



# Caroleann Gallagher

## First Irish President

of the  
**Women's Bar Association of Illinois**

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**Hamnet: Hats off to Chloé Zhao**

Literary adaptations face a headwind when attempting to attract the masses. A well-honed phrase, a simile or an insight may endure for centuries. But a scene featuring Tom Cruise jumping in mid-air from one aeroplane onto another puts far more bums on seats (and maybe even his own). It is a remarkable feat when a work of literature bridges the divide between mass appeal and seriousness. That is something that playwright and theatre share-holder William Shakespeare managed with unmatched accomplishment in his day - and his shade has done so ever since. So, it is fitting that a new film by Chloé Zhao, *Hamnet*, which imaginatively reframes the origins of Hamlet,

**View From Ireland**

By Maurice Fitzpatrick



**Fuel shortage worries compel Aer Lingus to cut over 500 Flights for maintenance**



should be doing just that. The film is based on *Hamnet*, Irish-born Maggie O'Farrell's eponymous novel, which was lauded with the Women's Prize for Fiction in 2020.

*Hamnet*, named after Shakespeare's son, is compellingly led by two Irish actors, Jessie Buckley and Paul Mescal. Both individually strong, together they have delivered performances in *Hamnet* that manage to illuminate Shakespeare's text and the dramatic context that Zhao weaves in her extrapolation of the biographical basis for Shakespeare's play about the imaginative prince.

In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, The Mousetrap, a play within the play, is a pivotal device. In its own way, too, Zhao's *Hamnet* features a play within the play; or, more accurately, a play within the origins of the play - a play about Shakespeare's marriage and the agony that strikes it in the middle of the film. Zhao has proven herself as a director of actors as her work with Frances McDormand in *Nomadland* (2020) attests - Zhao won Best Director and Frances McDormand Best Actress at the Oscars for that gritty depiction of rural, factory poverty in the US. Here, she draws out performances of comparable range and poignancy.

The standard narrative of Shakespeare's life is that an older woman (Anne Hathaway) seduces the younger Shakespeare, then the unplanned pregnancy, the shotgun wedding and the business-like, long-distance marriage. Instead, the emotional thrust of *Hamnet* centres on the relationships within a family in a pastoral idyll, Stratford-upon-Avon. But Shakespeare's ambition and genius draw him away to London. London is Shakespeare's domain; Stratford is where the family remains. Yet for all the egotism and solitariness of the writer's pursuit we encounter here a clear recognition on Shakespeare's part of the obligation to protect his family and to be a father as a presence and an example.

Zhao frames the film with a rich palette of nature's colours, its roots and crevices, which fortify the film with elemental forces, mysteries greater than the mundanities of life and the struggle to survive. That suits the overarching theme of motherhood and childbearing. London, by contrast, receives little focus in this film - it is the locus of theatre, his acting, a place of ambition and business. Zhao prefers to situate her film in the natural world, a place of instinct and feeling.

Tragedy hits. *Hamnet* takes on his sister Judith's disease, and it kills him. A marital rupture ensues. This appears to be surmountable only if the couple can find a deeper understanding of each other and their

fundamental needs. The creative process in this film is born from both the birth and the death of a child. It centres on the experience of the mother, Agnes, played by Buckley. The gulf between Agnes and Shakespeare deepens after *Hamnet* dies, partly because they appear to inhabit these separate worlds. In the ecstasy of grief, that separation rapidly engenders recrimination and bitterness.

The film succeeds in traversing the apparently separate spheres through Agnes encountering the great masterpiece that is *Hamlet* on the stage at the Globe Theatre. She steals down to London unbeknownst to her famous husband and sees him on the stage at the Globe, acting as the ghost of *Hamlet*'s father. For Shakespeare, the loss of his son is a trapped grief that can only find expression in the writing, rehearsing and performing the play. Shakespeare takes on his son's life and brings it to life again in art's compassion on stage. Agnes sees that on stage and understands her husband anew. It is a very moving culmination in the film. She witnesses how the play enshrines her lost son in a timeless work of literature. Agnes' journey back towards the husband she has spurned is fulfilled through her understanding his commitment to immortalise his son. It constitutes for Agnes a form of deliverance, a release from the most acute agony through a vision of how to accept the ultimate separation of her boy.

Zhao manages to depict that in a film that becomes its own story weaving together the bard's family and his art in a way that has rarely been achieved before. Other films and books have attempted it, though usually with an ironic tilt and tour de force exploration of Shakespeare's language: Anthony Burgess' *Nothing Like the Sun* is an outstanding example, a book which would make a fine film. Yet here something more difficult is achieved. Zhao conflates the pain and rupture in the creation of art with a metaphor of birth and renewal. The play *Hamlet* achieves the connection between son and father, life and death, this world and the unfathomable cosmos in a supreme expression of the human soul; it is the highest praise to say that *Hamnet* has achieved a tone and gravity that does justice to the text that inspires it.

Buckley deserves her place with Irish Oscar-winners - Brenda Fricker, Daniel Day-Lewis and Barry Fitzgerald. *But hats off to Chloé Zhao, who has made one of the films of the decade* and illuminated the work of a writer who was, to quote Shakespeare's contemporary Ben Jonson, 'not of an age, but for all time..'



Chloé Zhao

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**Reservations for Ten, Please!**

Well folks, it's official: with this column, we've reached the end of the Bill of Rights. The Tenth Amendment serves as the basis for what some might term "state's rights," that is, those powers not explicitly granted to Congress, the President, or the federal Judiciary by the Constitution:

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

In other words, any powers not delegated to the federal government by the Constitution are reserved for the States or the people. For example, if you recall, Article One empowers Congress to regulate interstate commerce—thus, states cannot impose their own regulations on interstate commerce.

Conversely, the federal government has been constrained from interfering in local and state police matters by cases like *Printz v. United States* (1997), which struck down a portion of the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act that required local and state police to conduct background checks on prospective handgun purchasers.

The foundations of the Amendment are built on the concept of federalism, in which one federal government represents a nation as a whole while several lower tiers of governments handle increasingly local affairs. During the nation's founding, this concept was novel and a bit fragile, as each of the former thirteen colonies had their own distinct identities and ways of doing things.

Since then, however,



the federal government has expanded and grown in power. In the modern era, Americans largely do not hold a sense of nationalistic pride for their state of residence (with a few notable exceptions), so the general notion of infringing on "state's rights" is less of a concern for the feds.

Still, in recent years, the Supreme Court has concerned itself with the prevention of the federal government "commandeering" states to enact regulations that would otherwise be up to each state to pass and enforce.

A notable and recent example of this mindset arising in case law is *Murphy v. National Collegiate Athletic Association* (2018). This Supreme Court decision struck down the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act of 1992 (PASPA), a law that banned states from legalizing gambling (with some states being carved out or grandfathered in).

As a result, gambling has been legalized in one or more formats (e.g. sports betting, lottery, racetrack, online, etc.) across nearly every state. By declaring that the federal government had overreached in passing PASPA, the Supreme Court returned the right to legalize or criminalize gambling to the states under the guise of upholding the Tenth Amendment.

In the Court's eyes, however, there is a difference between "incentivizing" passage of a specific regulation and requiring states to do so through force of law. Some of my older readers may recall a bygone era when each state had its own drinking age. By 1984, Congress wanted to

establish a national standard by "incentivizing" states to raise their drinking age to 21 or lose out on 10% of their federal highway funding. Needless to say, the states took advantage of this "incentive," and obliged the feds. By 1988, all fifty states and DC had adopted the 21+ drinking age.

Next month, we'll start getting into the parts of the Constitution that make it a "living, breathing document," that is, the seventeen additional amendments that have been ratified since the country's founding. Until next time!



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online, etc.) across nearly every state. By declaring that the federal government had overreached in passing PASPA, the Supreme Court returned the right to legalize or criminalize gambling to the states under the guise of upholding the Tenth Amendment.

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**Gaelic Park Reveals Irish Music Lineup for Irish Fest 2026**

By Margaret Mulvey  
Save the weekend of August 21st for Irish Fest at Chicago Gaelic Park featuring Billow Wood, Cailini Lua, JigJam and many more.

Chicago Gaelic Park is excited to welcome back fan favorites alongside a selection of new artists from Ireland and North America. There'll be great Irish music on all three stages, including: Billow Wood (above right - West of Ireland); Cailini Lua (lower right - Killaloe); George Murphy (Dublin); Jinty (Cork); Drowsy Lads (Ohio); and the fusion of trad and electronic instrumentation of SuperCéili (Dublin).

Fans can enjoy the traditional ballads of Derek Warfield and the Young Wolfe Tones and the high-energy Irish rock of Kilmaine Saints (Pennsylvania), Waxie Dargles (Oklahoma) and One for the Ditch (Chicago). JigJam (middle pic - Offaly/Tipperary), Chicago's favorite Irish bluegrass band and Grand Ole Opry regular, made their USA debut at Irish Fest in 2015.

Dennis Doyle will bring his harp, songs and stories, and many local favorites will be on hand, including: Declan McShane; Evin O'Riordan; Gerry Haughey; Going West; Jack Kinsella; Katie Sullivan; Kieran Byrne; Liam Durkin; and, the Larkin & Moran Brothers. Liam Durkin; The

and prices will increase as the Fest draws nearer. <https://tickets.chicagogaelpark.com/events/chicagogaelpark/2104491>

**38th Co. Clare Assn. "Day for Special People" June 7**

A day for Special People is scheduled to take place at Chicago Gaelic Park, 16119 W. 147th St., Oak Forest, on Sunday, June 7, 2026. Since its inception, this cherished event has begun with a 10am Mass dedicated to honoring those whom God has made "Special."

A buffet Irish breakfast will follow, during which we hold the Grand Raffle. Our "special guests" will be entered in this raffle upon entering the park. If their name is called, they can pick a prize of their choice from a wide variety ranging from electronics, sports equipment, games, large stuffed animals, etc. Everything is free to our Special Guests; they only need



Larkin & Moran Brothers; and, the rousing Bagpipes; Drums of the Emerald Society and the Shannon Rovers.

Tickets are available online,

and prices will increase as the Fest draws nearer. <https://tickets.chicagogaelpark.com/events/chicagogaelpark/2104491>

to register to participate in this day. There will be a nominal charge for breakfast to those other than our "special guests,"

Following the breakfast and Grand Raffle, guests are invited to play games on the patio for which they will receive a maximum of 4 prizes of their choice selected from tables full



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### Game On!

By Chris Wheaton

Frequent readers of this column (my wife and mother) know of my love of travel. This morning, over coffee we were discussing an upcoming trip to Germany and Switzerland to celebrate our friends 40th wedding anniversary.

Larry and Susi Wood live in a quaint, little village called Reichenau, Germany. It is actually an island on Lake Constance and one of those places where everybody knows everybody and nobody has any secrets. Susi has lived on the

island her entire life, but Larry is an outsider, only spending the past forty or so years there since they have been married. He frequently talks about his first few years and how difficult it was to be accepted into a new culture, as everyone viewed him with a touch of suspicion as the lone American to move into the "club."

My wife and I talked about our many friends from Ireland who have moved to this country and how the culture shock must have seemed overwhelming at the time. America is such a grand expanse with forty of our states being larger than the entire island of Ireland. Most of our friends have been here for awhile so I am sure they have adapted well but I cannot imagine the jolt they must have felt those first few years. As frequent travelers we only get a tiny sample of how life is in a foreign land and just when you start feeling like you understand, it is time to come home.

I am sure many of you miss certain things about Ireland or wherever you are from just as I know my friend Larry misses things here in the United States (maybe not so much

now with the craziness of our government). I often wonder at what point you call your new country "home"? Does it ever happen? I know many of my Irish friends say this is their home, but I also know they are Irish to the core and will never lose that feeling of longing for the way things are "back home."

Just like anything, there are pros and cons to where we choose to live. I would be lying if I said that my wife and I never discussed moving somewhere away from the Chicago area. When we travel, we play the "could we live here game." It is hard because when you are on vacation everything seems great, that is the purpose of a getaway. It is easy to fantasize about moving to some faraway land in Switzerland or Austria or some other magnificent vacation spot but is that realistic? Are we REALLY going to pull up stakes and leave our friends and family behind to go experience a new culture? Probably not, but it is fun to play the game. As they say, the grass is always greener on the other side. I sympathize with all of you who have done it by hunkering down here in America, far from your roots in Ireland, but I wonder how many

of you would move back. Has your move here been everything you thought it would be? Is it easier here than back home? Is our culture the one you want your children to grow up in? Those are all questions I never had to ask myself because like most of us, we play it safe and stick with what we are comfortable doing.

For now, I am content here in Naperville and all it has to offer. My friends, my kids, my job are all right here and that is enough. I cannot promise that my thoughts will not change this fall when I am sitting out on Lake Constance looking at Germany, Switzerland and Austria all packed into one postcard. We all have a bit of a wayfarer attitude in us, the restless and wandering spirit that lets us dream of adventure in places we have never been. It is a great feeling and one that keeps me going. The next expedition is always right around the corner, and it is important not to be afraid to look. Who knows, maybe one of you will go on a dream vacation and never come back. If it is you, be sure to write. I want to hear all about it!

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## Irish American Hall of Fame Video's Available Soon

One of the highlights of this year's Irish American Hall of Fame Gala was the series of tribute videos created for their inductees and honorees by Josephine Craven and Kevin Cassidy. These beautifully produced pieces captured not only the achievements of each honoree, but also the spirit, history, and humanity behind their stories. Through thoughtful research, elegant narration, music, and powerful imagery, the videos added a moving dimension to the evening. The audience response was extraordinary, with many describing the presentations as one of the most memorable parts of the gala. Kevin used his expertise gained by working as a cameraman for WGN channel 9 in Chicago, and Josephine used her narrating talents in videos she did for many years as a volunteer for iBAM!, the Irish Books, Arts, and Music Celebration. She has formed her own company, Listen to Lit, josephine.craven@listentolite.com bringing words to life with audio storytelling, live performance, and production with an Irish flair. Videos will be available to view after May 8 at <https://iahof.org/>

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A Cháirde,

We start the month with the Young Gaelic Association's third annual Kentucky Derby Party and Opening Day of the Carraig Pub's Beer Garden. That all happens before most readers make it to this page of the newspaper. A week later we celebrate Mother's Day. There'll be Mass and Breakfast in the morning and a dinner in the afternoon.

If, like me, you never made it all the way through James Joyce's "Ulysses", I suggest you check out "You'll See". There will be two performances on Wednesday, May 20th, presented by Branar, a leading theatre company from Galway. Kids, bring your parents, and they'll enjoy it, too.

On the Saturday and Sunday of Memorial Weekend, we host the Chicago Feis. Founded in 1959, the Feis features hundreds of Irish step dancers competing on four stages throughout the day. Jigs and wigs, hornpipes and costumes, reels and judges, musicians with impeccable timing, supportive dance families and generous volunteers. All are welcome to come see the action, and to stay after for entertainment in the beer garden.

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



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Sign up at [chicagogaelicpark.com](http://chicagogaelicpark.com) or in CGP Front Office

## Chicago Gaelic Park Queen 2025 - Orlaith Conlon



Our 2026 Queen Contest is on June 13th! Apply on our website by June 12th.

Being crowned the Chicago Gaelic Park 2025 Queen was such an honor. It was a year filled with heritage, community and moments that I'll carry with me forever. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity of carrying this tradition and stepping into a role that so many incredible young women have held before me. As Queen, I had the privilege of meeting so many people, walking in parades, and representing the Irish community. One of my favorite parts of the year was seeing how proud my family and friends were. Their support made every appearance feel even more meaningful. Being the 2025 Queen taught me confidence, leadership and the importance of celebrating where you come from. Gaelic Park is and will always be very near and dear to my heart, filled with so many memories that I will cherish forever and look forward to creating many more.



IRISH CULTURE  
FAMILY FUN  
LIVE MUSIC

IRISH  
FEST

CHICAGO GAELIC PARK

AUG  
21-23

Get ready for a euphoric journey to the Emerald Isle where the air will be filled with enchanting tunes and the rhythm of dancing feet. This weekend-long extravaganza is lined up with an unprecedented ensemble of Irish bands, dance schools, artists, and experts who will bring the true essence of Irish culture to the forefront. We have 3 stages of live music, a Cultúr agus Céili tent, children's activities, and more!



AND SO  
MUCH  
MORE

# CHICAGO GAELIC PARK

6119 W. 147th St. Oak Forest, IL 60452 - (708)687-9323 - [ChicagoGaelicPark.com](http://ChicagoGaelicPark.com)

### CGP Event Calendar

Visit [chicagogaelicpark.com](http://chicagogaelicpark.com) for more information.

- May 2 - YGA KENTUCKY DERBY PARTY
- May 10 - MASS & IRISH BREAKFAST
- May 15 - KIDS' CAMP REGISTRATION OPENS
- May 20 - ULYSSES FOR CHILDREN PLAY
- May 23-24 - THE CHICAGO FEIS
- June 12 - HOWL AT THE MOON
- June 13 - CGP QUEEN CONTEST
- July 11 - SUPERTRAMP TRIBUTE BAND
- August 4-6 - KIDS' CULTURAL CAMP

### Music in the Beer Garden

No cover charge for music at The Carraig Beer Garden

- May 1 - LIAM DURKIN
- May 2 - ST. JAMES GATE
- May 3 - MY DAD'S COVER BAND
- May 7 - TRAD THURSDAY
- May 8 - JESSE PEREZ
- May 9 - GERRY HAUGHEY
- May 10 - BEER GARDEN CLOSED
- May 12 - JAM SESSION & CAR CRUISE
- May 14 - OPEN MIC NIGHT
- May 15 - BERNIE GLIM
- May 16 - THE CHANCERS
- May 17 - COLIN & SAMMI
- May 19 - JAM SESSION & CAR CRUISE
- May 21 - TRAD THURSDAY
- May 22 - KIERAN BYRNE
- May 23 - MAD POETS
- May 24 - THE DREAMERS
- May 28 - RAY GAVIN
- May 29 - ELROY ACOUSTIC
- May 30 - CELTIC ROVERS
- May 31 - THE FABTONES

## WE ARE SO BACK! (In the Beer Garden That Is)



The Carraig Pub Beer Garden is open six days a week! Check out the Music in the Beer Garden calendar for our live music lineup!

Buy a Carraig gift card for Dad this Father's Day! I heard he loves an outdoor pint.



BEER GARDEN HOURS:

- Tuesday: Pub 3pm-12am, Kitchen 5pm-9pm
- Wednesday: Pub 3pm-12am, Kitchen 5pm-9pm
- Thursday - Pub 3pm-12am, Kitchen 5pm-9pm
- Friday - Pub 3pm-1am, Kitchen 5pm-9pm
- Saturday - Pub 3pm-12am, Kitchen 5pm-9pm
- Sunday - Pub 12pm-11pm, Kitchen 1pm-7pm

JOIN THE CARRAIG REWARDS PROGRAM!

- 25 point welcome bonus
- \$5 off for ever 100 points
- 3X the points Tues-Thurs
- Free dessert on your birthday



Saturday, May 23rd  
&  
Sunday, May 24th

Register by May 11th at [QuickFeis.com](http://QuickFeis.com).  
Email [Feis@ChicagoGaelicPark.org](mailto:Feis@ChicagoGaelicPark.org) with questions.



How do we maintain the accomplishments of the Gaelic Park Community and ensure that it will thrive in the future?

Give the gift of Irish Heritage to succeeding generations by contributing today!



Chicago Gaelic Park celebrates, preserves and promotes Irish culture and heritage through artistic, athletic, cultural, educational, and social activities. We provide a welcoming place for all to share in our great Irish American experience.

### GAELIC PARK PLANNED GIVING ENDOWMENT

Examples of ways to give:

- Cash Donations
- Living Will and Trust
- Investment Securities
- IRAs
- Life Insurance Proceeds

For more information or to discuss your plans, please contact Michael Bennett - General Manager by phone 708-687-9323

or email [endowment@chicagogaelicpark.org](mailto:endowment@chicagogaelicpark.org). Planned gifts are made after careful consideration 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
- Children's Irish Cultural Camp
- The Carraig Pub & Beer Garden
- Young Gaelic Association
- Premier Event Venue for Weddings, Parties, and Concerts



Sunday, May 10



Wednesday, May 20



Friday, June 12



Saturday, June 13



Saturday, July 11

SCAN THIS QR CODE TO ACCESS THE CHICAGO GAELIC PARK BOX OFFICE OR VISIT [TICKETS.CHICAGOGAELICPARK.COM/EVENTS/CHICAGOGAELICPARK](http://TICKETS.CHICAGOGAELICPARK.COM/EVENTS/CHICAGOGAELICPARK)





**Mark McMahon: Renowned Artist, Activist, and Chicago Treasure**

Artist Mark McMahon's distinctive style is immediately recognizable in the watercolors, drawings, and murals that are featured in museums, schools, and private collections around the world. He has painted everything - and anything - from NASA space shuttle launches to national political conventions and scenes from Cuba, Mexico, and Ghana. And yet, at his heart, McMahon is a true-blood Chicagoan, cut from the same cloth as other local legendary artists - people like his parents Franklin and Irene McMahon - who made an impact far outside the city limits.

"The world is my studio," McMahon reflects on his career. "I'm just a guy wandering around. I tried to fit myself in where I could, which ended up everywhere."

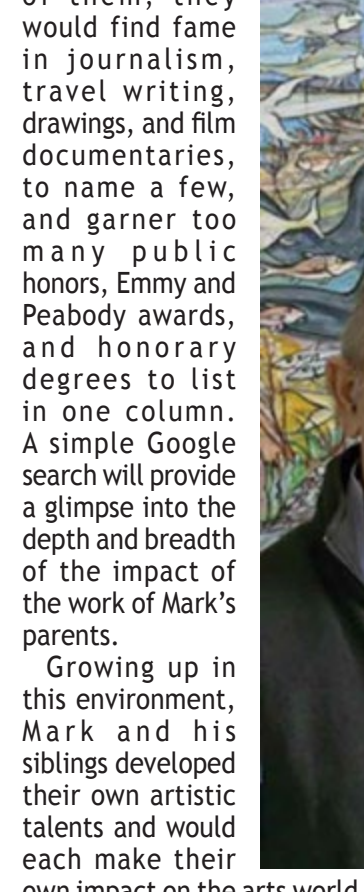
If Mark ended up "everywhere," then where exactly did he start? Naturally - this is the Irish American News, after all - his story can be traced to Ireland, and more specifically, County Mayo. There, in the middle of the Great Famine of the nineteenth century, his ancestors followed that great emigrant pilgrimage from Ireland to the United States, coming through New Jersey.

Fast forward one hundred years to post-World War II America, and his parents had settled in Chicago, living in the Edgewater Beach Hotel before moving to north suburban Lake Forest, where Mark and his eight siblings would grow up. "We were a big Irish Catholic family," Mark recalls, and when he and his siblings were not going to school at St. Mary's Catholic School, they were roaming the woods and engaging in the arts. In fact, to say that the McMahaons were an artistic family does not begin to capture the experience that Mark must have had in growing up surrounded by world-class artists and artistry.

Mark's parents Franklin and Irene McMahon were a tour de force couple in the arts world, here in Chicago, across the nation, and throughout the globe. Between the two of them, they would find fame in journalism, travel writing, drawings, and film documentaries, to name a few, and garner too many public honors, Emmy and Peabody awards, and honorary degrees to list in one column. A simple Google search will provide a glimpse into the depth and breadth of the work of Mark's parents.

Growing up in this environment, Mark and his siblings developed their own artistic talents and would each make their own impact on the arts world, which continues to this day. However, Mark's life path was anything but a straight line. "I started screaming on my first day of kindergarten," Mark remembers, and that proved to be a prophecy of his academic career. As a fourth grader, he would take on his first job - as a stableboy at Onwentsia Club in Lake Forest during the golden age of polo there - and as a teenager he moved to Colorado to attend boarding school there. He would stay in Colorado to matriculate at Adams State University, where he earned an athletic scholarship to play soccer. His greatest collegiate memories came not in the classroom or on the soccer fields, however, as he and two friends traveled to 48 states in his van over the course of six months as part of an education program that he developed with one of his professors.

University shortly after the killing of four and wounding of nine unarmed college students protesting the Vietnam War. Mark and his friends would travel 250 miles per day and perform 5 interviews per day



with people they met along the way. He keeps his diaries from that time in his Lake Forest studio in the basement of his house; they are ripe to be made into an engaging memoir of this time. Life on the road proved exhilarating yet challenging for Mark and his friends, and they were not all together by the time their journey ended. In fact, Mark would end up moving back to Chicago to earn his degree at Loyola University of Chicago, but his adventurous spirit and belief in himself - and his art - were fully intact during his time serving as an apprentice at American Graphics Studio, one of several creative art agencies in the thriving Chicago advertising world at that time. "I learned the trade at American Graphics Studio. I'd cut mats, help photographers, and study under talented illustrators," Mark says of that time. While he appreciated the experience he gained working in a large agency, Mark always knew that he was destined to

be a freelance artist, so he embarked on a remarkable career that continues today. As he admits, "I was raised to be a freelancer." It did not take long for Mark to gain notoriety and acclaim for his drawings, which carry the distinctive style of his father. The scenes he depicts are wildly diverse and have taken him across the globe, including to the Emerald Isle. He returned to his ancestral homeland to help lead a trip for alumni of the University of Chicago, and he also has fond memories of traveling with his extended family to Northern Ireland. As the media and advertising industries have transformed over the past four decades, Mark admits that he is a "rare bird" who has made a successful career doing what he loves. On the topic of Mark's loves, the story of his life would not be complete without including his wife Carolyn, whom he met through friends when she was working at the

the National College of Art and Design in Dublin. Mark and Carolyn have passed along artistry genes to their three children: Drew, who works in metal frames, Meryl in ceramics, and Elyse in design. While Mark likes to say that his life has not been a straight line - in his words, "my whole life is filled with weird things happening, I don't run in a pattern" - a closer reading reveals a few important themes that weave throughout his personal and professional lives. One, he is dedicated to his family, from his parents and siblings to his wife, children, and grandchildren; two, he has Chicago in his blood; three, he is an artist at heart, and, four, not to be underrated, he is a proud social activist.

This dedication to activism is another character trait that Mark picked up from his parents. His father gained fame for his coverage of the Emmett Till trial in Chicago, and he would go on to be heavily involved with the civil rights movement, bringing Mark and his siblings along to marches and other demonstrations in the 1960s and beyond. Fast forward to the twenty-first century, and Mark has carried on that legacy through his work, having traveled to Minneapolis to capture the scene during the aftermath of the George Floyd killing in 2020 and more recently depicting the No Kings protests in Chicago. Mark likes to say that his drawing technique has become a part of the fabric of Chicago. For those of us who have had the privilege of interacting with him over the past half-century, we know that it is not just his art that has become a part of the fabric of the city. He and his family are living Chicago treasures.

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Professional Quality Penny Whistles

www.burkewhistles.com

**Creating a Buzz by Beth Beyer**

What does a vibrant, healthy green space sound like? How can music and songs engage communities in creating these green spaces?

The Hope, Environment, and ArT (HEAT) initiative has become a model for other national and international projects focused on environmental solutions within communities.

The HEATChicago app serves as a prototype for this effort. It highlights community gardens that encourage participation and offer local food sources.

Additionally, it features audio storytelling projects that preserve and share the city's history. Creating a Buzz, a campaign of the Hope, Environment, and ArT initiative, takes this work further by focusing on bringing sounds and music to foster efforts to brighten our neighborhoods.

On Saturday, 5-30, the Center, in partnership with the Hope, Environment, and ArT initiative, will offer an opportunity to view a brilliant Irish documentary, *"Plight of the Bumble Bee"*, taste a honey cocktail, and enjoy traditional Irish music and song. The schedule will be as follows:

- 12 pm : Mini Fest (free)
- 5 pm : Movie/Panel- Plight of the Bumblebee (Mayfair Theatre - \$15 ticket)
- 6:30 pm: Trad Irish Session in



the Pub (free)

The evening begins with the short documentary, *Plight of the Bumble Bee*. The unique soundtrack composed by Brenda



One of the Irish American Heritage Ctr garden areas

Castles will set the stage for an evening of fun and will be performed live by award-winning Irish musicians - Brenda on concertina, violinist Eimear Arkins, and harpist Eileen Gannon. The score, performed in concert with the film, illuminates the tale of Kilkenny native, 81-year-old Peter Walsh, who has been counting bees in the same spot in Kilkenny since

1959, and includes heartfelt stories of saints associated with our bees, which are colorfully animated in the movie. The audience will be

transported "deep into the world of bees and their profound connection to Irish religion, folklore, and biodiversity... from moments of sadness to flashes of humor and hope, the film beautifully weaves a narrative that highlights the urgent need to protect biodiversity, both in Ireland and across the globe. It debunks common myths about bees

and biodiversity, offering fresh insights and inspiring viewers to take action."

The Fifth Province Pub will be a hive of activity. Honey-themed cocktails will be available for purchase before and after the film. Local vendors will sell honey, jewelry, and other pollinator-themed products. A live traditional Irish music session will kick up the beat. All the while, there will be a table within the pub where you can learn more about the importance of planting native pollinator plants locally and ways to get involved.

**Pollinator Plants:** They attract bees and butterflies by offering essential food sources—nectar for energy and pollen for protein—using bright colors, scents, and specialized shapes. They use visual cues like ultraviolet, blue, and purple for bees, and bright red, yellow, or pink for

butterflies, to signal food.

Planting pollinator gardens is a resting spot for monarchs during their over 3k mile migrations to winter in the mountains of Mexico before returning North for the summer. Bees do more than produce honey; they also support the growth of our gardens. You can assist with future pollinator planting efforts by purchasing a few plants for the IAHC planting event, scheduled for June. Donation options for the plantings will be available in the 5th Province. Additionally, the Hope, Environment, and ArT initiative will provide a free packet of pollinator seeds to help you start your garden.

Join us in celebrating nature, community, and resilience. Prepare to be inspired. Prepare to act. This is a story not just about bees - it's about us all.

**GERRY HAUGHEY MUSIC**

Vocalist / Guitar  
Mandoline / Banjo

Happy to Play at Private Parties of All Kinds!

Celtic Rock  
Rock & Roll  
Country  
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**CHICAGO SCOTS**

40TH ANNUAL

**SCOTTISH FESTIVAL & HIGHLAND GAMES**

JUNE 12-13

DUPAGE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS  
2015 MANCHESTER ROAD, WHEATON

The Highland Games is a Family-Friendly Festival

Tickets on sale now  
Children 12 & under free  
Volunteer = Free Admission

**NEW THIS YEAR**

**FAMILY FUN FRIDAY**

**SCOTTISH CEILIDH**  
Friday Night

**PARADE OF TARTAN**  
Veterans named 2026 Honored Clan will lead the parade 12:30 p.m. Saturday

**WORLD CUP WATCH PARTY:**  
Scotland vs. Haiti  
Join the entire Scottish Community to cheer for the Scotland vs Haiti Match 8 p.m. Saturday

**LARGEST PIPE BAND COMPETITION IN NORTH AMERICA**

More than 50 bands and still counting

Rare U.S. visit 4x World Champion Inveraray & District Pipe Band

Special Inveraray concerts Thursday & Friday nights



[ChicagoScots.org/festival](http://ChicagoScots.org/festival)

Sponsored by: Roscoe Company, The Georgeson Family & Scot Forge, UL Research Institutes, Wintrust, Belhaven, ImpEx Beverages, Duke of Perth, McAdam Landscaping, Pug & Hound, Sikich, Quaid & Rooney Realtors, Scotland Shop, WDCB, Scottish Government USA

# IRISH AMERICAN HERITAGE CENTER

4626 N. Knox Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60630  
773-282-7035 x10  
irish-american.org

**MAY FLOWERS ARE POPPING UP AT THE IRISH AMERICAN HERITAGE CENTER!** Celebrate spring with community, culture, and connection at the IAHC. As we head into May, enjoy a fresh season of live music, cultural programs, classes, and gatherings that bring us together. **Details & tickets: irish-american.org | 773-282-7035 (Ext. 10).**



## MONTHLY BINGO NIGHT

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 13 & 27 | 7:00 PM**

Doors at 6:00 PM and first call at 7:00 PM. \$10 per card (stack 'em if you're feeling lucky). The Fifth Province Pub will be open with drinks & a hot express menu. It's not just bingo—it's a midweek mood. See you there!

**\$10 PER CARD**

## THE STEPHEN SMYTH BAND - 2026 U.S. TOUR

**SATURDAY, MAY 2 | 7:30 PM**

Get ready for a night of high-energy Irish music and dancing as The Stephen Smyth Band brings their acclaimed showband sound to Chicago! Led by Stephen Smyth—an Irish music veteran with over 30 years of experience—this dynamic group delivers a lively mix of Irish ballads, country classics, and dancefloor favorites that have captivated audiences across Ireland and beyond. Supported by Declan McShane.

**TICKETS** IAHC Member: \$25 | General Admission: \$30

## MOTHER'S DAY STORY TELLING & LIVE MUSIC EVENT

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 6 | 7:00 PM**

Join us for the first-ever Mother's Day edition of giftLIT—an intimate evening of storytelling and live music celebrating motherhood in all its beauty, complexity, and humor. After last year's SOLD-OUT Halloween storytelling night, giftLIT returns to the IAHC for another unforgettable experience—this time with a heartfelt Mother's Day twist. Food & drinks available for purchase.

Come laugh, reflect, and connect through powerful stories and song—this is one you won't want to miss.

**TICKETS** Online: \$23 (including fees) | At the door: \$25

## THE GREAT IRISH BOOK CLUB

**SATURDAY, MAY 9 | 2:00 PM**

Our April Book Choice: *Wild Houses* by Colin Barrett

Raw, electric, and darkly funny, *Wild Houses* captures life on the edges of contemporary Ireland. New here? You're warmly invited. We gather for Irish literature, thoughtful conversation, and a good cup of tea every month. All readers are welcome. Bring your book, bring a friend, and we'll bring the tea.

**Free Event | IAHC Membership Recommended**

## MOTHER'S DAY MASS & BRUNCH AT THE IAHC

**SUNDAY, MAY 10 | MASS STARTS AT 11:00 AM - FOLLOWED BY BRUNCH**

Celebrate the mothers and women in your life with a special day at the Irish American Heritage Center. It's the perfect way to gather, celebrate, and enjoy great food in a warm, welcoming setting with good food and live music! This reimagined Mother's Day event features a delicious brunch spread including:

- Turkey, Ham & Cod
- Roasted potatoes, mac & cheese, fresh vegetables & more
- Crisp salads, fresh fruit, and warm breads like Irish soda bread & croissants

**TICKETS (Brunch): \$30 Adults | \$25 Seniors (65 & over) | \$15 Children (12 & under)**

## TRY YOUR HAND - A CHICAGO CALLIGRAPHY COLLECTIVE EVENT

**SATURDAY, MAY 16 | 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM**

Join us for a fun, hands-on lettering workshop hosted by the Chicago Calligraphy Collective - and it's FREE to attend! Watch live demonstrations of different lettering styles—and try them yourself. No experience needed and open to all ages! Registration required on our website.

**FREE EVENT**

## "CREATING A BUZZ" BEE & HONEY THEMED EVENT SERIES

**SATURDAY, MAY 30 + MORE | EVENT SERIES DETAILS TBA ON WEBSITE**

This May, the IAHC is celebrating the spring season with a series of bee and honey-themed events! Join us for a lively mini bee and honey festival featuring local vendors and additional activities, plus a special screening of the documentary *The Plight of the Bumblebee* as part of the celebration. The series will continue with a Community Garden Day, bringing everyone together to connect with nature and our shared green spaces. More details coming soon—stay tuned and check our website for updates!

**Mini Vendor Fest is FREE ENTRY | Documentary Entry Fee: \$15**



# IRISH AMERICAN HERITAGE CENTER IS YOUR CENTER

Your Center for Music.  
Your Center for Dance.  
Your Center for Culture.  
Your Center to gather with Family and Friends.

**BE A PART OF IT BY BECOMING A MEMBER OR RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY! JOIN AT IRISH-AMERICAN.ORG**

## STAFF MEMBER QUOTE

“Being an employee of the Irish American Heritage Center isn't just a job to me—it's a living connection to a story that began over 40 years ago, when a group of Irish immigrants came together to build something lasting. As a long-term employee, I feel deeply rooted in that vision. Every day, I'm proud to help carry forward their spirit of community, culture, and resilience. It means being part of something bigger than myself—honoring the past while helping shape a place where future generations can celebrate what it means to be Irish and American.”

— Catherine Kelly



## IRELAND 2026 RAFFLE

Presented by: Irish American Heritage Center & Aer Lingus

**2 Round Trip Tickets to Dublin, Ireland**

**\$20 PER TICKET | \$50 FOR THREE**

[WWW.IRISH-AMERICAN.ORG](http://WWW.IRISH-AMERICAN.ORG)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## MEMBERSHIP

Enhance your IAHC membership with options that fit every household and level of support: **Individual/Family** plans start at **\$30/\$50 for 1 year** or **\$50/\$75 for 2 years**, and include **10% off** at the IAHC Gift Shop (non-sale/non-food items) and food in the Fifth Province, **member-only ticket discounts**, **voting rights** for the IAHC Board, eligibility to **run for the Board** (members in good standing for 3 of 5 consecutive years), and an **Irish American News** subscription. Step up to **Harper (3 years, \$250)** for all core benefits plus an exclusive IAHC member T-shirt. Go all-in with **Bard (5 years, \$500)** and receive all core benefits **plus a private tour of the IAHC, two tickets to the Christmas Bazaar Breakfast, an Irish American News subscription, and an exclusive T-shirt. THIS IS YOUR CENTER—BE A PART OF IT BY BECOMING A MEMBER OR RENEWING TODAY AT IRISH-AMERICAN.ORG.**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Payments by credit card:  Visa  MC  Discover  
 New  Renewal  Gift Membership

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ NAME ON CARD \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ ACCOUNT # \_\_\_\_\_ EXP DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ 3 DIGIT CODE \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE \_\_\_\_\_  Cash  Check Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_  
FAMILY MEMBERSHIPS ONLY | Adult Name(s):  
1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Checks payable to the IAHC and mail to:  
4626 N. Knox Ave., Chicago, IL 60630  
Or visit [irish-american.org](http://irish-american.org), to purchase online

### UPCOMING MAY EVENTS

**SPECIAL EVENTS & HIGHLIGHTS:**

- May 2 – Stephen Smyth Band U.S. Tour Concert
- May 6 – Mother's Day Storytelling & Live Music (giftLIT)
- May 9 – Great Irish Book Club
- May 10 – Mother's Day Mass & Brunch
- May 16 – "Try Your Hand" (Chicago Calligraphy Collective) • St. Patrick's Father Monthly Dance
- May 21 – Genealogy Class
- May 30 – "Creating a Buzz" Bee & Honey Event Series

**RECURRING PROGRAMMING:**

- Call: May 5, 12, 19, 26
- Call MoF: May 1
- Barn Dance: May 4, 11, 18
- Traditional Music Sessions (Pub): May 7, 14, 21, 28
- Bingo (Pub): May 13, 27
- Iris Social Wine/Beer Sessions: May 6, 9, 16
- ICS Playgroup: May 5, 12, 19, 26
- ICS Senior: Chicago: May 6, 13

**HOLIDAY CLOSURE:**

- May 24–25 – Closed for Memorial Day

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“Ultimately “being a good sport,” was about embracing an Irish moral imperative. As only the Irish can.”

“Be a good sport,” in my home growing up, it was a family motto. Something carried with them to Chicago from County Tipperary.

Words that echoed through my childhood as an ancient moral imperative. When uttered by a parent, no higher challenge. No greater call to gentlemanly behavior.

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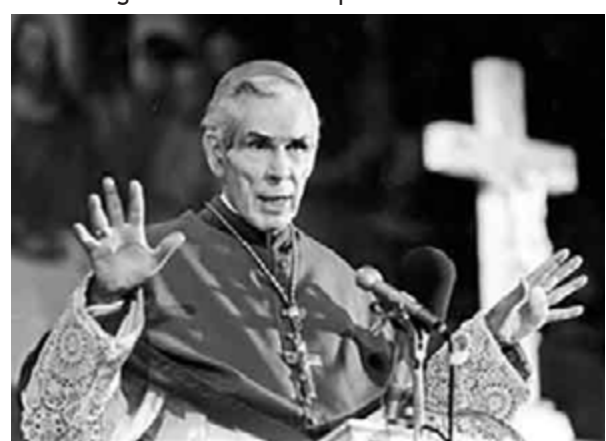
Understand. Suck it up. Keep your composure. Above all, don't be a jerk. Advice I would send to the members of the House of Windsor ASAP.

Those were words that always came in handy in my adolescence. In times of teenage trouble. In moments of mid-life outrage. High equine jumps. Raging seas. In cold flashes of adult hatred. Or in hot episodes of mature rage. “Be a good sport,” was always the reminder of what was expected. Above and beyond the call of duty. When a moment proved to be unjust. Or the actions of another were an obvious betrayal. Like bad mutton in your stew.

It was about disappointment. Hushed judgment. And not obliterating an opponent. It was always about keeping balance on the moral high ground. And never the easy way out of some difficulty at another's expense or saving face. No matter how many gauntlets were thrown down in our home or family it was always about preserving the “esprit de corps.”

Ultimately “being a good sport,” was about embracing a moral imperative. A serious life lesson. Taking the hard way out. Doing the right thing instinctively. For reward always in the future. For a payoff not immediate. Deferred. Like a sword fight with St. Bridgid. It meant commitment to some ideal of life bigger than yourself. Not always clear or certain. But a life choice shared with those who loved you. A code of tribal, family honor that connected to your heart. Words that shaped an important moral roadmap. Helping us find our direction. A way to get back home.

When you don't know the way, you are just stumbling around with no plan. No wonder Irish



saints always found it's dangerous to be without a roadmap for a safe return to stable living. Without it we are merely bumping around in the dark. Or at least life's oblique half-truths where people of shadowed-living always seem to be crowding around us, I'm sorry to say. They rarely help us reset our moral geography. They seldom identify the sources of light that further endures in our life. That has never been more important than in this present state of world fragmentation. Have you discovered any new-found passage ways out of the prophetically false deceptions of the Trump fiascoes? Has his threats to Pope Leo added any clarity in your life during the heretical abuse of the false prophets of American governance? Have you come up with any

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formulas for deepening meaning and purpose in your life? Especially while faced with the challenges of betrayal, isolation, separation, and loss during the totemic to war?

But all is not lost. I'm delighted that Archbishop Fulton Sheen has been cleared for beatification. We can always use another Irish saint. He rings so true, still, in my youth when he commanded an ABC television studio to elegantly speak to the world of the 1950s. His powerful faith told us all that “Life is Worth Living.” That was the name of his show that we watch on our 8” TV, large as Cinema back then. He will be raised to be “Blessed Fulton Sheen” on September 26th. The child of yet another heroic Irish family of faith he grew up in Illinois where he learned to be “a good sport”.

Many people have spoken to me, recently, of their



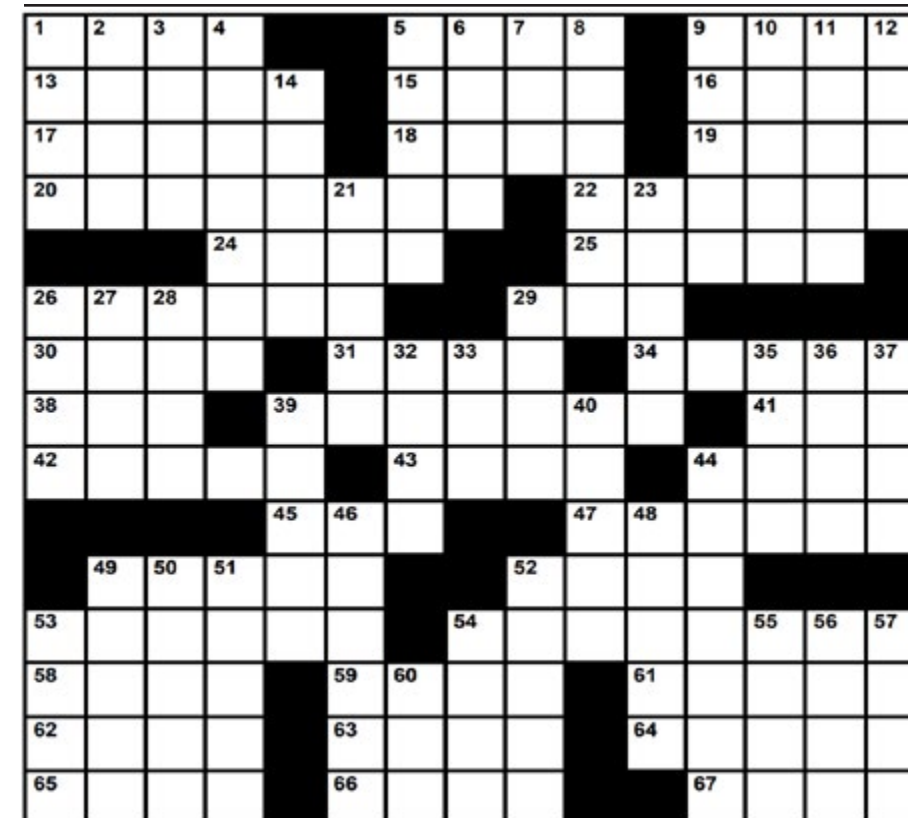
new found understanding of what's really of value in their lives. After months of life-altering changes in predictable living. Don't forget the realities of everyday life. Maybe we have been rescued by people we never knew as a friend. Tribal Chieftains. Prayerful hermits. Irish writers. Women of melody. Dancing up the footsteps of of centuries past. By their courtesy. Kindness. And attention to our needs.

Maybe someone has reach out to us for assistance and we have become a part of their struggle for survival. Helping keeps someone's kitchen grocery-filled during the panic of restless living, for example, perhaps they might have been the very thread that has given you the most hope.

Chicagoans have always been people of great survival. In the primitive wilderness of the Prairie we have faced great physical storms and challenges. Like warfare with our neighbors. Or shameful dismissal of the Bishop of Rome, or when the stockade of Fort Dearborn was burned and the residents slaughtered. Or catastrophes on the seascape of Lake Michigan. Or epidemics in times of primitive medicine as when we lost one-fifth of the city's population during the plagues of Cholera during the 1840s. And the Sisters of Mercy, from Ireland, breathed their last while wiping the brow of the dying. Or when three-fifths of the city burnt to the ground in the fire of 1871. While improvements of technologies often made recovery more certain, it was really the spirit of Chicago's people that led us to recovery and new directions.

Perhaps all is not lost. Maybe the time is ripe for us “to be a good sport.” Maybe there is still some moral high ground for us to achieve by our courage and behavior. Still pledged to wiping the brow of the dying.

“We are a city of neighborhoods,” old Mayor Daley used to say, for all that was holy. More sustaining. More inventive. More committed. Emboldened by our resources. Confident in our talent. Transformed by our commercial know-how and the political skills. Prayed for “at the church of our choice.” What we excelled at was the courage to “be a good sport.” To challenge ourselves to ride high on the moral landscape of fairness and hospitality. Welcome and opportunity. Promise and blessing. For all that was holy. Or as they say on the Southside, “Don't be a jerk.”



- Across (ANSWERS PAGE 17)**
- German river forming part of the Polish border
  - Catchall abbr.
  - Mimics
  - Bay window
  - Man, in the Irish Sea
  - Snare
  - Follower of a major world religion
  - Playthings for children
  - Small North American rail bird
  - Sample for examination
  - Fragrances
  - Gelatinous substance from seaweed
  - Largest lake in Ireland
  - Galway lake
  - Lump or bundle of soft material
  - Hurried or went quickly, per Shakespeare
  - Major river flowing through Germany
  - Sharp or bitter
  - \_\_\_ general rule, 2 words
  - One who changes or modifies
  - Canadian province abbreviation
  - Hoist again, as a sail
  - Coloring substances
  - Moon in Spanish
  - Cries of pain
  - Follower of ancient Chinese philosophy
  - Irish word for lake
  - Fathers
  - Walk quietly
  - Aristocrat
  - “May \_\_\_ you in on a little secret?” 2 words
  - Scoring sequence in baseball, 2 words
  - Italian for island
  - Concern or attention
  - Large heavy book
  - Cheats or swindles
  - Mark left by healed wound
  - Beverage brand
  - Suckling spot

- Down**
- Exclamations of wonder
  - Fall in drops
  - “\_\_\_ kleine Nachtmusik”
  - Soccer ejection penalty, 2 words
  - Bishop's ceremonial headdress
  - Currently showing, 2 words
  - Cunning
  - Light aircraft manufacturer
  - Confused, 2 words
  - Pointed projecting part
  - Third planet from the sun
  - Health resorts
  - Mario's brother in a video game
  - “Pirates of Penzance” heroine
  - Aromatic coniferous tree
  - Blacken by burning
  - French river
  - Back part or area
  - Existed
  - Old Ford models
  - Governor in the Ottoman Empire
  - Prefix with distant
  - Operates or manages
  - Rhythm
  - Disco-era term meaning ‘galore’
  - Cornerstone abbreviation
  - Goes berserk, 2 words
  - Cereal grains
  - Improvise without preparation, 2 words
  - Purple-flowered shrub
  - Musical theatrical work
  - Complete
  - Recipient of a gift
  - Twiches
  - Without sensation
  - Small burrowing mammal
  - \_\_\_-Seltzer
  - Publisher who transformed Vogue
  - Australian animal, for short

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## Greater Love Hath No Sailor Nor Family

SEAL Patrick Feeks Remembered by Clan of Navy Veterans

By Jim McClure

Patrick Delaney Feeks was a special type of Irish American warrior whose very title started with the word



“special.” Special Operator 1 (S01) Feeks was a U.S. Navy SEAL. SEALs are the best of the best warfighters in the Navy and arguably all armed services here and abroad. They are trained to arrive from the Sea, jump from the Air, and fight on the Land in top secret missions of stealth wrapped in shadow or death dealt in daylight.

You’ve heard of them most recently in last month’s heroic rescue of a downed airman in the hostile mountains of Iran, where they secured the area against all foes as the rescue began. Patrick’s skills utilized in missions in Iraq and Afghanistan included being a sniper—a long range marksman the likes of which famously saved Maersk Alabama merchant ship Captain Mark Phillips from Somali Pirates that took him and his ship hostage in 2009.

His father, retired Navy Captain Tom Feeks says Patrick knew from age 4 that he wanted to serve in the Navy and become one of its elite warrior commandos originally known in World War II as Frogmen for their diving and underwater demolition



(L to R): Mom Virginia, (Ginny) with Regina, and her Dad Tom

and modern day Stolen Valor avenger Don Shipley.

SEALs have such a heroic place in American military lore that Senior Chief Shipley, who first joined the Navy in the 1980s now has a full-time retirement mission of exposing imposters who claim to have been former SEALs and illegally profit from it. His viral videos over more than 10 years include one heartfelt tribute to a Sea Cadet he once met while holding mini training camps for teens: Patrick Feeks. Shipley gets up to 30 requests a day to investigate fakes; one day he sat down and recorded a video about Pat’s character and determination as a cadet pressed into leadership in the SEAL style training experience. He did so to emphasize what the DNA of the real deal is. Shipley’s own son is a SEAL today. Watching him talk reverently about Pat and his ultimate sacrifice in combat, you get the sense that Don felt he had another SEAL son and lost him.

Patrick achieved his goal after a do-over, once more showing the persistence that caught Shipley’s eye, and became a SEAL while his younger sister

was a Midshipman at the Naval Academy, where his father graduated from, and later returned to as an instructor after a Navy career as an aviator flying antisubmarine planes and commanding squadrons and larger commands.

Like many a combat vet in the closing years of the Global War on Terror, Patrick saw his share and more of action in Iraq and Afghanistan. Saving lives without a doubt as you’ll soon read, but losing his own along with a brother warfighter when their helicopter was struck down by a rocket propelled grenade in Afghanistan. He left behind his widow Emily, whom he’d married just the year before, herself an active duty Navy sailor serving in posts tied to intelligence gathering and special warfare operations.



In this month of May with Memorial Day approaching on the 26th, Navy Clan Feeks and all its branches and offshoots of nearly a dozen sailors and Marines over three generations has one fallen leaf that paid the ultimate sacrifice. But it wasn’t in vain.

In these several weeks after Easter recall the words of the risen Lord whose sacrifice and resurrection infiltrated deep behind enemy lines to defeat evil and sin for those who believe:

“Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Those words of more than 2000 years ago found in John Chapter 15, Verse 13 of the Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition bible have some 21st century equivalents that bear solid witness to that.

Lives changed, lives saved by a life that would later be lost. Testimony about Patrick on his memorial site. Details in the following account is somewhat shadowy as is the world of a SEAL. Highly trained special warfare operators who slip in and slip out, often doing the most dangerous and deadly secret missions.

From a grateful colleague in combat with Pat in Afghanistan:

*I had an opportunity to introduce a few Army officers to Pat. I told the story about a specific mission we did in Afghanistan where me (the senior enlisted guy) and the commander accidentally got into the wrong helicopters*

Dedicated to  
S01 (SEAL) Patrick D. Feeks  
UNITED STATES NAVY

during infil. Pat was our guy on the ground (along with Herb) who tried to call the landing zone “HOT.” Because I was on the wrong helicopter, I wasn’t monitoring the right radios traffic. Long story short, Pat and Herb went through hell so that we didn’t have to land in a contested HLZ.

To the Feeks family, there isn’t a day that goes by that I don’t remember his courage that day. Because of him, I got to see my grandchild last year. I remember leaving Pat, and Herb alone with a platoon of Afghan commandos to hold down a giant compound in the middle of Taliban country. We needed them to just hold down the compound while we went back to base and get supplies. Things went wrong and they were stuck there for 3 days by themselves, in persistent gun fights. On the third day (at night), Pat and Herb went to secure our HLZ. I was in the trail CH-47 approaching the landing zone when the aircraft suddenly banked, and made a rough landing a kilometer away. We eventually made our way to link up with Pat and Herb.

Their vehicles were all shot up and barely able to move. I learned that Pat and Herb got ambushed while securing our HLZ and that the all the vehicle’s antennas were destroyed by RPG/ small arms fire. Pat knew our CH-47s were inbound and that he had to warn them. I didn’t know it at the time (because Pat never mentioned it), but he got out of his vehicle, climbed on top of his vehicle, and used his portable SATCOM antenna to call off the helos. In the



Pat’s sister, Regina

middle of all the hysteria, he exposed himself to an insane amount of gunfire so that he could save us.

There is no doubt that he saved 2 helicopters full of men that night. I often think about the decision he made that night. Knowing with certainty that he was sacrificing his life for us. The courage, empathy, and selflessness to make that decision is unimaginable.

There’s a well travelled bridge into Annapolis that was named for Patrick Feeks in 2014, two years after his death near the end of the Global War on Terror. One commuter in particular was familiar with the span. “Every day twice a day back and forth” says Captain Tom Feeks who retired in 2021 and is about to celebrate his 50 year anniversary with wife Ginny.

Both acknowledge the pain of a life they created yet couldn’t see continue. Both say they draw comfort from seeing and knowing that Pat was extremely happy and fulfilled, with no doubts that he made a difference.

I didn’t get to interview Pat’s little sister Regina, who graduated from Annapolis in 2010 just two years before losing her sibling. But if Pat’s life brought about something she could put into words? I would say she couldn’t possibly express her feeling about her hero big brother better than she already has.

That’s because United States Navy Lieutenant Regina Feeks is currently serving America as a physician assistant, medical professional and healer, and is assigned to the Navy SEALs. IrishRoverJim@gmail.com

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**MAY CROSSWORD ANSWERS**

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### Terry From Derry

by Terry Boyle



#### Don't Speak About the War

There's always a deep need or desire to be known, even if the knowing is virtually (pun intended) impossible. For creative minds who are interested in the arts, we create a medium through which we project our soul or what we perceive to be the essence of who we are. For poets, our love of ambiguity stems from a love of mystery. We don't want to know everything, or we believe we can't know everything. There's a limit to what we can know.

Poetry or liturgy aims to create that sense of mystery as a means of drawing attention to the mysterious, that force that governs those things that lie just beyond our senses. Since the advent of nuclear physics and the emerging philosophies surrounding this discipline, we are free to experiment with ideas that mainstream science is cautious to embrace. Our existence and consciousness in the realm of quantum physics open new ideas.

Like clouds in the sky, our ideas of who we are change. Sometimes they seem familiar and understandable, but at other times they seem strange and mysterious. Particles become entangled, and our ideas race to find new meanings in our greater awareness of how little we know. Mystery is not an invitation to close our minds and accept some idea of faith blindly. It's a call to keep our curiosity alive.

I grew up in a working-class family in Northern Ireland during the worst of the Troubles. I was the first in my family to go to University. My interest in the arts led me to study English Literature. 3 degrees later, I found myself in love with the human imagination. The very fact that we can conceive the impossible convinces me that our curiosity is alive and well. What we see in the clouds can be defined by science as the result of weather patterns, whereas the imagination seeks to find familiar shapes and forms.

There are so many theories about who we are as a species. Some of them are a far stretch of the imagination, others reduce us to nothing more than matter. Somewhere in between these extremes lies a middle ground that embraces science and what appears implausible. It is this territory that I find myself occupying.

I remember in my younger, more idealistic days, one person saying that I had my head in the clouds. I suppose it's better than what they could've said. My views then were a bit more fixed, more traditional, than they are now. It was a time when my belief system centred around matters of faith. I don't blame people for wanting the world to be understood in concrete terms. It's comforting to believe there's a God and a plan for human existence. Since we fear death, it's understandable why we need an afterlife.

The hardest thing to live with is doubt. It's an uncomfortable place at the best of times. You live in hope that some discovery will prove your existence is meaningful, and not simply a random fluke. But it never happens. It didn't take me long to discover that those who protested strongly for certainty were often afraid to admit to doubt. Placards demonstrating fundamental credos do not make truth. If anything, these acts of supposed faith stifle growth and keep our thinking confined to a narrow viewpoint.

The more unstable our world has become, the greater the risk of abandoning our critical thinking for a more stable worldview. Once we begin to exorcise our libraries and schools of books that no longer fit our beliefs, we have lost our minds to ignorance and fear. Science is not at war with faith, as some would have you believe. Scientific thought is about expanding

Science has saved innumerable lives. Scientific thought, we would be at the mercy of. Science has also brought us a new juncture. We are at the edge of something that will change everything we understand about the world. A.I. has us reconsidering what we understand as consciousness. Is consciousness a purely human experience, or can we create consciousness in artificial intelligence? What would it be like to have another kind of life form that can process information much faster than we ever could?

I'm excited about the new scientific discoveries. We're already beginning to see how these things can benefit us as a species. But what we're also seeing is the rise of anti-intellectualism generated by those who allow themselves to be governed by fear. These people would prefer to see us unvaccinated, unprotected from disease, and at the mercy of witch doctors. They would also prefer to keep us in a state of warfare, using science to fine-tune weaponry rather than use it to bring us together.

When those who govern us reject science or use it to reinforce bigotry, then we should be suspicious of their motives. It's not in their interest to bring peace when they can keep firm control by exploiting people's fears. We're in a state of war now, and the spin perpetrated by those who started it is obscene. Children die, and people are forced into homelessness. The death toll continues to escalate, and what do we get from those who engage in this folly? Nothing but the inflation of their egos.

Their rhetoric demonises the enemy in the worst possible ways. Think about how the Germans dehumanised the Jews. By doing so, they could treat them in the most inhumane ways. Israel and the U.S. have learned nothing from the past. Together, they create the basis for wiping out nations. But let's not speak about the war. What's more important is the price of petrol and groceries.

<https://www.youtube.com/@Derrypoet>

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### Birthright Citizenship

By Abdon Pallasch

April's U.S. Supreme Court hearing about whether the constitution's birthright citizenship clause means what it says featured a discussion about the "Know-Nothing" Party's efforts in the 1800s to block what they called the hordes of dirty, shanty, unwanted Irish Catholics immigrating to the United States.

Six of the nine justices currently sitting on the Supreme Court are Catholics and some of them trace their roots to those Irish immigrants. Ironically, some of those arguing to close the door on immigrants today are descended of those Irish immigrants demonized in the 1800s.

Study after study has shown that immigrants, documented or not, commit crimes at far lower rates than native-born Americans. But that has not stopped Donald Trump from running three campaigns for president falsely claiming the immigrants commit more crimes.

The central question of the Trump v Barbara case revolves around this line in the 14th Amendment, passed by the U.S. Senate in 1866 and ratified in 1868: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to

the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States..." The Trump administration says senators only meant the line to apply to children of freed slaves, as opposed to what it actually says and has been interpreted to mean by courts for the last 200 years.

California Senator John Conness was born in Galway and emigrated to the United States at age 15. He joined the gold rush to California and was elected to represent that state in the U.S. Senate. In 1866, even though Conness knew it could cost him his senate seat, he proudly defended the rights of California's Chinese immigrants against attacks from Pennsylvania nativist Senator Edgar Cowan.

Cecilia Wang, national legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union, stood before the Supreme Court in April to defend the long-held view that the 14th Amendment means what it says: that children born in the United States automatically are U.S. citizens.

In response to questions from the justices, Wang recounted the arguments between Senators Cowan and Conness on the Senate floor in 1866, the year the amendment was being drafted:

"Cowan says, 'If we have this citizenship clause as part of the constitution, we are going to encourage these,

what he called 'gypsies,' Roma, in Pennsylvania, whom he characterized as 'invaders, trespassers and law-breakers,' 'We'll encourage them to come into our country because their children will be citizens.'" Wang told the justices.

"Senator (John) Conness, in your state of California, you will be facing a mass flood of Chinese immigration if we adopt the citizenship rule," Wang said. "And Senator Conness, himself an Irish immigrant, says, 'Yes, and I am voting for that. I believe in citizenship by virtue of birth without regard to parentage.'"

Conness lost his senate seat after defending immigrants. Wang reminded the justices that the same scape-goating of undocumented immigrants going on the United States right now was just as intense and focused mainly against Irish immigrants in the mid-1800s.

"At the time the framers are thinking about birthright citizenship, there had just been 15 or 20 years of unprecedented immigration from Ireland," Wang said. "The Know-Nothing Party was dominant in the 1850s just a decade earlier, and they were vehemently opposed to Irish immigration. They believed Irish Catholic immigrants were unassimilable and could never become Americans."

But unlike President Trump,

who wants to dispense with the nuisance of amending the constitution to get rid of birthright citizenship and instead dubiously claims the authority to delete it from the constitution with an executive order, Wang said the Know-Nothings never tried to pretend that the 14th Amendment did not mean what it said.

"But even the Know-Nothing Party members of Congress believed that the children born in the United States to those Irish immigrants were citizens like anyone else," Wang told the justices. "That's the intuition that the framers of the 14th amendment had, contrary to the government's arguments now. They wanted to grow this country. They wanted to make sure we had a citizenry to populate the military, to settle the country..."

Legal observers listening to the oral arguments said they found the justices skeptical about the Trump administration's effort to reverse 200 years of interpretation of the 14th amendment - though predicting how justices will ultimately rule is difficult.

Announcing his first campaign for president in 2015, Donald Trump said, "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people." His

immigrant-bashing in the last 11 years has stayed most focused on Mexican immigrants and Venezuelan asylum-seekers, but also included immigrants from Haiti and other poorer countries he called "shithole countries" home to mainly Black and Hispanic people.

But his stepped-up enforcement and deportation efforts have already snagged many Irish immigrants who thought they were secure in their U.S. residencies. Ironically, voters in the Republic of Ireland ended birthright citizenship in 2004 by a margin of 79 percent, bringing Ireland into line with most of Europe.

Thirty-three countries around the world, mainly in North, South and Central America, have the U.S. model of birthright citizenship. President Trump could have avoided humiliating himself had he Googled that fact before he posted in the minutes after April's oral argument: "We are the only Country in the World STUPID enough to allow 'Birthright' Citizenship!"

The court's ruling in Trump v Barbara is expected this summer.

Abdon wrote for the Chicago Sun-Times for 25 years and is now *Readers who would like to give us their thoughts on this topic can email:* cliff@irishamericannews.com

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### Chicago Remembers Musicians Patrick Cloonan and Anthony O'Connell

Here we remember and celebrate the lives of two legendary Chicago area Irish musicians, Patrick Cloonan and Anthony O'Connell, who passed away in the first few months of 2026.

**PATRICK (PAT) CLOONAN**  
Patrick Cloonan (1931-2026) was born and raised in Lettermullan, Connemara. He was one of 10 siblings- 6 girls and 4 boys. Everyone in the family played accordion, and shared instruments, but Patrick was the only one that took it to the next level. Although Cloonan found inspiration in his uncle Michael Sullivan, he was essentially self-taught. At the young age of 16 years old, Patrick headed to England with his older brother to help re-build London after the German Blitzkrieg. Patrick picked up the English language rather quickly and on construction sites he would actually serve as the interpreter for the Irish men who only spoke Gaelic.



Aside from his work, Patrick was an excellent Irish button accordion player. He saved up his money to buy an accordion that he could play in the dance halls of England on the weekend. Although he played in London, Camden Town and

Cricklewood, when times got tough, he found it necessary to pawn his little button accordion in order to pay the rent. Thus, he left London and wandered to northern England, where he worked for the English farmers. He soon left to go back to Ireland.

After a 2-year stint with the Irish Army, Patrick left Ireland to make his way to Boston, just to try something different. While working in Boston, he was able to purchase another Irish button accordion, but

it was there that he met two great Irish musicians known as the Cooley brothers- Joe (accordion) and Seamus (banjo) Cooley of the famed Tulla Céilí Band. Although they (the Cooley's and Cloonan) played Irish music every weekend in Boston's dance halls and pubs,

it was difficult to make a living, so ultimately the three made a decision to move together to Chicago.

Chicago had a reputation for having great Irish musicians, and indeed when Patrick arrived, he began to play with some of the greats, including Doctor Murphy and his sons, Frank and Jimmy Thornton, Johnny McGreevy, Pat Burke, Albert and John Neary, Kevin Henry and Phil Durkin. He even played with very young Michael Flatley, Liz Carroll, Jimmy Keane and John Williams. Patrick joined the Irish Musicians Association, and can be heard on one of their recordings made at the Glendora House. Cloonan also published a CD called "Pat Cloonan's Thanksgiving." It features 16 tracks of traditional Irish music, including eight reels, three songs, three jigs, two hornpipes, two slides, two slip jigs, a waltz, a set dance, an air, a polka, a poem, and just for laughs, a humor track! One track is "Johnny McGreevy's Favorite," also known as Fahey's Reel.

Patrick worked in sewer and construction, and eventually got a city job as an operating engineer. He met his wife, Galway native Frances Fahy, in Chicago at a dance event, where many Irish immigrants would meet their spouses. It was actually Joe Cooley (his mother's cousin) who introduced them. They had six children, 4 boys and 2 girls. Everybody played an instrument; his son Jim Cloonan learned to play accordion and has played most of his life at Chicago area sessions.

Fiddle player, Mike Chole, said of Cloonan "I met him .... 42 years ago. Coming from Connemara, he had a very relaxed speech style often times sprinkling some Irish words in the English sentences. This is how he played the accordion, easy style, relaxed, ornamented, never rushed. Because of this, everyone enjoyed playing music with him.... Pat was a giant in the Chicago Irish music scene." Jim Cloonan said a "powerful work ethic was one of the most important things I learned from my father. He was always learning new tunes, he never

settled for just playing ones he knew." Pat was still playing into his 90s, and died on March 2, 2026, just 2 days short of his 95th birthday.

**ANTHONY (TONY) O'CONNELL**  
Keyboard and button accordion player Anthony "Tony" O'Connell (1957-2026) was born in Dublin, Ireland, the only child of Anthony and Philomena "Phyllis" O'Connell. Although his parents were not particularly musical, they encouraged young Tony to learn accordion, and later piano; that began his musical journey. In his teens, while still living in Ireland, he played in several show bands, including one led by Anna McGoldrick, Ireland's "first lady" of comedy and song, whose comedic recording "Queen of the Blarney" became a blockbuster in Ireland.

One day in 1980, while traveling on a train from Cork to Tralee, Tony sat next to an American woman named Jo Gengler, and they struck up a conversation. They stayed in touch, and in short order, Tony moved to Chicago, and two years later married Jo. They were married for 43 years.

While working full-time, O'Connell took evening classes at Loyola University, and,



13 years later, he earned his Bachelor's degree in computer science. Over the years, he was employed at Rush-Presbyterian Medical Center, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and Northwestern Mutual Insurance until his retirement in March 2025.

Tony had many interests, but his wife Jo said his true passion was Irish music, and he was always happiest when he was playing music with his friends. Tony attended Chicagoland sessions regularly including the ones at McNally's (which he helped start), Quigley's, and Chicago Gaelic Park. Shortly after settling in Chicago, Tony had a band of his own called

the Kerry Piper. Tony wrote a tune called "Christmas in Kinsale" which is available on Spotify and thesession.org. Aside from his talent as Irish musician, Jo felt his best quality was "his kindness towards others."

Fellow Irish musician, Tony's personal friend of 25 years, and bodhrán player Joe Martin shared this: ".....In our travels to sessions Tony and I spent a long time talking about many things other than music.... He loved science fiction and physics, and he would attend Saturday morning lectures for the public at Fermi lab, where he'd learn about relativity, and quantum physics. He assumed that (as I had graduated from MIT) that I could converse with him about these things!"

Tony was a dog lover, an avid fan of Premier League soccer, and an enthusiastic traveler. Here is something very few people know about O'Connell- he enjoyed watching and attending figure skating events. Although he had no interest at first, Jo asked if he'd accompany her to the World Figure Skating Championships in Cincinnati. Once he got there, Jo said he really liked it, and they began to go regularly, and he became quite a fan.

Kell Chole of the Institute of Traditional Irish Music (formerly Murphy Roche Irish Music Club) said, "We met Tony at a folk fest in the very first days of our organization's existence. So, he was as close to being a founding member as anyone could be. As a piano player, he was the backbone of our ceili bands.... He was a tireless worker for

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, acting for years as secretary of the Midwest Region and webmaster for the Province of North America.... He was respected at the highest levels and we will never have another like him. He was one-of-a-kind."

With that I would have to agree.... Tony O'Connell seemed to be the rare person who had both sides of his brain engaged- the analytical side (computers, physics), AND the creative side (music, figure skating.) And kind on top of that. These two are irreplaceable and will be sorely missed. christine.lawless@yahoo.com



### Comhaltas N. America

Some of the folks who attended Comhaltas North America Prospectus 2035 recently at the Northbrook Hilton. More on the organization at <https://www.ccenorthamerica.org/>



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## Vulcan Proverbs, Trumpian Apologies, Pepper Spray and Me

"There is an old Vulcan proverb: 'Only Nixon can go to China.'" Well, that's according to Mr. Spock, so I guess it must be true. If you're a Trekker, you'll get it; otherwise, you'll just conclude that Grandpa is off his meds again.

I was sitting at home the other day, looking out through a heavy rain at the fields across from me and fiddling around with my late dad's shaving kit. When he passed over, more than twenty years ago, this and a collection of his many, many books is what I saved. And for some reason it always gets the old brain cells reflecting on things past.

It's one of those complicated yokes that Real Men used back then, full of mysterious little brushes, leather straps, open razors and things of that nature. Being a bit of a wuss, I'd probably accidentally cut my head off if I tried to use it.

When I got it home after the funeral, I discovered that he had a diary hidden away in the kit. And men just didn't keep diaries back then. Not where we came from, anyway. It wasn't exactly Samuel Pepys territory, put it that way. Yet there was my dad, keeping a diary; and one that spoke mainly about his love for his family.

In many ways, that typified my father. I often joke that the Old Man was a New Man before that term was in use. Having been in the navy, he was a very self-sufficient guy. He'd sew and cook and all the things that were considered the domain of women back then.

I think that it's fair to say that he was a good man. And I think of him often, especially when I'm looking through that shaving kit and the loose collection of

his own poetry that was tucked inside.

I thought of him this week and found myself back to being fifteen years of age again, hunkered down in front of the Telly, with him just home from

## Swimming Upstream

By Charles Brady



work and both of us awestruck to hear the news snippets coming in from the States.

President Nixon was resigning for having done something that we couldn't quite make head nor tail of; but it must have been something bloody awful just the same. I mean, he was resigning - the President of the USA was resigning. And in 1974 America was a place that I aspired to seeing one day: I loved their films; I loved their can-do attitude; I even loved their 'have-a-nice-day' baloney, which for some reason we were too embarrassed to say back then.

Nixon and the Watergate Tapes. It now seems almost quaint. Was it worse than the godawful language of hatred, of intractability, of near-demonic bile that was spewing from the mouth of President Donald Trump these past weeks? And yet there's one man who won't be doing a Nixon and falling on his sword for the good of his country.

He loved words, my Old Man; and it's a love that he passed on to me. But what I was hearing from THIS man, from this Leader of the Free World, was nothing less than a moral crime because it was the very WEAPONISING of words. It was taking the gift

of language, something that ideally should be used to inspire us and draw us closer together and - hell, I'll just say it - make the world a better place to live in. And Trump was doing something awful with them; he was warping them and mutating them into the most nauseating lumps of ugliness.

Eleven years ago, in a world that already seems from a different era, I believed that Donald Trump had it in him - precisely because he WASN'T a politician - to become one of the truly great presidents.

I was wrong. I was wrong and I can see now, belatedly, that given the nature of the man, I could never have been right.

I could of course tell you that this is simply an opinion column and it's only my opinion. But do you know something? That's not good enough, it's really not. I'm ashamed of myself; ashamed of being suckered when I'm generally the very one spouting the 'Trust No One' mantra. In fact, his name is now an adjective with me: 'How far did you get it wrong, Charley?' 'I got it wrong to a TRUMPian extent!! I WAS WAY OFF BY A BIGLY TRUMPian LIGHT YEAR, THAT'S HOW FAR OUT I WAS!!!'

He would have been disappointed in me, the Old Man, that I didn't see through this guy. Then again, he would have been disappointed by the Irish Government as well this week -- a government that once and for all showed that it has no interest in serving

the people who elected it. Never did that old idea seem truer than now, that we get an illusion of democracy on the day we get to vote; and straight afterwards our self-serving leaders go right on doing whatever is best for them, not us. An illusion of democracy once a day every few years; so, we in Ireland certainly have no right to be tut-tutting over what is happening in the States.

I was not involved in the Fuel Protests, having a few differences of opinion with them. However, I spoke with many last Sunday who were; and I was hugely impressed with the peaceful way in which they were handling it, even down to one of my concerns, the disruption of emergency services. It quickly became clear that the protestors were doing all they could to ensure that pathways were left open for these eventualities; in fact, if contacted in advance they gave assistance to anyone who needed to get through.

Certainly, they were a far cry from the wild-eyed, layabout Far Right (of course!) Mob that the government was making them out to be. Those I talked to were simply working people at the end of their tether, the fuel prices being just the latest onslaught against the ordinary person. And yet, in a complete misreading of the situation, our elected representatives threatened these people - their own constituents -- with army intervention and actually sent out balaclava-wearing enforcers to pepper spray them. Yes, what speaks of a free country more than balaclavas and pepper spray? The mind boggles at their tactics.

And this thuggery was waved

through by Micheál Martin and his fellow goons.

"We don't have a magic money tree", squeaked the usual government sycophants. Really? Just off the top of my head: Media Minister Patrick O'Donovan has signed off on a 20,000 euro pay rise for the head of RTE, Kevin Bakhurst.

No magic money tree? Are they having a laugh? There's nothing BUT magic money trees outside the Dail...just as long as the money doesn't go to the Irish poor. There's always a Zelensky or someone more deserving. And if there are homeless sleeping on the street you can just step over them. What do you think God gave you a pair of legs for?

Was the chasm between the public and its representatives ever as immense as it is at this moment?

Turning away from the window and a blustery Galway day, I pack up dad's little kit from yesteryear and thank God, not for the first time, that I was lucky enough to be raised by such a man -- and not by a Trump or one of our Irish chancers, who seem hell bent on achieving nothing so much as spreading divisiveness among their own.

He never got my liking for Science Fiction, the Old Man; but there's another Vulcan saying that he would have gotten behind: "I am pleased to see that we have differences. May we together become greater than the sum of both of us".

It's a bit better than sending in the balaclavas and the pepper spray, I would have thought. [charleybrady@gmail.com](mailto:charleybrady@gmail.com) If you'd like to comment on any columnists opinion, send to [cliff@irishamericannews.com](mailto:cliff@irishamericannews.com)

## Munster Rugby in Limerick: A History Etched in Red

Few sporting traditions are as deeply woven into a city's identity as Munster Rugby is into Limerick. More than a pastime, rugby here is heritage, sung from the terraces of Thomond Park and celebrated across the diaspora. For Irish Americans seeking a deeper connection to Limerick, the story of Munster Rugby offers a powerful lens through which to understand the region's culture, resilience, and pride.

Socially and culturally, rugby offered a strong identity in Limerick's working-class communities, distinguishing the city from other rugby centres such as Dublin and Cork. Scholars note that rugby in Munster, particularly in Limerick, was shaped by questions of class, politics, and regional pride throughout its development from the 1870s onward.



Origins: A Provincial Identity Takes Root

Munster Rugby traces its origins to 1879, the year the provincial branch of the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU) was established. This formation aligned Munster with the sport's growing national structure and provided a neutral provincial selection system to support Ireland's international team.

Even before the formal founding, the seeds of Munster Rugby had taken root. Interprovincial fixtures between Leinster, Ulster, and Munster were played as early as 1875, demonstrating the sport's early popularity and the competitive spirit already present in the province.

From the start, Limerick played an outsized role. The city quickly became central to Munster's identity, providing a passionate player base and a fiercely loyal fan culture that distinguished Munster from the other provinces. Clubs around Limerick City and County developed strong followings, and their intense rivalries helped elevate playing standards.

### Limerick: The Beating Heart of Munster Rugby

Limerick's role as the symbolic home of Munster Rugby is inseparable from its legendary home stadium, Thomond Park. Nestled in the city's urban fabric, Thomond Park is far more than a sporting venue, it is a cultural landmark whose atmosphere is renowned across the rugby world.

The stadium's reputation for fierce home support, respectful silence during goal kicks, and rousing renditions of *The Fields of Athenry* has cemented its mythic status. Its deep connection to Munster Rugby is longstanding: the ground has hosted provincial matches for over a century, including fixtures

against the world's most iconic touring sides. The stadium has undergone several enhancements, including a major redevelopment completed in 2011, which expanded seating and modernised facilities while preserving the ground's unmistakable character.

Munster's reach extends beyond Limerick of course, representing a province encompassing Cork, Clare, Tipperary, Kerry, Waterford, and Limerick. Limerick remains the cultural stronghold, known worldwide as a city where rugby is part of everyday life, a place where children in red jerseys are a common sight and matchdays turn the city's streets into a sea of red.

### Historic Encounters: Munster vs. the World

One of the most distinctive threads in Munster's history is its tradition of

Ireland, and Munster was no exception. At first, the province grappled with the implications of professionalization. By 1997, Munster had issued its first 15 professional contracts (only three fulltime) with coaches Declan Kidney and Niall O'Donovan appointed to guide the team through this transitional period.

During these early professional years, fan engagement was still developing. For example, aggregate home attendance for Munster's Heineken Cup matches in 1997 was around 13,000, lower than the combined attendance for local club fixtures involving Shannon and Young Munster that same season.

But between 1995 and 2000, something extraordinary happened. Munster Rugby evolved from a provincial selection into a world recognizable

Munster's first Heineken Cup victory in 2006, a defining moment that placed Limerick (and Thomond Park) on the global rugby map.

### Munster Rugby Today: A Cultural and Tourism Icon

Today, Munster Rugby competes in the United Rugby Championship and European Rugby Champions Cup, maintaining its status as one of Europe's elite provincial sides. The team motto, "To the brave and faithful, nothing is impossible", continues to capture the spirit that defines rugby in Limerick.

Visiting Limerick offers a rich rugby experience. Match days bring an electrifying atmosphere unmatched elsewhere in Irish sport, while local clubs and pubs offer authentic encounters with the city's rugby-loving community.

Munster Rugby is not just a team. It is a living expression of Limerick's



brand, "Club Munster", supported by a massive, passionate fan base and a team that embraced the province's underdog spirit.

The transformation culminated in

identity, resilience, and pride. For Irish Americans seeking heritage, connection, and storytelling, few narratives speak as powerfully as this one.

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### A Mothers Story

My name is Sabrina Gallagher, and I will always be grateful for the kindness and support I received from Hugh's House during the most difficult time in my life.

Our journey began on 20th July 2016 when my beautiful daughter, Madelyne, came into the world far too soon at just 29 weeks in Letterkenny General Hospital. She was tiny, fragile, and very sick. Like any mother, all I wanted was to be near my baby, but Maddie needed specialist care and had to be transferred to Holles Street Hospital in Dublin shortly after she was born.

I was admitted for a week after having her, but when I was discharged, panic set in. I had nowhere to stay, I did not know Dublin, and I could not bear the thought of being far away from my newborn baby while she fought for her life.

Thankfully, my sister had a friend who mentioned Hugh's House. I had never heard of it before, but after a few phone calls, I was told they had a room for me. That one phone call changed everything.

From the minute I walked through the doors, I felt welcomed and cared for. The warmth and kindness shown to me by everyone there is something I will never forget. They made me feel safe at a time when my whole world felt like it was falling apart. My room was spotless and cosy, and for the first time in days I felt like I could finally breathe again.

Hugh's House gave me so much more than a place to sleep. They provided me with home-cooked meals, comfort, friendship, and peace of mind. Most importantly, they allowed me to stay close to Maddie while she needed me most. Because of them, I could focus all my strength and energy on being there for my little girl without worrying about where I would go each night.

The people there became like family to me, and I will forever be thankful

for the love and compassion they showed during such a frightening time.

Now, our gorgeous girl will turn ten this coming July, and looking at her today, you would never believe just how much she has overcome in her young life.

Maddie has been a full-time wheelchair



"Hugh's House didn't just give me a place to stay, they gave me strength, comfort, and hope when I needed it most."

## Sabrina's Story

user since she was two years old. She has also been diagnosed with scoliosis, which causes a curve in her spine, and autism. Despite all the challenges she has faced, Maddie is the happiest, most loving little girl you could ever meet. She has the most beautiful smile, and it lights up every room she enters.

She has come through so much since the day she was born, yet she remains the brightest ray of sunshine in all our lives. She also has three wonderful siblings who absolutely adore her and love her dearly.

When I think about Sabrina and Maddie's journey, I often think of how blessed we are to live in a time where medical care has advanced so much for premature babies. Years ago, babies born as early as Maddie would have had very little chance of survival. Thankfully, because of modern medicine and neonatal care, so many tiny babies are given a fighting chance.

Much of that progress began with a man named Dr. Étienne Stéphane Tarnier, a French doctor born in 1828 who changed the future for premature babies everywhere.

## GOOD GRIEF

By JOSEPHINE COLEMAN



that supported families like ours when we needed it most.

She truly is our little miracle, and we are proud of her every single day.

I might also add that Sabrina and little Maddie are my Donegal cousins. Little Maddie may have entered this world early and faced many obstacles, but she is strong, brave, full of joy and taught us all about resilience, love and strength more than words could ever say. Wishing them well on their continued journey. Til next time. Happy Mothers Day to all our mums past and present.

Dr. Tarnier worked in a maternity hospital in Paris and was heartbroken by how many premature babies died because they could not stay warm enough after birth. At that time, doctors had very little they could do to help them survive.

One day while visiting the Paris Zoo, Tarnier noticed incubators being used to hatch chicken eggs. Watching the eggs being kept warm gave him an idea that would change history. He wondered if the same method could help save tiny premature babies.

In 1880, he created the first practical infant incubator—a heated wooden box with glass panels designed to keep newborn babies warm and protected. It was a simple invention, but it changed everything. Premature baby survival rates improved dramatically, and hospitals around the world soon began using incubators.

That one idea laid the foundation for the neonatal incubators still used in hospitals today.

Without Dr. Tarnier's invention and the incredible advances in neonatal medicine since then, many babies like Maddie might never have survived.

Sabrina said every time I look at my daughter, I think of how lucky we are—not only for the doctors and nurses who cared for her, but for places like Hugh's House



We are officially into Spring, even though April was a real rollercoaster ride as far as the weather was concerned, I'm hoping May will be a little calmer.

May is the time of the year when all those bulbs and perennial plants that have been sleeping for the last six months finally wake up and pop their heads out of the ground.

Tulips, daffodils, crocuses, asparagus, and my favorite rhubarb. Rhubarb is an amazing vegetable. Yes, that's right not a fruit but a vegetable from the buckwheat family. It's a little confusing because most times we see rhubarb it is usually being used in a pie, crumble or jam.

Rhubarb has been cultivated in England and in Scandinavia since the 18th century, and much earlier in China. Originally rhubarb was used for medicinal purposes. I've always considered it an early spring vegetable but it can be cultivated throughout the entire summer. Rhubarb

can be eaten raw although most people prefer to eat it cooked. It has red stalks similar in appearance to celery with large green leaves which are toxic to humans and animals alike, and should be discarded and not eaten. I



wonder who the lucky guy was that figured that out. Rhubarb usually requires some form of sweetener to balance out its tart flavor. It has both sweet and savory applications for desserts, sauces, condiments, chutneys, and jams.

Rhubarb cooks fairly quickly so it's perfect for pies and

crumbles, but we are going to look at the savory side of rhubarb. I am going to show you how to make a delicious sauce for salmon.

### Salmon with a Rhubarb Sauce serves 4

**INGREDIENTS**  
4-6oz pieces of salmon  
Salt - Pepper - Dried tarragon  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
2 cups rhubarb cut into a medium dice  
1 shallot diced -  
1 clove garlic minced  
1 inch piece ginger peeled and

1 oz heavy cream heavy cream  
Place olive oil, rhubarb, shallots, ginger, and garlic in a saucepan. Cook for 5 minutes over medium heat. Do not brown. Add vinegar, wine, honey, lemon juice, and water and simmer for 10 minutes. Add spices and cook additional 5 minutes. Puree with an immersion, or counter top blender and strain mixture pressing rhubarb through a fine strainer with a spoon or spatula. Discard any woody or large bits left in the strainer.

Return rhubarb mixture to a clean sauté pan. Add the sprig of fresh rosemary and the heavy cream. Bring back to a simmer. Add the butter one piece at a time incorporating it into the sauce. Taste and adjust the seasoning if necessary. If it is too acidic add more heavy cream. The sauce should coat the back of a spoon and you should be able to draw a line through it with your finger. You have just made a version of a Beurre Blanc sauce.

Pretty fancy huh? Keep the sauce in a warm place while you cook the salmon. You can cook the salmon however you prefer. Sear it in a pan, grill it or bake it the choice is yours. Season the fish with salt, pepper and tarragon. Whatever you do don't overcook it! All fish when cooked should still be transparent. If you're

looking for a gauge, I would say no more than medium. 5 minutes on each side is more than enough. To serve place some of the sauce on the plate and spread it around. Top with pan roasted asparagus that still has a bit of a bite to it.

Place salmon fillet, on the asparagus spears and top with a spoonful of sauce. Garnish with fresh chives.

So, in this recipe we have incorporated these spring items, rhubarb, asparagus, and chives and come up with a savory sauce that works really well with the fattiness of the salmon.

You can adapt this sauce for chicken or pork with the addition of brown sugar or molasses, chili powder for heat and perhaps some Dijon mustard, Worcestershire, or soy sauce always trying to keep the rhubarb the star of the sauce.

I hope you enjoy this twist on rhubarb. For a number of years The Irish Shop was a vendor at Gaelic Park's Irish festival over the Memorial Day weekend. I specifically remember one Saturday when the temperature was in the 30's and it rained all day. There was a stream running down the center of our tent and we froze our you know what off!

Lets hope we don't get a repeat of that anytime this year. Thanks for visiting my page.

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Thanks for visiting my page.

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### More Than a Game: GAA Scholarship Links USA Players to UCD

By Mark Jackson

The UCD Brian Mullins Ambassador Award for Gaelic Games was established in 2024 for recipients to pursue their academic goals at University College Dublin (UCD) while promoting Gaelic games and cultural exchange across the USA and Ireland. In memory of the great former Dublin player and former Director of Sport at UCD, Brian Mullins, the program aims to provide financial support for US students on their academic and sporting journeys.

Ger Brennan, GAA Development Executive at UCD and Dublin senior football manager, is proud to see the rising popularity of GAA in the US. "Seeing the passion for the games in the United States is incredibly inspiring," Ger says. "What stands out is how the games create connection. For American students coming to UCD, GAA becomes a way to integrate quickly into Irish culture."

One such American student and awardee of the Brian Mullins Ambassador Award, Catherine O'Neill, has been playing Gaelic football since she was five years old. As a first-generation Irish-American, GAA has been a part of her life for as long as she can remember. Both of her parents played Gaelic football growing up, and so did every Irish-American kid she knew in her area, so she did too.

Catherine is a first-year Bachelor of Civil Law student at UCD and played for both Shannon Gaels and Kerry/Donegal Ladies G.F.C. in her hometown of Rego Park in Queens, New York. As a full-back for the UCD Ladies third team, she played in the HEC Donaghy Cup quarter-final on February 25. The team unfortunately lost the match to Ulster University, but Catherine was happy with their performance because it was an intense and high-scoring game.

Since starting her degree at UCD last year, Catherine has found Gaelic football to be a lifeline and a fantastic way to meet new people. "I've found with the GAA that I've gotten to know a lot more Irish students that wouldn't necessarily be in my course," she says with a smile, "and

that I wouldn't know otherwise." Catherine often doesn't feel like an international student on campus because she sees familiar faces all the time through friendships she's made in her club. Ger Brennan helped with this by introducing Catherine to another passionate football player from the States and fellow scholarship recipient, Jenna Ryan.

Knowing Jenna made settling into campus life much easier for Catherine.

and have been playing for 5 years." In Chicago, Jenna made new friends through her hometown club and found a new way of life that connected her to Irish culture.

"My closest friends are all involved in Ladies Gaelic football in Chicago," she says, "and I spent a lot of time immersed in the community at Chicago Gaelic Park. The GAA there is about way more than matches: it's social events, pub nights, community gatherings and a shared connection to Irish sport and culture." Since coming to Dublin and being awarded the Brian Mullins scholarship, Jenna has had much the same experience as Catherine at UCD, making new friends and enjoying the thrill of competition.

Shannon Farrelly, UCD's North America Director based in NYC, is thrilled to see the legacy of Brian Mullins live on through this scholarship. Reflecting on the impact of this scholarship, she says, "I hope it adds to the momentum in the US and NY right now to keep young and talented athletes playing Gaelic games through to high school, then college, and after. We are so fortunate to have two great female athletes as the inaugural recipients of this scholarship at UCD, representing their strong roots in the USGAA and NYGAA."

"It's been such a positive part of my first year, and we were in the championship this season . . . which was really exciting," Jenna says. "Playing at UCD has helped me feel connected on and off campus, and I've made a lot of great friends through the team."

Both Jenna and Catherine highly recommend that other international

students apply for the program, since it has added so much value to their UCD experiences.

"So I'd say in applying, I would mention the fact that it's a bridging social thing," Catherine says. "We always want to see new faces turn up to practice. You shouldn't be scared to be the new person to show up, or the only American person to be on the team."

"The scholarship has really helped me settle into life at UCD," Jenna adds. "My advice for anyone thinking of applying would be to be genuine about their Gaelic games journey and how they contribute beyond just playing. Highlighting your GAA accomplishments, commitment to the sport, teamwork, and involvement in the wider community really helps show who you are both on and off the pitch."

Mags D'Arcy, Communications Manager at UCD Student Services, who is heavily involved with the scholarship and was herself a highly accomplished camogie player, knows the scholarship will have a rich legacy. "The hope is that the Brian Mullins Scholarship becomes a lasting symbol of what UCD GAA stands for - excellence, inclusivity, and connection," she says. "We want it to create a generation of players and graduates who carry the spirit of the GAA with them wherever they go in the world."

To support the UCD Brian Mullins Ambassador Award for Gaelic Games, please visit the UCD Foundation website.

Learn how to join a USGAA club here. If you are interested in starting your own club, please visit this page, <https://www.ucdfoundation.ie/>

If you have any queries about USGAA clubs, please contact [rob.tierney.usa@gaa.ie](mailto:rob.tierney.usa@gaa.ie)



L - R): Nathan Mullins, Catherine O'Neill, Jenna Ryan, Dominic O'Keefe

"We were both kind of going into the football here not knowing anyone," she says. "So, yeah, it was nice for going to tryouts together. Like, you weren't walking by yourself. So I'd say the scholarship helped in all those aspects - the social, the monetary and everything else."

Unlike Catherine, Jenna Ryan did not grow up playing football and only did her first punt kick five years ago, which makes her achievements in the game all the more impressive. Originally from Chicago, Jenna played for four years with her Chicago team, St. Brigid's, before coming to UCD last year to start her graduate studies in the School of Veterinary Medicine.

Growing up in Chicago, Jenna first learned about Gaelic football through a friend who asked her to play in a seven-a-side tournament as they were short a few players. Not knowing the rules of the sport and having never seen a match, Jenna toggled out and played anyway, discovering an affinity and love for the game.

"I ended up giving it a shot. It took a couple years to learn the rules completely," she says. "Now I'm here



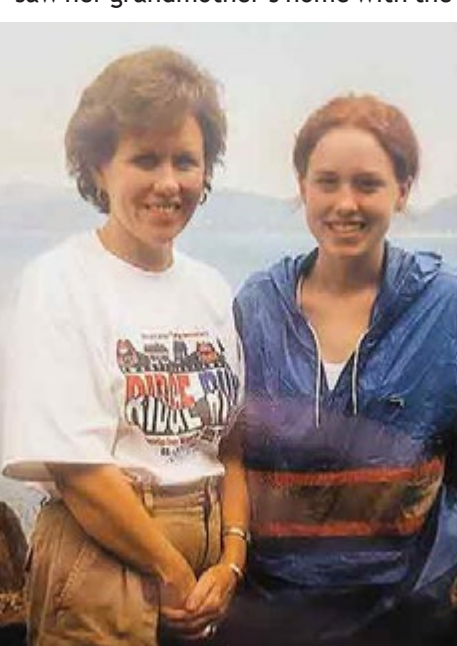
(Pictured left to right): Rob Tierney, Mags D'Arcy, Catherine O'Neill, Jenna Ryan, Shannon Farrelly, Josh Warde, Ger Brennan



Over spring break, my husband took my thirteen-year-old son to New York City. The two of them planned the trip together. They did all the classic tourist things—riding bikes in Central Park, walking through Times Square, visiting the Metropolitan Museum of Art, eating New York pizza, and even going to a comedy show. All of these experiences were special, but what stood out most was something you can't replicate: the one-on-one connection they shared. They laughed about funny situations, subway rides gone wrong, a full slice

of cheesecake on top of a milkshake, and an hour-long chess match in Washington Square Park. The rest of us were entertained by their stories, but the truth is, that experience belonged only to them. It was theirs in a way no one else could fully understand. They spent time together that simply isn't possible in the rhythm of everyday family life. It's a bond, and a set of memories, that will stay with them forever.

I understand that feeling because my mom took me to Ireland for the first time when I was eighteen as a graduation gift. I grew up with four younger brothers, and we took family trips, but this trip was just the two of us. It was the first time I had ever traveled alone with one other person, and I didn't fully realize how special it was until later. My mom, a nurse on the Southside of Chicago had saved money to finally go



Ellyse (r), and her mom, Marcy, in Ireland

red door that her grandmother talked about so many times.

We traveled to Ireland together a few more times over the years with other family members. Those trips were fun and unique. But that first one, just the two of us, me eighteen

and her in her late forties, both experiencing Ireland for the first time, making sure not to lose our money belts, passports or tour group, remains a core memory. It taught me that even when you don't have all the answers, you can figure things out together.

A one-on-one connection with anyone is powerful. Whether it's a trip, a lunch, or even a quick visit, there's something deeper that happens when it's just two people. You share stories differently and are really able to listen. You see each other more clearly. I've taken many trips with my husband, and he is a wonderful travel partner. But this idea of intentional one-on-one time can apply to anyone. Maybe a trip isn't possible right now, but what about dinner? A walk? A cup of coffee? You might be surprised by what you learn—and what you share.

And if anyone happens to want to send me to Ireland again—this time

to Europe. She was nervous, something I now understand as a mother myself. We joined a bus tour and met Dominic, our driver, and the most wonderful people along the way. I still remember sitting at dinner one night, watching her try to figure out the currency. I was surprised that she didn't immediately know what to do. It was a small moment, but it shifted something in me. My mom, who always seemed to have all the answers, was figuring it out. That trip helped me see her not just as "Mom," but as a person with dreams of her own. One of those dreams was to visit Ireland, and I was lucky enough to share that first experience with her. We even saw her grandmother's home with the

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And if anyone happens to want to send me to Ireland again—this time

with my daughter—I would happily accept. Take the time to connect with your mom, dad, sibling, child, or spouse. Those moments matter more than we often realize. As Oscar Wilde once said, "Be always searching for new sensations. Be afraid of nothing." Email is [Ellysepfandler@gmail.com](mailto:Ellysepfandler@gmail.com) if you have had a connection like this while traveling or just want to simply send me to Ireland!

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**Loving Outreach to Survivors of Suicide**

By Deborah R. Major, PhD, LCSW

After working as a private banker for years, I realized I wasn't doing what I was called to do. I returned to school, earned a degree in social work, and applied to be a therapist at Catholic Charities. As I was waiting for my interview in the lobby of a former school in the Back-of-the-Yards neighborhood, a little boy came down the stairs and attempted to push open this very big, heavy, wooden door. I thought, 'I need to go help that child.' Instantly, I knew I had to work here. I realized I have to help children trying to push through doors they can't open. I went on to provide therapy for children in Catholic Charities' foster care for 16 years.

In 2010, I was asked to create a program for children participating in Catholic Charities' Loving Outreach to Survivors of Suicide program, founded by Father Charles T. Rubey in the 1970s. The program brings people together,

creating a community of survivors who support each other. Individual counseling and support groups are held in person across Cook and Lake counties, and also online. LOSS hosts support groups for spouses, parents, Spanish speakers, families of first responders, and others, and a writing group. I went on to become the program's director, working alongside Father Rubey for 16 years now, as well as seven clinicians and 43 volunteer group facilitators who are survivors.

Everyone who comes to the LOSS program is trying to understand the nature of the pain of their loved one who took their own life. They ask themselves: What was going on? Why didn't I know this was happening? Why didn't they ask for help?

Why didn't I do something different that day that could have prevented this?

In our counseling sessions, we don't provide the answers to these questions, but we do explain that the person was in a great deal of psychological

then they need to hear the stories of other survivors. As the survivor explores grief and shares it with other people, the narrative evolves to become more realistic and coherent. The survivor develops more compassion for themselves and for their deceased loved one. It's this turning of the prism and the evolution of the narrative that helps the survivor heal.

Suicide is not a sin. It's the result of mental illness. In May, we recognize National Mental Health Awareness Month and the importance of caring for our mental health.

It's up to each of us to help each other in our mental health journeys. Survivors of suicide come to LOSS feeling ostracized, kicked out of acceptable social circles, and this program brings people back inside the circle — it's restorative. Not only do they take their place in the circle, survivors, volunteers, and donors are reaching behind them for the next person

coming through the door and welcoming them into the circle. We need a way to take care of our neighbors in the aftermath of suicide. LOSS helps anyone out there who's willing to come in, sit down, and share their story about being touched by suicide.

If you or a loved one has been touched by suicide and would like to know more about the support that the LOSS program can provide, email loss@catholiccharities.net. Or if you would like to support our program that lifts up hundreds of suicide survivors every year, visit catholiccharities.net/give.

988 is your connection to free, confidential crisis counseling, mental health and substance use support, information and referrals. You can reach the toll-free help line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by phone, text, and online chat. Behavioral health professionals can link you to the services you need.

Deborah R. Major, PhD, LCSW, is the Director of Loving Outreach to Survivors of Suicide for Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

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pain. Many of the people who die by suicide are suffering from mental illness that was just too painful to bear.

We want survivors to know that LOSS is here when they are ready. We provide a community, resources, and education to the survivor about suicide and suicide bereavement to help them understand their feelings.

We encourage survivors to join our groups to connect with other survivors experiencing the same emotions and struggles as they grapple with the "why" question. They need to share their story,

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This casual, family-friendly experience will be held from 10am to Noon on Saturday, May 16, at the Irish American Heritage Center, 4626 N Knox Ave., Chicago. There is plenty of free, off-street parking in both of the IAHC's newly paved lots. "Try Your Hand" is free to

everyone - children, teens, young and once-young adults, too. To register, go to [irish-american.org/](http://irish-american.org/)

events Registration is required to ensure we have supplies enough for all attendees.

Chicagoland/Northwest Indiana is rich in calligraphic talent. The following artists will be pen-ready to show and share their incredible skills: Lisa Kivland/Uncial (Celtic); Debbie Gallas/Creative Capitals; Karen Ness/Italic; Laurie Paolinetti/Copperplate; Tim Botts/Foundational; Amy Neubauer/Roman ("bubble") letters; Vaishali Shinde/Brush Pens; Julie Wildman/Unusual Tools (demo with play); and Nancy Belda/Neuland.

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**Tax Season Is Over—Now It's Time to Look Ahead**

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assets. Each of these factors plays a role in your financial future. The question is: to what

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**Master Your Money**  
By Mike Corigan

everything is still fresh in your mind, ask yourself:

Are you doing everything you can to reduce next year's taxes?

Are you too exposed to stock market volatility? And most importantly—are you truly on track for the retirement you want?

Most CPAs and tax preparers focus on the past. They document what already happened and prepare your return after the fact. Unfortunately, once the year has ended, there's often little you can do to meaningfully reduce your tax liability.

That's why it's critical to think forward.

Instead of looking in the rearview mirror, start planning for what lies ahead. The actions you take today can have a significant impact—not only on your future taxes, but on your overall financial well-being.

It's easy to procrastinate. Life gets busy, and financial planning often falls to the bottom of the list. But your financial health deserves attention. Make it a priority.

Consider having a professional review your entire financial picture. A comprehensive review can uncover blind spots and help you build a strategy designed to last. Think of it as a financial check-up—addressing potential issues today so you can feel more confident about tomorrow.

From Social Security and Medicare planning to pension decisions, tax strategies, and creating reliable retirement income—these are complex and important decisions. You don't have to navigate them alone.

There are six fundamental financial planning considerations everyone should address:

- Longevity - The risk of outliving your assets as life expectancy increases.
- Liquidity - Having access to funds for unexpected expenses.
- Inflation - The rising cost of living and the erosion of purchasing power over time.
- Market Exposure - The level of risk in your portfolio, especially once you no longer have a steady paycheck.
- Mortality - The financial impact on a surviving spouse or partner.
- Taxes - The ongoing effect of taxation on your income, savings, and retirement

extent do they apply to you? The sooner you take control of your financial plan, the better positioned you'll be to enjoy a more confident, secure, and stress-free retirement. For many, navigating these

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**Roaming in the Gloaming**

By Estelle Shanley

I ask that you keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion. Please release me from craving to straighten out everybody's affairs. Make me thoughtful but not moody.. Helpful but not bossy.

**A Prayer for Growing Old Gracefully:**

Lord, thou knowest better than I myself that I am growing older and will someday be old.

**What is the Young Irish Fellowship Club?**

By: YIFC Culture Committee (Katie, Hannah, Robby, Kathleen, & Fiona G.)

The Young Irish Fellowship Club of Chicago is a 501©3 non-profit, 100% volunteer-based organization inviting people of all ethnic backgrounds to explore the Irish culture, meet new friends in the community, and help support Chicagoland charities. YIFC brings young adults (18-35) together to make lasting connections, raise funds, and celebrate our Irish heritage.

**2026-2027 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
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We extend a special congratulations to our newly appointed board members!

With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it all; but thou knowest, lord that I want a few friends at the end.

Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details; give me wings to get to the point.

Seal my lips on my aches and pains; they are

**SAVE THE DATES!**

YIFC is proud to partner with the Young Gaelic Association for their Derby Party on May 2nd. Our sponsor Keeper's Heart will be doing a whiskey tasting. YIFC has coordinated a bus to depart at 1PM from Fadó to Chicago Gaelic Park and return to The Kerryman. Tickets are on the YIFC website. The YIFC May First Thursday will be on May 7th from 6-9PM at Vaughan's Lakeview. Come kick off the summer with us! We are grateful to Vaughan Hospitality as a sponsor of YIFC. On May 29th, we will be hosting a Board Alumni Happy Hour. Our annual golf outing will be on Saturday, August 15th at Old Orchard Country Club.

**CULTURAL CORNER** - Include a cúpla focal in your conversations this month: Dia duit (sg) / Dia daoibh (pl) - Hello Conas atá tú? - How are you? Le do thoil - Please Go raibh maith agat - Thank you Slán - Goodbye

**GET INVOLVED!**

Please join us at one of our great events! If you are interested in sponsoring YIFC or partnering with us, please email us at [youngirishfellowship@gmail.com](mailto:youngirishfellowship@gmail.com). To follow along with all YIFC activities, find us on our Instagram @youngirishfc, Facebook, or website [www.youngirish.com](http://www.youngirish.com)

increasing, and I love rehearsing which is becoming sweeter as the years go by.

I dare not ask for improved memory, but for a growing humility, and a lessening cock-sureness when my memory seems to clash with the memories of others.

Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet, for an old sour person is one of the crowning works of the devil.

Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places and also talents in unexpected people.

O lord give me the grace to tell them so. Amen.



Just a few weeks ago, Killarney-born actress Jessie Buckley became the first Irishwoman to take home the Best Actress Oscar - and it was tinged with irony, because her latest movie - fantasy horror *The Bride!* in which she starred alongside Christian Bale in an "ambitious" adaptation of the famous Frankenstein story - opened just the week before

Three Incestuous Sisters. Despite that arresting title, it has some serious star power: starring alongside Buckley will be Dakota Johnson, Josh O'Connor (pictured left) and her fellow Irishwoman (and four-time Oscar nominee), Saoirse Ronan. Italian director Alice Rohrwacher has loosely adapted the book alongside Ottessa Moshfegh, and principal photography is set to begin in April.

Looking again to the future, and this week saw the trailer for Martin McDonagh's latest movie *Wild Horse Nine* released. It stars John Malkovich and Sam Rockwell and was filmed on Easter Island, an island west of Chile that's famous for its large monumental heads called moai. It takes place in the 1970s, just before the Chilean military coup d'état that overthrew socialist president Salvador Allende, and Malkovich and Rockwell play CIA agents who are behind those plans, and have a long record of altering history in the US and abroad.

Chris (Malkovich) is an eccentric, witty man who is



the ceremony to box office and critical disaster.

It was all quickly forgotten though, and we can expect to see her on the big screen a lot over the next few years. To that end, recently too her next project was announced: the upcoming adaptation of Audrey Niffenegger's bestselling novel

suffering from poor health and wants to write a memoir, while Lee (Rockwell) is his junior and friend - but this mission is going to test their trust and loyalty. The supporting cast includes Parker Posey, Steve Buscemi, Mariana di Girolamo, Ailin Salas and Tom Waits, and is written by McDonagh, whose last movie *The Banshees of Inisherin* received nine academy award nominations. It will be released in Ireland in November, and we'll see it soon after that.

Finally, production has officially begun in Ballycastle in County Mayo on Tony O'Donnell's US-Ireland noir thriller, *The Sandy Banks*, which stars Susan Lynch (pictured), Pat Shortt and Gary Lydon.



The movie marks O'Donnell's directorial debut, and takes place in the remote west of Ireland during Christmastime, when the body of a woman is discovered 16 years after her

disappearance. The discovery reignites tensions between local families, and pushes her brother towards a final reckoning.

Production is also due to get underway later this spring in Galway City and Connemara on *The Yank*, a new six-part psychological thriller penned by Eithne Verling and Kate Mulgrew. Verling is a Limerick native, and until last year she worked with Galway City Council and was the director of Galway Museum before stepping away to focus on this.

Leading the cast and co-writing is actor Mulgrew (Star Trek: Voyager, Orange Is the New Black) who plays Nora Hill, a New York detective who returns to her family home in Connemara while on leave from the NYPD following a traumatic incident - but of course, she is soon pulled into a murder investigation.

More casting news too for Belfast-born actor Jamie Dornan, who has been cast as Strider/Aragorn in Andy Serkis's upcoming *Lord of the Rings* movie *The Hunt for Gollum*. Dornan will take on the role famously played by Viggo Mortensen in Peter Jackson's 2001-2003 trilogy, in a cast that will also include Kate Winslet, Leo Woodall, Lee Pace, Ian McKellen, Elijah Wood and Serkis himself, who takes on directing duties after being Jackson's Second Unit Director on *The Hobbit* films.

There's a long time to wait for this one though: *The Hunt for Gollum* will release globally in December 2027, and will serve as a prequel to the events of *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Finally, a mention of the sad news that Moya Brennan, lead singer of the Grammy and BAFTA-winning group Clannad, died recently at the age of 73. The acclaimed folk singer, songwriter and harpist was originally from Gaith Dobhair in the Donegal Gaeltacht, and recorded over 30 albums and sold millions of records globally. Clannad formed in 1970, and became one of the world's foremost traditional Irish acts, and their music graced several successful TV shows and movies including *Harry's Game*, which was an international hit. That theme also featured in *Patriot Games* starring Harrison Ford, and Clannad appeared on the soundtracks for *King Arthur*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *Message in a Bottle* and others. Many also might remember their theme for 1980s UK television series *Robin of Sherwood*, or her contribution to classic dance track *Saltwater* by Chicane, which she guested on in 1999. She leaves a husband and two sons, and a lifetime of music.



**APRIL IN REVIEW**

We kicked off April with our First Thursday Happy Hour at Mary Jo McGuire's in Lincoln Park. It was packed, and we were so pleased to see a mix of familiar and new faces. Our new board met for the first time at Glascott's to plan the year (safe to say, we are in for a fun one!). We were proud to have seven board members in the Chicago Rose selection. YIFC also attended the Irish American Hall of Fame Dinner at the Irish American Heritage Center.



**Just Another Flag?**

A fresh new book sheds light on a side of Irish Republican history that is often overlooked. 'Just Another Flag? The Social Outlook of Irish Republicanism, 1916-1940' by Tadhg Quill-Manley (Tadhg Ó Cuill-Maonlai), a law student, takes readers beyond the familiar stories of battles and flags to ask a simple but powerful question: What were the men and women of the Easter Rising, the War of Independence, and the years that followed really fighting for? Tadhg grew up in the house of his great-grandfather, Herbert 'Sean' Mitchell, who served as O.C. of the IRA's renowned First Cork Brigade. Sourced academically, but written in clear, engaging language, the 610-page book draws on original newspapers, manifestos, and the words of the leaders themselves - from Terence MacSwiney and Constance Markievicz to Moss Twomey, Liam Mellows, Maud Gunne MacBride and Seán MacBride. It shows how many Republicans saw the fight for independence as part of a larger vision:



a fairer Ireland that would not benefit aristocrats and imperial capital, but instead working people, farmers in debt, the impoverished and the dispossessed. However, it also highlights internal conflicts and how such activity was perceived by opponents.

Far from a dry academic study, this project is a lively, thought-provoking read that brings the hopes and debates of the period back to life. Whether you're a history buff, a proud Irish-American, or simply curious about the human side of Ireland's revolutionary years, this book offers a fresh perspective on a story many of us thought we already knew. Coming to local and university libraries, it is also available to read for free online on the Internet Archive go to: <https://archive.org/details/republican-social-radicalism-copy> You can buy the book by contacting the author through his email - [tadhghquillmanley@yahoo.com](mailto:tadhghquillmanley@yahoo.com)

A letter sent to IAN from Chris Fogarty and Mary O'Sullivan in response to Senator Duckworth asking for donations from the Fogarty's Yes, Senator Duckworth, there IS something you can say to convince us to donate \$5 to you. Say, in writing, to your AIPAC handlers; "Henceforth I reject bribes in any form, thus I am blocking you, AIPAC, from my eMail and other accounts. I'm also ordering my staff to prohibit entry to my office of anyone promoting Israel's interests over American ones. I will no longer agree to fund Israel's genocides, property robberies, war crimes including its current starvation of Gaza. Please justify our donating to you. Chris Fogarty and Mary O'Sullivan

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**UPCOMING IN IRISH AMERICAN NEWS**

**JUNE**  
 Liam O'Neill, 2025 Visual Arts Awardee at iBAM!, Will be Featured in an in depth story by iBAM's President, Josephine Craven

**JULY**  
 The Brownes Created the Spinnaker Restaurant in Lanzarote, an Irish Winter getaway in the Canary Islands. Now, the Children are in Charge!

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**  
**To Columnist Charles Brady**  
 Enjoyed your column this AM in the IAN (obtained at Irish Legend bar in Willow Springs). I would say there are always exceptions to definitive statements. To that end I present Bill Clinton bombing the Serbs back to the negotiation table and also bombing the pharmaceutical factory in Libya to deflect from the controversy around the Monica Lewinsky scandal. Sincerely, Kieran Nicholson Burr Ridge IL. Originally from Sligo and later Galway.

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## Books Under Review

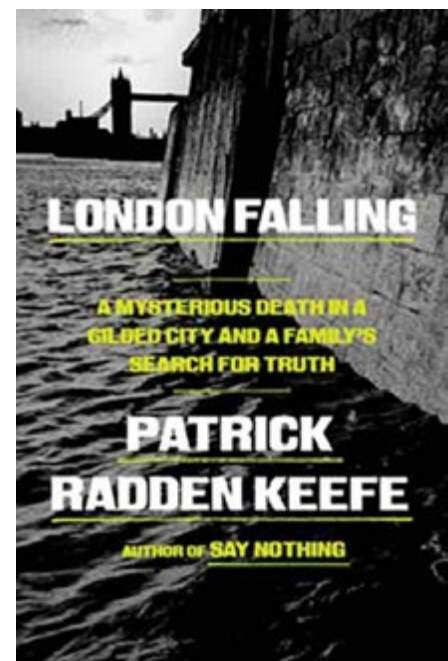
By Sabina Clarke



a suicide or a murder? The following teaser is from the dust jacket of the book- "In the early morning of November 29, 2019, surveillance cameras at the headquarters of MI6, Britain's spy agency, captured video of a young man pacing back and forth on a high balcony of Riverwalk, a luxury tower on the bank of the River Thames." I'm hooked!

### A London Murder Mystery

Patrick Radden Keefe's latest masterpiece London Falling, a literary gem, is a true crime novel that opens with: "After Zac Brettler died his parents tried to decode the mystery of what happened to him, endlessly revisiting specific moments from his short life."



The revelation that Zac posed as the son of a wealthy Russian oligarch assuming an alternate totally fictitious identity is a shock to his parents and at the crux of the mystery of his suspicious death. With this revelation, the Brettler's are faced with the stark realization that there is little they know about their youngest son.

For years, the private conservative Rachelle and Matthew Brettler decided not to go public with the circumstances of their son's death-- but as they became disenchanted with the bungling seemingly casual approach to the investigation led by the Metropolitan Police and as they set about trying to investigate their son's death themselves - and after being introduced to Radden Keefe --they agreed to share their story with him which resulted in Radden Keefe's February 5, 2024 article in The New Yorker, A Teen's Fatal Plunge into the London Underworld which served as the family's initial foray into the public arena.

From this moment on, I'm transported---enveloped in an intriguing mystery with so many twists and turns, examining clues that look promising until alas another dead end. I totally surrender to the master storyteller Radden Keefe and his superb investigative skills, while he tries piecing the puzzle together of this grieving family's tragedy and the mystery of what happened to Zac.

With the solid upper middle class Brettler family I too am suddenly thrust into a world I never knew existed -- an alien underworld of gangsters and poseurs and charlatans lurking just beneath the surface of the gilded sophisticated urbane city of London.

The mystery involves the exact circumstances of Zac's death-- who was responsible? How did it happen? Was it

Truman Capote broke barriers with his non-fiction crime novel In Cold Blood that was serialized in four consecutive issues in The New Yorker magazine debuting in the September 1965 issue while Patrick Radden Keefe with this convoluted mesmerizing murder mystery has elevated the genre to dizzying new heights.

**About the author:** Patrick Radden Keefe is the author of six best-selling award-winning books: Chatter; The Snakehead; Say Nothing; Empire of Pain; Rogues; and London Falling. He holds a B.A. in history from Columbia University; a Masters in Philosophy from Cambridge University; a Masters in Science from the London School of Economics and a Law Degree from Yale University Law School. He is a Marshall Scholar and a Guggenheim Fellow.

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Welcome back to the enchanting land of Tir na N'Óg for children's books. This month's theme is books with main characters who have some sort of special need. As we will see, both picture books and chapter books can deal sensitively and intelligently with kids who think or act differently from the average child.

### WHEN THE STAMMER CAME TO STAY

You may recognize author Maggie O'Farrell as an author of adult books including the hugely popular, Hamnet. She also writes for children, though, and her new book, When the Stammer Came to Stay, is based upon her own experiences as a person who stutters. A stammer is called a stammer in Ireland, and the main character of the book, Min, is a young girl who develops a stammer.

The stammer is not what originally defines Min. She is a rough-and-tumble tomboy who likes getting dirty in nature and having a nice chat with anyone she meets. After the stammer comes to stay, though, it does begin to define Min as she withdraws from others more.

Min's character is in sharp contrast to her sister, Bea, who likes reading and keeping things very orderly. Despite their differences, they are fast friends. As Min grows more and more anguished and withdrawn, it is Bea who finally takes her to the library to learn about her stammer and identifies the problem as a dibbuk, or an undesirable spirit.

Min's family has several lodgers living in their household, and each of their skills comes into play as Min learns to live with her stammer. The violinist shows the power of music; the biologist shows how organisms live together and help each other, and the librarian, instead of laughing at the idea of a dibbuk, states that there are as many dibbuks as there are people and they all cause different problems.

Min finally learns to face her dibbuk and live with it, and as we learn in the author's note, Maggie O'Farrell is still living with that stammer today. The book's message is much broader than a stammer, though. We also see Bea begin to deal with her dibbuk which turns out to be that she worries too much and is too tidy.

The illustrations by Daniela Jaglenka Terrazzini in this picture book are exceptional. There are full-page and even two-page spreads of the action. The cross-section illustration of the girls' tall narrow house is especially wonderful as it requires the reader to turn the book sideways to see the activity in every room. The book,

## Much More Than Leprechauns



By Sheryl O'Sullivan

though, as a picture book, will be a little challenging to younger children. The book is much longer than regular picture books, has a great deal of text on some pages, and contains some difficult words. It can be read aloud, but probably only older picture book lovers will sit still for it.

### THE LONDON EYE MYSTERY

What an intricate and elegant mystery! The book will leave everyone (kids and adults alike) pondering what happened to the very end. I have read this book aloud to several college classes, and have never had one student figure out the mystery before the main character. Even now, after reading the book multiple times, I am still noticing subtle clues left by the author that I never noticed before.

Siobhan Dowd, the Irish author of this book, sets her mystery in London around the giant Ferris wheel-like structure known as the London Eye. The basic plot is a boy (Salim) goes up on the London Eye but doesn't come down. This is impossible, so what became of Salim is the mystery that needs to be solved.

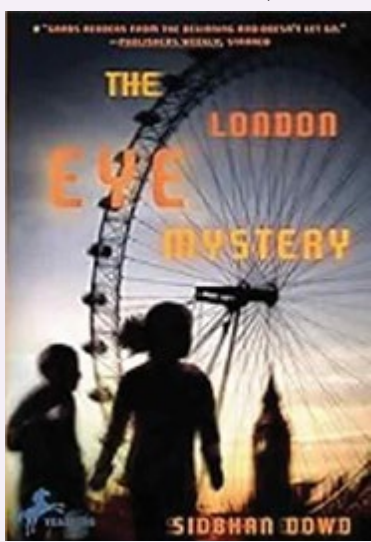
While the plot is very satisfying, the most wonderful thing about this book is the main character, Ted. He is 12 years old and has been diagnosed with a syndrome (unidentified in the book) that makes his brain work differently from other brains. This plays out in lots of ways. He is extremely factual and literal, and is always correcting or explaining things to everyone. He cannot understand emotions and gets by through the use of a chart which his teacher taught him that helps him know if people are happy/sad/mad. His brain retains pretty much everything it seems, and this abundance of facts and his tenacious thinking let him finally figure out what happened to his cousin, Salim, when he disappears from the Eye. The exposition of Ted's character is intriguing and masterful, and rings very true for the ways of special needs kids who are on the autism spectrum.

In addition to the great mystery and the wonderful way in which we come to know Ted, the book also has very believable family dynamics with a not-always-kind older sister, and parents who are struggling to remain calm during the terribly stressful time of a missing child. Kids from about fourth grade on up through college will enjoy this book, and also perhaps develop a more realistic understanding of autism and its daily implications.

Keep enjoying Irish children's books!



Siobhan Dowd, the Irish author of this book, sets her mystery in London around the giant Ferris wheel-like structure known as the London Eye.

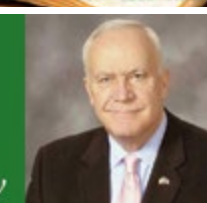


homeless man with an unlucky ferret, and a young beauty pageant entrant chasing fame and fortune, are but a few of the disparate cast of characters to be found in this collection.

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## Books in Review

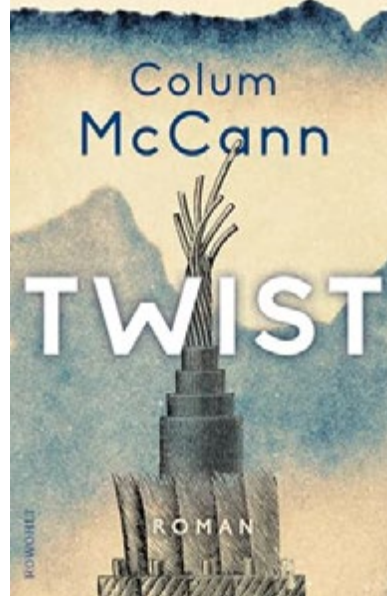
By Terrance J Kemeally



**Twist** By Colum McCann ISBN 978-0593241738 Random House 2025 256 pgs.

"Twist" begins with a straightforward narrative. Anthony Fennell, an Irish journalist and playwright down on his luck, gets an assignment from an online journal to write a piece on the underwater cables that carry the world's data and the repair teams that patrol the oceans fixing ruptures. Fennell narrates the story. The sum of human existence- words, images, transactions, memes, voices- travel through the tiny fiber optic tubes which make up the cables.

Fennell's editor sends him to Cape Town where he is to meet a man named Conway, a fellow Irishman, who is the chief of the Georges Le Conte ship. The mysterious Conway is a baffling character. He is in love with a South African actress, Zanele, who must leave to go on her literary adventure to London where she is performing in "Waiting for Godot."



has ruptured. The undersea cables have been vulnerable to accidental damage by fishing

trawlers and curious marine predators; more recently there are fears that the cables have been targeted by saboteurs in the Baltic and Taiwan Strait.

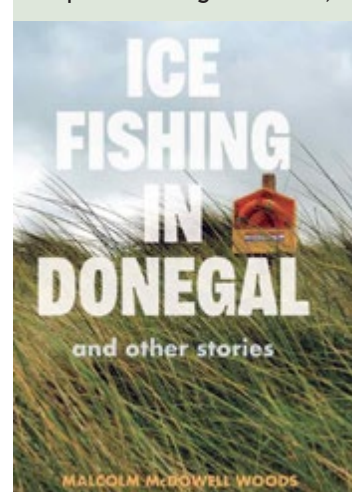
Conway is charismatic and secretive. When they reach the cable break, it takes days to pull the cable up. After repairing the second of two cable breaks, the second occurring to a massive underwater mudslide thousands of kilometers to the north in the Congo channel, the ship heads for a smaller break near the capital of Ghana, Accra. There Conway suddenly disappears. No one knows where he went. Fennell searches for him for three weeks but comes up empty. Fennell fictionalizes what happened to him and that is the denouement of the book..

McCann's writing conjures up physical activity in an intense cinematic way. There are passages of extraordinary vividness; free divers plunging to the sea floor on a single breath, sea sickness; and extreme weather. These evoke with a power that seems to persuade the reader that you are a participant or a witness. Colum McCann is an Irish writer and the internationally bestselling author of "Let the Great World Spin." "Twist" is an interesting and thought provoking read.

### Ice Fishing in Donegal: & Other Stories

by Malcolm McDowell Woods Paperback \$16 Dunnybegs Press 6 x 9 inches- 156 pages ISBN: 9798995332701

An aging Irish poet chasing ghost words, a foul-mouthed octopus seeking freedom, a



Lament, the grown-up miracle baby from A Landing and the visual artist in Falling Apart, will experience unexpected revelations which expose the underlying interconnectedness of our existence.

Others, like the young boy in pre-Troubles Northern Ireland, the gifted pianist with sleep issues and the man returning to his family's old Wisconsin homestead, will also undergo a shift in perspective.

The stories and poems in

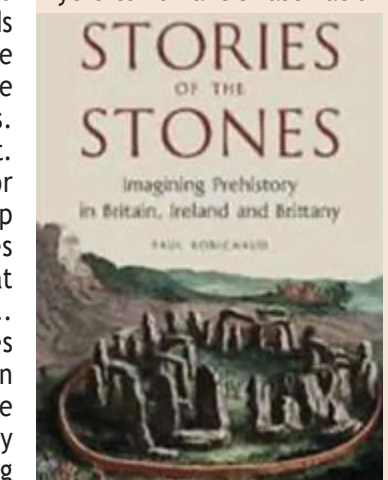


My name is Malcolm McDowell Woods. I am an editor and journalist, a communications professional and a university lecturer. Scottish by birth and Northern Irish by ancestry, I now reside in Wisconsin with my partner, Nicki, and our dogs, Neville and Molly. My two adult children live nearby.

I have written for a variety of periodicals in the US and Europe. I co-authored the book, "Irish Wit and Wisdom" and the unpublished "Guide to the Ice Age Trail." I have worked as a newspaper and magazine editor and helped launch several publications. I was co-founder and managing editor of the former Irish American Post magazine. I have authored numerous short stories and received national honors for editorial writing and page design as well as the Milwaukee County Individual Arts Fellowship for Fiction Writing. "What the Tide Leaves Behind" is my first novel.

### Books by University of Chicago Press

Out 7-3, Robichaud's *Stories of the Stones* reveals the rich cultural afterlife of ancient stones and sacred landscapes. The book explores how ancient monuments—standing stones, megaliths, and earthworks—have been reimagined across the centuries in folklore, literature, art, and popular culture. From medieval myths to romantic fascination

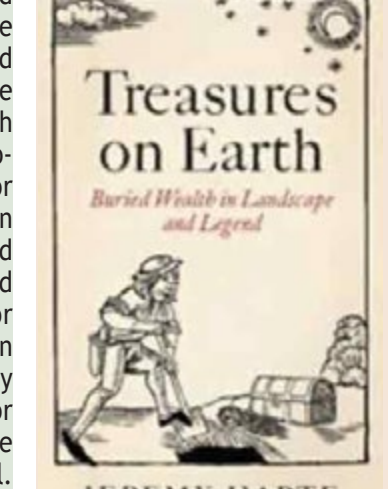


and from folk-horror cinema to Julian Cope, these sites have inspired powerful stories that reflect the beliefs & anxieties of each era. In Britain, Ireland, and Brittany, Stonehenge and Newgrange, as well as lesser-known sites steeped in local lore. Though their original meanings are mysterious, our interpretations reveal deep emotional and cultural connections to the ancient landscape. Richly illustrated and wide-ranging, this book is ideal for those interested in prehistoric monuments, and storytelling traditions.

Robichaud is professor of English at Albertus Magnus College in New Haven, Connecticut. Previous books are Pan: and The Great God's Modern Return.

Publishing 7-6, Harte's *Treasures on Earth* uncovers the deep folklore of Britain's riches, fears, and desires.

From haunted barrows to ruined castles, Britain's landscape is rich with tales of not just gold, but of ghosts, curses, and forbidden knowledge. The book gathers hundreds of traditions for the first time, showing how folklore, shaped by local memory has imagined wealth not merely as currency, but as power, danger, and loss. These legends tell of



experience. With clarity and insight, it also brings to life the tellers and collectors of these stories, tracing how oral knowledge endured even as literacy spread. It is a compelling invitation to listen again to old stories, and to hear what the land and sea remember.

dragons, demons, and seekers armed with spells, but also of real hopes stirred by poverty, war, and the mysteries of place. With vivid storytelling and insight, this book reveals how treasure lore carries the weight of history. In the end, these are stories about what is buried, but about why we still yearn to uncover it.

Jeremy Harte is a folklorist inspired by landscape and stories of encounters with other worlds. He is author of *Cloven Country: The Devil and the English Landscape and Travellers thru Time: A Gypsy History*, both published by Reaktion Books.

Publishing August 4, *Nunn's Whispers from Celtic Seas* illuminates what ancient coastal tales can show us about deep memories of land, sea, and survival.

What if the legends of submerged cities, land-making witches, and sea-crossing bishops are not mere inventions but echoes of real events? Whispers from Celtic Seas revisits coastal traditions from the Celtic fringes of NW Europe, showing how they preserve memories of dramatic environmental change-floods, land loss, and shifting shorelines-carried forward through oral storytelling for generations. Drawing on cutting-edge geological and archaeological research, it recasts these tales not as fantasy but as historical testimony grounded in lived



Nunn is professor of geography at the Univ. of the Sunshine Coast, an honorary professorial fellow at the University of Melbourne, and a visiting fellow at the Univ. of Oxford (2026-7). Publications include *The Edge of Memory and Worlds in Shadow*. Publishing with Reaktion Books, distributed in North and South America by the University of Chicago Press, all of these titles have already received strong advance praise. <https://press.uchicago.edu/index.html>

# THE IRISH BOOK CLUB.COM

## JFK: President, War Hero, and Writer

By Dr David McKinstry

"If more politicians knew poetry, and more poets knew politics... the world would be a little better place in which to live." These are the words spoken by John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the first Irish Catholic President of the United States, a man most Irish admire and feel we know. However, what is less known about JFK is he started his professional life as a writer who won the Pulitzer Prize and wrote extensively on political issues including Irish unification.

What is also extraordinary is that in 1963, when he was not addressing the Cold War abroad and the civil rights movement at home, he was writing a book about improving children's health. Jack Kennedy, viewed as being the most glamorous of presidents was a bookish man. It was this most literary of presidents, who employed his wide-ranging knowledge to shape matters of war and peace. Yet his ascent to greatness was a journey of unexpected twists and turns of fate and history.

### YOUNG JACK

Six weeks after America entered the Great War, John Fitzgerald Kennedy (JFK) was born on May 29th, 1917. It seemed fitting that second son of the powerful Irish Bostonian dynasty would be born in such an eventful year as his public life would be defined by matters of war and peace. Young Jack's childhood was one of sheltered Bostonian privilege with summers spent at the Gatsbysque family

home at Cape Cod during the Roaring Twenties. This was a far cry from the famine boat which Wexford great grandfather boarded for America in 1848. However, global events were to steer JFK back to the old world, when in 1938, President Roosevelt appointed Joseph Kennedy as US Ambassador to Great Britain.

### JFK IN LONDON

The years between 1938-40, when Joe Snr served as US ambassador, which Jack referred to as being the "Innocent Season", was also marked by a dark side. Jack, a keen student of history, observed intently his father's involvement in high diplomacy. During this time, he regularly attended the House of Commons visitors' gallery to listen to Churchill make speeches warning the chamber of the rise of the Nazis.

### FIRST BOOK

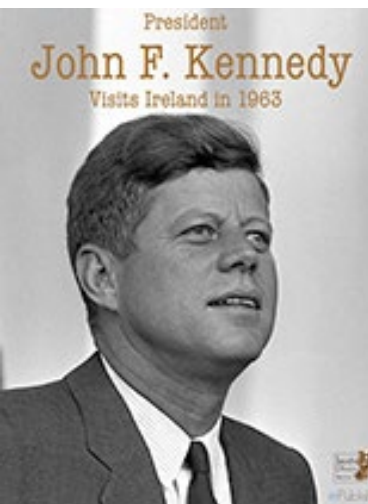
What he observed as Britain's total unpreparedness for the impending war, led to him write his first book, *Why England Slept* (1940). At the tender age of twenty-three JFK gave an in-depth critical analysis of British democracy's lack of preparedness in dealing with the Nazis threat. When the book was released, it sold 80,000 copies which was exceptionally good sales for a first-time author. The second Kennedy son looked destined to become a successful writer, whilst his elder brother Joe was being mentored by his father for a future presidential bid. However, America's entry into

World War Two in 1941, would change the destinies of both Kennedy brothers.

### WAR HERO

On America's declaration of war JFK enlisted in the Navy. In 1943, when a Japanese destroyer sank Lieutenant Kennedy's patrol torpedo boat, his crew clung to wreckage miles from shore. JFK began to evacuate his injured crew by swimming each of them to shore. For his heroic actions Jack was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for extreme gallantry and the Purple Heart. JFK is the only president to receive the Purple Heart.

In August 1944, when his older brother Joe was killed,



JFK stepped up to the plate. Jack the writer became John the politician as his father began to mentor him for a future presidential bid. Yet he continued to write and was acutely interested in Irish affairs. In the summer of 1945, JFK headed to Dublin to interview Eamon de Valera on the issue of ending partition. The article published in the New York Journal-American entitled:

"Eamon de Valera Seeks to Unite All Ireland." Early on in his life, Jack intently studied Dev and had a lifelong respect for the Irish President.

### PULITZER PRIZE

During the 1950s, whilst Kennedy began his political career as a young Senator, he continued to write. In 1957, he won the Pulitzer Prize for his book *Profiles in Courage* (1956). The book profiled eight U.S. Senators who risked their careers to fight for their personal beliefs. JFK, not yet forty, had established himself as an award-winning writer and respected journalist and was now making his bid for the White House.

### WHITE HOUSE

In 1960, John Fitzgerald Kennedy became the youngest elected President and first Catholic to sit in the Oval Office. It was his deep knowledge of literature and history which helped him guide his country peacefully through some of the most turbulent crises of the twentieth century. Yet the leader of the free world did have time to visit the land of his ancestors. In June 1963, JFK made a presidential visit to Ireland. He described his visit as "The best four days of my life." In his presidential address in Dublin, he said: "This is not the land of my birth, but it is the land for which I hold in the greatest affection, and I will certainly come back in the springtime."

Tragically, JFK was assassinated in Dallas on November 22nd, 1963. On November 25th President

Kennedy was given a state funeral in Washington D.C. in the presence of world's heads of state. Presidential protocol dictated that America's elite Infantry regiment; The Old Guard perform the graveside rifle salute. This honour the regiment jealously protected. Yet at the request of his widow, the Old Guard stood aside to allow the Irish Army Cadets to perform the "Queen Anne Drill", which Kennedy had witnessed in Dublin five months previously. This is only time that foreign troops have rendered honours at the funeral of an American President. Standing in attention at Arlington National Cemetery, as the Cadets performed their drill, was Eamon de Valera, paying his final respects to a fellow president.

### JFK'S LEGACY

JFK's literary background enabled him to communicate directly to a worldwide audience and articulate his ideas with a blend of sophistication and clarity. In October 1962, when the world stood on the brink during the Cuban Missile Crisis, he showed presidential resolve by stating: "Our goal is not the victory of might, but the vindication of right." Yet when the crisis was over, he offered the hand of friendship to the Soviets. On June 10th June 1963, the writer come president delivered his "Strategy of Peace" speech stating: "We all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal." President John Fitzgerald Kennedy: writer, war hero, and son of Erin.

## RORY O'CONNOR: To Defend the Republic

PAPERBACK 336pp \$29.99 ISBN: 9781785375842

By Gerard Shannon

This is the first biography of the IRA leader Rory O'Connor, close comrade of Joseph Plunkett and Michael Collins, key revolutionary figure during the Irish War of Independence and Commander of IRA operations in Britain.

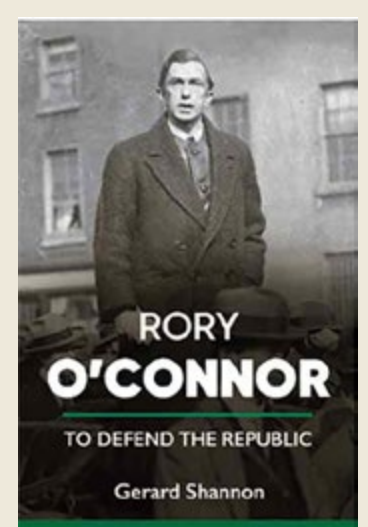
O'Connor, one of the most vocal opponents of the Treaty, is particularly remembered for the dramatic circumstances behind his controversial execution during the Irish Civil War.

The execution of IRA leader Rory O'Connor on 8 December 1922, along with Liam Mellows, Dick Barrett and Joe McKelvey, marked a bitter turning point in the Irish Civil War and remains one of the most infamous episodes in modern Irish history.

An unlikely revolutionary, in his early years, O'Connor qualified as an engineer and worked on the Canadian railroad. Returning to Ireland in 1915, he joined the ranks of militant Irish republicanism and became devoted to the violent

overthrow of British rule. After playing his part during the Easter Rising, in its aftermath he became a key figure in rebuilding the revolutionary movement.

By the outset of the Irish War of Independence, O'Connor was the IRA's Director of Engineering and worked in the Dail's Local Government. He became close friends with Kevin O'Higgins who chose him to be best man at his wedding in October 1921. In correspondence O'Higgins warmly described



O'Connor as 'the bestest best man that ever rounded up a bridegroom'. Yet, just over one year later in December 1922, O'Higgins would sit at the government cabinet that approved O'Connor's execution.

On the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, O'Connor became the public face of IRA opposition to the settlement. Captured several days into the Civil War, his extra-judicial execution in reprisal propelled him into the pantheon of Irish republican martyrs. In this first biography of O'Connor's life, historian Gerard Shannon brings together various archival sources and

accounts to help understand this important and often enigmatic IRA figure.

### About the Author:

Gerard Shannon is a public historian who specialises in the Irish revolutionary period of the early 20th century. He has written numerous articles and done public talks primarily on leading revolutionaries. His first major publication, *Liam Lynch: To Declare a Republic*, was released to critical acclaim in 2023 and made the non-fiction bestseller lists. Gerard also works as a civil servant and is a resident of Skerries in north county Dublin.



O'Connor's funeral procession through the city to Glasnevin Cemetery for burial in the Republican plot



(L to R: Eamon Rory, Oscar Traynor, Constance Markievicz, and Mary MacSwiney

## New Novel Tells the True Story of an Irish Priest Who Stood Against the Ku Klux Klan in 1920s Alabama



A new historical novel by Irish writer and university professor Sheila Killian, (pictured) is bringing renewed attention to the remarkable story of an Irish emigrant priest who challenged the rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the American South a century ago.

Killian's novel *Something Bigger* tells the story of Fr Jimmy Coyle, a native of County Roscommon who served in Birmingham, Alabama, during the turbulent years following the First World War, when racial tensions and white supremacist movements were reshaping public life across the region.

At a time when speaking out carried real personal risk, Fr Coyle worked to build inclusive congregations and

minister across racial and social divides. His actions placed him in direct conflict with powerful forces in the city during one of the most volatile periods in the history of the American South.

The novel is narrated through the voice of his younger sister Marcella and draws on family archives and historical research. Killian is the grand-niece of both Jimmy and Marcella Coyle,

her family's Irish-American history.

Originally published during the Covid pandemic, *Something Bigger* has now been released in a new European edition printed in Ireland. The book has received praise from leading contemporary Irish writers including Donal Ryan, who described it as "a stunning, intensely engaging novel by a consummate storyteller," and Liz Nugent, who called it "compelling, intriguing and skilful."

Killian, who is based in Limerick, Ireland, is an award-winning author and university professor whose research into family history and Irish emigrant experience informed the historical background to the novel.

Speaking ahead of the Irish release of the new edition, she said she hoped the book would help introduce readers on both sides of the Atlantic to an overlooked story from the history of the Irish diaspora in America.

*Something Bigger* is available internationally through online booksellers and by order through independent bookshops, and on Amazon.

The author is available for interviews, readings, and talks on the historical background to the story and the process of researching Irish emigrant lives in the American South.

[www.451Editions.com/something-bigger](http://www.451Editions.com/something-bigger)



GETTING TO KNOW THE IRISH!

By Tina Butler - Leonard



## Who was Charles F. Feeney?

He was better known as "Chuck".

Forbes said he was the "James Bond of philanthropy". He was an Irish American businessman and philanthropist. Also known as Cornell Universities '3rd founder because he donated so much money to the Ivy League school. An interesting fact about Cornell is that it has an apple vending machine. (Japan is famous for dispensing interesting items via vending machines)

Jim Dwyer wrote in the New York Times that none of the one thousand buildings on the five continents that were built with Feeney's gifts of \$2.7 billion bear his name.

Feeney was born in New Jersey. His mom was a nurse, and his dad was in the insurance business. Feeney went to Catholic schools, and he has credited his charitable spirit to his education.

I taught at a catholic school so that gives me comfort to hear someone compliment the Catholic school's system and how it gave them a good moral compass.

Feeney co-founded Duty-Free Shoppers group and was the founder of the Atlantic Philanthropies. One of the largest private charitable foundations in the world.

Feeney was a wealthy man and very private man. He never wanted to show off his wealth most other people probably would. I admire his style and think keeping such matters private prevents jealousy and competition from others.

Feeney lived very modestly, frugal in every aspect. He wore inexpensive clothes and lived very humbly in comparison to his financial worth. Feeney gave away his fortune in secret and for many years he wanted to be anonymous. He shunned publicity although he cooperated and shared for his 2007 biography, "The Billionaire Who Wasn't".

Duty free shops at the airport are in the international departure lounges where they sell products exempt from import sales/added taxes. (Usually lower in price and meant for immediate export. The airports with the cheapest duty free in the world include Malaysia and Singapore.

Feeney believed in the "Giving while living" using wealth to solve problems immediately instead of creating a foundation after the person has died. He has often said, one idea that never changed in his mind is that you

should use your wealth to help people. A philanthropist is "a person who promotes human welfare and social change through voluntary acts such as donating money, time, skills or expertise." (philanthropy is derived from the Greek, "love of humanity") today some famous philanthropists include Warren Buffett (95 yr) and Bill Gates and Melinda French.

Feeney donated to various schools, hospitals, and The Peace building in Belfast. He donated to different Universities in Ireland & Sinn Fein. (Republican Party)

Feeney believed in, "The Pay It Forward movement", it encourages individuals to repay acts of kindness to others instead of to the original benefactor, creating a "ripple effect" of goodness. This global initiative promotes random acts of kindness—such as volunteering, buying coffee for a stranger, or mentoring—to build community, foster unity, and spark positive social change.

The benefits of giving are huge, it promotes a sense of well-being, it releases hormones such as oxytocin, dopamine and serotonin. It triggers a "helpers high" this state reduces cortisol (stress).

Some of his honors include Time magazine stating, "Feeney's beneficence already ranks among the grandest of any living American". In 2010 he received the Cornell Icon Award.

In 2012 all the Universities of Ireland granted an Honorary Doctor of Law to Feeney. In 2015 he received the UC Presidential Medal from the President of Italy, Napolitano.

Feeney passed away in 2023, he was buried in Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin.

"For it is in giving that we receive" St. Francis of Assisi "It is not how much we give but how much love we put into giving". Mother Teresa

"A kind gesture can reach a wound that only compassion can heal." Roy Bennett

Smidin Gaeilge Generosity---fial, to give—a thabhairt, humility—umhlaiocht

I would like to say hello & thank you to a proud Irish American lady named Marge Ricketts. Thank you for all your kindness, letters and encouragement. I truly feel honored and grateful beyond words!

If you have questions/ comments please email: [Molanive@yahoo.com](mailto:Molanive@yahoo.com)

**FYI: KITCHEN PARTY CEILI RADIO**  
Sun. 9am CT [www.wicronline.org](http://www.wicronline.org)  
Mon. 10am CT [979harrisville.org](http://979harrisville.org)  
Fri. 6:30am CT [bluesandrootsradio.com](http://bluesandrootsradio.com)

**LITERARY AGENT WANTED:**  
Looking for a forward looking, easy going, Irish-American literary AGENT who wants to go to meet the King of Norway!  
I NEED A LITERARY agent who, when seeing a pile of rocks upon the roadway, does not merely see a pile of rocks, but sees within them, the vestiges of a great cathedral.  
[jamescrowley@yahoo.com](mailto:jamescrowley@yahoo.com)

**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.

available at **amazon**

Get it now at: <https://amzn.to/4swmF8N>

Scan to view on Amazon

### IABC Stalwart Mary Morris Passes

By Kathy O'Neill

Mary was an amazing woman, mother and grandmother, colleague and friend.

She was super professional; old school, taking notes in shorthand, and dressing in beautiful suits. She was always warm and thoughtful; offering up a cup of instant (coffee), or a hair bonnet to wear home when it rained.

Mary was fiercely loyal and loved her family, her friends and her faith. She loved sweets, a good prank, and she laughed easily.

Mary is no doubt having a cup of tea with Barbara Glynn right now. We're all lucky, those who got to share time and laughs with Mary.

She was a light in the lives of so many in our community.



She was hard working, witty, fearless, loving, religious, obviously adventurous and determined.

Our Dad died 49 years ago, leaving her a 45 year old widow with 3 boys aged 16, 14 and 9, she was our rock, persevering and doing everything and anything she could to give us a great life - which she did.

She often did side jobs like waitressing at the Irish Village (God Bless our cousin Jim and Kay O'Neil, the proprietors of that wonderful restaurant) or banquet halls (which she (and Jim haha) would very readily admit she was absolutely awful at) at night or on weekends, in addition to her 20 year plus "day" job as the Executive Secretary to the Executive Vice President, Commercial at Banker's Life and Casualty Insurance Company. She absolutely loved that job and her boss Mr. Bentle.

She greatly loved and was completely devoted to her parents, her 4 siblings (including her younger brother Martin who survives her at home in Fairhill and Thomas who tragically passed away on his Christening Day), our Dad, her children (including our beloved brother Johnny whose very early and unexpected death completely shook her to the core) and grandchildren, my wife Esma and my sister-in law Connie, and she would do absolutely anything for all of us. She was a devoted fan and attendee at all of our 3 sons' hundreds of baseball, football and basketball games and tournaments over the past 24 years, very rarely

missing a game (no matter how far away it was) - she was not a great driver (usually going 20 mph in a 40 mph zone, kind of oblivious to those around her), but she would drive to the end of the Earth for our sons' games.

They "re-met", fell in love and got married in Toronto on December 27, 1958. They immigrated to Chicago on February 8, 1960 to raise our family, joining the Glynn's and O'Neils who were here ahead of them.

Our Mom was one of the smartest people you could ever meet - she was an absolute genius at mathematics.

Nothing was ever too hard for her. She trusted God completely and without question. She was a deeply loyal and faithful friend and loved the Irish Heritage Center (where she was a founding member, a tireless volunteer and a treasured employee) and the St. Patrick Fathers. She was a proud Sacred Heart Pioneer and member of the Shamrock American Club and the Galway Fellowship Club.

Sadly, many of her beloved relatives and friends have preceded her in death, including her loving parents Kate (nee Screene) and Andrew Gormally; her beloved and devoted husband Pat "Bob" Morris; her loving brothers Andy, John and Thomas Gormally; and her most beloved son Johnny Morris.

I'm sure that she is looking forward to being reunited with all of them in Heaven soon.

She is survived by her beloved brother Martin (Fairhill, Menlough); her loving sons Jimmy and Pat (Esma); and her loving daughters-in-law Esma and Connie. Beloved "Granno" to her adoring grandchildren Amanda, Sean Francis, Christina, Patrick, Ryan, Sean Vincent and Jack.

She will be greatly missed by us and all who knew her. May her memory live on forever!

RIP Mom - it's well earned - thanks for being you and doing all that did for us! You were truly one-of-a-kind, and we were blessed to have you in our lives. We're all hoping to continue to make you proud.

Love always and forever! God Bless you until we all meet again in Heaven...

Visitation was Sunday March 22, 2026 from 3-8 p.m. Funeral Monday, March 23 at St. Juliana Church at 10 a.m. Interment All Saints Cemetery.



### Don't Speak About the War

There's always a deep need or desire to be known, even if the knowing is virtually (pun intended) impossible. For creative minds who are interested in the arts, we create a medium through which we project our soul or what we perceive to be the essence of who we are. For poets, our love of ambiguity stems from a love of mystery. We don't want to know everything, or we believe we can't know everything. There's a limit to what we can know.

Poetry or liturgy aims to create that sense of mystery as a means of drawing attention to the mysterious, that force that governs those things that lie just beyond our senses. Since the advent of nuclear physics and the emerging philosophies surrounding this discipline, we are free to experiment with ideas that mainstream science is cautious to embrace. Our existence and consciousness in the realm of quantum physics open new ideas.

Like clouds in the sky, our ideas of who we are change. Sometimes they seem familiar and understandable, but at other times they seem strange and mysterious. Particles become entangled, and our ideas race to find new meanings in our greater awareness of how little we know. Mystery is not an invitation to close our minds and accept some idea of faith blindly. It's a call to keep our curiosity alive.

I grew up in a working-class family in Northern Ireland during the worst of the 'Troubles.' I was the first in my family to go to University. My interest in the arts led me to study English Literature. 3 degrees later, I found myself in love with the human imagination. The very fact that we can conceive the impossible convinces me that our curiosity is alive and well. What we see in the clouds can be defined by science as the result of weather patterns, whereas the imagination seeks to find familiar shapes and forms.

There are so many theories about who we are as a species. Some of them are a far stretch of the imagination, others reduce us to nothing more than matter. Somewhere in between these extremes lies a middle ground that embraces science and what appears implausible. It is this territory that I find myself occupying.

I remember in my younger, more idealistic days, one person saying that I had my head in the clouds. I suppose it's better than what they could've said. My views then were a bit more fixed, more traditional, than they are now. It was a time when my belief system centred around matters of faith. I don't blame people for wanting the world to be understood in concrete terms. It's comforting to believe there's a God and a plan for human existence. Since we fear death, it's understandable why we need an afterlife.

The hardest thing to live with is doubt. It's an uncomfortable place at the best of times. You live in hope that some discovery will prove your existence is meaningful, and not simply a random fluke. But it never happens. It didn't take me long to discover that those who protested strongly for certainty were often afraid to admit to doubt. Placards demonstrating fundamental credos do not make truth. If anything, these acts of supposed faith stifle growth and keep our thinking confined to a narrow viewpoint.

The more unstable our world has become, the greater the risk of abandoning our critical thinking for a more stable worldview. Once we begin to exorcise our libraries and schools of books that no longer fit our beliefs, we have lost our minds to ignorance and fear. Science is not at war with faith, as some would have you believe. Scientific thought is about expanding our knowledge. Science has saved innumerable lives. Without scientific thought, we would be at the mercy of every disease.

But science has also brought us a new juncture in our existence. We are at the edge of something significant that will change everything we understand about the world. A.I. has us reconsidering what we understand as consciousness. Is consciousness a purely human experience, or can we create consciousness in artificial intelligence? What would it be like to have another kind of life form that can process information much faster than we ever could?

I'm excited about the new scientific discoveries. We're already beginning to see how these things can benefit us as a species. But what we're also seeing is the rise of anti-intellectualism generated by those who allow themselves to be governed by fear. These people would prefer to see us unvaccinated, unprotected from disease, and at the mercy of witch doctors. They would also prefer to keep us in a state of warfare, using science to fine-hone weaponry rather than use it to bring us together.

When those who govern us reject science or use it to reinforce bigotry, then we should be suspicious of their motives. It's not in their interest to bring peace when they can keep firm control by exploiting people's fears. We're in a state of war now, and the spin perpetrated by those who started it is obscene. Children die, and people are forced into homelessness. The death toll continues to escalate, and what do we get from those who engage in this folly? Nothing but the inflation of their egos.

Their rhetoric demonises the enemy in the worst possible ways. Think about how the Germans dehumanised the Jews. By doing so, they could treat them in the most inhumane ways. Israel and the U.S. have learned nothing from the past. Together, they create the basis for wiping out nations. But let's not speak about the war. What's more important is the price of petrol and groceries.

<https://www.youtube.com/@Derrypoet>  
Our columnists say what they want. If you have an opposing viewpoint, feel free to write us a letter. We will probably print it in a future edition

### Obituary

Mary Morris, age 93, born October 1, 1932, passed away peacefully in her sleep on March 12, 2026. She was a proud native of Fairhill, Menlough, County Galway, Ireland.

Our Mom was fearless, adventurous and hardworking. At the age of 16, she got a job working as a secretary to a young attorney in the town of Athenry which was about 15 miles from her home in Fairhill. Every week, she would catch a bus in Menlough early Monday morning, ride to Athenry, work there all week, stay in a boarding house and then bus back down home to Menlough after work on Friday. She did this for about 2 years and then decided to leave home to follow her brothers Andy and John and many of her Screene cousins to London.

She absolutely loved London and lived there for about 5 years, but then

one day, on a complete whim, she and a girlfriend of hers just picked up and moved to Toronto, without knowing anyone there or anything about Toronto or Canada. Can

you imagine? How crazy! She lived in Toronto for about 5 years, during which time she ended up "re-meeting" our Dad there. They had known each other a little - or maybe more accurately knew a little about each other - back home in Menlough, but my Dad was about 5 years older than her and had already left home on his own world adventures to London, San Francisco and Toronto.

They "re-met", fell in love and got married in Toronto on December 27, 1958. They immigrated to Chicago on February 8, 1960 to raise our family, joining the Glynn's and O'Neils who were here ahead of them.

Our Mom was one of the smartest people you could ever meet - she was an absolute genius at mathematics.

### The Returning Swallow

By Randall Stephen Hall.

Our northern Irish swallows Follow their own way. They stretch their wings To overwinter in South Africa.

Leaderless and without a rudder They plough they blue skies of Ulster.

To go where they never say never. Below the equator.

A loving aviator, beyond politics.

In late April they begin to arrive Threading our skies to Mother Africa.

They have no compass While we have little direction.

For some of us it is harder To know where home is. Pushed here, long ago Amongst these Irish hills. For profit.

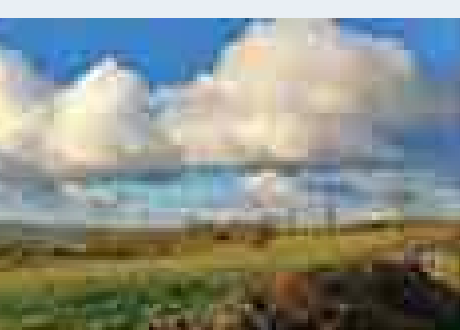
Migrants all, the swallow has no knowledge Or use for needless baggage Like, who is and who isn't African, Irish or just a Brit.

They fly above our objectives.

They do not reject or are subjective To the Irish speaker or the Brythonic spittle.

For they look down on us from on high. And see no borders or relevant colours As a flag is merely material moving.

Observe the swallows See how they fly And how they mate for life, mate.



For their trouble and their strife Wedded to the journey, from here to there. Rather than the welcome The returning swallow receives each year Above our streets, from the Starling.

So the swallow builds a nest In the full knowledge That he may rest here, unhindered And his neighbour will not throw stones Or disturb these calm families That nature has gifted us. The result of which is ongoing peace Year on year.

Could we not fly Like the swallow? Could we not work that miracle?

Isn't it a queer thing That we've never created A political party of the Swallow. With two wings, endurance and vision. Able to fly off the ground And knowing no boundaries.

But, stranger still, things can change Over and above the clichéd And the predictable.

All our ships are sinking Whereas the swallow Will always fly Higher than any flag.

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Unsung Heros - Maud (Mulvihill) and Herbert (Sean) Mitchell

The Town of Athlone is situated in the middle of Ireland spanning the River Shannon between counties Westmeath and Roscommon. As a Garrison town, it is recognised as one of the longest continuously occupied Military barracks in Europe. During the British occupation it served as the Headquarters for the Western Military District. Having access to the River Shannon, extensive Railway and Roadways made Athlone a very important hub for British Military Operations. At the height of the British Empire many soldiers left what was then Victoria Barracks, to travel and serve in faraway places - to India and beyond. Brigades such as the 1st East Yorkshire, 9th Lancers (Cavalry) Royal Field Artillery were all operating from Athlone before and during the War of Independence. The famous Connaught Rangers were stationed there during the 19th century and the Westmeath Rifle Militia during the Crimean war. In February 1922 after over 200 years, the facility was formally handed over to the emerging Irish Army. Since then, many Irish Soldiers have left the same Barracks (now known as Custume Barracks) to serve with distinction in the United Nations Peace Keeping Forces, across Europe and Africa.

Despite the Town having many families dependent on the British Army and Police Force for their wages, and local business's dependent on their custom, there were also many planning for Irish Independence. Families such as the O'Connors, Elliott and Reynolds would later play vital roles in the Easter Rising, War of Independence and Civil War.

Our story concentrates on Maud Mulvihill from Coosan and her husband Herbert Mitchell. Maud wrote in her



Maud Mulvihill

memories 'The Man with the Long Hair' "I am eighty. My life is at an end. What I write is the truth. Do nothing about it



Herbert (Sean) Mitchell

until I am dead."

Maud was born in Athlone in 1891 into a Roman Catholic and very Nationalistic family. She was very active in the formation of Cumann na mBan, a close friend of Liam Mellows with whom she helped organise the Midlands Brigade. She was the first Captain of Cumann na mBan in the Midlands.

Herbert James Mitchell was also born in 1891 in the Midlands into a Protestant (his father Robert was a Fenian) family and grew up in a very privileged planter stock. With his father's encouragement and support he became involved and committed to the early Volunteer movement in Athlone and participated in many of its activities.

Sean later converted to Catholicism and married Maud on the 8th of September 1915 in St. Marys Catholic Church Athlone.

Pre-Easter Rising 1916

The Volunteer movement in Coosan started in the summer of 1914 with 60 men. Despite the lack of arms regular parades were held with visits from Liam Mellows, who put them through drill exercise and manoeuvre's, men such as Frank (Butt) O'Connor, Séan Hurley and Herbert were very much to the fore with the organisation. Meanwhile Maud was active with Mellows after the establishment Cumann na mBan. Both organisations were busy fundraising for the Brigade to purchase arms. Prior to the Rising it was customary for soldiers returning home on leave to bring their ammunition and guns with them, as a result some were bought while others were stolen. The authorities banned this practice after the Easter Rising.

When the Great War started the Volunteer force split owing to the very pro English attitude adapted by John Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party. The great majority of Volunteers in the Midland area followed Redmond and formed a different force known as the Irish National Volunteers. Only a small number remained loyal to the Irish Volunteers who then became known as the Athlone Company. The young Mitchell couple stayed true to the Irish Volunteers.

Easter Rising

In Frank O'Connor's papers he states that on Easter Sunday morning the Company mobilised at Maghera. Sean Hurley was in charged after mobilisation was complete. They set out for Shannonbridge on bicycles and not military formation to avoid any suspicion. A party had been left behind to destroy the Railway lines and Telegraph's Communication in the Athlone area, and when achieved they were to rejoin the party at Shannonbridge. The plan was to hold Shannonbridge until Casement's Brigade passed through and Liam Mellows was to meet them there. The rifles were taken to Shannonbridge the previous day by Edward Farrell in his horse and trap, Farrell had friends living there who hid the weapons. On the Sunday morning, they received a counter commanding order, to go home, but to hold themselves in readiness for a recall. There was a dance in Coosan that night, and nearly all the men attended. The men remained mobilised until they learned the Rising in Dublin was

over. Several men were arrested with some immediately released, others including Frank, Seamus O'Brien, John Blayney and Peter Malinn were held for some time. Séamus Hurley was in fact interned in England. While the Company did not reach Dublin, it had members already based there, including the Elliot sisters, Ellis and Emily (ounding Members of Cumann na mBan) who saw action at the GPO and Four Courts. The sisters had the task of transmitting the struggle to the outside world with special attention on the Irish American audience, at that point America had not as yet entered the First World War. Today there is a road in Athlone named after these brave women.

After the surrender in Dublin and the subsequent arrests the movement for all intents and purposes became inactive in Athlone. However, the Volunteers working in conjunction with Cumann na mBan did organise concerts and dances to raise funds to provide for the men who were imprisoned.

When the general release of prisoner's took place in 1917 the reorganisation of the volunteers got underway. O'Connor in his papers highlights that Herbert Mitchell and Sean Maloney were instrumental in getting the organisation active. Open drill parades were held regularly, and Officers training was held near Coosan during that year, often overseen by Liam Mellows. It was also the year that Herbert was offered a commercial position in Cork which he accepted. Before moving to Cork the couple were presented with a gold medal and bracelet by the Brigade in recognition of their hard work in the cause of Irish Freedom.

Arriving in Cork

When they arrived in Cork, they joined Cork No 1 Brigade 'G' Company as they were living in its area. 'G' and 'H' were part of the Lough Parish on the south side of the city. It was recommended to Herbert to change his Christian name, to confuse the authorities when they came to his place of work to check their records, he changed his name to Sean.

It was at this time they formed a friendship with the Hegarty's of The Laurels, John Joe, Nan and Mamie (H Company), Conn Neenan (G Company) and other officers of both Companies.

On their arrival Sean and Maud soon set up arms dumps, both at Clarkes Bridge in the city, and helped also with John Joes dump and bomb factory at the Laurels. Sean took an active part in several jail breaks helping volunteers to escape, saving them cruel

interrogation and probable execution. Similarly, like the Hegarty sisters Maud became an intelligence officer, moving arms and dispatches around the city during daytime and curfew hours. She was later appointed President of the Bishopstown branch. Their lives were in constant danger, and their homes often raided by the RIC, Army, and Black and Tans. In 1919. Dick Mulcahy on a visit to Cork, appointed Sean a Captain in G Company (a few short years later they were to become sworn enemies).

War of Independence

Sean and Maud often returned to Athlone to see her parents accompanied by their children, on these occasions, they also delivered dispatches and secured arms from his brother Walter (who was also very active) for the Cork Brigade.

On the 13th of May 1919, Sean (with his son) was returning to Cork with guns when the train stopped at Knocklong Station, a famous rescue occurred. The freeing of Sean Hogan who was on his way under armed guard to Cork to be interrogated in the Military Prison.

Hogan along with Dan Breen, Sean Treacey and Seamus Robinson were responsible for the Soloheadbeg Ambush on the previous January, when they fired the first shots in the War of Independence. The delay in the train arriving in Cork allowed Sean and his son to walk home unincumbered.

The Brigade relied a lot on the Intelligence secured by the women of Cumann na mBan who had members working in hotels, big houses, shops and restaurants. They also worked as Secretaries in Army and RIC Barracks, so troop movements and mail were always copied and reported back to the Brigade. Some working in the Cross & Blackwell factory smuggled out tin cans to be used for bomb making.

Volunteers working on the Railway provided information on which trains were safe to raid, thus giving G and H company time to plan their ambushes. These raids provided further vital information and equipment.

1920 -1921

In the local elections held in January 1920 Sinn Fein won 30 seats out of a total of 50 seats s on the Cork Corporation. Thomas McCurtain was elected the first Republican Lord Mayor of Cork. His first proposal in office was to recognise Dail Eireann as the legal constitutional Parliament of the Irish nation. This set the tone for significant future events that occurred in the city. The Mitchells together with members of G&H company were very proactive in these elections. Within a few short



Cathal McSwiney Brugha, Tadgh Manley Quill (their great grandson) and Jim Hegarty

weeks of his election on the 20th of March the Lord Mayor McCurtain was murdered at his home in Blackpool, in front of his pregnant wife and family, by members of the RIC. The Corporation donated a plot of ground at St. Finbarrs Cemetery for his burial, now known as the Republican Plot. Sean was tasked as Chief Marshall on the day giving support to the family and especially to the Lord Mayors young son Thomas. (Just over 50 years later Thomas would speak at Sean's own funeral in the same graveyard.)

Terence McSweeney became McCurtain's successor as both Brigade Commandant and Lord Mayor of Cork. The Mitchells continued their activities under their new commanding officer.

As the war escalated during 1920 Michael Collins issued a nationwide decree to burn RIC Barracks and increase further disruption to the British administration.

G&H company burned their local Togher Barracks to the ground, Sean and John Joe participated in this action, the guns and equipment were carried by Nan and Maud to the site and they returned them to the Hegarty's dump at The Laurels which was only a few fields away.

On the same evening orders were given to burn Tax Offices records although not necessarily the buildings, both successful actions resulted in putting huge financial and logistic strain on the British administration in Ireland. Similar successful activities were completed in Athlone.

On the 21st of June Sean together with members of G and H company (including Joe Murphy who later died on hunger strike) were involved in the attack on the Farran Barracks which lasted for over three hours. They continued to ambush trains on their way to British Army Barracks; these rewarded them with valuable information on troop movements and useful ordnance, which was used against the authorities, burned what was not required and sending a strong message to spies.

G&H company made a further nuisance of themselves by felling trees and digging ditches across many main roads, thus disrupting the transport movement of Troops, RIC and Auxiliaries. Sean was also instrumental in disrupting the British communication network when he and his men took it upon themselves to cut telephone lines.

Over the Summer many Volunteers were captured and imprisoned without trial. This led to a mass hunger strike culminating in the death of Lord Mayor Terence McSwiney, Michael Fitzgerald and Joe Murphy of H company during the month of October. On his death Sean O'Hegarty (no relation) was appointed CO of the Cork Brigade. Sean had a reputation for bravery and strategy against the British Forces.

In December the Black and Tans went on a rampage and burnt Cork City destroying many business's and making hundreds homeless. This resulted in its citizens supporting the actions of the IRA in their fight for Irish Independence making life for the British authorities more untenable.

Truce

On the 11th of July 1921a Truce came into effect, halting fighting between the IRA and the British Authorities. Hours before in came into effect four British soldiers left their posts in Cork Jail and made their way up Bandon Road. There they were lifted and executed with their bodies only discovered the following day in nearby Ellis's Quarry, based in G and H companies area. Both Dublin and London were furious at this turn of events, but they were never told who was responsible. Many Volunteers were tortured and executed at the hands of the Army when they were captured and sent to jail. It is accepted that their deaths were an act of revenge for the murder of their comrades.

Treaty

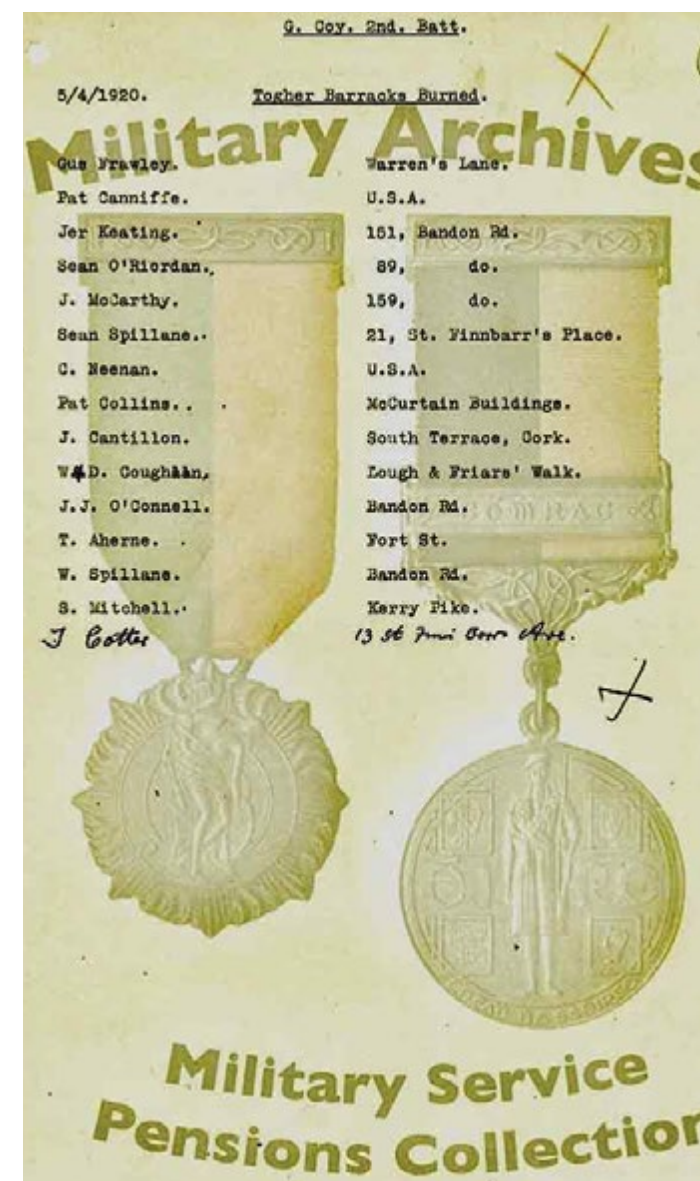
When the treaty was signed in December 1921, it resulted in rallies being organized nationwide to garner support for its acceptance. Many were broken up by anti-treaty supporters. In her papers Maud states that Sean was summoned by Michael Collins to attend a meeting in Moore's Hotel. There he was offered the position of Command of the Southern Division of the Free State Army. Sean quired Collins



Unveiling of Athlone Monument 1953 - on platform (l to r): Eamonn DeValera, Sean McBride, Frank O'Connor, Erskin Childers, Ellis Elliot and Brigid Reynolds

saying, "You don't mean to split the Army"? "To hell with the Army" Collins replied, "well to hell with you Mick" "The dye was cast.

In March 1922 just months prior to commencement of the Civil War under the command of Sean O'Hegarty the Brigade launched an audacious plot under



Tom Crofts to secure arms. Hegarty became aware that a British vessel the UPNOR (well documented) was to transport British arms and ammunition from the soon to be decommissioned Haulbowline base back to the UK. Once they captured the UPNOR (despite it been escorted by two British Naval Destroyers) they sailed it to Ballycotton Harbour and unloaded its ordnance. Waiting there were officers Conn Neenan and Martin Corry with over a hundred lorries in which they transported some of the arms to Mitchell's home now in Kerry Pike some 5-6 miles from the city, some to The Laurels, with the majority going to Tom Barrys section in West Cork. Collins and Churchill were fuming at this event knowing it would arm the anti-treaty forces in the Munster Republic.

Civil War

Sean and Maud immediately took the anti-treaty together with their friends, the Hegarty's of The Laurels. As a result of O'Hegarty taking a neutral stance together with other senior officers, Sean played a significant role in the war. For its duration he was rarely at home as he was very much a wanted man being on the run from the Irish Free State (IFS) Authorities. His home was raided on a regular basis, not now by the Black and Tans or RIC but by former comrades in the IFS. Maud was raising a young family during this period with help from the Hegarty sisters, bringing her food and supplies.

They also accompanied her when she went to visit Sean and the Active Service Unit delivering arms and dispatches. On one occasion when Nan was visiting, the house was raided, to frighten the women, the IFS fired shots over the house shouting, this is what will happen to your husband when we find him, they believed she oversaw an arms dump. They never found anything apart from some nurse's uniforms that were taken from the UPNOR. Sean fought not only in Cork but travelled to Limerick to prevent the advance of the IFS army. Sean depended on my father John Joe to protect the arm dumps as well as gathering intelligence. When John Joe was arrested, he was to be executed if he did not give Sean up (who was using the Laurels as a Brigade and safe house). Luckily for him he was recognized by an IFS Officer who had him released and allowed escape. Thus, allowing this story to be told.

Remembering The Heros

In 1953 a monument was unveiled in Athlone to honour the Midland Brigades. In attendance were local Cumann na mBan members Ellis Elliot and Brigid Reynolds, Eamonn deValera, Sean McBride, Frank O'Connor and Erskin Childers.

In Cork the Old IRA Men's Association also erected plaques in memory of their fallen heroes. In 1960 one was placed on Joe Murphys house by H company, G company placed a similar one at Phair's Cross. In 1963 a new memorial was unveiled at the Republican Plot by President DeValera (not without incident).

Sean and Maud saw action in both Brigades and kept their very strong republican beliefs for the rest of their lives. Sean did spend jail time during the early years of the Free State. Sean died in 1971 and Maud the following year, both are buried in Saint Finbarrs cemetery close to the Republican plot. There is now a development in Kerry Pike, called Mitchell Court in their memory.

Footnote: In my talks over 50 years ago with Frank O'Connor in Athlone, I was not aware that his friend Herbert was the same man as my father's friend Sean, nor that Maud, Nan and Mamie were close active officers in Cumann na mBan.

Information: [jimhegartyauthor@gmail.com](mailto:jimhegartyauthor@gmail.com) [www.Hegartycollection.ie](http://www.Hegartycollection.ie)



Herbert Mitchell (grandson) at launch of Hegarty's of The Laurels & Jim Hegarty



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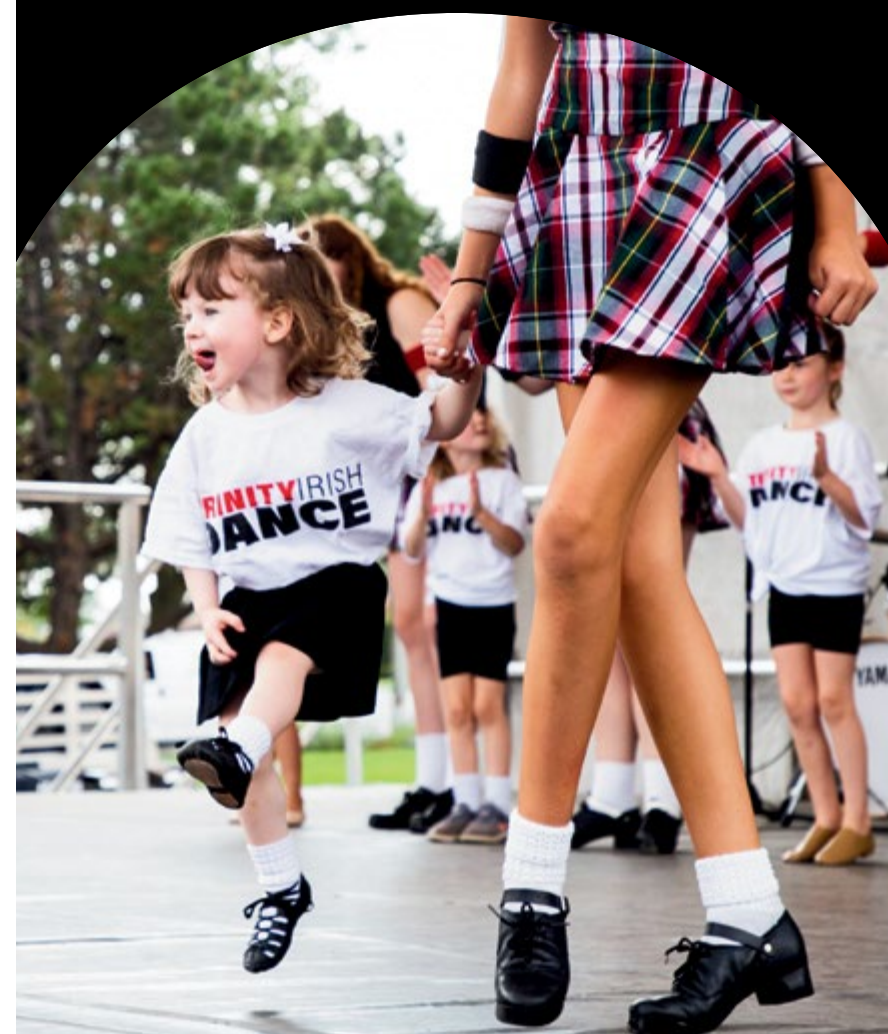
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## Caroleann Gallagher's Women's Bar Association of Illinois Presidential Message - 2026-2027

I grew up on a small, windswept island off the northwest coast of Ireland, in a community of less than 500 people that shaped who I am. At my tiny high school, the motto was an Irish proverb that has stayed with me ever since: *Faoi scáth a chéile a mhairimid*—we live in each other's shelter. It taught me the value of community, support, and standing together, and it guides my vision for the Women's Bar Association of Illinois in 2026-2027.

For more than a century, the WBAI has been a shelter for women lawyers: a place of mentorship, leadership, and connection. The WBAI was founded by just nine women. Though their numbers were small, they had a clear vision and recognized the need to support one another. They had the foresight to understand that they were stronger together, and that spirit became the grassroots of this organization. My hope this year is to honor those founding values and revisit the principles that made the WBAI both important and necessary. At WBAI, everyone deserves a seat at the table. And if the table is not yet long enough or fully representative, we must build it longer, we must build it stronger, and we must add more seats.

I realize that, for some,

the WBAI may have seemed like an organization that wasn't "a fit for them." Truthfully, when I first moved here, that is exactly how I felt. I did not know a single person in the legal community. I was unsure where to begin and questioned whether I would ever belong. But I was wrong. The night I walked into my first WBAI event—nervous and alone—I discovered something incredible. I found my table. I found my community. I found mentors, allies, and lifelong friends. This organization welcomed me with open arms



(L to r): Kelly Sabo Gaden, WBAI, Caroleann Gallagher, WBAI, Justice Rita Garman, Retired Supreme Court Justice, Justice Lisa Holder White, Retired Supreme Court Justice, Justice Mary Jane Theis, Retired Supreme Court Justice, Justice Elizabeth Rochford, Supreme Court Justice, Justice Mary K O'Brien, Supreme Court Justice, Justice Anne M. Burke, Retired Supreme Court Justice, Katie Twardak, WBAI

and an open heart, and it has made all the difference in my life and it is part of the reason I now call Chicago my home away from home.

As President, my vision is to expand the WBAI table



across Illinois. Through membership-driven events, CLE programming, collar county initiatives, and our signature Cook County gatherings, I hope to strengthen our presence far beyond Cook County. My goal is to welcome new voices, support emerging leaders, and ensure the next generation of women lawyers finds a space where they are supported, empowered, and able to thrive.

My hope for this year is simple: that more women lawyers across Illinois will discover what I found here—a community to call their own, a network that lifts them up, and opportunities they never imagined. And perhaps someone will look at me and think, *If she can do it, so can I.*

Because when we make room for one another, when we build a longer table and lift each other higher, we live the wisdom of that Irish proverb:

*Faoi scáth a chéile a mhairimid* - We live in each other's shelter.

As we embark on this year together, I invite each of you to take a seat at the WBAI table—whether it is your first time or your hundredth. Let us welcome new

voices, embrace diversity, and commit to building a stronger, more inclusive organization. Together, we will ensure that the WBAI continues to be a place where every woman lawyer can find support, connection, and the opportunity to thrive.

This is our table, and there will always be room for one more. Le Meas (With Respect & Gratitude)

Caroleann Gallagher, President  
Women's Bar Assn. of Illinois  
*(Editor's Note): Caroleann was featured in the November 2024 issue of IAN which you can read on our site, at [www.irishamericannews.com](http://www.irishamericannews.com), or you can download the rest of her story there!*

## Congratulations to the Irish American Hall of Fame Class of 2026



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• TOURISM •

# Ireland Unrushed: The Key To The Perfect Ireland Getaway? Slow Down, Stay Longer, And Savor Each And Every Moment



Madden's Bar in full swing during the Belfast Fleadh; Kayaking in Hough Harbor, Dublin; Mount Congreve Gardens in Waterford; Visiting with a pony along the Connemara Greenway, Galway.

**I**KNEW AN LADY, FROM A FAIRLY well-to-do background in the midlands of Ireland, who settled with her family on the outskirts of Dublin, in the north of the city. Once a week, for many years, she would take a bus into the city center, where she would buy a cup of tea and a pastry at Bewley's famous café on Grafton Street. After willing away a quiet hour or so there she would take a short 15 minute walk, past Dublin Castle and the Four Courts—two of the capital's most historic landmarks—on her way to the famous Moore Street Market. After buying her weekly fruit and vegetables she would order a glass of Guinness and sit and savor it at the bar of a local pub. Not just any pub, but the pub where the market stall vendors took their break. She faithfully kept to this routine because, as she explained to me one day when I accompanied her on it, there was nothing funnier than the natural quick wit of the 'real Dubliners' and, for her, there was nowhere better to hear it than at Bewleys and at that pub. That was it, she just loved the banter of the Dubliners. It brought her joy. Therein lies the secret to a great Irish vacation. Wherever you find yourself, slow down and take the time to enjoy the moment, to get to know the place you are in and the people that call it home. It is easier to do that in Ireland than it is in most places. The best experiences are often based in the simplest of life's pleasures: a walk through the woods, a sing-song in a friendly pub, an afternoon exploring a seaside town. The pace of life is inherently different in Ireland, people are naturally predisposed to 'slow down and smell the roses' as they say. And this time of year, late spring and early summer, is

when the island truly leans into that unrushed spirit. There is a stretch in the evenings and a beautiful splash of color returns to the countryside as wildflowers bloom in meadows, hedgerows, and along cliff-top paths. Walk or cycle along a greenway or a quiet breen and you'll notice how it will quiet your mind as the only things you can hear are the birds and the breeze around you. See how many colors you can spot, between the yellow flare of gorse, the delicate whites and pinks of hawthorn, the first foxgloves rising on the banks of a hill—it is a kaleidoscope. Orchids appear like tiny surprises for anyone who pauses long enough to look. May is typically one of the best months for weather, and has the added advantage that it is before the start of peak summer season. Whether you find yourself in the center of a big city or deep in the countryside, the natural beauty and the rich history of the island is on display all around you. All you need to do is slow down and take in the experience. Here are some ideas to inspire and help you to get the most out of your Irish vacation. **Take a cruise** Seeing the Irish countryside and coastlines from the water is a spectacular and unforgettable experience. There are many options, here are a few. Cruise the tranquil waters of the Shannon-Erne Waterway for the ultimate slow travel experience. You can spend a week navigating the 40 mile stretch of river and canal that connects the River Shannon with Lough Erne in Northern Ireland. And remember, it's not a commute, the journey is the point. Take your time to stop off at any of the bustling riverside towns and sleepy villages you'll pass

on the way. Take a few hours to walk or cycle scenic trails. Enjoy traditional music, a hearty meal and good company in an intimate local pub. Cruising is for everyone. You don't need a licence and training is provided before you set off. There are lots of shorter cruises too. Spend an hour or a day on the beautiful lakes of Killarney in County Kerry. See the sights of Dublin from the vantage point of a guided River Liffey tour. A sea cruise is by far the best way to see the world famous Cliffs of Moher in County Clare or Donegal's Slieve League Cliffs, the highest sea cliffs in Europe. If you're really up for a unique adventure, you could go Sea Kayaking along the north Antrim Coast, home to the Giants Causeway, a volcanic rock formation that has both a unique geological history a special place in the pantheon of Irish mythology. **Take a drive along the coast** Ireland has two coastal driving routes that offer uninterrupted views of some of the most dramatic land- and seascapes on the planet. **The Wild Atlantic Way** stretches from Malin Head in County Donegal to Kinsale in County Cork. It passes through nine counties and at 1600 miles it is one of the longest coastal touring routes anywhere in the world. On the route are some of the most beautiful small towns and villages in Ireland; Doolin in County Clare, Dingle in Kerry and Killibegs in Donegal to name just a few. It also takes you through Galway City, and is the perfect way to access some of Ireland's most stunning scenery such as the Burren in County Clare, the Ring of Kerry, and offshore islands such as the Aran Islands and Skellig Michael (used as a filming location for two Star Wars movies).

**The Causeway Coastal Route** is a spectacular 115-mile driving route in Northern Ireland linking Belfast and Derry/Londonderry. Renowned for its dramatic scenery, it features the Giant's Causeway, the Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge, and 13th-century Dunluce Castle. The route runs along the Antrim Coast and Glens, offering stunning views of the Irish Sea. **Explore a town or city** As the days warm up and the evenings lengthen, music spills out of the pub doors and into the street. You'll see buskers warming up or maybe a festival tent glowing at dusk. The month of May is when Ireland's cultural calendar begins to hum again. Urban journeys can feel especially alive this time of year. In Dublin you can wander from the Liberties to the coast, where you can find distilleries, street art, and sea air all within a commutable radius. In Galway you can drift between cafés, craft shops, quayside music, and the pull of the Atlantic Ocean. In Belfast you can find creativity, history, and green spaces that all blend seamlessly into this UNESCO City of Music. In Kilkenny you will find medieval streets, craft studios, and riverside walks that invite you to take your time. And throughout these cities, partners like Taste and Tour, EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum, and the Peacemakers Museum add depth, flavor, and storytelling to every stop. **Visit a garden, or an artisanal maker** May is also the month when Ireland's many formal gardens and growers come into their own. Mount Congreve Gardens in County Waterford—which houses the largest collection of plants in Ireland—

is in full bloom. Also at their best are the gardens at Powerscourt in County Wicklow (voted Number 3 in the World's Top Ten Gardens by National Geographic); the National Botanic Garden at Kilmacuragh in County Wicklow, with its famous collection of conifers and rhododendrons; and the gardens at Mount Stewart in County Down which, thanks to the mild climate of Strangford Lough, hosts a huge variety of plants from around the world. The island of Ireland is home to hundreds of artisanal food and drink makers, many of which invite you into their premises and show you how they continue the sometimes centuries-old traditions of turning local fruit, vegetables, meat and dairy into a diverse range of high quality products. There is perhaps no better way of experiencing an area and its local culture than by indulging in the food and drinks that have, in many ways, come to define it. The Boatyard Distillery in Fermanagh, where you can find the perfect Gin for any occasion and a true local story; the Burren Smokehouse, which brings farm to table to a new level; and Tracey's Farmhouse Kitchen in County Down, where you can learn how to make tradition Soda, Wheat and Potato Bread, all offer the opportunity to see Ireland in a uniquely personal way. **A final note for travelers** If you're dreaming of a trip that feels restorative, spacious, and full of quiet color, May is one of the most beautiful months to experience the island of Ireland. Go for the landscapes, stay for the authenticity, and leave with the feeling that only Ireland can give you.



CROSSING THE CARRICK-A-REDE ROPE BRIDGE ON NORTHERN IRELAND'S SPECTACULAR CAUSEWAY COAST

Visit the island that goes beyond



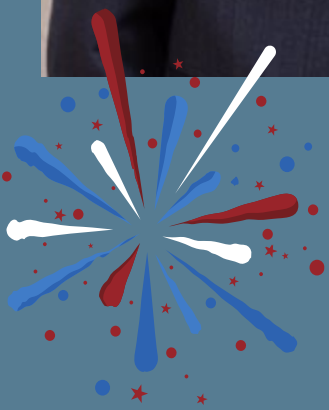
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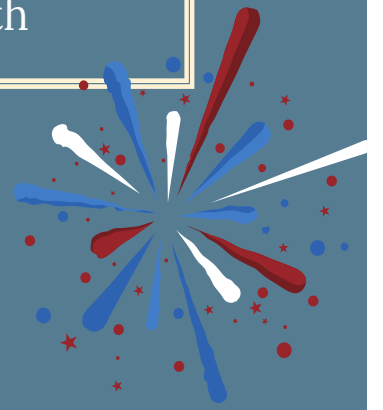


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