatrick



As Lord Hastings Ismay, the first Secretary General of NATO (1952-1957), famously said, the purpose of NATO is ‘to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down’. Three generations later NATO faces an existential threat, mainly because the US is only in the remotest sense of the word ‘in’ (and is openly hostile to another member). The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation needs to retain its primary purpose: protecting the Western Alliance through its commitment to collective retaliation in the event of an attack on one of its members. That also means acting as a nuclear deterrent for all the members since many of them are not nuclear powers.

Since the dramatic kidnapping of President Nicolás Maduro on January 3rd (following a CIA operation) and the threatened takeover of Venezuela, NATO has been more vulnerable to schism than at any time in its history. What would fracture it beyond repair is a US incursion in Europe. It would be naive not to game a US invasion and takeover of Greenland. Nobody can say they were not warned. On January 9th, Trump announced: ‘We are going to do something on Greenland, whether they like it or not, because if we don’t do it, Russia or China will take over Greenland, and we’re not going to have Russia or China as a neighbour’. Yes, and we need to invade Newfoundland because it could be a conduit for Martians. The Russian or Chinese alleged design on the sparsely populated autonomous island simply does not exist. Nevertheless, Europe and NATO can ill afford to ignore Trump’s threat. That applies to Ireland too. As an all-but-defenseless island in the Atlantic (much like Greenland) our continuing to choose isolation over the collective commitment of NATO is getting riskier.

In advance of high-stakes talks in the White House, Danish prime minister Mette Frederiksen implicitly pointed out the hollowness of Trump’s excuses

to threaten invasion: ‘The United States has an agreement with Denmark where they can post more soldiers on the island upon request but [US soldiers] have dropped tremendously in the last decades with only one base left’. Trump wants Greenland not as a beachhead, but as a bauble. Trump did not attend the White House meeting on January 14, which only lasted 50 minutes and was described as ‘constructive’ (diplomatic-speak for unconstructive).

The new purpose for NATO, for as long as Trump is in the White House, must be to keep the Europeans in, the US down and the Russians out. The first means strenuous commitment from Europe to the alliance through recruitment, investment and military supplies - all underway. No change with the third principle (the UK and France have just expanded their commitment to Ukraine to include troop deployment). It is the shift in the second strategy, regarding the US, that is the most delicate and risky.

For the time being, NATO will die unless it finds a new framework. Equally, the alliance cannot afford to become calcified and ignore shifting realities. Trump’s open contempt for international law and national sovereignty is a reality that NATO must face. But how?

Prime Minister of the UK Keir Starmer shared a plan with other European leaders such as Emmanuel Macron and Friedrich Merz. The idea is to pretend to take Trump’s notion of Greenland’s strategic importance seriously; to act before the US by deploying European troops and ships to Greenland before the US. Greenland is an autonomous territory within the Kingdom of Denmark, which controls Greenland’s foreign policy, so Copenhagen could provide cover to NATO by seeking its support in Greenland. As military historian Gwynne Dyer argued: ‘if the European Union, Britain and Canada

Megan Cahill - Rose Recap

In May 2024, Megan Cahill of Lincoln Park, IL was selected as the 2024 Chicago Rose of Tralee. She is a graduate of Fenwick High School, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Law. Megan currently works as an attorney at a financial services company in Chicago. Since her selection as the 2024 Chicago Rose, Megan has made the most of every opportunity as a Rose finalist and has toured around the world promoting her Irish heritage as well as the City of Chicago.

Megan traveled to Tralee, Co Kerry in August of 2024, and had the experience of a lifetime on the Rose Tour. Megan proudly wore her “Chicago Rose” sash at all of the many events she attended and activities she participated in - including helicopter rides and boat tours! Megan made lasting friendships with 31 Rose finalists and 32 Rose Escorts from all over the world. She was interviewed on RTE television, which broadcasts the Rose Selection, live from the International Rose of Tralee Festival. During her interview, Megan spoke of her involvement in the Chicago Irish community as a volunteer at Old St. Patrick’s Church, Board member of the Young Irish Fellowship Club, and member of the 2023 and 2024 St. Patrick’s Day Parade Court. Megan also mentioned her love of adventure and favorite travel experiences, such as climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro in Africa and running the Dublin City Marathon. As a competitive

(all NATO members) got their own ships, planes and soldiers into Greenland first at Denmark’s invitation, it would make a hostile takeover by the US difficult to impossible’.

That has come to pass. Known as ‘Operation Arctic Endurance’ (a fair acknowledgement of the weather conditions in Greenland), Denmark implemented the military operation from January 15, its defence ministry announcing the deployment of ships, soldiers and military aircraft also from fellow NATO allies Germany, Norway, France and Sweden. This is a vaccination-style approach to military operations. And, as with medical vaccinations, it really could work. It would also serve to spur Europe into action on defense commensurate with the current threats to the continent from the Kremlin and now, sadly, from the White House as well.

Even so, it is a pity to indulge Trump’s King complex because what European (and Canadian) NATO is planning appears to treat Trump’s delusional conception of Greenland as a backdoor of Chinese and Russian expansion with a respect that it does not deserve. How strange that must seem to those Americans who are worn out from marching in ‘No Kings’ demonstrations against the overreach of Trump. It recalls the old parable of King Canute. King Canute ruled England, Denmark and Norway in the 11th century. All about him were flatterers who encouraged him to think himself invincible, and that the world obeyed his command. Canute, tired of their droning on, instructed that his throne be placed at the seafront, where he sat down and ordered the tide not to come in. When the water duly engulfed his ankles, Canute turned to his retinue and laughed at their flattery. But Trump is far too megalomaniacal to think about bursting the bubble around him. He would rather take to Truth Social and promulgate his version of the gravitational pull of the Moon.

The year is off to a great start.

Irish dancer and 10-time World Championship qualifier, Megan was thrilled to perform an Irish Dance to close out the RTE interviews as the final contestant.

In December 2024, Megan traveled back to Ireland to attend the Rose of Tralee New Year’s festivities in Trim, Co Meath. In March 2025, 35 Roses and Rose Escorts from her Rose class traveled to Chicago to march in the St. Patrick’s Day Parade and participate in the Chicago festivities. It was truly a remarkable day and testament to the great City of Chicago! Following the Chicago Parade, Megan traveled to New York to march down 5th avenue in Manhattan alongside the Roses and Rose Escorts in the NYC St. Patrick’s Day Parade.

More recently, Megan attended the Ireland vs All Black’s rugby match at Soldier Field in Chicago, and hosted Roses from Kilkenny, Cork, Leitrim and New York, all who traveled to Chicago to visit Megan for the weekend and attend the match.

On April 19, 2026, at the Irish American Heritage Center in Chicago, Megan will pass the sash on to the next Chicago Rose. Megan is an inspiration and has made Chicago proud with her grace, talent and dedication to help others. The mission of the Rose of Tralee is to provide enrichment opportunities that will encourage young women of Irish descent to be exemplary role models for tomorrow’s youth and to make a positive difference in the world.

The 2026 Rose will represent Chicago with a fully sponsored ten day excursion throughout Ireland, culminating at the International Festival in Tralee. For an experience of a lifetime apply online at <https://roseoftralee.ie/apply-to-the-rose-of-tralee>. For info on the Chicago Rose Selection or Sponsorship information for the Chicago Rose of Tralee Centre, email: chicagorosecenter@roseoftralee.ie

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(l-r): 2024 Niamh Shevlin Donegal Rose, & Megan Cahill Chgo. Rose



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Constitution Corner

by Conor O'Connor



Lucky Number 7
The Seventh Amendment to the United States Constitution is about as straightforward as any part of the Bill of Rights

gets. It states:
In Suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right

of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise re-examined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

One can safely divide the rights protected by the Seventh Amendment into two parts. The first part guarantees the right to a trial by jury in most civil lawsuits on the federal level (i.e. lawsuits concerning non-criminal harms, or torts). The second part limits federal courts from overturning the “factual determinations” (i.e. verdicts) made by juries with few exceptions.

One notable exception to the Seventh Amendment was created in 1943. In *Galloway v. United States* (1943), a disabled World War I veteran sued the federal government to receive disability benefits. He insisted that the disability was brought on by his active service in the Army and Navy. The presiding federal judge issued a directed verdict in favor of the government. Such an action directs the jury to issue a verdict matching the judge’s judgment. Directed verdicts may only be issued when the judge believes that the evidence of the case would be incontrovertible to any reasonable jury. The case was appealed under the grounds of the Seventh Amendment’s guarantee to a civil trial

by jury-but the Supreme Court upheld that a directed verdict did not violate the Seventh Amendment, since such practices have their roots in common law.

Another quirk of the Seventh Amendment worth pointing out is that the rights it guarantees have not been incorporated and applied at the state level, unlike several other amendments. That said, all but three states (Colorado, Louisiana, and Wyoming) guarantee the right to trial by jury in civil cases in their State Constitutions.

While a jury trial is guaranteed and made available to plaintiffs and defendants in all sorts of civil cases, the right is oftentimes waived in favor of a bench trial (a trial in which a judge decides the outcome of the case rather than a jury). This is done for a number of reasons, but often simply because it is faster and cheaper than assembling a jury pool, selecting jurors, and holding a jury trial. Additionally, while some civil suits do eventually go to trial, many are settled out-of-court before the trial occurs.

The Amendment’s “Reexamination Clause” strictly limits the circumstances in which a federal judge may overturn the findings of a jury, except in such instances permitted

by common law (i.e. previous court decisions). This clause protects the immense power of a jury to rule in the cases they are called upon to determine. There are exceptions, however. In instances where a jury has clearly erred or where substantial facts/procedures were not presented, a judge may overturn the verdict and order a new jury trial. Importantly, however, a judge may not re-adjudicate a jury trial on their own; a new jury must be convened.

An oft-overlooked piece of the U.S. Constitution, the Seventh Amendment has ensured that civil wrongs are afforded the same amount of consideration and seriousness as criminal trials. Justice envelopes all spheres of life under this important bit of legalese.

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Limerick for St. Patrick’s Day: A Different Kind of Energy - Two Parades, One City, and a Weekend You’ll Feel in Your Bones

If you’ve ever celebrated St. Patrick’s Day in the United States, you’ll know the excitement - the music, the colour, and the deep sense of Irish pride. Now imagine experiencing that same spirit at its source, in a city that lives its culture every day rather than once a year. That city is Limerick.

Set along the River Shannon in Ireland’s MidWest, Limerick is known as the Treaty City, shaped by history, creativity, and strong community spirit. It’s warm, grounded, and full of character, and nowhere is that more visible than during the St. Patrick’s Festival weekend. What sets Limerick apart is something few other cities offer: two major parades, each with its own atmosphere and heart. This isn’t a single-afternoon celebration, it’s a weekend that builds and bursts into life across the city’s streets, pubs, and public spaces. For American visitors, it offers a chance to experience St. Patrick’s Day in a way that feels genuinely Irish, but also familiar.

St. Patrick’s Day in Ireland has evolved over time, and in Limerick the celebration has long been tied to civic and community life. Today, that tradition is alive in the way families, sports clubs, performers, and visitors come together, filling the streets

choreography, and sound.

For American visitors, watching bands perform on Irish streets is often one of the most memorable moments of the trip. The crowds respond with genuine enthusiasm, creating a shared cultural moment that feels both emotional and joyful. After the parade, the celebrations spill naturally into the city’s restaurants, cafés, and pubs, where locals and visitors mingle with ease.

The St. Patrick’s Day Parade is where Limerick’s identity shines brightest. Community groups, youth organisations, performers, and sports clubs come together to create a parade that is proudly local but welcoming to all. As it winds through the city and along the river, visitors experience not just colour and spectacle but a strong sense of belonging. Children wave flags from their parents’ shoulders, crowds cheer every participant, and conversations start easily with strangers. When the parade ends, the celebration doesn’t, the city keeps buzzing well into the evening.

St. Patrick’s Day parade also gives visitors the chance to experience Limerick at its most expressive. Music flows from pubs and public spaces, and the sense of celebration makes it easy for visitors to feel part

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Limerick Greenway invites cyclists and walkers to explore scenic landscapes, while the medieval town of Kilmallock immerses visitors in history.

Thrill-seekers can enjoy the buzz of the Ballyhoura Mountains, while Lough Gur Lakeshore Park and its ancient Stone Circle offer a deeper connection to Ireland's past.

Treaty City Brewery Tours provide a taste of locally crafted beer, rounding out a memorable experience.

Limerick is a must-visit destination for tourists in 2025, where vibrant culture, rich history, stunning landscapes, and a warm, welcoming atmosphere await around every corner.

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Photo by Kieran Ryan-Benson

with anticipation as the routes come to life. It is a celebration created by the city and shared with everyone who wants to be part of it.

One of the highlights is the Limerick International Band Championship, which typically takes place on the Sunday of the festival weekend. As Ireland’s only international marching band competition, it has become a standout event in the national calendar. Bands come from across Ireland and across the world, especially the United States, bringing everything from the precision and energy of American marching bands to the heritage of Irish town bands and pipe bands. The city transforms into a moving concert, full of colour,



Photo by Kieran Ryan-Benson

of the city. For Irish Americans, this can be particularly meaningful. St. Patrick’s Day has long been a way for the diaspora to express pride and connection and experiencing it in Ireland, especially in a city as authentic as Limerick, it adds new depth to that connection.

What makes Limerick especially appealing is its accessibility, making it walkable enough to feel relaxed rather than overwhelming during the festival weekend. You can move from parade to river views to cosy pubs without rushing, and the atmosphere feels friendly and accessible. Those who stay longer will find a city with a rich history, visible in its architecture, along the Shannon, and in its strong sense of identity. Limerick is confident and real, and it doesn’t perform for visitors, it simply invites them in. That authenticity is what leaves such a lasting impression.

Many visitors choose summer months for Irish travel, but St. Patrick’s Day offers something deeper: a moment where culture, identity, and celebration come together. In Limerick, that moment feels shared and real, not staged or commercial. To come to Limerick for St. Patrick’s Day is to step into a celebration full of heart, warmth, and connection. Come when the music echoes through the streets, when the river reflects its many greens, and when strangers become companions for the day. You’ll leave with more than memories; you’ll take home a feeling that stays with you long after the weekend ends.

La Fhéile Pádraig!



Game On!
By Chris Wheaton

I had the opportunity recently to check a box off my bucket list when I visited Montreal and attended a Canadiens game. I have been a huge hockey fan since I was a boy and for whatever reason warmed up to both Montreal and the Blackhawks. I have no ties to Canada, no blood from there and have only been there once before so it is one of my life's great mysteries how this fandom came to be. My favorite hockey player growing up was #12 on the Canadiens, Yvan Cournoyer nicknamed the "roadrunner" for his speed on the ice. I don't know why, but I have a vivid memory of a Saturday game between the Hawks and Canadiens where Cournoyer put up five goals.

We made a point of getting to the Bell Center early so we could take it all in and peruse all the historical banners and plaques that adorn the stadium. It would have been extra special to go to a game at the old Forum, but that barn closed its doors for good in 1996. In many respects, the Bell Center reminded me of Croke Park in that the history pours out of the walls and unfortunately the seating area is pretty tight. I thought the seats at Croke Park were small, but I can honestly say, the Bell Center rivals it and does not

leave room to spread out or to even stretch your legs. At the end of the day, none of that really mattered because I was overjoyed to just be in the venue.

As gametime approached the excitement level was near a fever pitch and rose even higher as the two National Anthems were played. Much like the Irish, most of the fans sang the Canadian anthem, loudly and proudly. The national pride was clear, and it was nice to see and hear, especially with all the madness occurring here in the USA.

During the first intermission I turned to the people I was with and asked them if they noticed something that I haven't ever experienced at a sporting event in our country. They asked what I was referring to and after I told them, they wholeheartedly agreed. I had noticed that unless it was a "cheerable" moment or a "booable" moment, the fans remained very quiet. They were focused on the action on the ice and were obviously hyper- educated hockey fans. It was one of those things that once you noticed it, you couldn't take your mind off it.

Another commendable aspect of the experience (and it really was an experience) was how nice everyone was. I didn't see anyone drunk and

out of control, no one was yelling at the spattering of Red Wings fans in attendance, people said "please: and "excuse me", lines for food, drink and the bathrooms were fast and orderly. It was all around a fantastic adventure. The only negative I could find was that the "Habs" lost the game 4-0. The result did not take away from our enjoyment one iota.

To cap off the night we left the stadium in a blinding snowstorm and encountered an old-fashioned snowball fight amongst a bunch of kids while we walked to the Metro. It was really a "hallmark" moment and something I will not soon forget.

The night concluded by us stopping at a pub right next to

our hotel and catching the 4th quarter of the Bears miracle finish against the Packers. We were quite fortunate to even find a place that showed American football because it is far down the list of priorities for Canadians. It was a great way to end a wonderful weekend. Maybe next month I will be writing about the Bears in the Super Bowl!

By Ashley Styx

When Tanya, a young mother participating in a Catholic Charities housing program, couldn't afford to attend the graduation ceremony for her associate's degree, we stepped in to help her celebrate her achievements.

Our Giving Hope Fund provided her with the chance to travel to the ceremony with her children so they could see her walk across the stage to accept her diploma. She felt it was important for her children to see the value she placed on education to motivate them in their schooling. The joy she felt attending her ceremony inspired and encouraged her to pursue her bachelor's degree.

The Charities Resource Hub of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago serves as a front door for anyone coming to us for help. Our team distributes direct financial assistance to those who are eligible and in need. Sometimes, all it takes is a few hundred dollars to keep a family stably employed or housed. The beauty of our Charities Resource Hub's funds is the generosity and flexibility that private donations provide us to meet the needs of those who come to our doors for help.

We also recently assisted Sal, a senior and long-time

resident of Lake County. Sal faces significant challenges in securing employment and is ineligible for public benefits. He works part-time jobs and relies on assistance from food pantries to support his family. Sal and his family were at risk of eviction and becoming homeless. Our Giving Hope funds were able to support Sal and his family with rental assistance so they could maintain their housing. Sal shared he was very grateful to Catholic Charities and his case manager for, once again, providing support to his family during a difficult chapter in his life.

Elizabeth, a mother of four and a domestic violence survivor, received assistance from our Giving Hope Fund for a badly needed car repair. She spent months worrying about the safety of herself and her

stability of working.

I am a single parent, and I take care of the needs of my four children. This is a sacred responsibility and a sacrifice, but I assume [these] demands with joy because I love my children, and I know that God protects us. Having a safe vehicle helps me complete my everyday tasks.

My gratitude is to all who contribute to help those who need help. I feel very blessed that we have received this timely and important help to improve the everyday life of my family. God bless all the people who make it possible for families like mine to receive financial support just when we need it the most. Amen."

We hear stories like these every day that highlight the ways a small amount of



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children. Elizabeth wrote: "These are the immediate benefits that my children and I have received: First, the benefit of feeling safe to transport my family to their school, medical, and recreational needs. Secondly, to be able to drive to my job and [not] fear losing the

extend our thanks to those who support Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago so we can serve people in need in Cook and Lake counties.

Ashley Styx is the Senior Program Director of the Charities Resource Hub at Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Karen Ronan Appointed President of Network Ireland

Network Ireland, the country's largest business networking organisation for women, has appointed Karen Ronan, Chief Executive of Galway Chamber of Commerce, as its National President for 2026.

The organisation, established in 1983, supports more than 1,400 female entrepreneurs, SME owners and senior professionals across sectors ranging from multinational business to non-profits, the arts and the public sector.

Ms Ronan, who succeeds Amy O'Sullivan of AOS Consulting as National President, has more than three decades' experience in business and tourism in Ireland and overseas. She previously led

the Shannon Region Conference and Sports Bureau for 22 years, during which time the agency generated an estimated €160mn in economic impact for Clare and Limerick by attracting

A graduate of the Kemmy School of Business at the University of Limerick, she said her priorities as President will include strengthening commercial links between Network Ireland's 17 branches and expanding opportunities for women-led enterprises.

Ms. Ronan said she plans to drive more than 3,000 business leads and introductions between members during 2026, a target she believes could unlock millions of euro in new commercial activity.

"It is a great honour to take on the role of President of Network Ireland for the coming year," she explained. "My theme for the year, 'Building Bridges', reflects the need to connect people, ideas, sectors and regions. While progress has been made,



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equality for women in business cannot be taken for granted.”

Ms. Ronan added that a key part of her agenda will be encouraging members to “shop their own network” by sourcing suppliers and partners from within the organisation.

She continued, “We must continue to build equity by addressing structural barriers, amplifying diverse voices and ensuring women are supported to lead, influence & succeed. Network Ireland has a powerful role in bringing people together to drive meaningful change,” she said.

“I look forward to working closely with the advisory council, national executive, regional branches, and members to deliver a year that combines advocacy, connection and tangible business outcomes, reinforcing Network Ireland’s role as a powerful platform for women in business across Ireland,” concluded Ms. Ronan.

Geraldine Casey, MD Retail Banking, AIB said, “AIB is proud to continue as an official partner of Network Ireland for a thirteenth year. Our shared goal is simple: to remove barriers, build confidence and accelerate opportunity for women in business through practical supports such as mentoring, financial guidance and meaningful connections. These supports help amplify the success and impact of women who are helping power local economies. These women also inspiring the next generation to build resilient businesses and brighter financial futures. We wish Karen every success as she assumes the National Presidency for 2026.”

Karen Ronan’s presidency formally commenced following the Network Ireland Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Dublin today. Joan Walsh of Partnership International, a Cork-based work, study and travel organisation, was confirmed as Vice President for 2026.

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Vaughan Hospitality Honored with IN-Spirit Award from Ireland Network Chicago

Try to congratulate Kevin Vaughan on being awarded the 2026 IN-Spirit Award, the annual honor that the Ireland Network Chicago presents to one leader in the Chicago Irish community, and he will quickly

the award,” says Kevin, who notes that the company boasts 300 employees, including his sisters Anne and Diana, across their six bars and restaurants in Chicago.

The roots of this award

children with a glimpse into the business of hospitality.

The Vaughan parents would emigrate to the United States in 1984, and drawing on the hospitality experience they gained in Ireland, they would go on to open the original Vaughan’s Pub on Milwaukee Avenue in 1987. Many of the Vaughan children, including Anne, Diana, Eamonn, and



Corcoran’s Grill and Pub and Moon Star Kitchen and Bar, the newest addition to the group that opened in 2025.

been intentional about finding locations with dense populations, like downtown and Old Town. We like to say that we run Chicago Irish bars, with an emphasis on Chicago. We don’t necessarily push the traditional Irish pub concept. But we’re providing a Chicago bar and restaurant experience with Irish hospitality.”

Ask Kevin for the secret of success of his family business, and his answer is remarkably simple and yet remarkably rare in today’s day of instant gratification and “flavors of the month,” particularly in the bar and restaurant business.

“We provide a good product at a fair price in a welcoming environment. People love the idea of visiting a local business with a consistent product, and we’re all about repeat business, not quick wins. We’re not the new shiny penny, but we’re around for the duration,” he shares, noting that Vaughan’s on the Northwest Side has been in business for nearly 40 years, Vaughan’s in Lakeview for 30, and Corcoran’s for 25.

Beyond serving a quality product in a familiar environment, the bars of Vaughan Hospitality serve as critical gathering points for promoting Irish history,



Kristan and Kevin Vaughan



Eamonn Vaughan Chairing the 2015 Irish Fellowship Club Christmas Luncheon

clarify that the recipient of the award is not him, but rather Vaughan Hospitality, the company that he has owned with his wife Kristan and late brother Eamonn.

“We’re nothing without our team. That’s who is getting

stretch back to Newmarket in County Cork, where Kevin and his eight siblings grew up. Their parents Dan Joe and Bina owned a ballroom dance hall, which hosted popular musicians and artists like Joe Dolan, and also provided their

Kevin, became involved in the day-to-day operations of the bar, which quickly found its place as a welcoming home away from home for young Irish immigrants; Kevin recalls that many of them would spend holidays at the bar or ask Bina to cash their paychecks for them there.

Fast forward to 2026, and the six establishments of Vaughan Hospitality have become iconic Chicago institutions; in addition to the original Vaughan’s Pub on the Northwest Side, they own the Emerald Loop and Chicago Brewhouse downtown, another Vaughan’s Pub in Lakeview, and in Old Town,

Needless to say, the city - and the world - have changed over the past four decades. The typical Irish immigrant in the 1980s looks much different from those emigrating today, and the Irish community that was once centered in specific areas like the Northwest and Southwest is now dispersed across the city, particularly downtown. Chicago has grown into an international tourist destination and seen the opening of Millennium Park, the Riverwalk, and massive growth of areas like River North and Old Town.

“Business looks different now a days,” Kevin acknowledges. “And we’ve





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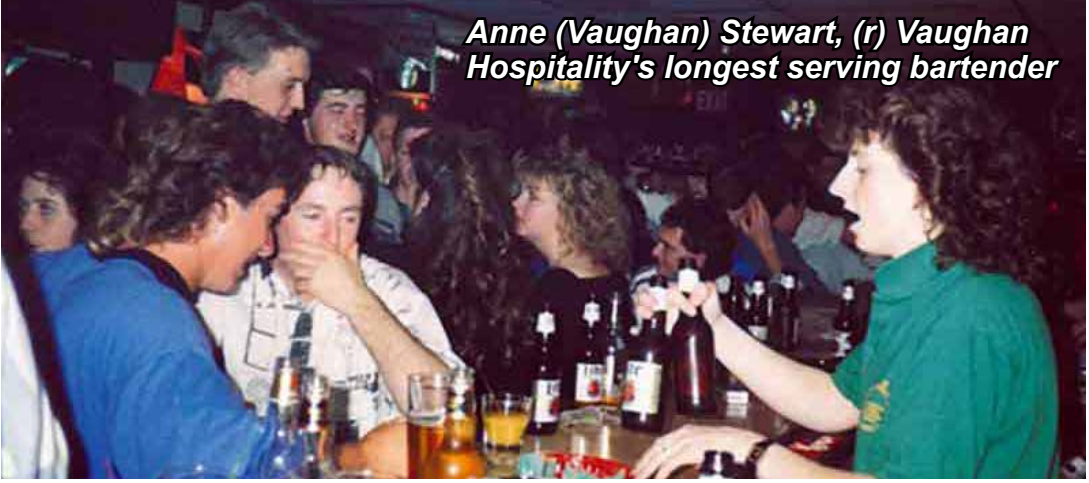
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culture, and connection with Ireland and its people. In the days before the internet, texting, and social media, they were essential places for Irish immigrants to gather, and despite those technological innovations, they continue to serve that role today.

That sense of Irish hospitality has extended outside of the walls of the Vaughan Hospitality establishments and into the communities in which they operate.

“We do our best to take care of Irish people,” Kevin

of its bars and restaurants for Irish-related people and causes.

As Craig O’Halloran, President of the Ireland Network Chicago shared, “The Vaughan establishments have been a home away from home for the Irish in Chicago, including many of Ireland Network Chicago’s events and meetings. Their impact on Chicago’s Irish community—past, present, and future—is immeasurable.”

In addition to focusing on the Irish community,

the familiar Guinness of Corcoran’s. The restaurant, so named because Kristan had dreamed of opening a café called Moon Star Café when she was nine years old, is already garnering rave reviews, and Kevin sees it as an opportunity to complement Corcoran’s so both places thrive next door to each other.

Reflecting on the honor bestowed upon Vaughan Hospitality by Ireland Network Chicago, Kevin admits that he “feels like a dot” in



Dan Joe, Bina, Anne, Michael, Kevin, & Danny at Vaughan’s Northwest Highway location in Chicago

shares, and anyone who has interacted with the Vaughan Hospitality Group over the last four decades knows that they have made good on that promise.

Vaughan Hospitality has supported a number of Irish organizations, including sports associations, Ireland Network Chicago, the Irish American Partnership, and the Irish Fellowship Club, where Eamonn served on the board of directors and chaired its famous Christmas lunch in 2015.

The company has hired hundreds of Irish immigrants, welcoming the recognizable young people coming over on the J-1 visa each summer, and regularly opens the doors

Vaughan Hospitality is also a generous supporter of local organizations, and Kevin previously served as president of the Illinois Restaurant Association.

While the company has been intentional about staying true to its mission without taking excessive risks, it also shows no signs of slowing down, and, when prudent, expanding. The proof of that is the aforementioned Moon Star Kitchen and Bar, which recently opened next door to Corcoran’s and provides a new concept for Vaughan Hospitality. Moon Star is a speakeasy restaurant with shareable food and a drink menu that features high-end cocktails instead of

the vast tapestry of Irish Chicago, pointing to past award winners such as the late Senator Billy Lawless and Mike Clune as pillars of the community. He reiterates that the award belongs to Vaughan Hospitality’s employees, and particularly to his wife and sisters who continue to carry on the legacy of those that helped build the company, namely his parents Dan Joe and Bina and his brother Eamonn.

Vaughan Hospitality will be honored at the Ireland Network Chicago’s annual ball, held February 7th at the Drake Hotel. More information about the company can be found on its website at vaughanhospitality.com





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Join us for a special St. Patrick's Day Fundraiser with the Irish American Heritage Center at the Chicago Wolves vs. Texas Stars hockey game! The puck drops at 7:00 PM at the Allstate Arena in Rosemont, IL. Get ready for a night of Irish spirit, hockey action, and community pride. All ticket proceeds benefit the Irish American Heritage Center.

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Born and raised on Chicago's Northwest Side in Sauganash, Ryan grew up at the Irish American Heritage Center—so many great memories, from community celebrations to (a personal favorite) Fish Fry Fridays.

For the past eight years, Ryan has served the Chicago Irish community through the Young Irish Fellowship Club of Chicago, holding leadership roles including President, Forever Green Chair, Vice President of Events, and Chairwoman, helping drive impactful events, fundraising, and volunteer efforts.

“ I am truly honored to continue serving our community in a new way as the Events & Rentals Coordinator at the Irish American Heritage Center. I look forward to working with members, partners, and guests to help create meaningful, well-organized, and memorable events for years to come. - Ryan Gill ”



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***Out of Ireland we have come,
Great hatred, little room
Maimed us from the start,
I carry from my mother's womb
A fanatic heart. - WB YEATS***

These words of William Butler Yeats, the Irish poet, and Nobel Laureate, are both a warning and an explanation of who we Irish are. Here are some further clues to our identity.

What makes a sermon always seem too long, but a reunion with friends in a pub goes by way too quickly?

What makes waiting for a table seem excruciating, but the hours buckled into your seat on an Aer Lingus flight to Dublin just seems to zip by?

Why are deep, wet Irish kisses so luscious, but waiting for the dentist always manages to give you a cramp?

I remember years ago growing up with a passion for speaking French. I must have been nine years old. I could never separate speaking the language of Napoleon from singing little Irish tunes my grandmother sang. So when I did learn the true language of love I had become a cabaret act. In a mark of necessity I forced a cousin to learn French at the same time. We were a real show.

Ages later while working at a fancy periodical in New York I met the Bouvier sisters, Jackie Kennedy and her sister, Lee Radziwill. I was dying to ask them if they held any family member hostage when they learned their elegant French. But then I realized in their household everyone spoke French. It was how you communicated with the servants and your parents. In their refined environments speaking French was as easy as crossing the Atlantic on an oceanliner like the "Il de France." Those things, like French were easy. Time. However, was the most complex thing in everyone's life.

Time still remains the queerest of things. We are enwrapped in it. Surrounded by it. Swept off the refined environments of our feet by it. But we are powerless to alter it. Heck, I can't keep the clock on my stove accurate because my toaster oven



always blows a little fuse when the microwave is running. Perhaps someone could concoct a formula for that which would be impressive, but it's just the toaster and the microwave. Or as I call it, the 1950s waylays the 1960s.

The man who really puts that into poetic perspective for me is James Taylor. Afterall, he sings the anthem of time, "Auld Lang Syne," on his 2006 Christmas album. Best version I have ever heard. It's like time comes lookin' for a hug with great American style. It's really the style that's important. Important to me, certainly.

James Taylor and the coming of the New Year always gets me thinking about life's meaning, because it's all about time. Time on different stretches of creation. You know, dinosaurs 50,000 years ago or bell-bottom pants 50 years ago.

Time. It's all relative. My time. Your time. God's time. All criss-crossing each other like highways in Los Angeles. Regulating the value all the time. What's really a second? A minute? An hour? A day? A year? So too the discovery of fire. The Magna Carta. Learning to



ride a bike. That first kiss. A Wagner opera. Grandma's soda bread, Grandpa's stroke. Your last breath. All a moment in time.

But how much time? At the old year's leaving and the new year's arrival, it might be appropriate to ask larger questions about time. Its length, true shape, its lasting influence and affect.

Time sometimes is precisely like Woody Allen trying to sit and play the cello in a high school marching band. Impossible. We're moving in the wrong direction. We

cannot keep up. It's beyond our reach, or it exceeds our grasp.

When was the last time you had a nice double handful of time to play with? Time isn't just the domain of scientists like Galileo or Isaac Newton. Or Albert Einstein. Time is ours. It belongs to us, like 'one for the road,' a late night kiss, or a second 'cup of joe.'

In small or full measure. In simplicity or grandeur. It is the common soil upon which we walk the earth. The familiar footfall of human feet. It's the fiber between our toes. It's just the measure of it that gets us. Throws us off, confuses our count and disorients our steps.

The harmony of the season and the arrival of a fresh unit of time reminds us that we are never late. We can start to measure all over again. Creation. Redemption. Birth. Life. Death. And everything in between from auburn highlights to a new tattoo. To turf growing in a bog. The harmony of the season demands that we engage the footfall of others, the direction of their movement and of their life. No one has done it better than the Irish since the Bronze Age.

Neither our ancestors, nor we, are lost. We are not isolated, nor are we timeless, hopeless, or merely a speck on the windshield of the Universe. We are shaped by time. Created and fashioned by it, filled with hope by its singular strength. But we recognize its limits and its expanse even on the early days of 2026.

My Grandmother O'Gorman was filled with quaint customs. One of her favorites was "bringing" the New Year to others. It involved knocking on a neighbor's door and delivering good wishes for what's ahead and the blessings of God on that enterprise. In just a moment she demonstrated a cosmic understanding of time and a cosmic measure of her neighbor in a serious, thoughtful and dignified manner.

Grandma said it was always important to make sure some fresh "new" air came into the house with you. Her formula for getting the job done. We all need reminders about the time that surrounds us. About our mutual relationship to each other. Over the measure and tick-tock of counting out the beats.

From snowflakes and rainbows to pay stubs and the choruses to familiar tunes, we will always need a marking for time's movement. From 20 AD to 2026 AD, we count the Kings and Popes who help us to curve time and hold it. I hope this fresh time of yours will be happy and blest.

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

Healy Scanlon Veugeler Gannon is a law firm comprised of eight trial attorneys and four “Of Counsel” attorneys, two of whom are from Ireland. We are located downtown at 161 N. Clark Street, Suite 2200, Chicago, Illinois 60601 (312-977-0100) (overlooking Daley Center). www.HSVGlaw.com. The firm concentrates in the representation of injured victims of all types of accidents.

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

From Safety to Soybeans:
New Illinois Laws
Taking Effect in 2026

On January 1, 2026, hundreds of new laws went into effect across Illinois. This article highlights some of the most significant changes and examines the measures expected to have the greatest impact on residents statewide.

SB 0008 creates the “Safe Gun Storage Act,” making it unlawful for firearm owners to store guns in a manner that allows a minor, at-risk individual, or prohibited person from accessing them, unless the firearm is secured in a locked container. Violations can result in civil fines of up to \$10,000. Studies show that states with secure firearm storage laws have seen reductions of as much as 78% in unintentional shootings by children.

SB 0024 prohibits law enforcement agencies from adopting or enforcing policies that impose a waiting period before accepting a missing person report. This legislation is designed to ensure that Illinois law enforcement agencies respond swiftly and effectively in efforts to locate missing persons.

SB 0073 prohibits the sale of baby food containing toxic heavy metals, such as arsenic, lead, mercury, and cadmium, at levels exceeding FDA limits, and requires manufacturers to conduct monthly testing for these contaminants.

SB 0618 amends the Liquor Control Act of 1934 to include ensuring that the popular practice of selling mixed drinks for takeout will continue indefinitely. The law also increases production limits for Illinois distilleries, permits them to self-distribute their products, and authorizes craft breweries to offer customer rewards and loyalty programs.

SB 1507 targets ongoing safety issues on DuSable Lake Shore Drive by requiring the University of Illinois Chicago Transportation Center to conduct a

comprehensive study examining crash data, dangerous driving behaviors, and the potential role of traffic enforcement technologies, including AI, in reducing roadway hazards.

SB 1563 revises the Illinois Code of Civil Procedure to streamline the process of

removing squatters from property they have no right to possess. Previously treated as tenants and subject to the formal eviction process, squatters are now classified as trespassers, allowing law enforcement to remove them immediately once a property owner establishes legal ownership. This change is expected to benefit property owners and landlords, who under previous rules often faced a removal timeline that could exceed six months.

Among the most controversial laws taking effect later in 2026 is SB 1950, which permits physician-assisted death in Illinois. In 1997, the United States Supreme Court in Washington v. Glucksberg unanimously held that physician-assisted death was not a right protected by the United States Constitution, thereby allowing states to enact laws prohibiting or permitting the practice. Illinois is now the twelfth state in the United States to enact legislation

allowing this practice.

The End-of-Life Options for Terminally Ill Patients Act gives adults with a terminal illness and a prognosis of six months or less to live the option to request a prescription for medication that would end their life. The law makes participation by doctors, healthcare providers, and pharmacists entirely voluntary, while making it a felony to coerce a patient into requesting the medication or forging a request. Disability rights advocates and religious organizations are among the groups voicing opposition to the legislation.



On a lighter note, HB 4439 names the soybean as Illinois’ state bean, highlighting the state’s leading role in U.S. soybean production.

By Timothy J. Ganshirt
Timothy is an associate attorney at Healy Scanlon Veugeler Gannon.

AMERICAN BREXIT
COMMITTEE

- Conservative leader vows in 2025 to repeal GFA/ Human Rights Act of 1998
- Thatcher unleashes SAS to assassinate 5 Sinn Fein elected officials/9 campaign workers.
- US permits UK double agent Nelson to purchase arms from South Africa linked to 209 loyalist killings in NI-No arrests & no prosecutions.
- Thatcher addresses Congress in 1985 and lies about democracy and rule of law in NI.
- Britain stalling for cover-up in NI rushes for Brexit referendum without the customary White Paper; real purpose was to bully Ireland to join BX and strengthen partition border and break from GFA.

THE LONG GRASS
Propaganda Trumps Truth

- Reports-Many conflict related are long delayed and usually summarized; the full report never fully sees the light of day.
- Official -British historians to write NI history but stuck on a ‘censor’ requirement “if a detail proposed for use might affect the reputation” of a nation or person is implicated (read United States and its officers).
- Media-Lord Hannon (WSJ), Robert O’Brien (UK Policy Exchange) Britain’s safe pair of hands to be against Ireland’s re-unification
- U. S. Dept of State -For years UK had separate NI office in Dept. of State; opposed visa for Gerry Adams MP; granted approval of RUC gun sale; supported UK MLAT search warrant for Boston College tapes; published a Annual Human Rights Report that claimed there were no reports of disputed killings but there are 1100 UK trying to bury.
- Public Relations-Ret. Admiral NATO Chris Perry speaking tour opposing Ireland’s reunification at UK Together Foundation. He claims Ireland’s reunification means threat to Britain through Russia.
- Show Time—British Army Black Watch pipers and other regiments that served in NI crisscrossed America to impress citizenry and distract from NI violence. Original Magna Carta, which King John ignored the day after he signed it, was deployed all over the U. S. used to distract from Britain’s lawless killing and criminal cover-up of injustices, Catholic discrimination etc. to gullible Americans.

Britain’s treachery in NI is pervasive and ongoing. The term ‘special relationship,’ as invoked by the British has lost its original meaning. Since 1998 the cliché has become a code word like Demetrius or Kenova, for Britain’s schemes to cover its criminal past and perfect Ireland’s partition. Even America’s ‘demarche’ to England for the Legacy law feels like a scripted scenario to feign real concern where there is none. The words of the 2023 US-UK Atlantic Accord---rule of law, accountability, democracy & human rights---remain empty of meaning in the case of NI.

In President Trump’s 2025 National Security Strategy document a reference is made “to help[ing] Europe correct its current trajectory.” Perhaps his “unconventional diplomacy” could prove helpful in accelerating the reunification of Ireland. Decades of Britain’s continuing corrupt and criminal actions in NI prove it unfit to govern there. Americans can demand change and they should.

Please give your voice and vote to Members of Congress who share these concerns for Ireland and the GFA.

Visit www.irelandsfuture.com or contact@irelandsfuture.com
and thank former Taoiseach Leo Varadkar for his leadership.

Follow the American Brexit Committee in GOOGLE GROUPS.



CHICAGO GAELIC PARK

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

A Cháirde,

If you danced your toes off at the Chicago Hooley and enjoyed all the great music and the community camaraderie, please join me in thanking all the sponsors and volunteers who made that weekend possible. Thanks also to the volunteers who made Little Women's Christmas so much fun for all attendees. What a night they had!

We're all marking our calendars for events coming up in March, which will soon be here, but there's plenty to do this month, too. Our February concerts are Gadan, Merry Ploughboys, Brooklyn Charmers and Brothers Gibb. We'll be watching the Big Game, celebrating St. Valentine's Day, watching Colin Broderick's film. "Emerald City", tapping our feet at the sessions, and enjoying the Book Club and Irish singing. And we'll make time for some chicken curry, beef stew, or one of Maureen's other specialties in the pub.

Le gach dea-ghuá,

Bill O'Sullivan - President of the Board of Directors at Chicago Gaelic Park



SIGN UP FOR
IRISH FEST UPDATES



The Month of March at CGP

We're Irish 365 days a year, but March is a special month around here. Save the date for a few of our March events! Stay tuned to our website for updates.

Parades

All are welcome to march with the CGP community this March! Our float will be in the Oak Forest Fleadh Family Parade (Saturday 3/7), Tinley Park Irish Parade (Sunday 3/8), Chicago St. Patrick's Day Parade (Saturday 3/14), and South Side Irish Parade (Sunday 3/15).



Ireland on Parade - March 11-13

Ireland on Parade is an exhibition of the music and dance of Ireland that takes place at Chicago Gaelic Park annually in March leading up to St. Patrick's Day. Various Irish step dancing schools from the entire Chicagoland area are featured each evening of Ireland on Parade. Join us March 11-13!



South Side Irish Sunday - March 8

Start the day (Sunday 3/8) with our monthly Mass followed by a traditional Irish breakfast. After that, doors open at 12pm for a full day of South Side Irish fun! We'll have entertainment in each room for the whole family to enjoy. Stay tuned to our social media to find out when tickets become available. Pro tip: Grab your tickets online ahead of time at a discounted price!



St. Patrick's Day Sunday Celebration - March 15

We'll have entertainment in each room for the whole family to enjoy! Walk with us in the South Side Irish Parade and head back to enjoy live music and family fun. Our lineup includes: Ben Traverse 5 Piece Band, The Narrowbacks, Reilly, and Joe McShane! Secure your tickets online ahead of time to get admission at a discount!



SIMPLE THINGS IN CONCERT FRIDAY, MARCH 20TH



Simple Things is a three piece band, featuring vocalist Dylan, bass guitarist and backing vocalist Shane and instrumentalist Kealan. They bring a fresh new flavour to pop music, with their traditional Irish background influence.

Both Kealan & Dylan started out their journey in music at a young age. Coming from the heart of Kerry, music was at the forefront of their lives. As childhood friends they started off as musicians playing Irish traditional music together, before developing and exploring new territories in pop music.

Secure your tickets online at our Box Office at
ChicagoGaelicPark.com.



CHICAGO GAELIC PARK

6119 W. 147th St. Oak Forest, IL 60452 - (708)687-9323 - ChicagoGaelicPark.com

CGP Event Calendar

Visit chicagogaelicpark.com for more information.

February 1 -	GADAN CONCERT
February 7 -	MERRY PLOUGHBOYS
February 8 -	MASS & BREAKFAST
February 8 -	GAELIC PARK BOOK CLUB
February 15 -	IRISH FILM NIGHT
February 20 -	STEELY DAN TRIBUTE
February 27 -	GPP ALL-IRELAND TRIVIA NIGHT
February 27 -	BEE GEES TRIBUTE
March 11 -	IOP BEGINS
March 20 -	SIMPLE THINGS
April 11 -	ELTON JOHN TRIBUTE

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- Free dessert on your birthday



Music at The Carraig

No cover charge for music at The Carraig.

February 1 -	CHRISTINE LAWLESS
February 5 -	TRAD THURSDAY
February 6 -	LIAM DURKIN
February 7 -	MULLIGAN STEW
February 8 -	EVIN O'RIORDAN
February 12 -	OPEN MIC NIGHT
February 13 -	ZED SMYTH
February 14 -	GERRY HAUGHEY
February 15 -	JOHN STAUNTON
February 19 -	TRAD THURSDAY
February 20 -	COCO & FANCY
February 21 -	THE CHANCERS
February 22 -	SOUTHSIDE BOOGIE
February 26 -	KIERAN BYRNE
February 27 -	ST. JAMES GATE
February 28 -	THE FABTONES

Win 2 Tickets to Ireland

\$20 for 1 Ticket - \$50 for 3 Tickets. Purchase tickets online at our Box Office.



Drawing on Tuesday, March 17th at 7pm

2 Round Trip tickets from Chicago to Dublin. Tickets subject to date restrictions.

Aer Lingus



Purchase Tickets

CHICAGO
GAELIC PARK

The Carraig Weekly Specials

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Friday and Saturday evenings with no cover charge.

Wednesday - BBQ Ribs

Thursday - Build your own 14" Pizza for \$10

Friday - Fish Fry - French Fried Shrimp, Brewer Battered
Cod, 1/2 & 1/2, or Fried Chicken served with Fries &
Coleslaw

Sunday - Sunday Roast served with Yorkshire pudding,
mashed potatoes, vegetables & topped with Chef Moe's
homemade gravy.



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that it will thrive in the future?

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artistic, athletic, cultural, educational, and social
activities. We provide a welcoming place for all to
share in our great Irish American experience.

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of one's financial situation and charitable goals. It
is recommended to consult financial, tax, and/or
legal advisors regarding these types of donations.

Preserving and Promoting our Irish Mission:

- Chicago Irish Feis
- Irish Fest
- Official Home of the Chicago GAA
- Our Lady of Knock Rosary Procession
- Monthly Mass and Irish Breakfast
- Mother's Day Buffet/High Tea
- Gaelic Park Players
- Heritage and Harvest Day
- Children's Irish Cultural Camp
- The Carraig Pub & Beer Garden
- Young Gaelic Association
- Premier Event Venue for Weddings,
Parties, and Concerts



Saturday, February 7



Friday, February 20



Friday, February 27



Sunday, March 8



Sunday, March 15

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OR VISIT [TICKETS.CHICAGOGAELICPARK.COM/EVENTS/CHICAGOGAELICPARK](https://tickets.chicagogaelicpark.com/events/chicagogaelicpark)





Session City Part Seven: Quigleys, 28 Years Young, Serves up the Craic at Wednesday Trad Sessions

On a chilly night in January, my tour of Chicago's Irish traditional music sessions led me to Quigley's Irish Pub in downtown Naperville. Wednesday night's session, led by Jeff Lindblade, included about 15-20 musicians of all ages, with some coming from as far as Pontiac IL.

Quigley's is located at 43 E. Jefferson Ave., in the historic 1845 Jefferson Hill building, which had also been the home of Naperville Mayor Kendall in the early 1900's. In 1996, owner Nancy Quigley and her then husband took a trip to Atlanta, Georgia, where they visited and were inspired by an Irish-style pub. At the time, Guinness sponsored a class on "how to start an Irish pub;" so they attended it, and then promptly began design and construction on their own pub.

To assure that Quigley's

and bookcases imported from Dublin along with original Irish prints, which accent the walls. In the Cottage Room, which had served as the billiard room of Mayor Kendall, the original hand-hewn beams and stone foundation can be seen.

Two booths in the Victorian room are called "snugs." In Ireland, a pub "snug" is a small, fully enclosed area—basically, a little room, although the walls do not extend to the ceiling—which seats 6-8 people and is completely hidden from view. In Victorian times, these were the only places where women were allowed to drink. Quigley's snugs do not have doors but are otherwise true "snugs." Of Quigley's ambience and clientele, general manager Andy Nosek said, "This is as close to an Irish Pub that you are going to get on this side of the pond..... But, although we

Although he is of Polish ancestry, he has been a regular at Quigley's for the 20 years he has lived in Naperville. Why? "You cannot beat it. Quigley's is everything you want in a pub; atmosphere, tasty food, wonderful music, and great people."

As Quigley's has served as home base for the West Suburban Irish (WSI) for the past 19 years, it has essentially become the Westside Irish cultural center. With a membership of over 500 individuals, WSI sponsors several activities at Quigley's including the bi-monthly traditional Irish music session, weekly Irish language classes, and Trivia Night. Outside of the pub, WSI hosts the Naperville St Patrick's Day Parade, an annual Emerald dinner in February, and Naperville's Irish Fest in the fall.

Irish musician and multi-instrumentalist Jeff Lindblade leads the trad session that meets at Quigley's on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month. When his ancestors emigrated from Sweden four generations ago, the family name was Nelson. But they felt their name was too common, and so it was changed to Lindblade (blade of the Linden tree, which grew on the family plantation back in Sweden.)

Jeff grew up in Naperville, where he attended Prairie Elementary, Washington Junior High School, and Naperville North High School. After obtaining a business degree from Wheaton College, he began his career as a software developer. Now, he works as a real estate entrepreneur, a job that allows him the flexibility to travel and play music. He just got married last year and has one grown daughter.

One of Jeff's aunts played Scottish fiddle tunes, and he was always amazed by her ability "to play by ear, and in the moment." While he received lessons on the piano and clarinet, somewhere along the line he picked up guitar. One day, while attending

a performance of Riverdance, he was drawn to the playing of uilleann piper, Davy Spillane. The minute he heard those pipes, Jeff said, "I have to do this," and he began studying the pipes in earnest.

However, soon after participating in his first session at the Kerry Piper, he realized it would take a long time for his pipe playing to get to the level required to fully participate in sessions. Of the pipes, he said, "it's a lonely instrument because you sound horrible for a long time, and you just have to reconcile yourself to that fact."

By this time, Jeff had become quite proficient on guitar, and, inspired by guitarists Donogh Hennessy (Lunasa), and John Doyle (Liz Carroll's collaborator), Jeff switch to guitar at the sessions because that allowed him to participate at a higher level more quickly than waiting to get better on the pipes. Today he plays guitar, Irish flute, tin whistle, and uilleann pipes. His current projects include The STEAM Irish Quartet and The Bow Tides. He has appeared at several important festivals including the Milwaukee Irish Fest and has toured internationally as a musician for the Trinity Dancers.

When speaking about traditional Irish music, Lindblade at first quipped, "Do you know what tradition is? (pause) It is peer pressure from dead people," But then he quickly added, "You have

to respect the tradition. But there's also room to have it breathe and grow to interpret it for a new generation."

Jeff feels to be an effective session leader one must consider three groups of session stakeholders: musicians, the audience, and the pub owner. Regarding the musicians, he said, "My goal is to make the session accessible to the musicians who show up. None of us got to where we are without someone else's help. At Quigley's, everyone gets to play tunes even though they may be slower or simpler. I want to be careful about who the listeners are too (audience), and that pub owner's goals are being met."

The musicians who frequent Wednesday night sessions are as varied as the instruments they play. Cathy Grafton, now in her seventy's, travels to Quigley's all the way from Pontiac Illinois. Although she formerly played mandolin and Bluegrass, for the last 20 years she has been playing bodhrán at sessions. Gen Z-er José Jansen has been playing flute for 3 years and attends the session just "so he can get better." Alison Bryant, age 47, played classical clarinet for 37 years, and attended the Quigley's session at first only as a spectator since 2017. She started on Irish tin whistle 7 months ago and is experiencing an awkward learning phase. Occasionally, she has to sit out a song because she has not learned it yet. However, this does not discourage her. She said, "This session is really good for beginners, professionals, and everyone. It's very welcoming." Rounding out the group are experienced musicians like fiddler Lexia Kennedy and flute player Joe Nielsen.

I went to Quigley's on a chilly January night, but once inside I found a cozy Irish pub, full of the authenticity, craic and warmth that was intended by the owners when they set out to build it 28 years ago.

christine.lawless@yahoo.com



Irish Pub would have the great "craic" that Nancy was seeking, the entire interior of the pub was fabricated by pub builders in Ireland and then shipped over and re-assembled. The entire space is broken up into small areas. The Smoking Room features an antique fireplace

are an Irish Pub first, we can be considered a 'melting pot' in that we get a lot of everybodyand I mean everybody: Irish, British, Indian, and during the World Cup - France, Spain, Netherlands and more."

Michael Bialka, age 68 years, is a typical Quigley's patron.



Jeff Lindblade

2/21 - 115 BOURBON STREET

3/6 - FOREVER GREEN

3/7 - MANHATTAN IRISH FEST

3/8 - FIREWATER SALOON

3/13 - 115 BOURBON STREET

3/14 - OLD ST. PAT'S

3/14-- MARY JO MCGUIRE'S

3/14 - IRISH-AMERICAN HERITAGE CENTER

3/15 - ZIA'S SOCIAL

3/17 - GUINNESS OPEN GATE BREWERY

3/17 - CHIEF O'NEILL'S

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Celebrate St. Patrick's Day with Family and Friends
at Chicago Symphony Orchestra Hall on March 9th



When: Monday, March 9, 2026, at 7:30 PM
Where: Chicago Symphony Orchestra Hall
Tickets: \$40-\$75, available starting Feb. 3, 2026, via CSO Box Office (312.294.3000 or visit CSO.org

Sponsorship opportunities start at \$1,000 and can be purchased at oldstpats.org/siamsa

Shamrock'n: A Family-Friendly Irish Celebration

When: Saturday, March 14, 2026 11 AM - 5 PM

Where: Old St. Pat's Campus, 625 W. Adams (Entrance Des Plaines St. between Adams & Jackson)

Tickets: General Admission: \$30 (food à la carte)

Kids: \$10 (includes a hot dog)

Pub Pass: \$60 (includes 3 beverages and a meal)

Available starting February 2nd, 2026, at oldstpats.org/shamrockn

Looking for a lively way to celebrate St. Patrick's Day with family and friends? **The 5th annual Shamrock'n at Old St. Pat's Pop-Up Pub** offers an afternoon of fun, entertainment, and Irish cheer in a welcoming, warm festive atmosphere.

What to expect:

Delicious Beverages and Pub Fare: Savor Irish favorites alongside refreshing Guinness, Baileys and Cola-Cola beverages in the pop-up pub.

Live Entertainment: Enjoy traditional Irish music, and performances from **Whiskey Mick** and more great bands that will have you singing and dancing all afternoon. Special appearances by Irish dancers and Bagpipers will help you get your jig on.

Activities for All Ages: From face painters, balloon artists to engaging community activities, there's something for everyone.

Pot O' Gold Raffle: Try your luck in the grand raffle, with a potential top prize of \$20,000! Early bird drawings run February 12 & March 8, offering additional chances to win cash, Shamrock'n Pub Passes, and reserved Civic Mass seating. **BONUS:** Buy 2 tickets, get the 3rd FREE!

Whether you're a family with young kids, a group of friends looking for live music and drinks in a lively yet relaxed atmosphere, or a longtime supporter of Old St. Pat's, Shamrock'n is the perfect way to celebrate the Irish spirit while supporting the incredible community programs at Old St. Pat's.

Join the Celebration - & Support a Great Cause

Both events exemplify Old St. Patrick's Church's commitment to community, culture, and faith. From the stirring performances at Siamsa na nGael to the joyous camaraderie of Shamrock'n, St. Patrick's Week is a time to celebrate the richness of Irish heritage while making a positive impact on the Chicago community.

With proceeds supporting the church's outreach and cultural programs, your participation helps extend the legacy of compassion and inclusion that has defined Old St. Pat's for 180 years and generations

to come.
Don't Wait—Reserve Your Spot Today!

Tickets for both events are expected to sell quickly. Don't miss your chance to be part of this year's celebrations:

Siamsa na nGael: Secure your seats starting February 3 via the CSO Box Office: CSO.org

Shamrock'n: Purchase tickets starting February 2 or to learn more about sponsorship opportunities visit: oldstpats.org/shamrockn

To volunteer for Shamrock'n or learn more about both events, visit oldstpats.org.

This St. Patrick's Week, come together with Old St. Pat's to celebrate faith, culture, & community.

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Introducing Irish Folk Band, ISHNA, With Their First Album ‘SLI AMACH’: Way Out

“Slí Amach: Way Out” is the debut album of Boston-based Ishna, a contemporary Irish folk band. Ishna explores traditional repertoire within the context of a global setting, bringing the band members’ diverse backgrounds into each of their carefully crafted arrangements. The album starts with a darkly humorous tale of a murderous wife, continuing on through exhilarating instrumentals, heart-tugging ballads, and rousing rebel songs, before finally leaving the listener in the familiar setting of an Irish pub. “Slí Amach” is energetic and uplifting, weaving Ishna’s unexpected twists into the beloved music of Ireland.

Ishna was founded in Dublin Ireland by husband-and-wife team Ciaran Nagle and Tara Novak. After moving to Boston in 2012, they put this group of musicians together in 2015. Oddly enough, they met all of the players separately, and none of them through playing Irish and personal friend of Ciaran and Tara. Robert brought all of the studio equipment up from NYC, the cameras were donated by Ben Davis at Studio Lab in Derry NH, and the band were housed by another friend in a 1700s farmhouse in Jaffrey NH. Ishna spent the week not only making music, but also hiking, cooking elaborate meals, comparing specialty cocktail recipes, staying up late around the fire pit, and enjoying this uniquely immersive recording experience. The result is an album that is infused with the camaraderie of the musicians: an album that invites the listener to step into the fold of this community and to experience Irish music in a new way.

Ishna is made up of 6 members, all of whom hail originally from different parts of world:

- Ciarán Nagle: vocals, spoons (Dublin Ireland)
- Tara Novak: fiddle, vocals (Omaha NE)



music (jazz, musical theater, classical, and Italian folk music)! Over the past decade, the group has evolved, honing in specifically on the acoustic traditional music of Ireland, while finding ways to allow each band member to bring their unique musical vocabulary into the overall sound.

“Slí Amach” was recorded June 29 -July 2, 2025, at Cold Comfort Farm - an 18th Century barn in Peterborough NH, which is a small town in the rural Monadhnock region. It was recorded, mixed, and mastered by Robert L. Smith at Defy Recordings, an Oscar-and-Grammy-award-winning producer

- Dan Meyers: Irish whistle, flute, uilleann pipes, & bodhrán (Spokane WA)
- David McGrory: piano, accordion, viola (Belfast Northern Ireland)
- Björn Wennö: guitar, chitarra battente (Uppsala Sweden)
- Brian O’Neill: bodhrán, cajón, riq, additional percussion (Phoenix AZ)

** Slí Amach (the way out/exit) in Irish is pronounced roughly as "shlee a-mokh," with "shlee" sounding like "sleeve" and "amach" having a guttural "kh" at the end, like the "ch" in Scottish "loch," but pronounced with the tongue further back in the throat, notes <https://ishnamusic.com>

altan

“More than any Irish group, this Donegal quintet is seen as keeper of the traditional flame.” - Boston Globe



MARCH 5 | PARK WEST | CHICAGO
Tickets at parkwestchicago.com

Swimming Upstream

By Charles Brady



Living Ghosts... and Tales of Future Past

"All songs are living ghosts. And long for a living voice."
--Brendan Kennelly

They never die, those old stories. It may sometimes seem that they have faded away for a while; but the important ones, the good ones, will just mutate, change, metamorphose...and come back in another form, to quietly pass their wisdom on to another generation.

These and other thoughts went through my mind last night, when I went to see the much-talked of film 'Hamnet'. It is obviously of great interest in Ireland as the two leads both hail from here: Jessie Buckley is from Killarney and Paul Mescal comes from County Kildare. (Also, since these ruminations will be reaching into the past, Ms. Buckley's great-grandmother was Madge Clifford, the distinguished Republican and officer in Cumann na mBan.)

As a Shakespeare buff since my long-gone schooldays, I am enormously amused to see both England's greatest playwright and his wife played by two Irish actors; and, of course, it is adapted from the bestseller by Maggie O'Farrell from Coleraine in Northern Ireland. I've a feeling that the Bard himself - who had a mighty sense of humour -- would have loved the idea, especially as it is has at its helm the Chinese-born director Chlo Zhao, an artist who has very swiftly found a distinctive style.

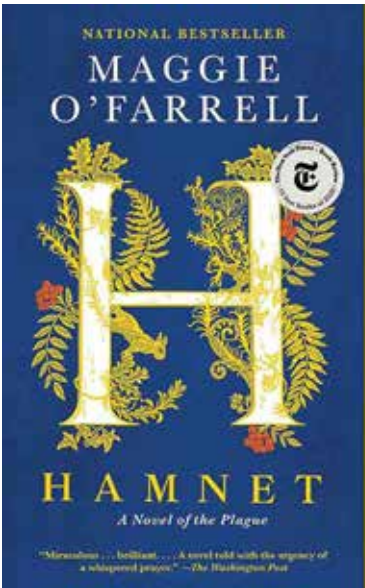
Now, I've been thinking a lot lately about how the old stories come back to us, often after many years. A friend of mine (one who unlike my lazy self, always has to be pushing her mental boundaries) has recently taken on a crash course in Irish history that is being taught in conjunction with an overview of the enchanting myths, legends and folklore of this land.

When she mentioned to me that she was doing a talk on the Salmon of Knowledge it probably says too much about me that my first thought was of that great Scottish film of pagan horror, 'The Wicker Man'. (The 1973 original, not the travesty of a remake.) In it, a villager dresses as the Salmon, whose origins are similar to the Irish tales.

These stories vary slightly but remain essentially the same: young Fionn takes up a dwelling on the banks of the River Boyne, near to an older Druid-poet by the name of Finegas. For seven years Finegas has attempted to net the Salmon that swims those waters, since to eat of it

is to gain knowledge that will make him the wisest man in all of Ireland.

In the seventh year he succeeds. Tired out, he leaves the magical Salmon to be prepared by Fionn, who is under instructions not to taste as much as a single bite. However,



in the cooking of it Fionn burns his finger; and, when he sucks on it to relieve the pain, he ingests some of the oil and thus gains the knowledge of the Salmon. A disappointed Finegas immediately realises what has happened but accepts that Fionn has now become the wise man that he himself had dreamed of being - and off the young lad goes to begin his wanderings. And into the creation of his very own myth-cycle, eventually becoming the wise leader and mightiest of the Fianna warriors, guarding the High King who lived at Tara.

I'm always struck by the essential kindness of this myth: Finegas has put in seven years of trying to land the fish but he is quietly accepting that it was not destined to be his lot; and when Fionn is asked not to eat of the fish he is respectful and obedient. (Compare that to a certain Eve being told to keep herself away from that oul' apple o' knowledge - but that's wimmin for ye!)

Given the header of this column, I'd like to put forward the idea that knowledge is like the Salmon, only to be gained by forever swimming upstream; but if I'm honest it probably points to the sheer random nature of how it is gained - as in the Tale of the Salmon, often it is simply by accident.

Or does it symbolize the passing on of knowledge through the oral tradition that was a necessity of the times? Either way, it is fascinating to realise just how much instinctive understanding of human psychology these ancient tale-

spinners possessed.

It led me in turn to recalling the excitement amongst cinemagoers back in 1984 when the Irish director Neil Jordan had an unexpected hit with only his second film, 'The Company of Wolves', which had really taken off in the U. K. Back then I was working in Dublin and had the odd pint in the Bailey Bar in Duke Street, where Jordan was also an occasional customer. Outside there was a huge poster with the marvelous tagline: LONDON BELONGS TO THE COMPANY OF WOLVES.

In the screenplay by the feminist and magical realist writer Angela Carter, she and Jordan draw on some of the original fairy tales, giving us the legend of Little Red Riding Hood as it was probably intended: as a warning to young women 'never to stray from the path and into the woods'. The red of the girl's cape of course indicates menstruation, that she has now reached womanhood and should beware of those wolves - or men - who will take notice of her. And yet it is more complex than that. Angela Lansbury as the Granny tells Red Riding Hood:

"Granny knows a great deal, but she doesn't know everything. And if there is a beast inside every man, he meets his match in the beast inside of every woman."

When these ancient and universal stories are retold in their original form, they strike a deep and resonating chord in our psyches. And of course they are meant to. In a time when people were often either illiterate or when writing tools were in short supply, they had to get a certain point across succinctly and in a way that would last.

And then there is the plain fact that as human beings...we just like stories. And in many cases the origins of those stories are deep in the past.

In 1881, the Governor of New Mexico, Lew Wallace, had just dispatched Sherrif Pat Garrett to assassinate the outlaw known to history as Billy the Kid. He had also just completed his great novel 'Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ'. It fascinates me, the idea that whilst actually living in an era that we would come to know

through dreams and myth, he himself was dreaming of an even earlier time, almost two thousand years before.

And so, in 'Hamnet' I was delighted that when Shakespeare begins his wooing of Agnes (who is depicted as very much a Child of Nature) he chooses to capture and hold her attention by telling her the story of Orpheus and Eurydice. There in a 16th century to which we, the audience, have been taken, he transports her

even farther back, to ancient Greece.

How wonderful; how splendid; how instructive - at a time when it is easy to despair of our species and its often-willful stupidity - to be given the simple pleasure of a story. To have the past reach out and remind us that we are all of us gifted and cursed by a similar trait: curiosity.

We always want to know...just what happens next.
charleybrady@gmail.com

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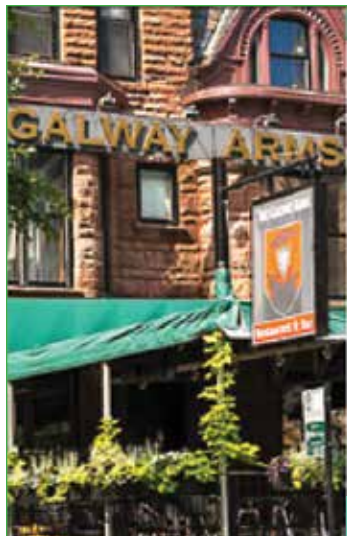
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32nd Manhattan Irish Fest Mar. 6/7

This is year 32 of the Manhattan Irish Fest Manhattan Irish Fest - March 6th & 7th 2026, (MIF). The Irish American Society of County Will (IASCW) is the host of the event along with loyal partners the Village of Manhattan Village of Manhattan, and the Prairie State Road Runners PSRR. Also key to our success is the Irish Fest Family Area hosted by St. Joseph Manhattan School & Parish. We hope you join us on Friday, March 6th, and/or Saturday, March 7th, in Manhattan, Illinois.

MIF was started by members of the IASCW, Mike & Mary McHugh, and Tim & Mary McGrath. Mike, a local insurance

producer, and Tim, a local attorney Real Estate & Family Law - Manhattan, IL - Timothy J. McGrath, were members of the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce. They were looking for a fundraiser to help the Chamber. So, of course, their loyal fellow members of the IASCW offered to jump in and help. Mike McHugh (1950-2017) was one of 14 original founders of the IASCW, starting in 1981.

McHugh and McGrath had no idea the fire they lit. That first year, the event was so well-attended that the team had to rush out to local liquor stores to purchase more beer. The event grew quickly. The IASCW was asked to take

over as host of the event. We did so, but occasionally transferred the hosting duties back to local Manhattan groups. The Manhattan Youth Athletic Association took a turn at it. The Manhattan Park District had it for a few years. But it always came back to the IASCW. I guess we know a thing or two about how to throw a St. Patrick's celebration!

The key to this event is the volunteer groups who sign up. Over 300 people are needed, most on Friday and Saturday, but others are required for set-up and clean-up. Volunteers must come from a legitimate 501(c)(3) recognized non-profit or charitable organization. The net proceeds from the

event are then distributed to those volunteer groups based on their respective hours served. Records from prior years are not available, but since 2017, the event has donated over \$575,000 to local groups and causes. MIF Committee Chair Mic Brophy has collected a talented group who dedicate lots of time and talent to pull this thing off year after year.

Another important partner is the Village of Manhattan's emergency, fire, police, and utility personnel who work long hours that week to help us get ready, set up properly, see to the safety of all attendees, and keep the lights on! The IASCW and the Village of Manhattan share a great

working relationship. Mayor Mike Adrieansen and the Village board members support the MIF and cooperate for a fun and safe celebration.

So get your entry button--designed this year by a student at St. Joseph school!--early. Run in the 5k race, watch the parade, listen to the Emerald Society Pipe & Drums open the entertainment tent, dance with friends to Irish music, contribute to the craic, and of course have a pint of Guinness. We hope you join us on Friday, March 6th, and/or Saturday, March 7th, in Manhattan, Illinois.

Tim Brophy, Executive Director, Irish American Society of County Will
Info@countywillirish.net



Manhattan Irish Fest Events:

Entry Buttons are required:
\$10 in advance; \$15 at the door

FRIDAY

Entertainment in Main Tent
5:00 PM to 11:00 PM:
Two from the Gallow, Reilly,
Whiskey of the Damned

All Ages Dance at St. Joseph Parish:
6-9 PM, DJ and Concessions

SATURDAY

Craft Fair, 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM, Intermediate School
5K Race, 10:45 AM
Parade, 11:00 AM
Entertainment in Main Tent Noon - 10 PM:
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Celtic Punk Band BOILED IN LEAD to Release 12th Album King of the Dogwoods March 20

Legendary Minneapolis Celtic punk (folk, world) band Boiled in Lead announced today that they will be releasing their 12th album, King of the Dogwoods, on March 20 via Omnium Records on Compact Disc, Colored Vinyl and digital formats and can be purchased here. The first single, “Je T’Aime Helena” is also out today via all DSP’s.

Boiled in Lead’s musical recipe features guitar, bass, violin & drums that play country music from many countries with power and emotion. They are the longest-running Celtic punk band in America, and an important part of the foundation of what became Minnesota punk rock; their star is still on the wall





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at legendary nightclub First Avenue, dating back to their first 7th Street Entry show in 1983. Having played alongside bands like Hüsker Dü, Richard Thompson and Camper Van Beethoven, Boiled in Lead are celebrating more than 40 years on stage and in the studio



combining eclectic sounds featuring world music tunes from Irish, Serbian, Bulgarian, Klezmer, and roots American traditions. A record release show, presented by KFAI, is confirmed for the Parkway Theater in Minneapolis on Friday March 21 2026 with openers Pop Wagner and the Brian Boru Irish Pipe Band. Tickets at <https://theparkwaytheater.com/all-events/boiled-in-lead-dogwoods>

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Porchlight Music Theatre Announces Cast For The Irish And How They Got That Way

January 31 - March 15, 2026, At The Ruth Page Center For The Arts

The Hilarious and Heartwarming Musical about the Irish Experience in America is Directed by David Girolmo and

Music Directed by David Fiorello.

CHICAGO - Award-winning Porchlight Music Theatre is proud to

performance schedule includes previews Saturday, Jan. 31 at 2 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 1 at 2 and 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 4 at 7:30 p.m. and Thursday, Feb. 5 at 7:30 p.m. with the press opening Friday, Feb. 6 at 7:30 p.m. The Irish ... performance




announce the cast and creative team for the next production in its 31st season, The Irish ... and How They Got That Way, by Frank McCourt, original musical arrangements by Rusty McGee with music and lyrics by various artists, directed by David Girolmo and music directed by David Fiorello, January 31 - March 15, 2026 at The Ruth Page Center for the Arts, 1016 N. Dearborn St. The


schedule is Thursday and Fridays at 7:30 p.m., Saturdays at 2 and 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. The Irish ... is included in Porchlight’s 2025 - 2026 subscription series, available at PorchlightMusicTheatre.org. Single tickets are reserved seating and are on sale for \$24 - \$110 at PorchlightMusicTheatre.org or by calling the Porchlight box office at 773.777.9884

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Chicago Irish Film Festival Returns for 27th Year Featuring In-Person, Online Viewings
*Festival includes opening night screening of **Báite**, an on-site Ukrainian War documentary, and a film featuring Irish Sign Language*

The 27th annual Chicago Irish Film Festival (CIFF) returns to showcase the best features, shorts, and documentaries from the Land of Storytelling. This year's festival will screen exclusively at AMC New City from February 26 thru March 1, followed by a virtual format offering digital tickets for at-home screening from March 2-8.

The theme for this year's festival is One Heart, Many Homes. CIFF will screen nearly 20 feature films and documentaries, along with a series of short films selected from over 300 entries. Spanning a wide range of issues and genres, the lineup highlights the extraordinary creativity central to Irish filmmaking. The festival opens on February 26 with the U.S. premiere of *Báite*, directed by Ruán Magan and starring Eleanor O'Brien, Moe Dunford, and Oisín Mistéil.

Báite takes place in 1975 during the All-Ireland weekend. It is a gripping murder mystery that blends family drama with secrets quietly unfolding. The

film is the winner of the Best Irish Language Feature Film at the 2025 Galway Film Fleadh. Other feature films playing at this year's festival include:

Buried Alive: Chronicles the story of Mick Meaney, who was buried six feet beneath the London soil in 1968 in a simple wooden coffin. Hundreds gathered to watch and raise a glass—despite the fact that Mick was very much alive.

Movie Magic: A film in which an aspiring writer and a fantasizing director find themselves swept through a series of classic film worlds, shifting roles as spies, period protagonists, and something far more monstrous along the way.

Life on Mercury: Follows a lottery-winning priest, a lawyer serving the wealthy, and a young criminal chasing his next scheme as their lives become unexpectedly intertwined by a single €20 note passing from hand to hand.

Documentaries featured this year include: *Sanatorium*, which takes the viewer through

the summer of 2023 in the midst of the war in Ukraine, following the staff of the Kuyalnyk Sanatorium as they work to care for, comfort, and entertain their visitors amidst nearby airstrikes; *A Quiet Love*, an intimate feature documentary told through Irish Sign Language, following three Deaf couples whose relationships endure across history, family, and profound personal choice; and *Gerry Adams: A Ballymurphy Man*, in which Gerry Adams looks back on more than sixty years of political life in Northern Ireland as a divisive yet central force in the pursuit of peace.

Shorts program features nearly 50 films exploring "Life, In Motion" thru 5 categories:

So It Begins (Parenthood): Examines family crises and fragile relationships. From parenting, pregnancy, and getaway weekends to special needs and individual freedom, these films look at family life from every angle.

Wide-Eyed (Childhood):

Features a wonderful collection of Irish stories including a spunky young girl, an unusual fox, a forgotten backpack, and a wonderfully strange summer friend, hailing from some of Ireland's most award-winning animation studios.

On the Brink (Young Adult): Touches on sisterly love, new friends, parental resistance, special grandparents, and the courage it takes to trust each other and believe in the future.

Holding On (Mid-Life): Viewers can explore short stories involving missed opportunities, surprising dates, identity issues, and a true scoundrel.

The Long Goodbye (Death): A collection of dark fiction shorts featuring unfulfilled longing and undead bodies. From professional mourners to futuristic erasure, this collection will have viewers rethinking funerals, aging, and breakups.

Guests will have multiple opportunities to meet directors, producers, and select actors throughout the festival,

including representatives from *Báite* on opening night, *BP Fallon: Rock and Roll* on February 27, and *Sanatorium* on February 28. Closing out the in-person festival on March 1 is *Saipan*. Set on the eve of the 2002 FIFA World Cup, the film depicts Ireland's campaign thrown into turmoil when captain Roy Keane walks away from the national squad in Saipan after a bitter clash with manager Mick McCarthy.

Ticketing Information Passes and tickets for this year's festival are available through GoElevent.

All in-person screenings will take place at AMC New City (Suite C3401, 1500 N. Clybourn Ave, Chicago). For more information on how to experience this year's CIFF, at chicagoirishfilmfestival.com

Presenting *sponsors* of the festival include the *Government of Ireland's Emigrant Support Program, Culture Ireland, the Consulate General of Ireland, Screen Ireland, and the Irish Film Institute.*



Top (l to r): *Eiru, Sanatorium, Baite*, Bottom (l to r): *Emerald Nightengales, Sunflower, Big in Japan, Aontas, BP Fallon*



Skerryvore at North Shore Center Feb 21

Skerryvore brings their bold, modern take on Celtic music to the North Shore Center for an unforgettable live show. Hailing from Scotland's Isle of Tiree, Skerryvore has become one of the most exciting Celtic fusion bands touring today. Their music blends

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traditional Scottish roots with rock, pop, and world influences, creating a high-energy sound driven by bagpipes, fiddle, guitar, and powerful percussion. Known for their electrifying live performances, Skerryvore has captivated audiences around the world from intimate theaters to major international festivals. Fans of contemporary Celtic music and high-impact live shows will feel right at home. The evening will feature a vibrant mix of fan favorites, exciting new material, and the signature sound that has made Skerryvore a global Celtic music powerhouse. Saturday, February 21 | 7:30 PM George Van Dusen Theatre Buy Link: Skerryvore Tickets Feb 21, 2026 Skokie, IL at Ticketmaster

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We Get Letters....



Dear editor at Irish American News, The Knowles Nelson Stewardship Fund is a perfect example of a program that Wisconsinites have benefited from even though many of us have never heard of it. I hadn't, until I heard that it had been removed from the state budget by the legislature. So I did some research and discovered that the Knowles Nelson fund has had bipartisan support in Wisconsin for 30 years to protect Wisconsin's land, water and wildlife while providing outdoor spaces that we can all access for parks, hiking trails, and boating. We don't all have the financial means to own our fishing cabin, acres of woodland or a lake vacation home

but because of Knowles Nelson we have access to the outdoors in public parks to all enjoy the great outdoors. Looking at the Knowles Nelson website, I am amazed to see there are over 10,000 projects across the state, invested in every county and with almost all residents within a mile or two of a project. The tourist industry in Wisconsin brought in almost \$10B to Wisconsin's economy in 2022 supporting over 94,000 jobs. This is a program that allows all Wisconsinites to enjoy our beautiful outdoors, supports our local economy and protects irreplaceable natural resources. It deserves our support. Please ask our elected officials to support legislation funding the Knowles Nelson programs. Support AB435/SB436. Sincerely, Gloria Randall-Hewitt evegardener@gmail.com, 1825 park avenue, Racine, WI, US, 53403

Peggy Hanley Obituary

Mary Margaret "Peggy" Hanley, nee Stenson, 84, of Niles, formerly of the Westside of Chicago. Faithful wife of 63 years to Raymond L Hanley Jr. Most loving, one of a kind mother to Raymond L Hanley III., Jeanne (Douglas) McDougall, John (Colleen), and Matthew (Maureen) Hanley. Adored and best Gram to Tara (Ryan) Meyer, Joseph, Liam, Bridie, and Marty Hanley, and loving Granny to Ford, Declan and Winnie Peggy. Caring sister to Noreen (late Pat) Kelly, Joseph (Carol), Marty (Mary), and Kevin (Maggie) Stenson. Favorite and adored aunt, cousin and friend to many. Peggy was fun-loving and social, happiest at a family gathering, a night out with the girls or siblings, a trip

to Florida, or organizing a Milwaukee Fest weekend. She loved playing cards, especially Madman Rummy. She loved all things Irish and was fiercely proud of her Irish heritage—especially her red hair and the color, green. Above all else, Peggy adored her children and her family. She treasured every opportunity to stop by for an afternoon visit with her children and grandchildren, knowing that a "quick visit" would almost always turn into hours together. Her happy place was sitting outside—whether on the front porch of Pittsburgh Ave., the back porches of Bay Drive and Niles, or the patio she so proudly enjoyed at her Interlaken, Lake Geneva condo. Info at 847-255-7800 or www.FriedrichsFH.com

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Filmmaker Will be at CIFF With Short Film ‘Not’



Northside Dublin Filmmaker, Anne Marie Kelly, (pictured above) will fly to Chicago where her short film, “NOT”, will show as part of the shorts program in the Chicago Irish Film Festival.

In four minutes, this autobiographical surrealist gem takes us to the heart of the often-overlooked experience of the “other” child in a family where a child with special needs is born.

Combining her work as a Psychotherapist & Hypnotherapist with her award-winning work in Film

& Music is a natural alignment. “One skillset embraces the other”, she says, “in both worlds, the growth is towards our inner truth”. I am very lucky to have reached this point in my life and excited to meet with the festival goers in Chicago. chicagoirishfilmfestival.com

The Chicago Irish Film Festival runs from February 26th to March 1st with their online festival running until March 8th. More information can be found about Anne Marie Kelly’s work at www.anne-marie-kelly.com



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Abbey Murphy Makes the U.S. Olympic Team: She is shown here after scoring a goal against St. Cloud State. Picture: (U of Minn.) <https://www.blockclubchicago.org>

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Roaming in the Gloaming

By Estelle Shanley

Yes! I lived in America but once I heard there was an Irish Cooking School at Shangarry, County Cork I was determined to meet the owner, become a student and learn the ways to improve the culinary image of Ireland and also my own kitchen in the US.

The renowned cookery school attracted students from all over the world and my aim was to write articles not only about the school but the availability of fresh vegetables, fruits and herbs from local Irish pastures.

Obviously my two eyes were fixed on the availability of Irish dishes such as Dingle Pie and the preparation of spectacular dinner-party creations as well preparing meals in the traditional Irish cooking method that are not expensive.

Several years ago in Chicago I discovered Darina Allen's book was for sale and I could purchase a ticket to hear her speak at one of the city's restaurants. She had a new book entitled "Simply Delicious". I purchased one for myself and three more, one each for my daughters. Her book is an amazing read and my very first dinner I cooked from its pages was a Casserole Roast Chicken with leeks and bacon, a dash of cream and a splash of sunflower oil.

The recipe produced a grand dinner for four to six persons. However I wanted more than just cooking, my aim was to get inside the Ballymaloe Cookery School that grew from humble beginnings in a converted barn into an internationally acclaimed school.

As the school expanded so too did the range of

short and long courses that enhanced the repertoire by bringing in from time to time guests chefs from all over the world and people of vast experience and different cultures.

But I wanted more and decided I'd ask around to raise the funds so I could travel to Ireland and be a member of Ballymaloe School.

My spouse listened to my plan and turned it down immediately. Ireland was too far away and I was needed at home to entertain for Chicago and beyond.

I pushed every button, I pushed and shoved emphasizing that I could give cooking lessons at home and earn sufficient funds to travel to Ireland and settle down for a while at the Ballymaloe School and even dreamt on bringing the school to Chicago.

It might happen, it might not but I'm willing to try. Reading this, if you are interested please pick up your phone and let's talk. We could poach a whole salmon or trout to be served hot or cold, here or in Ireland!



Darina Allen of Ballymaloe Cooking School receiving an iBAM! award for Culinary Arts in 2014 at the Irish Books, Arts and Music Celebration Gala, held in Chicago at the Irish American Heritage Center.

Pictured with Darina is Ferdia Doherty, an Irishman who moved to Chicago, and later founded the popular Farmhouse Restaurants with the help of Irish-American, Bill Gainer.

RATIONING

Years ago my Cousin Tom McCaffrey recalls the availability of Food Ration Cards in our town of Dundalk in 1943. He also remembers shopping for groceries in Alister's shop to take home for the family dinner. Those with their Ration card in hand, paid and departed. The cards limited how much of various foods they were entitled to. He listed to a woman pleading over and over for an extra quarter pound of butter. The Manager Paddy Mc Alister politely told her he could only give her what the Ration card allowed. She grew angry and he told her again, "you only get what the Ration Card allows Fine she said, save the butter and shove it up your arse.

He replied without losing his temper. I am very sorry madam, I won't be able to do that. I already have two pots of jam and a pound of sugar up there!!!

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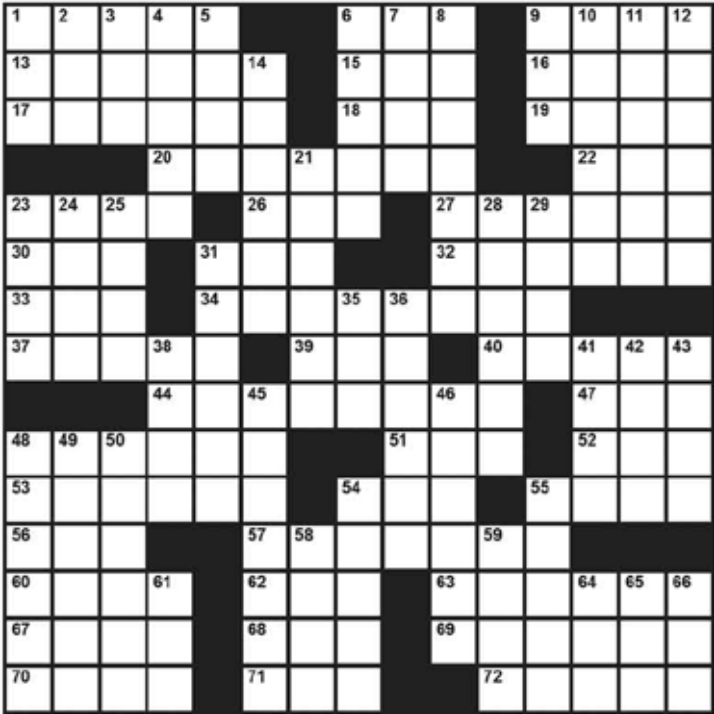


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- ACROSS
1. Coal pieces

6. Cousin of reggae

9. Card game for three

13. Irish rugby star, _____ Doris

15. Prediction

16. Dad

17. Come from

18. Sculptor Jean _____

19. Gift tag word

20. Resembling a moray, 2 words

22. Get better, as much wine

23. Back home for good, abbr.

26. D.C. lawmaker, abbr.

27. Lets up

30. Amusement sound

31. Trendy

32. Carpenter's collection, 2 words

33. Spanish for gold

34. Main character who does
- not appear so

37. Rebuffs

39. When a plane is due in, abbr.

40. Irish rugby star, Josh van der _____

44. Thumbs-up

47. Country club figure

48. Cry baby

51. Whichever one

52. John Lennon's wife

53. Wagnerian heroine

54. Nelson Mandela's org.

55. Same as mentioned

56. Camera type, abbr.

57. Irish rugby star, Dan _____

60. "Where the heart is"

62. Was placed

63. Strange

67. German automaker

68. Suffix with west

69. Las Vegas NFL team player

70. Foot care session, abbr.

71. Nutritional abbr.
72. Those in favor
- DOWN
1. Screen type, abbr.

2. Emirates, for short

3. French for sea

4. Employed busily

5. Put away

6. Grease spot

7. Captain of the Enterprise

8. Propitiate

9. Tanning lotion letters

10. Gold measurements

11. High point

12. Least wild

14. His column in Dublin was replaced by the Spire

21. Athletic award

23. Sorority letters

24. Make, as money

25. Biblical pronoun

28. Pub hopper, 2 words

29. Missing in action, abbr.

31. Fastened, in a way

35. Simpson case judge

36. Cuban capital

38. Fun time

41. Dated music holder

42. River in Ulster

43. Space

45. Conference for reporters

46. It secures a ship

48. Chess piece

49. Not level

50. Weaseled

54. Insurance giant

55. Low budget small studio film

58. Rock-like

59. Supplement dosage timing, 2 words

61. The Giants' Manning

64. Tags

65. Call

66. Eddy Murphy's "48 ____"
- ANSWERS PAGE 33



Matt Walsh II (r) with Irish singer, Clodagh Togher, recently at the Heritage Center for day 3 of the Dance Hooley Chicago. Clodagh, her father and family toured the IAHC before their concert.



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For and Against a United Ireland to be Discussed at the Chicago Club March 12th

iBAM! award winner 2024, Fintan O'Toole, and Sam McBride, the authors of *For and Against a United Ireland* will be in Chicago March 12 discussing their new book.

The discussion regarding a United Ireland in Chicago is heavily focused on the book, *For and Against a United Ireland* by Fintan O'Toole and Sam McBride, which presents balanced arguments for both sides rather than picking one.

While various Chicago-based Irish institutions and networks exist, the discourse, particularly concerning this new literature, aims for an impartial analysis of the constitutional, economic, and social implications of



(l to r): Fintan O'Toole and Sam McBride

unification.

For and Against a United Ireland was commissioned by the ARINS Project (Analysing and Researching Ireland North and South), a joint initiative of the University of Notre Dame's Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies and the Royal Irish Academy.

More on the Chicago visit in March edition, and online at www.irishamericannews.com as soon as we have it!

"WE OWE IT TO EACH OTHER TO CONSIDER THESE ISSUES THOUGHTFULLY AND RESPECTFULLY. NOT EVERYONE WHO WENT BEFORE US HAD THIS CHANCE."

—FROM THE INTRODUCTION

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Heap Earth Upon It

This follow-up to the award-winning *Sunburn* is a claustrophobic tale of obsession, family, and identity...

In January 1965, the growing town of Ballycrea has four new residents...The O'Leary siblings arrive in their new village under suspicious circumstances. Desperate to make a new start and leave their troubled life behind, the O'Learys offer only a few contradictory details about their past.

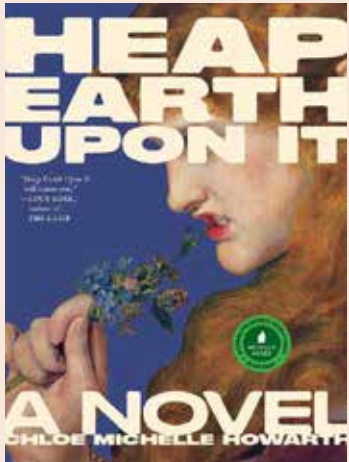
As they slowly settle into town, the siblings are taken under the wing of Betty and Bill Nevan, a wealthy couple in

their forties who have always wanted children. However, as one O'Leary sister grows close to Betty, lines are crossed and their intense relationship becomes difficult to define. All the while, the O'Learys' buried secrets keep bubbling up, threatening to ruin their new future.

Gothic, lush, and suspenseful, Chloe Michelle Howarth spins a tangled web that leaves you wondering whom to trust until the very last page.

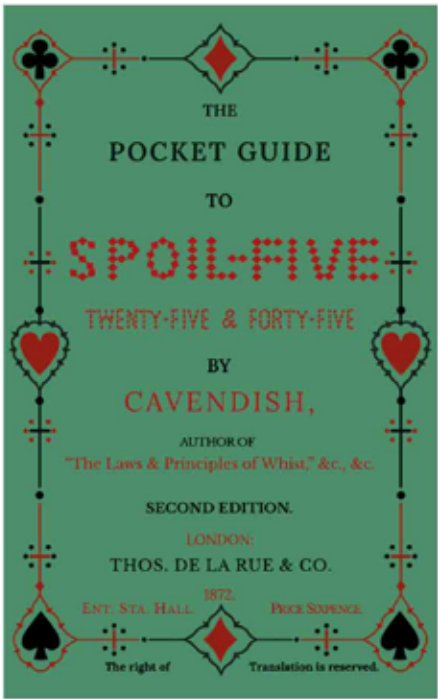
"Airless and gripping ... A devastating mix of hope and heartbreak from one of Ireland's most exciting queer voices." — Niamh Ní Mhaoileoin, author of

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Distributed by Penguin Random House



The Original Rules of the Card Game '25'!

A newly republished 1870 rulebook preserves the earliest written rules of Irish trick-taking games.



First published in 1870, *The Pocket Guide to Spoil-Five, Twenty-Five, & Forty-Five* by Henry "Cavendish" Jones is the earliest known book devoted entirely to the rules of Irish trick-taking card games—including the game now commonly known as 25.

Jones (1831–1899) was one of the most influential authorities on games of the 19th century. Writing under the pen name Cavendish, he authored definitive guides to card and lawn games and was instrumental in shaping modern sports culture—most notably helping to establish Wimbledon and serving as its first official referee.

This newly republished edition presents Cavendish's original text in a faithful modern reproduction. Inside, readers will find detailed rules covering setup, dealing, play, robbing, and reneging, along with guidance on misdeals, illegal plays, and dispute resolution. Cavendish also provides historical context for these Irish games and offers strategic advice aimed at improving competitive play.

More than a rulebook, *The Pocket Guide to Spoil-Five, Twenty-Five, & Forty-Five* serves as a snapshot of how these games were played and understood in the 19th century. For longtime players, it offers a definitive reference; for newcomers, a direct link to the game's origins.

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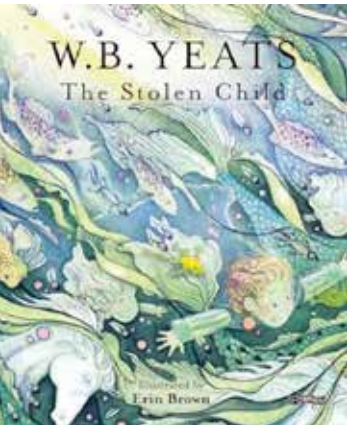
Much More Than Leprechauns



By Sheryl O'Sullivan

Welcome back to the enchanting land of Tir na N’Og for books! This month we will be looking at two recent children’s books which both use the W.B. Yeats poem, The Stolen Child as inspiration. You probably remember at least the refrain of this poem from your youth. If not, it goes like this: Come away, O human child; To the waters and the wild; With a faery, hand in hand; For the world’s more full of weeping than you can understand. Let’s look now at how a picture book illustrator and a chapter book creative team have used this poem to make it relevant for children.

THE STOLEN CHILD
The text of Yeats’ poem is followed exactly in this picture book with lovely illustrations by Erin Brown. While the title of the book and the title of the



poem re the same, in the book the child does not seem to be stolen at all. In fact, the child seems to be having a grand adventure while hand-in-hand with a faery.

The words of the poem take the child through Sleewth Wood, Rosses, and the hills above Glen-Car which are all actual places in Yeats’ beloved Sligo that you can visit today. The child is treated to some glorious sights. There are vats of reddest cherries, mythical beasts and engaging faeries. The child dances and chases bubbles and whispers to slumbering trout. What child wouldn’t choose this faery world over our world full of weeping?

Yeats’ poem is illustrated by Erin Brown who fills each page with vibrant colors and amazing details. The settings, the wildlife, the faeries and the mythical beasts all come alive on every page. Sometimes it’s a little bit like Where’s Waldo to even find the child amid all the glamour. Non-readers will study each page and find new details at every reading.

Since the entire book consists of only this one poem, the words on each page are spare. The rhythm and rhyme scheme

of the poem, though, help the words swing along, and the refrain periodically makes a satisfying bit of recognized text. This is especially helpful for the 3-6-year-old non-readers who are the intended audience of this book.

It is guaranteed the reading this beautiful book will make both you and your child completely forget about this world full of weeping.

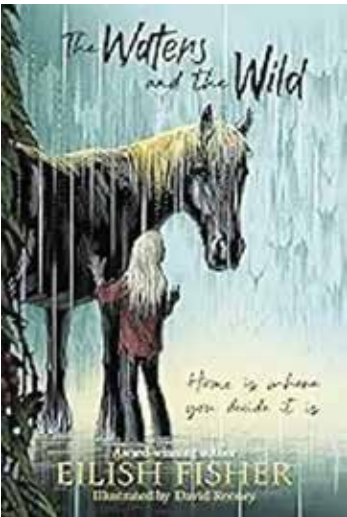
THE WATERS & THE WILD
You will probably remember Eilish Fisher as the author of Fia and the Last Snow Deer, which I told you about early last year because I loved it so much and then had to tell you about again when it won the overall prize for CBI Book of the Year. Well, Eilish has done it again! Her new book is written in verse

like Fia, but the subject matter is very different.

This book also takes some of its inspiration from the Yeats poem The Stolen Child as you can recognize from the title. The human child in question is named Rowan, and she is growing up in Arizona when we first meet her. Her beloved Irish father dies early in the book, though, and Rowan and her mother take him back to his hometown in Ireland to bury him as he wished.

From there we have a young teen dealing with loss, displacement and her mother’s grief. We also see her trying to reconcile her father’s stories about the faerie world, the banshees, pucas and merrows that are rumored to live in Ireland’s Underworld, to the day-to-day reality of a town that has built a wall to keep the faeries out. Adventures follow, of course, and Rowan proves herself to be a worthy heroine.


The weaving of the old tales in with Rowan’s quest is truly



several ways. Not only is the writing beautiful in this book, but the illustrations are also wonderful. They are done completely in grey tones and green tones. The lack of full color gives them a compelling poignancy. Illustrator, David Rooney, creatively interprets the action in the story and extends it through many full-page drawings. The personality of the horse/puca is made especially vivid in the illustrations.

This wonderful book is aimed at middle-school-aged children, but as usual with a book written in verse, it will also be very helpful to older students who struggle with reading but need a book with meaty themes to keep their attention. As with all the best children’s books, you will love this book as much as your child.

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FEBRUARY CROSSWORD ANSWERS



Did you ever wonder why February only has 28 days and not 30, or 31 like the rest of the months? It goes back to Julius Caesar over 2000 years ago. He decided that there were ten months in a year, all with having an odd number of days. This was based on astrology, superstition, and the growing season of farmers. January February were not included in the mix because nothing was happening in those months. The time that February now occupies was when the Romans honored their dead and executed prisoners. So much for Cupid and love. This was called the Julian calendar.

In 1582 Pope Gregory XIII revised the Julian calendar to 365 ¼ days and 12 months, and somehow February ended up with only 28 days, except for leap years but we’re not even going to get into that.

February is the coldest time in the Northern Hemisphere. It is neck and neck with January for the coldest month and also the snowiest, so the way I see it only makes sense to make this the shortest month and get it over with. Who wants 3 extra days of crappy weather?

When winter comes around, I tend to hibernate. The Holidays have come and gone

and I become less social. This gives me time to explore my new passion, making soup.

In less than an hour you can make a delicious pot of soup. Most of the ingredients you



need to make soup are already in your fridge, and some you throw all when we trim and peel fresh vegetables. Take broccoli for an example. Those big stalks generally end up in the bin but they have the same flavor that the more tender flowerets have. Just cut them up and put them in your food processor

and chop them up. Add some carrots, celery, onion, and a clove of garlic and process until every thing is finally chopped. That’s the base for your cream of broccoli soup, or almost any cream soup by just changing the main vegetable. It could be cauliflower, or maybe carrot and ginger, or spinach.

The possibilities are endless. Melt a couple of tablespoons

of unsalted butter in a large heavy stock pot. Add the chopped vegetables and sauté for 10 minutes over medium heat. Stir in 2 tablespoons of flour and cook 3 minutes. Add some chicken or vegetable stock to cover the vegetables by an inch and simmer for 30 to forty minutes. Blend soup with a hand blender, or pour

into a blender and puree. If soup needs to be thickened make a corn starch slurry with equal parts of corn starch and water. I would start with 2 tablespoons of each. Stir into simmering soup and stir. Add more if soup is still too thin. Finish with some heavy cream and season with salt and white pepper.

If you want broccoli and Cheddar add sharp Cheddar, a teaspoon of Dijon mustard, and a splash of Worcestershire sauce. This soup would cost \$9-\$12 in the store for a container.

This month I am going to show you how to make my recipe for

MUSHROOM AND BARLEY SOUP.

This is a very hearty soup. I use reconstituted dried mushrooms which gives the soup an amazing mushroom flavor. The only things that you may not have in your pantry are dried mushrooms, and pearly barley. These items are readily available at most grocery stores.

Recipe

Mushroom Barley Soup

Makes about 1 gallon of soup. This may seem like a lot but trust me it won’t last.

- ½ lb. pearly barley
- 10 oz diced celery
- 8 oz diced carrots
- 4 oz diced onions
- 8 oz diced Idaho potatoes
- 8 oz sliced mushrooms
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoon flour

- 2oz dried porcini mushrooms
- 1 cup water
- 64 oz chicken stock
- ½ teaspoon thyme
- ½ cup heavy cream
- ½ cup sour cream
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon white pepper
- Pinch of nutmeg

Shimeji mushrooms {Jewel usually has white or brown shimeji mushrooms for .99}

Chopped parsley

Put dried mushrooms and water in a saucepan. Heat to a boil. Cover and remove from heat. Let set for 20 minutes. After 20 minutes strain and reserve liquid. Chop dried mushrooms. Melt butter in a large heavy stock pot. Add chopped dried mushrooms, carrots, celery, onions, sliced mushrooms, and potatoes. Sauté 5 minutes until translucent. Stir in flour. Add chicken stock, and reserved mushroom liquid to the stock pot and stir. Add pearly barley and bring to a simmer. Cook for 30-40 minutes or until barley is tender, stirring occasionally to prevent soup from sticking to the bottom of the pot. Add thyme, salt, white pepper and nutmeg. When barley is tender add heavy cream and sour cream.

Garnish with white or brown shimeji mushrooms and chopped parsley.

My family loves this soup and I end up giving most of it away.

Serve with some good rye or sourdough bread and butter.

St. Brigid Day: A Call to Ecological Conversion

St. Brigid of Kildare lived in fifth-century Ireland, long before the Catholic Church established a formal canonization process. Sainthood in early medieval Ireland developed through local recognition rather than official decree, based on reputation, leadership, and lasting community impact. Brigid was widely known during her lifetime as an abbess, a female head of a monastery responsible, for spiritual leadership and day to day management of the community. The monastery grew into one of the largest and most influential monastic centers in early medieval Ireland, it functioned as a center for worship, education, agriculture, and care for the poor. While exact numbers are not recorded, historians estimate that the monastic settlement may have supported several hundred people at its peak time. Early texts such as the Vita Sanctae Brigidae (Life of St. Brigid), attributed to the 7th century Irish monk and writer Cogitosus, describe her authority, charity, and role in organizing communal life.

Brigid’s recognition as a saint was rooted in practical acts rather than martyrdom or theological writing. She

was known for distributing food during times of scarcity, managing land and livestock, and offering shelter to travelers and those in need. These acts established her reputation as a leader whose faith was expressed through service,



and the responsible use of shared resources, qualities that sustained both the monastic community and the surrounding population. By the early Middle Ages, devotion to Brigid had spread across Ireland, with churches founded in her name and her feast day observed on February 1st.

Viewed through a modern lens, Brigid’s leadership reflects principles now associated with sustainability: local food systems, shared resource management, and social responsibility during environmental and economic stress. Scholars note that early Irish monastic communities operated as self-sustaining settlements, balancing

agricultural production with community care. Today, these same principles underpin contemporary sustainability efforts, from food security and climate resilience to community-based responses to hardship.

This year’s St. Brigid Day observance offers more than cultural remembrance, it serves as a call to ecological conversion, inviting reflection, prayer, and action grounded in sustainability and care for creation. Her historical ethical framework finds contemporary expression in Laudato Si’, Pope Francis’s encyclical on care for our common home. In it, the Pope calls for an “ecological conversion”-a transformation of heart and mind that recognizes how social injustice and environmental degradation are inseparable. “Everything is related,” the encyclical reminds us, urging individuals and communities to move from awareness to

responsibility.

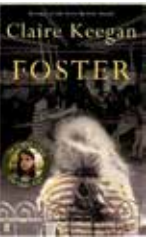
Beginning 1-24 and continuing thru March 7th, The Friends of St. Brigid at Old St. Patrick’s Church in Chicago will host its third annual series of programs honoring St. Brigid of Kildare, titled “Brigid 2026: Welcome that Heals, Hope that Empowers” featuring programs led through prayer, storytelling, art, music, service, and ecological reflection. The event kicks off with a St. Brigid cross weaving workshop, held at the Irish American Heritage Center. In a similar spirit, the Solas Bhríde, a spirituality, ecology, and social justice retreats, ecological programs, and community initiatives focused on environmental care, peacebuilding, and inclusion. Solas Bhríde works closely with local and global partners to promote sustainable land use, community wellbeing, and climate awareness, rooted in the legacy of St. Brigid.

Ireland’s designation of St. Brigid’s Day as a national public holiday in 2023 has renewed attention on Brigid’s historic association with food sharing, hospitality, and care during scarcity. In Chicago, that legacy is reflected in parish

food pantries, community kitchens, and mutual-aid networks that address food insecurity, particularly in winter. Brigid’s tradition of distributing milk and bread from the monastery at Kildare finds a modern parallel in these local food systems, which rely on shared resources, volunteers, and neighborhood partnerships. Research from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency shows that climate pressures and supply disruptions can intensify urban food insecurity, especially for low-income communities, making community-based food networks essential to resilience. St. Brigid Day-inspired efforts connect these practical responses to long-standing values of dignity, service, and collective responsibility.


St. Brigid’s Day is not simply a feast day or cultural marker. It is a reminder that sustainability is not new, nor is it purely political. It is relational, spiritual, and deeply human. As February invites planning before planting, reflection before action, the legacy of St. Brigid offers a quiet but compelling guide, care for the earth, care for one another, and let both begin close to home.

THE IRISH BOOK CLUB.COM



Books Under Review

By Sabina Clarke



Fitzgerald and Hemingway
A Dangerous Friendship

by Matthew J. Bruccoli
Carroll & Graf Publishers
New York, NY 1994

Even now more than 100 years later, Ernest Hemingway and F Scott Fitzgerald hold us in thrall as much for their personal lives as their literary achievements—and will continue to as long as books survive.

Both were prominent writers of the Jazz Age -the Roaring '20s-- a term coined by Fitzgerald that chronicled glamour and disillusionment that he captured so well in *The Great Gatsby*.

Fitzgerald, the romantic whose short life epitomized the Jazz Age and his wife Zelda were icons of the '20s living a hedonistic, carefree extravagant lifestyle that eventually ended in tragedy - his early death at 44 and and her confinement to a mental institution.

Hemingway, his contemporary - often characterized as a 'man's man' was a central figure in a group of expatriate writers in the '20s that called themselves the Lost Generation-- a term that reflected post-World War 1 disillusionment.

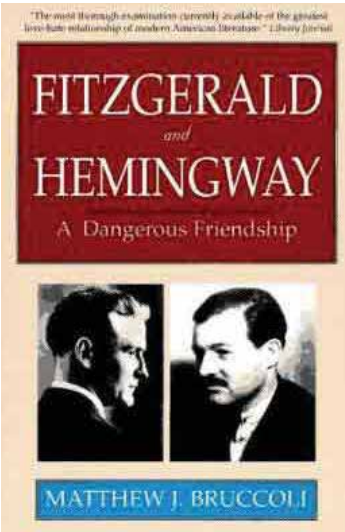
Their styles of writing could not have been more dissimilar -- Fitzgerald, likely the greater although less disciplined talent

F Scott Fitzgerald died on December 21, 1940 from a heart attack in Hollywood, California-- a city he loathed; reduced to writing screenplays that he abhorred- an alcoholic feeling like a failure with most

of his books out of print.

Ernest Hemingway died on July 2, 1961 at the age of 61 by a self-inflicted gun shot wound to the head. Hemingway's career was steady-- he remained a literary giant throughout his life winning both the Pulitzer and the Nobel Prize.

Fitzgerald was perhaps the greater genius who squandered his talent because of personal demons. He was a chronic alcoholic --- his insecurity was fueled by his constant financial struggles, his unstable, neurotic wife Zelda, an albatross around



Fitzgerald and his wife, Zelda

, was a poet; Hemingway, the realist, started his career as a journalist and was highly disciplined.

Fitzgerald was obsessed with the very rich-- his themes centered on wealth, social status and the American dream. Hemingway's rugged image that he carefully projected was also reflected in his work that focused on physical adventures, masculinity and war.

Compared to Hemingway, Fitzgerald appeared vulnerable and almost effeminate.

his neck. She taunted his masculinity and competed with him. She started intense ballet lessons in her late '20s that led to a mental breakdown and an eventual diagnosis of schizophrenia She also competed with and resented his writing and wrote her own book *Save Me the Waltz* based on their life together causing tension in their marriage since it stole material from Fitzgerald's work in progress-- *Tender is the Night*.

In contrast, despite being

married four times, Hemingway did not seem to have these domestic interferences; his work came first—even his four wives consecutively were supportive—some financially and others editorially. His prodigious drinking was under control and his work habits consistent and disciplined as compared to Fitzgerald who often passed out and became incoherent when he drank alcohol.

When they met in Paris in the '25 in the Dingo American Bar Fitzgerald was the bigger star. His debut novel *This Side of Paradise* was published in 1920. It was an immediate success and launched his career--- this was followed by *The Great Gatsby* in 1925. Hemingway was unknown as a novelist-- publishing some short stories through connections in Paris. Fitzgerald helped Hemingway get his first novel *The Sun Also Rises* published in '26. They became close friends but eventually their friendship soured.

Hemingway was frustrated by what he saw as Fitzgerald's weaknesses: his inability to hold his liquor; his domination by his wife Zelda; his lack of discipline as a writer and writing for commercial magazines which he called "whoring" his talent. Yet, he also had tremendous respect for Fitzgerald's talent.

Fitzgerald was more generous in his assessment of Hemingway calling him "the greatest living writer of our time." There are many lively and entertaining letters exchanged between them in this book yet Fitzgerald who was perhaps the more honest emotionally of the two-- notes that "we were not really friends since '26."

Hemingway ultimately betrayed Fitzgerald when he published a short story in *Esquire* magazine in '36 that mentioned "poor Scott Fitzgerald wrecked by his romantic awe of the rich". This was in the same magazine that Fitzgerald wrote about his nervous breakdown in a three part series of confessional essays called *The Crack-Up*.

Both men were drawn to each other by a mutual admiration of their talent. From this telling - the author's portrayal of both in this book, Fitzgerald was the kinder of the two in his personal assessment of Hemingway; Hemingway was harsher; he criticized Fitzgerald as weak and a coward.

In his posthumously published Paris memoir, *A Moveable Feast*, Hemingway recalls his first meeting with Fitzgerald: "The first time I ever met Scott Fitzgerald a very strange thing happened. Many strange things happened with Scott but

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this one I was never able to forget. He had come into the Dingo bar in the rue Delambre where I was sitting with some completely worthless characters, had introduced himself and introduced a tall, pleasant man who was with him as Dunc Chaplin, the famous pitcher. I had not followed Princeton baseball and had never heard of Dunc Chaplin, but he was extraordinarily nice, unworried, relaxed and friendly and I much preferred him to Scott."

Hemingway portrays Fitzgerald as a "drunk, a weakling, a hypochondriac, a fool, an irresponsible writer, a nuisance, sexually insecure, and wife dominated-- and ridicules his tie."

Bruccoli notes that "Hemingway needed a claque, Fitzgerald needed heroes." "Hemingway," says Bruccoli, "had a compulsion to declare his independence from, or non-indebtedness to writers who could be said to have helped or influenced him while Fitzgerald maintained his literary friendships - and preserved the forms of friendship with Hemingway and all his other literary friends.

The author examines the Fitzgerald / Hemingway friendship through the lens of the letters they exchanged; their comments about each other in other correspondence and particularly with their editor Maxwell Perkins.

Beyond their writing, there has been a public fascination

with both writers. According to Bruccoli, they "dramatized themselves—acting out their own mythologies. One played the ruined writer; the other played the titan." By the time they met-- their styles of writing were formed—their bond was their shared ideal about the value of literature.

Hemingway's memoir, says Bruccoli, was written during his dark years. A more accurate assessment of their relationship is the letters exchanged during the earlier years of their friendship in the '20s that are lighthearted and full of banter and genuine affection.

Hemingway, observes Bruccoli, was "ruthless in his judgment of people. As a man who proclaimed a strict code of conduct, he had no empathy for weakness." Hemingway was disgusted with Fitzgerald's drinking behavior and appalled by what he saw as Zelda Fitzgerald's domination of her husband and interference in his work as "Hemingway's work came before all things."

Although Hemingway's letters do not show that he respected Fitzgerald, they do reveal a high opinion of his talent. Referring to Fitzgerald he said, "He is the great tragedy of talent in our bloody generation."

Theirs was a complicated and fascinating friendship from a personal standpoint and for its historical literary significance. Their correspondence offers an intimate peek into the lives of the two most important writers of their generation.



Chicago Gaelic Park Opens

By Christine Fettig

On November 20th, the Thursday before Thanksgiving, 400 people arrived at Chicago Gaelic Park for the Opening Event. They came through the doors of the Tara Room as club mates, Irish community supporters, GAA representatives, original/past and current Gaelic Park Board, Directors and members. Employees, volunteers of the venue, couples, families, neighbors, friends and family of the same filled the room along with representation from Chicago's Ireland Consulate.

Finally, this projects Phase 1 objective was ready to be seen. This exhibit display honors those who fought years of being “no fixed abode” to finally having a permanent home. The physical scope of work includes thirty-five unique club shadowboxes, both past and present, amongst floor to ceiling wall graphics, the life-size action images, all are of Chicago players. A timeline calls attention to our marketplaces North American title years. Before this spring, the Chicago titles for each club and their history will be added.

When arriving to the event, the Opening Sponsors shared tastings of their products, Limavady Irish Whiskey and Mojo Coffee. Hors d'Oeuvres were passed between high and low tables and since the standard of this project in true Chicago fashion was high, it was only fitting for the linens to be gold.

A few short speeches were followed by the release of groups by committee Chairperson, MaryTherese Murphy. She released each Club, in short time intervals, allowing cameras to catch the raw emotions as the community for the first time was witnessing the vast amount of historical artifacts that had been collected over time, most in the specific call to action over the past year.

Once released, everyone approached and entered the hall quietly. There were tears. Many were silent, others with joy, some required putting a hand on a nearby shoulder. Some of the things you did hear while walking were “This is amazing.”, “Oh wow. Look there’s my grandfather.”, “This is not at all what I expected, it’s unbelievable”. and “I have never seen a photo of my Aunt in her Camogie gear”. Emotions were high, heartfelt and then it became loud as onlookers began to share stories while pointing.

Smiles from ear to ear were seen, pints were carried and sipped, people were laughing. Everyone’s guard was down which is typical when together rooted in Irish community, very different from when in gear on the pitch and competing in matches even amongst our own hometown clubs.

John Barrett, Corkman, an original investor in Gaelic Park, who has served on every possible capacity within

this community was proudly greeting folks and shaking hands at the entrance. Original club meeting notes drafted by him can be seen in the hallway. “This is mind-blowing”.

The exhibit includes an L-shaped trophy/cup display case where the hallway turns about midway down the hall. Visually the short return of the case will grab your curiosity from over 125 feet away. You can see it from the old public pay phone still hanging on the wall outside the General Managers office, toward the front of the building. That visual of the exhibit case is purposeful, it will cause you to walk into the hall to check it out. The case has a color-coded map of Ireland, equipment, floored with astroturf meant to replicate the grass on the pitch. The case is also is loaded with hardware, some standing on pedestals on shelves, including a few that are genuine silver. One being from the 1909, The O’Connell Championship cup, a Limerick Hurling Club in honor of Mike Fitzgerald. The NACB Jr. C. Hurling Cup, the first of many won by Michael Cusaks, no longer sits on a shelf in a garage. The artifacts in this display case will have rotation changes allowing special features and different themes.

The St. Vincent’s Hurling Shadowbox displays a jersey, worn by Eamonn Kelly, original raffle and dinner dance tickets, a Chicago Championship medal, submitted by Liam O’Brien’s family. It’s one of many artifacts that were submitted by his daughter. O’Brien, a very proud GAA man had a vision for this Hall of History project to happen one day, he spoke often of the dream like others. What folks do not know is that he started an Excel spreadsheet, had begun collecting artifacts and notating who gave them. He called it a “Memory Jogger”, it was discovered in envelope that was dropped into Gaelic Park office and displayed in the exhibit. His daughter Jen, wasn’t aware this project was even happening and so it was an emotional surprise to see these envelopes when the committee checked the bin that week. A player registration sheet from 1976 that has 111 Hurlers was in that pile. That’s not a typo, one-hundred-eleven registered players and this sheet is on display in the same shadowbox. O’Brien was affiliated for short time with St. Vincent’s Club. Many of his Kilkenny mates hurled with the Harry Bolands and so at some time came a shift in club colors for O’Briens jersey and registration to the same.

The Harry Bolands shadowbox displays 7 Chicago and North American medals donated by also donated by O’Brien’s daughter, to honor her Father. The jersey on the left side in the case, is 70+ years old, it’s thought to be the oldest jersey in North America worn by Jim McLoughlin and was collected by Willie Joe Casey

Chicago GAA - Hall of History!

when home in Ireland last summer. When Jim heard about the project, he called to American and “I have this old jersey and I would love for it to be a part of this great honor”.

Limerick’s Jersey Box includes medals from 1977 and 2008 donated to honor David Quaid, by his daughter, Maria Maloney. This family has been 4th generations of being involved in clubs and competing for Chicago. Maria was an Erin’s Rover, player, manager and remains a huge supporter. Quaid’s grandsons (Sean & David) were players as well. His great-niece Christina, Erin Rover, now has her daughter playing with the youth which pushes them to a 5th generation.

“The committee did an outstanding job and exceeded our expectations in honoring Chicago GAA’s proud history. Chicago Gaelic Park’s story cannot be told without the Chicago GAA. The hall is a great addition to Chicago Gaelic Park. ” - Bill O’Sullivan, President of the Board of Directors at Chicago Gaelic Park

James Staunton, a Parnell, active with youth clubs and Chicago GAA Vice Chairperson Board, said when you leave this room and go out to the hall, it’s absolutely fabulous.

Bill Casey, in the committee’s finance role, amongst other tasks, a former Celtic in the 90’s said from the podium, “Just a few weeks ago, the hallway behind me was just that, a hallway. Today, it’s a showpiece, a place of pride for all to see. I’d like to thank our Opening Sponsors and Chicago Gaelic Park. As well, the USGAA, Munster Council, Chicago GAA and Clubs who made contributions. Chicago Cut Steakhouse, thank you for donating a table for dinner of ten, a value of \$10,000 as a raffle prize. I was honored to be a part of this”.

Tom Dolan, shared committee Chairperson for this project, long time GAA man, 40 year volunteer at Gaelic Park, closed out the event by thanking everyone for coming and stated “This is for the generations that are coming behind us. It’s for the young kids. They can walk down that hall read a bit of history and say “that’s my uncle, my aunt, my grandpa, or my nana”.

Phase 2, the digital experience will take a minimum of 12-18 months to build out, and is in motion. It will be accessible via a large digital monitor that will hang the hall. The goal is to create the largest marketplace archive of GAA history in North America. Not everything a club submitted can be displayed in a shadowbox, especially with some to the longevity of the clubs. Photographing these artifacts and incorporating search opportunities on a digital platform will allow

all newspaper articles, photographs and other items to be tagged a create this database. Someday this will transition to connect the current digital age which today’s clubs share their photos and memories and hoisting of cups.

This phase will also incorporate a program that includes volunteers/docents to walk scheduled groups down the hall, like school field trips or visiting members of other cultural arms of the Gaelic Park Community. Someone who may have grown up Irish dancing or involved with The Gaelic Players may be able to introduce the games to someone that may otherwise have missed the opportunity.

Once a dream, now a reality, a showcase of 100+ years of Gaelic Games while giving a not to head out the doors to the pitch, with words above that say “More history to be made - through these doors -

After 100+ years of Gaelic Games being played in Chicago with Gaelic Park being their forever home, the past 40 years, the hallway designated for this exhibit that has been talked about for a decade is now Open for all to see, with no cost for admission.

If you or someone you know have submittals, please drop them into the office at Gaelic Park during regular scheduled business hours.

For More Information: Visit & Subscribe To: www.chicagogaahallofhistory.us
Follow our Socials. Media walks are being scheduled. Corporate Sponsorships are being accepted.
Christine Fetting 630-930-9117

“The opportunity to be behind this Creative Design, Fabrication and Project Management has been a top honor. As an American who was invited to play football in my 20’s, I’m glad I was able to come back, replicate the excitement I felt winning Chicago(s) and a North American Title, with this exhibit. I am lucky to have experienced those feelings in gear, even luckier to have worked alongside a great committee, who trusted the process and desired to create a display to pay tribute to the early generations, where youth will be inspired, others can learn about the games, and everyone is Irish Proud, Chicago Proud when walking the exhibit hall” - Christine Fetting



This month we head to Co. Wicklow, a mountainous and serene county. Co. Wicklow will be my final article, my last column, it is bittersweet.

I have truly enjoyed writing about Ireland and hearing from readers and where their families come from.

Co. Wicklow is bordered by the Irish Sea; it is known as the garden of Ireland. It gained that name because of its scenery, nature trails, beaches and ancient ruins.

St. Kevin was born in Wicklow. He founded the ancient monastery of Glendalough. Glendalough, with its seven churches, is a popular pilgrimage destination. The famous poet, Seamus Heaney wrote a poem titled, St Kevin and the Blackbird. (how a blackbird lands in his palm and builds a nest) St. Kevin is mentioned several times in James Joyces, Finnegans Wake.

The Wicklow mountains are legendary they are the largest continuous highland area in Ireland. The mountains are a major attraction for tourists; there are songs written about the mountains. Christy Moore has sung several songs related to Wicklow. One of the songs is "the lost tribes of the Wicklow mountains."

Sadly, Wicklow was the first county to lose the Irish language, with only 2% of people speaking it in the 1700's.

The famous Parnell Family came from Co. Wicklow. (Charles Stewart Parnell was known as Ireland's uncrowned King)

Wicklow is known for making the traditional Blackthorn walking stick. In Irish folklore the blackthorn stick (shillelagh) symbolizes strength, resilience and Irish identity. It is believed to ward off evil spirits and bring luck, while also serving as a weapon and a symbol of authority, linked to ancient magic. Made from



the blackthorn tree, it was a practical tool, a status symbol, and a spiritual guardian, associated with warriors and druids.

I will close with an Irish Blessing.
"May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
The rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of his hand.

May God be with you and bless you:
May you see your children's children.
May you be poor in misfortune, rich in blessings.
May you know nothing but happiness
From this day forward.

May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind be always at your back.
May the warm rays of sun fall upon your home,
And may the land of a friend always be near.

May green be the grass you walk on,
May blue be the skies above you,
May pure be the joys that surround you,

May true be the hearts that love you.
(Author Unknown)

A big THANK YOU is in order as Tom Butler retires from writing this column.

Over the last 10 years or so, he has written about every county in Ireland, and given us something to think about when he closes each story. All of his columns can be found on our website at www.irishamericannews.com under the BACK ISSUES TAB at the top of the website.

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GETTING TO KNOW THE IRISH!
By Tina Butler - Leonard

This month I would like to highlight a singer from Co. Cork, **Annmarie O'Riordan. (pictured)**

My aunt Gertrude from Galway loved Annmarie. I learned about Annmarie from my aunt. There is another singer with the same last name, you may remember Dolores O'Riordan from the Cranberries. (Rip, 2018) the name O'Riordan means royal poet.

Annmarie O'Riordan is a folk, country and sean-nos singer. She comes from Cork, the Rebel County, the largest county in Ireland & home to Titanic's last port, Cobh.

My aunt especially loved the song, "Caledonia". The ancient Roman name for Scotland and some still use today to describe Scotland in a romantic reference.

Many people have sung Caledonia such as Dolores Keane, Sir Sean Connery, (he was a part of an advertisement for Scotland) Nathan Carter, Nina Nesbitt, and our favorite Annmarie O'Riordan.

I spoke to Annmarie, we had a lovely chat about her life, her work, her passion and the future. She is incredibly warm, articulate and genuine. Annmarie is a primary school teacher, farmer and singer. She is multi-talented! A very busy lady to juggle all of those responsibilities.

I asked her why she chose to get into music? She, states, "music has been a part of her life for as long as she can remember. Her teacher entered her in the Millstreet Feile Cheoil singing competition, she was only five, and she won! She received her first gold medal that day! She is thankful for how early and how much encouragement she has received along the way."

I asked who are your heroes? She states," her family and credits her parents and grandparents for her inspiration and love of music. Her parents, Eileen and Humphrey brother Johnjoe and her maternal late grandparents Mary and Danjoe had a

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great influence on her. Her father Humphrey played the button accordion."

I asked how would you describe your style? She states," it's a mix of sean-nos, folk and country. She loves songs that tell a story. She relishes the feedback and stories from her fans, the connection with her audience means the world to her."

I would like to explain Annmarie's singing style sean-nos for anyone unfamiliar. It means in the old way, it's unaccompanied traditional Irish singing (from 13c) usually in the Irish language. A few examples of sean-os songs include, Oro se do bheatha bhaile (oh your welcome home), casadh an tsugain (twisting of the rope), mo chile mear (my gallant darling), paddy's lament (about emigration).

I asked, when you're not making music what do you do. She states," I am a teacher and a farmer. She recently completed a master's degree, in Christian Leadership in Education. She also enjoys vintage cars and going to car shows."



Thank you, Annmarie O'Riordan! We can't wait for you to come to Chicago! Failte mhor romhat

Smidin Gaeilge
Singer-amhranai, song-amhran, music-ceol, farmer-feirmeoir, teacher-muinteoir

"The most beautiful music of all is the music of what happens".

Irish proverb

If you have any questions/ comments, please email me at: molanive@yahoo.com

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Good news from the 83rd Golden Globes, where Killarney-born actress Jessie Buckley won the award for Best Female Actor in a Motion Picture - Drama for her role in Hamnet, a story that looks at the tragic inspiration behind Shakespeare's Hamlet.

She beat Julia Roberts and Jennifer Lawrence, among others, and is surely the Oscar favorite now too. More than that, it seems like she's now the front runner to play the next Bond girl in the new James Bond movie.

Amazon MGM Studios now own the franchise, and director Denis Villeneuve (Dune, Blade Runner 2049, Arrival, Sicario) and writer Steven Knight (House of Guinness, Peaky Blinders) already on board, we should expect a cracker - whenever it comes, and whenever the new 007 is announced.

No similar luck for her co-star Paul Mescal, who was born in Maynooth, and awards were shared out pretty evenly between movies, with three for One Battle After Another directed by Paul Thomas Anderson, while dramatic British TV series Adolescence won four - all the acting awards in the category, and Best Series.

Two other definite Irish winners in the future - at the 20th annual Oscar Wilde Awards - are director Lee Cronin, who was born in the seaside town of Skerries, just outside Dublin, and whose debut horror movie The Hole was a critical hit in 2019. It was followed by Evil Dead Rise in 2023, which earned \$150 million worldwide, and coming up soon is The Mummy, which will be released worldwide in April.

Joining Cronin and actress Laura Tierney is actor Domhnall Gleeson as the final recipient of a "Wilde" at the US-Ireland Alliance event.

The son of legendary actor Brendan, Dubliner Domhnall is the lead in the current NBCU series The Paper, a mockumentary that sees the same documentary crew who followed the employees of The Office now searching for a new subject. They chose the historic but struggling fictional Toledo newspaper, The Truth Teller, and Gleeson plays Ned Samson, the idealistic Editor-in-Chief determined to revive the failing enterprise.

He's been on the big screen quite often, in Academy Award-winning Irish short Six Shooter in 2004, and subsequently in Never Let Me Go, True Grit, Ex Machina, The Revenant, About Time, and several of the more recent Star Wars movies, among many others. To many of a certain age however, he's "Bill Weasley" from Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows.

If you want something Irish to watch right now, then get onto YouTube and check out the trailer for unique Irish-set horror movie Hokum, which is directed by Damian McCarthy and stars Severance actor Adam Scott as a novelist who heads to a remote inn where he is consumed by the frightening tale that locals told him about a resident witch.

The cast also includes Peter Coonan, David Wilmot, Florence Ordesch, Will O'Connell, Michael Patric and Brendan Conroy, and principal photography took place in West Cork.

In casting news, Eve Hewson (daughter of U2's Bono) has joined the cast of Steven Spielberg's new sci-fi project Disclosure Day, his first movie in several years. The cast also includes Emily Blunt, Josh O'Connor, Colin Firth, and Colman Domingo, and while Hewson's role isn't known, the story is about what happens if when we find out that we're not alone in the universe. Hewson is currently on the big screen in the George Clooney-

starrer, Jay Kelly.
Finally, Dublin actor Andrew Scott will be starring alongside Oscar-winner Olivia Colman in Elsinore, which is described as the "powerful and inspiring true story of the actor Ian Charleson (Chariots of Fire, Gandhi), as

he gets ready to give the performance of his life in Hamlet at the National Theatre in London."

If all goes to plan, Elsinore will have started shooting by the time you read this, and that's all for this month: Happy Valentine's Day to all of you!



Andrew Scott and Olivia Colman

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ST. PATRICK'S DAY 2026 IN CHICAGO WITH THE IRISH FELLOWSHIP CLUB

The Irish Fellowship Club of Chicago will celebrate St. Patrick's Day Weekend with the 125th Annual St. Patrick's Day Dinner on Friday, March 13, 2026 at the Hilton Chicago. For 125 years, the Irish Fellowship Club has been the civic kick-off for St. Patrick's Day in Chicago. This year's dinner will be chaired by IFC Board Member, Michael G. (Mick) O'Rourke, President and CEO of Signature Bank. Cocktails will begin at 6pm with dinner at 7:30pm with dancing to the Rich Daniels Orchestra following.

The Dinner provides important funding for the Irish Fellowship Club Education and Cultural Foundation. Says IFC President Devon Bruce of Power Rogers, "Our sponsors, table and ticket buyers are essential to the success of this great event. We appreciate their generosity which enables the IFC to support Catholic High Schools and Irish cultural organizations in Chicago." Sponsorships, tables and tickets are available on the Irish Fellowship Club website: www.irishfellowshipclub.com.

Dinner Chairman Mick O'Rourke comments, "The Irish Fellowship Club is delighted to celebrate the Irish community and the fellowship of the Club at the St. Patrick's Day Dinner." The Dinner will honor the Grand Marshal of the St. Patrick's Day Parade, Fr. Tom McCarthy, OSA of the Augustinian Order and the Guest of Honor of the Parade, the Shannon Rovers, in recognition of their 100th Anniversary.

The Irish Fellowship Club St. Patrick's Day Dinner will also recognize the outstanding leadership of IFC Chairman, Fr. Jack Clair, President/Executive Director of Misericordia Home with the Richard J. Daley Award. Fr. Jack served as the President of the Club in 2025. Says Executive Director Kathy Taylor, "It is a pleasure to serve with Fr. Jack. His commitment to our Catholic High Schools has been wonderful and his focus on building the fellowship of the Irish community in Chicago has led the Irish Fellowship Club and Foundation to greater success."

The St. Patrick's Day celebration continues on March 14 with the Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade and the dyeing of the Chicago River sponsored by the Plumbers Local 130UA, all led by the IFC's own past Chairman, Jim Coyne. The Parade will kick-off from the corner of Balbo and Columbus Drive with the theme of Faith, Peace & Joy. The Irish Fellowship Club will have a float and marching group and invite members and their guests to join us.

To provide sponsorships or buy tables or tickets, visit the Irish Fellowship Club website at www.irishfellowshipclub.com, or contact Executive Director, Kathy Taylor at Irishfellowshipclub@gmail.com.



Mark Schmeltzer, Peter O'Brien, Fr. Scott Donahue, and Mick O'Rourke at the IFC Dinner 2025

Join the Irish Fellowship Club! New Member Application

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Marcy Twardak, Minister MacNeill, Fr. Jack Clair, and Clete Kiley. Grand Ballroom at the Hilton



IFC Jim Coyne with 2025 Grand Marshall Mark McManus and the Shannon Rovers

Every year, we Irish celebrate Little Women's Christmas, marked on January 6th. It is a day dedicated to the women who worked tirelessly throughout the Christmas season—cooking, cleaning, caring for families—and who finally get a little time to themselves.

(Ladies only!)
Recently, I came across the story of a remarkable woman who felt especially fitting for this day. She helped change and modernise the layout of kitchens, making daily life easier for women everywhere—all while raising twelve children of her own. That immediately caught my attention, as my own Donegal mother also raised twelve children. I thought you might enjoy her story too. The lady who invented the kitchen.

The Remarkable Story of Lillian Moller Gilbreth
Lillian Moller Gilbreth was one of the most influential figures in the history of modern work, though for much of her life she was known simply as “Mrs. Frank B. Gilbreth.” Behind that modest title was a pioneering psychologist, engineer, author, and mother of twelve—one of the first women to permanently change how we think about efficiency, human behaviour, and everyday life.

Lillian was born in Oakland, California, in 1878, the second of nine children in a comfortable and supportive family. From a young age, she showed a strong love of learning and a sharp, questioning mind. She attended the University of California, Berkeley, where she studied literature, philosophy, and psychology—subjects that would later shape her revolutionary approach to work and family life. At a time when very few

women pursued higher education, she went on to earn a doctorate in psychology from Brown University, becoming one of the first women in the United States to do so.

In 1904, she married Frank B. Gilbreth, a brilliant and energetic engineer who was already studying how people performed tasks. Frank believed that any job—whether laying bricks or washing dishes—could be broken down into individual motions, studied carefully, and improved. When Lillian joined him, something powerful happened: science met psychology.

Together, the Gilbreths became leaders in what was known as scientific management, though their approach differed greatly from others of the time. While many efficiency experts focused purely on speed and output, Lillian insisted that human beings—not machines—were at the heart of every system. She brought empathy, psychology, and concern for wellbeing into a field that had been dominated by cold measurement.

They developed what became known as time and motion studies, observing tasks closely and eliminating unnecessary movements. Their work

reduced fatigue, increased safety, and made jobs less physically and mentally exhausting. One of their most famous contributions was the idea of “therbligs”—Frank's name spelled backwards—which identified basic human motions such as reaching, grasping, and turning. This allowed tasks to be redesigned in simpler, more natural ways.

But Lillian was doing something

world that did not take women seriously. Many assumed her career would end. Instead, it truly began.

She stepped forward as head of the consulting firm, lecturing, publishing, and negotiating contracts under her own name. She became one of the first women accepted into engineering societies and later joined Purdue University as the first female professor on the engineering faculty. There, she taught generations of engineers to consider human needs alongside technical systems.

One of her most lasting contributions was her work in home and kitchen design. By studying how women worked in kitchens and laundries, she realised how poorly many spaces and appliances were designed. Her research helped shape modern kitchen layouts—counter heights, efficient work areas, and appliance placement—many of which we still rely on today. She also advised companies like General Electric on making household products safer and easier to use.

Despite her many achievements, Lillian remained deeply devoted to her family. She lived to be 92 years old, witnessing a world transformed by the principles she helped create. When she died in 1972, her influence could be found everywhere—from factory floors to offices and, most importantly, in the heart of the home.

Lillian Gilbreth's legacy is not just about productivity. It is about compassion woven into science. She showed us that systems should serve people, not the other way around—something every woman who ever ran a busy household already understood.

A little inspiration to get us through this dreary winter
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I love that thought.



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Irish-Born Daniel Whelan Has Become One of the Elite Punters In NFL History In Just 3 Years

Irish-born punter Daniel Whelan's NFL season came to an end when the Chicago Bears defeated the Green Bay Packers in the final moments of an electrifying game on Wild Card Weekend on January 10. It was Whelan's third full season in the Packers' famous 'Green and Gold.' In 2023 and 2024 his stats were stellar as he made the position his own, but in 2025 he took things to a different level entirely.

By the Numbers
Whelan's punting numbers stand out even by NFL standards, but when measured against previous single-season records in Green Bay, they border on the extraordinary.

The Packers punter finished the 2025 season with 49 punts for 2,533 gross yards, averaging 51.7 yards per kick—a figure that now sits alone atop the franchise record book.

Those numbers are all the more impressive given the conditions in which they were achieved. Punting at Lambeau Field is widely regarded as one of the league's toughest assignments, with swirling winds and plunging late-season temperatures often disrupting even elite specialists. Unlike punters who benefit from domed home stadiums, Whelan regularly faced the elements and still produced consistently elite results.

Whelan's splits remained remarkably steady. Across 13 outdoor games, he averaged 50.3 yards per punt, compared to 54.8 yards in four games played under a roof. He maintained an average above 50 yards in every month of the season and came close to that mark at Lambeau Field itself, averaging 49.2 yards at home versus 53.3 on the road.

That consistency translated into historic results. Whelan's 51.7-yard gross punting average tied for the NFL lead when rounded to the nearest tenth, matching Arizona's Blake Gillikin, who played just five games before landing on injured reserve. More significantly, it obliterated the Packers' previous single-season record.

That mark had been held by Corey Bojorquez, who averaged 46.5 yards per punt in 2021. Whelan surpassed it by more than five yards—a staggering margin at the professional level. He had flirted with the record in previous seasons, averaging 46.2 yards in 2023 and 46.1 in 2024, before breaking through emphatically in 2025.

Beyond franchise history, Whelan's season also stacks up among the best the league has ever seen. His gross average ranks third all-time among qualifying NFL punters. Only Tennessee's Ryan Stonehouse has posted higher figures, averaging 53.1 yards in both 2022 and 2023.

Whelan also rewrote the Packers' record book in net punting average, which accounts for returns and touchbacks. The previous franchise benchmark belonged to Justin Vogel, who averaged a net 41.6 yards in 2017. Whelan surpassed that mark comfortably, finishing 2025 with a net average of 44.3 yards.

League-wide, Whelan's net average ranked fourth in 2025. Only Baltimore's Jordan Stout (44.9), Indianapolis' Rigoberto Sanchez (44.7)



Daniel and his father

and Minnesota's Ryan Wright (44.5) finished ahead of him.

Taken together, the numbers point to a season that was not only great, but historically so—and achieved under some of the league's most demanding punting conditions.

26-year-old Whelan was born and raised in Enniskerry, County Wicklow. At the age of 13 he moved, with his family, to Palm Springs, California. As a teenager in Ireland he was an avid sports player.

"I pretty much played every sport. When I came to the States, at about 16 years old, the coach asked me to try out for the football team. And I got the kicking job," he explained.

It was only when he later attended the University of California, Davis and played college football that he began to consider the possibility of a career in the NFL.

"I really wasn't thinking (about football) that much until I kept getting a little bit better each year. And then I was like, okay, maybe I do have a chance. I switched my focus to basically just football for the rest of college to try and do the best I could," he says.

After a brief stint playing in Canada, Whelan first signed for the Packers in 2023, becoming the first Irish-born NFL player to play in a regular season game in 40 years.

In September last year he signed a three year contract extension worth nearly \$7 million, making him one of the highest paid punters in the league.

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Trinity Irish Dance Company Coming to the Auditorium With World Premiere Work 2-28

35 Years of Genre-Defying Innovation

Chicago's own Trinity Irish Dance Company (TIDC) is in the midst of final preparations for their milestone 35th Anniversary Season - they will soon be on their way to New York City for a seven-show run at The Joyce Theater, one of the world's most storied dance forums on 8th Ave.

On February 28th, they will return home - bringing their renowned legacy and percussive power home to the iconic Auditorium for a one-night-only performance, featuring a mixed repertoire program with highlights including the world premiere of Pasture Bedtime, Bleating Hearts by Jamey Hampton and Ashley Roland of BodyVox, the Chicago premiere of SÉseacht (shay-shokht) by tap choreographer and MacArthur Genius Grant recipient Michelle Dorrance in collaboration with the dancers, and the Auditorium debut of The Sash by Founding Artistic Director Mark Howard, Associate Artistic Director Chelsea Hoy and contemporary choreographer Stephanie Martinez.

Led by the consistent pioneering vision of Mark Howard in partnership with Chelsea Hoy, and called "sophisticated and commanding" by The *Los Angeles Times* and "a stunning program of groundbreaking dance" by *Broadway World*, this company of international performing artists returns home to The Auditorium amidst their landmark 35th Anniversary season - fresh off their 5th engagement at New York City's Joyce Theater and their recent debut at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, which made history for the global Irish community this past July. TIDC's performances marked the first time a full program of Irish dance was presented on the Ted Shawn Theatre stage in the festival's 93-year history.

TIDC was founded in 1990 as a creative forum to celebrate Howard's unique vision to fuse vibrant Irish traditions with ever-evolving American innovation. In the late 80s and early 90s, Howard's distinct movement genre "progressive Irish dance" broke new ground for the form, leading to a global commercial reaction to his early work. Despite the widespread commercialization of Irish dance, Howard and TIDC have stayed true to their original mission of elevating the form through an integrity-filled, artistic lens, allowing the work to morph and evolve while keeping a clear lineage to the ancestors. Considered an international treasure by critics and enthusiasts, TIDC continues to carve new traditions as they push the boundaries of the art form.

"Trinity Irish Dance Company has been the trailblazing force for Irish dance, and in their 35th year, they remain at the cutting edge of what is possible for this traditional form in the 21st century. They achieve what commercial Irish dance shows do not: a powerful combination of genuine innovation, cultural depth and authentic artistry with exceptional technical range," describes tap choreographer Michelle Dorrance.

TIDC's one-night-only performance will feature

a mixed repertoire program that celebrates the evolution of the company's versatility and range and the global impact of this 35-year old pioneering legacy, featuring original live music by TIDC's band, fronted by Killarney-native, New-York based Brenoshea. Premieres will include the world premiere of Pasture Bedtime, Bleating Hearts created and directed by Jamey Hampton and Ashley Roland, co-artistic directors of BodyVox, a dance theater company based in Portland, Oregon. As alumni of PILOBOLUS, MOMIX, and iso Dance, Hampton and Roland's unparalleled imaginations have taken them around the world, leading to everything from choreographing the Oscars to multiple Emmy Awards. Pasture Bedtime, Bleating Hearts celebrates the versatility of TIDC's artists through Hampton and Roland's distinct wit, whimsy, and theatrical physicality. Combining film and live dance and music, Pasture Bedtime, Bleating Hearts



breaks new ground in fertile soil.

"Against the backdrop of the heavy times we are living in, Jamey and Ashley's expertise and finely honed sense of the ridiculous provide the perfect dollop of whimsy that our company and audiences need. They truly embody their tag line: 'optimism in motion,' and give us permission to not take the most innovative Irish dance company in the world - or life - too seriously," describes Mark Howard.

Fresh off its world premiere in New York City, the company will present the Chicago premiere of SÉseacht (shay-shokht), created and directed by renowned tap choreographer and MacArthur Genius Grant recipient Michelle Dorrance and choreographed in collaboration with the dancers. SÉseacht is a rhythmic tour-de-force using exclusively TIDC's unique vocabulary of Irish step dance, complemented by

original music by TIDC's four live musicians.

"Michelle has invited dancers to share the edges of what's possible for our form - percussively, virtuosically, and technically. We're jumping in and out of time signatures not commonly enjoyed in the Irish tradition, rooting ourselves in rhythms both tribal and complex," shares Hoy, assistant director on the work and one of 14 dancers in the premiere cast.

The Auditorium debut of The Sash, choreographed by Howard, Hoy, and guest contemporary choreographer Stephanie Martinez. Set to a rousing score by Northern Irish composer Kevin Sharkey's, and bringing to life his dream inspired by his childhood during the 'Northern Ireland Troubles,' The Sash fuses Irish precision, traditions, and history with contemporary flair, reminding audiences that unity is stronger than conflict while presenting an unprecedented movement vocabulary. The Sash "brings the virtuosity and versatility of TIDC's artists to a new level" (*Irish Central*), and features dialogue from the hit television series Derry Girls as well as spoken text provided by acclaimed Irish actress Eva Birthistle of the famed television series Bad Sisters.

In reaction to The Sash, Howard has been celebrated as "a choreographer of striking originality" (*Dance Enthusiast*). The son of an Irish father and a British mother, although admittedly an outsider, Chicago-raised Howard approaches the subject matter with authenticity and a unique perspective. "He has been massively respectful to the roots of the story. He's a Celtic Warrior - a Warrior poet," says composer Sharkey.

"The Sash is a revelation. As an Irish man who loves my country's traditions, I am grateful for the Trinity Irish Dance Company's unwavering commitment to evolve this ancestral art form with integrity. Their work honors the ancestors of a country that is rich in meaningful culture. Mark Howard has always insisted on allowing the form to speak for itself instead of being stuck in a formulaic commercialized box- a vision born out of his bold ambition and high taste level. This work needs to be seen in Ireland." -Denis Neville, Kerry-native and a member of TIDC's Board of Directors.

The program includes the Chicago premiere of Sofía, a duet featuring groundbreaking newcomer Sofía Dorantes of Querétaro, Mexico, and Patrick Grant of Toronto, Canada, who recently won a solo world championship gold medal for Canada, alongside additional formative works by Howard, including Soles, Black Rose, and Push. The company's international roster of dancers and musicians reflects TIDC's global reach, with artists hailing from the U.S., Mexico, Canada, and Ireland. Additional international artists include Francisco Lemus (Puebla), named in *Dance Magazine's* 2025 "Top 25 to Watch", Saori Nakasone Nakamurakari (Mexico City), and Meaghan Kilmartin (Montreal), and Kylie Paliani (London, Ontario).

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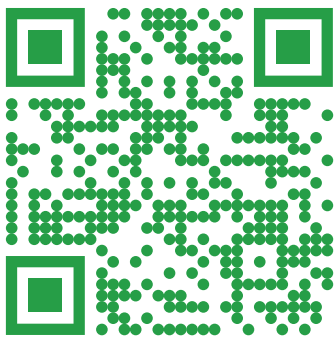
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