

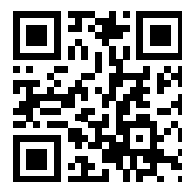


ilrish
newsmagazine

December 2023 | Volume 17 - Issue 12

Scottish Fiddler
Ryan Young
is Changing the Fiddle

SCAN
TO READ
ONLINE





EDITORS CORNER
 @Jobjr
 JOHN O'BRIEN, JR.

Still a Plum

Cleveland has certainly been in the lights over the last few weeks, with the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the Achill – Cleveland Twinning, matched with business discussions to further the progress already made in commerce between the two communities.

The *iRish* in action

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Then came the visit of Ireland's Ambassador to the United States, H.E. Geraldine Byrne Nason, to celebrate the opening of the office for the Honorary Consul to the United States for Ohio Mark Owens here in Cleveland, and the testimonial to Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians National President Marilyn Madigan the following night. Marilyn's *Madigan Muses* column also celebrates Marilyn's seventh anniversary with *iIrish*.

Stories within cover the twinning, the delegation, and presentations from the week, plus letters and pictures authored by our visitors, reflecting on their experiences while they were here. Of course, this issue is centered on Christmas, past and present, but our regular columns on books, music, theatre, holiday recipes,

games, traditions, kid's craic, good health practices and information, humor and opinion are included as well.

We have extensive coverage of all these events and topics here in print, and even more coverage in text, pictures, and LARGER print, in the digital version at www.iirish.us.

Congrats to Cooking Up a Hooley in the Kitchen Columnist Katie Gagne, celebrating her five-year anniversary with us; Pittsburgh Relationship Manager Mairin Petrone and Columbus Irish Columnist Andrew Shuman, each celebrating their one-year anniversary with us. We are so blessed to have you on our team. This issue also wraps up our 16th year publishing iIrish.

Nollaig Shona Daoibh. Slán agus beannacht,
Merry Christmas to You All.
 Goodbye and bless you,
 John and all the staff at *iIrish*.

iIrish is made in America. We have always been green and are proudly Irish, all year long.

...

Nuair a stadann an ceol, an damhsa déanann an amhlaidh (When the music stops, so does the dance)

John

"FOLLOW ME WHERE I GO, WHAT I DO AND WHO I KNOW."











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 The opinions and statements expressed in this newspaper are entirely those of the authors, and do not reflect in any way the opinions of Irish.

About Our Cover:
Scottish Fiddler
Ryan Young is changing fiddling as we know it.

West Side Irish American Club Fall 25 Tournament Champions



Above: Mike Holian, Pat Leneghan, Mike McGuire Pat Goggin, Maureen Carr, Fiona Chambers.

At Right: Champions Mike McGuire and Pat Goggin

By **Richard Lardie**

Congratulations to Pat Goggin and Mike McGuire, the WSIA Fall 25 Tournament Champions! Two teams tied for 2nd place: Pat Leneghan and Mike Holian; Fiona Chambers and Maureen Carr, who survived an initial playoff with Sister Maureen Burke and Judy Bartel.

A good time was had by all, and they enjoyed a marvelous meal



prepared by Kevin McDonough and his brigade. Special thanks to Kathleen Mangan, Kathleen Sheehan, Christine O'Donnell, Mary Ellen Grealis, and Kathy Pettit.

The spring tournament will be held April 14, 2024. •

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MERRY CHRISTMAS from the staff of



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Michael Davitt Museum: A Don't Miss When in Mayo

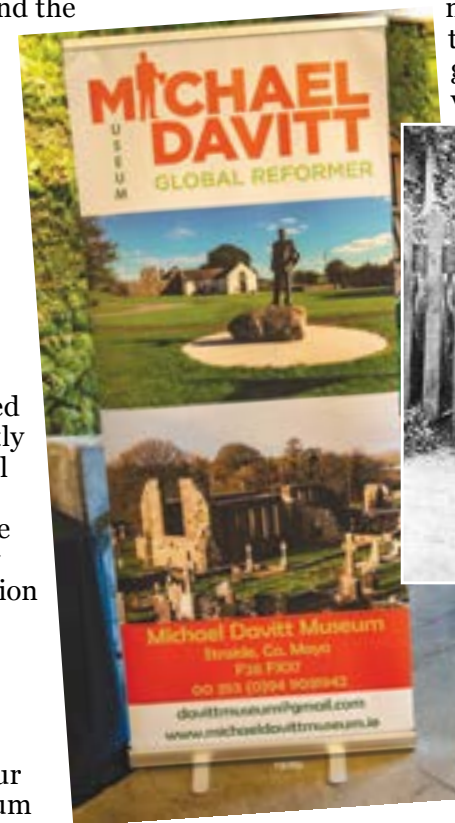
By **Yvonne Corcoran Loftus**, Curator

Michael Davitt is Ireland's greatest patriot, and the most influential international Irishman of the 19th Century. The Michael Davitt Museum is dedicated to the life and legacy of this pre-eminent social activist and global reformer.

The Museum collection is housed in the magnificently restored Pre-Penal Church in the picturesque village of Straide, County Mayo. The exhibition is enhanced by an audio-visual presentation and brought to life by the museum's award winning tour guides. The museum has developed a reputation as a centre of excellence and has attained full accreditation under the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland.

Davitt is forever remembered as the Father of the Land League,

an organisation instrumental in ensuring the retreat of landlordism and returning the land to the native people who tilled the soil for generations. He visited Cleveland



on several occasions from the late 1870s onwards, in order to connect with the city's

growing Irish community.

The collection reflects the subject's diverse range of national and international interests and friendships. Exhibits illustrate his role as a revolutionary figure, a land agitator and a socialist.

His associations with Mahatma Gandhi, President Theodore Roosevelt and Leo Tolstoy are also featured, while his patronage of both the GAA and Celtic Football Club make it a 'Must See' for sports enthusiasts.



No tour is complete without a visit to Michael Davitt's grave, which is located to the rear of the museum. It serves as a poignant reminder of a man who dedicated his life to the poor and oppressed.

The Michael Davitt Museum is adjacent to Straide Friary. This 13th Century Norman structure contains some of the finest medieval sculpture available on the island of Ireland. The President of the 'Ladies Land League,' Anne Deane, is buried within the

Friary walls as well.

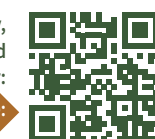
The entire area forms part of a beautifully maintained, spacious site. Ample parking is available and this tranquil location is ideal for picnics and leisurely walks.

Guided tours incorporating the Museum Collection, Michael Davitt's grave and the adjoining Friary are available on request. However, to avoid disappointment, booking in advance is advisable. Tickets can be accessed by completing our online booking system or by contacting the museum before your planned visit.

www.michaeldavittmuseum.ie
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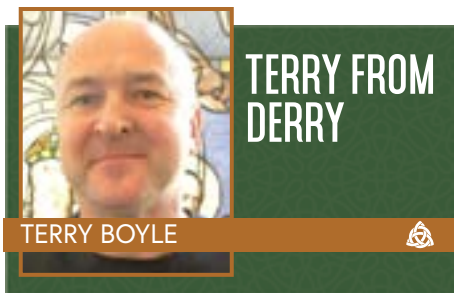
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The Magi

The following piece of imaginary playfulness is rooted in my understanding of modern Irish literature. Yeats, a pioneer of the Irish Literary Renaissance, paved the way for writers such as Sean O'Casey and Brendan Behan.

While one cannot fault Yeats' literary talent, he was still a flawed human being. And, it's these foibles that I wanted to have fun with in this flight of imagination.

Last night at the pub was good craic. I overheard Yeats complaining to Sean O'Casey about changing times. The celebrated statesman began eulogizing the death of feudalism and bemoaning the excesses of democracy. A point that was not well received by his listener, who began fidgeting with a cardboard coaster and biding his time.

Yeats, well accustomed to being in the spotlight, had perfected the art of speaking loud enough to be heard above everyone else. Sadly, I was probably the only one who paid his discourse much attention.

The other barflies were too engrossed in a televised football match to notice the poet's antics. Occasionally, their spontaneous outbursts drowned out the clever man's sophisticated oration. Not impressed by the lack of interest, Yeats began channeling his frustration into a more erudite discussion on the sad state of Irish art.

O'Casey, pushing his tweed cap to the side, adjusted his glasses, and coughed. Yeats' elitist manner proved too much for the ardent socialist to stomach. Flipping the bar coaster up, O'Casey caught it the first time. 'Not bad for a blind

man', he interjected.

Thrown off his stride, Yeats watched as O'Casey completed the trick for the second time. 'Now, it's your turn. You try it.'

If looks could damn you into obscurity, O'Casey would be shoveling snow in Siberia. An indignant Yeats placed a determined finger firmly on the coaster. He wasn't happy with such a frivolous diversion.

O'Casey, equally determined, exhorted the poet to just go for it. 'No one's watching you. What difference would it make, anyway? A man of letters like yourself isn't above a bit of fun. Is he?' Yeats was rattled. It was written all over his studious face.

As the poet reflected on his options of whether to stay or go, the pub door swung open with a dramatic flair. Brendan Behan brutishly staggered into the premises. Singing at the top of his voice, he was quickly admonished by those watching the beautiful game. Not one to be silenced, he was about to cause a great ruckus when he caught sight of Yeats and O'Casey.

Taking his leave with a loud belch, Behan planked himself beside the celebrated duo. Without a second thought, he shamelessly threw his arms around his literary comrades. Reeking of smoke and booze, he kissed both men on the cheek. 'Ah sure, look at us. We're some of the best fecking writers, this country has known.'

Out of the corner of my eye, I could see a host of smile wrinkles light up O'Casey's face.

Yeats' fate was well and truly sealed. The boisterous drunk was holding him captive with his uninhibited display of self-congratulation.

Yeats, who had begun to fidget with the bar coaster, found himself suddenly taken hold of by the lapels of his jacket. Behan's spit got dangerously close. Pulling the poet towards him, he mawkishly slurred 'You're the father of us all. You know that don't you? Where we would be without you? Sure, it doesn't matter that you're an Anglo-Irish Prod.'

Turning to O'Casey, who was looking as if he was experiencing some religious ecstasy, Behan



continued. 'Sure, it doesn't Sean. Oh, sorry, you're one too, aren't you? A Pod but you're one of the good ones. Working-class, like meself.'

Desperately trying to free himself from Behan's huge hands, Yeats' humiliation was eased when O'Casey intervened. Gently putting Behan back into his seat, O'Casey began to soothe the inebriated writer.

'Brendan, sit down. There's a good man. You need to take better care of yourself.' Temporarily appeased, Behan begins to lavish praise on his friends, stating unequivocally, that Yeats will be remembered as the 'father of us all' followed by 'but no one can understand any of that Irish mythology shite.'

When O'Casey's smile turned to laughter, the poet's scorn was hard to contain. O'Casey might be shoveling snow in Siberia for an eternity but from the look on Sean's face, he thought the hardship was worth it.

As the supporters' cheers faded into a postmortem of their team's loss, the TV screens lit up with a news report. The former American's fake tan and weird hairstyle were unmistakable.

Behan, leaping up from his chair, pointed to the image of Trump. 'I can't wait until someone makes that wan as their prison bitch. Look at him. The waster! They should lock up the whole fecking family.'

Ivanka can design and model the new orange jumpsuit. Trump Junior can write his new book, Fingered. Melania, oh she's a

hooker.... Jasus, sorry, I meant looker! She's a top-shelf Prossie.'

O'Casey's peals of laughter found the poet rising to his feet and ready to pontificate. 'As I was saying to Sean before you came in Brendan, this is a bad state of affairs we're in. You might not like that man....'

Behan, oblivious to the usual deference paid to the elderly poet, would not be silenced. 'Like him? If he was the only one in the nick with me, you couldn't pay me to shag him. He's a tosser!'

Caught between enjoying Behan's mad antics and Yeats's discomfort, Sean tried to reinstate some civility. 'Gentlemen, sit down. Let's not make fools of ourselves.' As if on cue, the soccer fans began to leave, and the pub grew quiet.

The lack of ambient noise had an obvious effect on the writers. Brendan, still mawkish in his praise, was less ebullient.

I was thinking of heading home when Greta Thunberg's image appeared on the TV screen. On seeing the young spirited environmentalist, Brendan's waning enthusiasm fired up again. 'There's your new Maude Gonne. Forget all that Mise Eire shite! It's the planet we should be thinking about, and not this speck in the universe we call Ireland. Look at us, some of the best Irish writers. You'd think we could do something more like her.'

Sobering up, Behan's mood was reflective. I half expected Yeats to use the opportunity to make a speedy exit, but he didn't. I equally expected O'Casey to offer to escort

Continued on page 7



safe home



*Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him.
May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.*

MAURICE J. O'GRADY

(Mar 18, 1934 - Oct 10, 2023) age 89, native of Limerick, Co. Limerick, Ireland, beloved husband of the late Kathleen (nee Fox); loving father of Erin Samenuk (John); proud "Pops" of Jacob, Julia, Owen and Connor; dear brother of Joan Healy (Bill) and the late Michael, Dan (Jane Donovan), Kit Flynn (Michael), Bridget Carey (John), Tom (Mary Downes), Jack (Peg Sheahan), Mary Cregan (Joe), Margaret, Eileen Caldwell (Tony), Paddy (Kathleen Byrne), Nora Bracken (Joe); uncle, great-uncle and friend of many. Passed away October 10, 2023. U.S. Army veteran and retired Laborer Local



310. Memorial contributions are suggested to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital at www.stjude.org or St. Brendan Church.

**Obituary courtesy of Chamber's Funeral Homes*

JAMES A. "JIMMY" SHEEHAN

(April 21, 1962 - November 5, 2023) age 61, beloved husband of Sheila (nee Masterson); lifetime friend and brother-in-law of Martin Papcum, his wife Sandra and their daughter, Erica (Stassa); son of the late Mary Bernice (nee Helbig) and Thomas Sheehan; cherished brother of Jack (deceased) (Kathy), Thomas (Annelise), Kathy Papcum (Steve), Mary Moser (Duffy) and DeeDee Sheehan; beloved uncle, nephew,



writer, he said, to fight against the forces of those dragging us towards the abyss.

I was dumbfounded. What I was witnessing was hard to believe. Under a Swedish star, three Irish wise men, meandering in their ways, all following her light. I left the pub that night believing there was hope for us all. •

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cousin and dear friend of many. Passed away November 5, 2023 with his family by his side.

**Obituary courtesy of Chamber's Funeral Homes*

KATHLEEN A. "KAY" HOUGH

(September 30, 1940 - November 8, 2023) (nee Lynch), age 83, beloved wife of the late James; loving mother of Mary Catherine (deceased), Patrick (Katie),



Sheila Cooney (Patrick) and Maureen; cherished Grandma, Gaga, Nana to Seamus, Meghan, Moira, Mary Clare and Shannon Hough and Jimmy, Paddy and Maggie Cooney; dear sister of Rev. Fr. James Lynch, Michael Lynch (Beverly) and the late William Lynch; special aunt, cousin and friend of many. Passed away November 8, 2023. Memorial contributions are suggested to Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers c/o Fr. Jim Lynch, 3602 W. 148th St., Cleveland, OH 44111. **Obituary courtesy of Chamber's Funeral Homes*

AGNES T. FOX

(March 1, 1938 - November 11, 2023) (nee McGrath), age 85, native of Gortnaclossagh, Cong, County Mayo, Ireland.

Beloved wife of 61 years to the late Sean Fox; loving mother of Ann Stefancin (Dan), Kathleen Drellishak (Dan), Maura Byrne (Mike), Eileen, Edward (Ann Marie), John (Erin), Patricia Gompf (Jason) and Brian (Liz); proud

Grandma of 25: Sean Stefancin (Ling Ling), Megan Pasquarette (Jay), Sara Stefancin (Megan), Erin Taylor (Alex), Connor Drellishak, Brian Drellishak, Colleen Drellishak, Daniel Drellishak, Matthew Byrne (Maggie), Catherine Kolde (Nick), Patrick Fox, Michael Fox, Dermot Fox, Owen Fox, Clare Fox, Caitlin Fox, Maggie Fox, Tessie Fox, Madeline Gompf, Aidan Gompf, Kerri Gompf, Emma Fox, Luke Fox, Colin Fox and Ryan Fox and great-Grandma of 4: Lily Agnes Pasquarette, Jack Daniel Pasquarette, Joseph John Kolde and Nolan Patrick Kolde; sister to Michael McGrath (deceased) (Mamie deceased), Julia Chambers (deceased) (Tommy), Mai Fox (deceased), (Joe deceased), Pat McGrath (deceased) (Peggy), Kathleen Kelly McVeigh (deceased), (Patrick deceased), Bridie Gallagher (deceased) (Jimmy deceased), John McGrath (deceased) (Vonnice), Mattie McGrath (deceased) (Kathleen deceased), Margaret Thornton (deceased) (Eddie deceased), Philomena Corley (deceased) (Jimmy) and Dermot McGrath (deceased) (Kathleen); beloved aunt, great-aunt and dear friend of many. Proud and active member of the West Side Irish American Club. Passed away at home surrounded by her family November 11, 2023. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions are suggested to the Cleveland Area Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association P.O. Box 96011, Washington D.C. 20090-6011 or The Monastery of the Poor Clares, 3501 Rocky River Drive Cleveland, OH. 44111.

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Scél Lemm Dúib

I'm not normally the type to gripe about the weather, the crazy lady (my darling wife) does that enough for both of us, but I do sympathize with those that don't care for the winter months. After the beauty of the first snowfall wanes, we're left with five or six months of ick! My evening walks with the hounds are turned into Artic expeditions for me, but they are oblivious to the weather and have no regard for my comfort. It seems that even in the eighth or ninth century, some folks were complaining about the coming of winter. A while back, I shared what is arguably Ireland's most famous poem, Pangur Bán. Written in Old Irish, it was found in the margin of a manuscript by an unknown Irish monk, who compared his work with that of his cat. The following poem was also found in the margin of a book, it's author is also unknown, but, it is attributed to Finn MacCumhaill, leader of the Fianna and the main protagonist of the Finian cycle in Irish mythology. It was common practice to compose a poem and put it into the mouth of a literary character. This poem is also in Old Irish, and as I previously stated, dates from the eighth or ninth century. It was translated by Kuno Meyer and Kenneth Jackson in *Four Old Irish Songs of Summer and Winter and Studies in Early Celtic Nature Poetry* respectively. Note the Latin used in the opening line, you will often find Latin mixed with Old Irish in older Irish writings.

Scél Lemm Dúib	<i>I Have News for You</i>	
Ut dixit Find hu Baisene	<i>As Fionn descendant of Baisene said</i>	
Scél lemm dúib	<i>I have news for you</i>	
Dordaid dam,	<i>The stag bells,</i>	
Snigid gaim,	<i>Winter snows,</i>	
Ro-fáith sam,	<i>Summer has gone,</i>	
Gáeth ard úar,	<i>Wind high and cold</i>	
Ísel grían,	<i>The sun low,</i>	
Gair a rith,	<i>Short its course,</i>	
Ruirthech rían,	<i>The sea running high,</i>	
Ro-rúad rath,	<i>Deep red the bracken,</i>	
Ro-cleth cruth,	<i>Its shape lost,</i>	
Ro-gab gnáth	<i>The wild goose has</i>	
Guigrann guth,	<i>Raised its accustomed cry,</i>	
Ro-gab úacht	<i>Cold has seized</i>	
Etti én	<i>The birds' wings</i>	
Aigre re	<i>Season of ice</i>	
É mo scél.	<i>This is my news</i>	
Foclóir		
Old Irish	Modern Irish	English
Scél	scéal	story
Lem	liom	with (grammatical form of le)
Dúib	daoibh	you plural (y'all)
Dordaid	dord	bellowing
Snigid	sní	lows
Gaim	gheimhridh	winter
Sam	samhradh	summer
Gáeth	gaoth	wind
Árd	ard	high
Úar	fuar	cold
Ísel	íseal	low
Gair	gairid	short
Rían	aigéan	ocean
Raith	raithneach	bracken
Giugrann	gé fhiáin	wild goose
Én	éan	birds
Aigre	leac oighear	ice
As you can see, Irish, like all languages, has changed over time. Modern dictionaries are not the best source when attempting to translate some of these older works. I enjoy coming across these older poems, but leave the translations to those who have studied old Irish.		
Good or bad, we like to talk about the weather. It can be an easy conversation starter with someone we don't know, and sometimes the only thing we say!		
Aimsir Foclóir		
An aimsir (<i>un am-sheer</i>)		the weather
An lá (<i>un law</i>)		the day
An oíche (<i>un ee-ha</i>)		the night
An mahaidin (<i>un woh-jin</i>)		the morning
Inniu (<i>inn-yoo</i>)		today
Anocht (<i>uh-nahkt</i>)		tonight
Scamall (<i>skoh-mahl</i>)		cloud
Scamallach (<i>skoh-mahl-ach</i>)		cloudy
Baisteach (<i>bosh-tahk</i>)		rain
Gaofar (<i>gwee-fer</i>)		windy
Fliuch (<i>fluyhk</i>)		wet
Ceo (<i>kyo</i>)		fog/mist
Ceomhar (<i>kyo-wer</i>)		foggy/misty
Sioc (<i>shuk</i>)		frost
Seaca (<i>shah-ka</i>)		frosty
Sneachta (<i>shnok-ta</i>)		snow

Continued on page 9

Fliuch sneachta (<i>fluyhk shnok-ta</i>)	sleet descriptive term, lit. wet snow
Stoirm (<i>stor-im</i>)	storm
Gealach (<i>gahl-ach</i>)	moon
Oíche ghealaí (<i>ee-ha yell-ee</i>)	moonlit night

We've talked before about basic Irish sentence structure, verb, noun or pronoun, followed by an adjective. The combinations below will aid us in constructing new sentences in present, past and future tense.

Tá sé (<i>taw shay</i>) it is	Bhí sé (<i>vee shay</i>) it was
Níl sé (<i>neel shay</i>) it is not	Ní raibh sé (<i>nee rev shay</i>) it was not
An bhfuil sé (<i>un will shay</i>) is it?	An raibh sé (<i>un rev shay</i>) was it?
Nach bhfuil sé (<i>nock will shay</i>) isn't it	Nach raibh sé (<i>nock rev shay</i>) wasn't it?
Beidh sé (<i>bay shay</i>)	it will be
Ní bheidh sé (<i>nee vay shay</i>)	it won't be
An mbeidh sé (<i>un may shay</i>)	will it be?
Nach mbeidh sé (<i>nock may shay</i>)	won't it be

We can ask about the weather using the three regional dialects we've learned to ask how someone is by changing the pronoun to whichever noun we wish to inquire about.

Conas atá an aimsir? (<i>kun-uss ah-taw un am-sheer</i>)	How is the weather?
Cád é mar atá an láw? (<i>kahj ay mar ah-taw un law</i>)	How is the day?
Cén chaoi a bhfuil an oíche? (<i>kay hee will un ee-ha</i>)	How is the night?

Examples

Tá se gaofar. (<i>taw shay gwee-fer</i>)	It is windy.
Tá sé ag cur sneachta. (<i>taw shay eg kur shnok-ta</i>)	It is snowing.
Tá sé ag cur báistí. (<i>taw shay eg kur bawsh-tee</i>)	It is raining.
Tá sé ag stealladh báistí. (<i>taw shay eg shtell-ah bawsh-tee</i>)	It is pouring rain.
Tá sé ag cur sceana gréasaí. (<i>taw shay eg kur shkawna grey-see</i>)	It's raining cobbler's knives.


It's raining cobbler's knives.
Thit an tóin as an spéir! (*hit un tone as an speer*) The arse fell out of the sky! (a heavy rain indeed)
Cén aimsir a bheidh í ndán duinn? (*ken am-sheer a vayd ee nahn doo-in*) What is the weather forecast?
Tá sé gealta fuar anocht. (*taw shay gell-ta foo-er ah-nocht*) It is promised to be cold tonight.
Tá sé go hálainn anois. (*taw shay guh hawl-inn ah-nesh*) It's beautiful now.

Nollaig Shona Daoibh
Nollaig shona duit/ daoibh (*null-ug hoe-na gwit/yeev*) Merry Christmas to you/you all
Beannachtaí an tSeasúir. (*bahn-uhk-tee un tay-soor*) Seasons Greetings
Nollaig faoi shean agus faoi mhaise duit/daoibh (*null-ug fivee hayn ah-gus fivee voosh-ah gwit/yeev*) Christmas happiness and goodness to you/you all.
Athbhliain faoi mhaise duit. (*ah-vleen fivee voosh-ah gwit*) Happy New Year to you.
A chara (*ah kar-ah*) my friend, or a chairde (*ah kar-juh*) my friends can be substituted for duit or daoibh when addressing those close to you.
These last few phrases can be used if you're entertaining at your home this holiday season.
Cead Míle fáilte (*kayd mee-la fawl-cha*) One hundred thousand welcomes
Go mbeirimid beo ar an am seo arís. (*guh mare-ih-midj be-yo ar un am sho ah-reesh*) May we live to see this time of year again.
Slán agus beannacht (*slawn ah-gus bahn-ocht*) Goodbye and bless you.
Slán abhaile (*slawn ah-wahl-ya*) Safe home •

Bob Carney is a student of Irish language and history and teaches the Speak Irish Cleveland class held every Tuesday at PJ McIntyre's. He is also active in the Irish wolfhound and Irish dogs organizations in and around Cleveland. He can be reached at carneyspeakirish@gmail.com

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MEGAN LARDIE



kids craic

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

In most cultures, the Twelve Days of Christmas are celebrated from Christmas Day, December 25th, to January 6th, the Feast of the Epiphany, (the day the three kings arrived with gifts for Jesus). We have all heard the Christmas carol, The Twelve Days of Christmas, but do you know what all the verses mean? What do a bunch of hens, geese, maids a milking, and pipers piping have to do with Christmas?

There are different theories on how the song started and what it means. The song was first published in England in 1780. Some believe that the song began as a memory game sung by British children. The object of the game was to remember all the previous verses and then add the new verse. Players unable to remember the verses had to pay a “forfeit” which was usually a piece of candy or a kiss.

Another theory is that this was a song sung by Catholics during a time when being Catholic was a crime, especially in countries like Ireland and England. It is believed that the song has hidden comparisons to teachings of the Catholic church.

Each gift is said to represent a part of the Bible. The “true love” in the song is not an earthly person but is meant to be Jesus. The “me” in the song is meant to be the baptized followers of the church.

This was a way for Catholics to learn about their faith without letting others know since they could not practice in the open. This has never been proven to be true because the verses do not contain any one thing that refers only to Catholic teachings. Either way, it is actually really fascinating!

What is your favorite Christmas song? Do some research on



the meaning of the song. You might have the most intriguing conversation at Christmas dinner with family and friends. **I wish you all a Happy Christmas!**

Here are the verses of the song, with what is believed they represent:

A Partridge in a Pear Tree = Jesus
Two Turtle Doves = The Old and New Testaments

Three French Horns = Faith, Hope, and Charity

Four Calling Birds = The gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John

Five Golden Rings = First Five Books of the Old Testament

Six Geese-a-Laying = Six days of creation before God's Day of rest

Seven Swans a Swimming = Seven gifts of the Holy Spirit

Eight Maids-a-Milking = Eight Beatitudes

Nine Ladies Dancing = Nine fruits of the Holy Spirit

Ten Lords-a-Leaping = Ten Commandments

Eleven Pipers Piping = Eleven faithful disciples

Twelve Drummers Drumming = Twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed •

• • • • Kids in the Kitchen • • • •

• Crock Pot Candy

- This is an easy treat to add to any holiday cookie plate or to give to family, friends, or teachers as a sweet homemade gift!

• Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter, diced
- 16 oz. almond bark
- 12 oz. bag semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 10 oz. dark chocolate chips
- 10 oz. peanut butter chips
- 3 c. salted, roasted peanuts
- 1 1/2 c. lightly crushed, ridged potato chips
- 1 1/2 c. crushed pretzel twists or skinny sticks
- 1 c. red and green coated candies, such as M&Ms, optional
- 1/4 c. sprinkles, optional

• Directions:

- Place the butter in the base of the slow cooker.
- Chop the almond bark into pieces about the size of chocolate chips.
- Add the almond bark, semi-sweet, dark, and peanut butter chips. Cover with a lid and cook on high for 30 minutes.
- Remove the lid and stir to combine. Reduce heat to low and cook for another 10 to 20 minutes, stirring every 10



minutes, until all the chips are melted. Reduce the slow cooker temperature to hold warm. Gently stir in the peanuts, potato chips, and pretzels. Line 3 sheet trays with parchment paper. Using a spoon, drop mounded scoops (about 1 1/2 tablespoons each) onto the sheet trays, about 1-inch apart from each (the candies will spread and settle a little once dropped). Gently press 3 to 5 coated candies (M&M's) into the top of each piece of candy and sprinkle with sprinkles, if desired. Let rest for 30 to 45 minutes at room temperature, until firm. Store in a single layer, between sheets of parchment paper, in the refrigerator, for up to 1 week.

ḡab in ḡaelic

Happy Christmas to you!

Nollaig Shona duit (pron: nullig hunna dwit)

Megan is a Reading Intervention Educator for the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. She holds a BA from Hiram College and a BA+ from Ashland University. She resides in Avon Lake with her husband, Joe, and their five children. She may be reached at meganlardie126@outlook.com.

MILESTONE & SWEET SNAPS



Ireland's Ambassador to the U.S. H.E. Geraldine Byrne Nason, 4th from right, seated next to Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians National President and Irish Madigan Muses Columnist Marilyn Madigan, 4th from left. at the President's Testimonial Dinner, held at the West Side Irish American Club.

Marilyn and H.E. Byrne Nason are surrounded by local and national Hibernian leaders from across the U.S. Kathleen Savage, next to Marilyn, 3rd from left, was the inaugural recipient of the Constance Markievicz Award.



Congratulations to Leta Frank, awarded the Pat Taylor, Sr. Founder's Award for her tremendous contributions to the Akron Hurling Club. Presented by Club President Patrick Taylor, Jr.



Photo Courtesy of Emily Barno

Representatives from the Midwest Division of the Gaelic Athletic Association are well-represented at the U. S. National Annual General Meeting

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Christmas Card Poems

Beginning in 1976, when Seamus Heaney, his wife Marie, and their three children, Michael, Catherine, and Christopher, moved away from dangerous Belfast to County Wicklow in the Republic, the Nobel Prize winning poet began to include poems in his Christmas cards. He had the cards privately printed in limited batches by Peter Fallon, with a simple design on the front and the poem within. Other poets, notably Robert Frost, also sent out new poems in their Christmas cards, and they are reproduced in a lovely collection called *Light Unlocked: Christmas Card Poems*, ed. Kevin Crossley-Holland and Lawrence Sail.

Not all of Seamus Heaney's card-poems are Christmas-themed; some are early versions of works that he revised that became among his most famous, such as the *Tollund Man*. Many appeared in later collections, lightly changed, or substantially revised. In all there are 23 Christmas Card poems.

The first, "Catherine's Poem," from 1976, is a simple quatrain of his three-year-old daughter's questions: "Aren't poems like your toys, Daddy?"

Catherine said.
"And didn't you and Mammy make me

And God made the thread?"
(*Island of the Children: An Anthology of New Poems*
Ed. Angela Ruth (London, Orchard Books, 1987)

We can imagine that Heaney, charmed, included it in his holiday greetings to close family and friends, with little thought of starting a Christmas tradition. Nevertheless, he continued, and these poems provide glimpses of Heaney's style and interests, especially and his great

concern for the "*The Spirit Level*," as he called a later collection.

Christmas Poems

Of the poems that are specifically about Christmas, the one I find most moving is called "*The Manger*." Sent in 1998, The Manger is double voiced, a Heaney characteristic in poems where he describes a scene from his past with the specificity of that moment and his reaction at that time, but he then overlays or shifts the scene from the past moment to present recollection.

Memory poems such as The Manger depict a scene from the past that is subtly infused with mature insight. The mastery of such poems is that the insight does not disrupt the immediacy of the recall, even as it signals the later interpretation.

In The Manger, the child-narrator is looking at the church's Christmas creche, and he is disappointed. He is put off by the "gloss and chill" of the plaster Infant Jesus.

"He wasn't right at all," the innocent child thinks about the artificial Christ. He regards the whole scene from his own farm knowledge, satisfied that the solid shepherds, stiff-lugged donkeys (a good word in Anglo-Irish to mean having carried), and Joseph and Mary are "truly placed."

The cow is altogether wrong: badly- scaled and plaster-fake. But the biggest problem is there is "no manger to be seen." No "arm-filled, fodder-billowing manger-mouth." That's the hard line; the crux of his confusion. Heaney warned us already that the Christ-child was "seed-nailed," an anticipation of the sacrifice to come, crucifixion and nativity inextricably joined (like the great painting by Francisco de Zurbaran in CMA of the young Christ weaving a crown of thorns while his mother sorrowfully watches).

The image is one example of the double-consciousness of the poem, since the child would think the black dot on the plaster Christ child's hand was like a seed, and the adult would know that the seed was to become the flesh-impaled nails of the Crucifixion. But the manger is absent, and no one has brought arms-full of hay or food or comfort.

At the communion rail—invoking the Catholic trope of the body as a

vessel or a manger and communion as the food or fodder -- the child kneels and learns, "almost," not to admit the "let-down." But it is there, nagging, and unspecified. It might be many things, especially to the more-knowing adult who has written the remembrance: how far the statues, like all art and words, are from sublimity; how the miraculous no longer inspires awe; how without awe, there is no uplift (let-down's opposite); how generosity fails. Transformation is always Heaney's poetic quest, though this poem allows for a substantiation of faith and doubt.

Few of us could produce such a small masterpiece to slip inside a homemade card. But we might still follow the practice, if only to delight a friend or relative. The simplest approach is to reimagine a scene from the past that illustrates something lasting you have been given which you remember with gratitude. You'll find that a word or image yields easily to the next and forms meaning, sometimes surprising even the writer. Seamus Heaney always signed his card *a gra – with love*. A gift of love. Here is my modest attempt.

Reader

For my mother, Regina Colleran,
A gra

*Billy sat in the stroller,
Jim and I each held a handle,
While our mother pushed from behind,
Urging us on: Keep walking.
Keep walking.*

*We were six, four, and two,
Off to the library, past the little store
that sold penny candy,
watched over by a
Hundred-year-old woman,
surely a witch,*

*We thought, but our mother said no.
On past the firehouse,
the post office, the shoe repair,
an endless trek, till we arrived,
and were let loose*

*Among the shelves of picture books.
Our mother gave back her great
stack
of thick novels and mysteries
to choose another three or four
to last the week.*

*She had to forgo sleep to read
but still she roused us early
and made the eggs and sent us off
to learn less than what she had
already taught us.*

The first paragraphs of this article are indebted to Ashby Bland Crowder's "Christmas Greetings from Seamus Heaney: in *New Hibernia Review*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (AUTUMN 2017), pp. 34-58. The 23 Christmas poems are cited in Rand Brandes and Michael J. Durkan, *Seamus Heaney: A Bibliography, 1959-2003* (London: Faber, 2009). They are: "Catherine's Poem" (1976); "Christmas Eve" (1978);

"Changes" (1980); "Holly" (1981); "Sweeney and the Saint" (1982); "A Hazel Stick for Catherine Ann" (1983); "Dangerous Pavements" (1987); "A Rich Hour" (1988); "The Settle Bed" (1989); "Field of Vision" (1990); "A Transgression" (1991); "Tollund" (1994); "The dotted line" (1995); "Jesus and the Sparrows" (1996); "Would They Had Stayed" (1997); "The Manger" (1998); "A Light Appeared" (1999); "At the

Hillhead" (2000); "I Sing of a Maiden" (2003); "Miracle" (2006); "Wind Fierce Tonight" (2007); "Derry I Cherish" (2008) and "Look Far" (2009.) •

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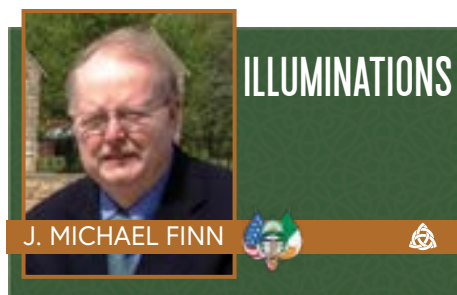
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Glasnevin Cemetery

Glasnevin Cemetery is a large cemetery in Glasnevin, Dublin, which opened in 1832. It is the largest cemetery in Ireland.

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Originally covering nine acres of ground, the area of the cemetery now has grown to 124 acres. It holds approximately 1.5 million graves, including the graves of many notable figures from Irish history.

Prior to the establishment of Glasnevin Cemetery, Irish Catholics had no cemeteries of their own in which to bury their dead and, as the repressive Penal Laws of the eighteenth century placed heavy restrictions on the public performance of Catholic services, it had become normal practice for Catholics to conduct a limited version of their own funeral services in Protestant churchyards or graveyards.

This situation continued until an incident at a funeral held at St. Kevin's Churchyard, in Dublin, in 1823 provoked public outcry. A Protestant sexton (a person employed as caretaker of a church and its graveyard) severely reprimanded a Catholic priest for performing a limited version of a

funeral Mass.

The outcry prompted Daniel O'Connell, champion of Catholic rights, to launch a campaign and prepare a legal opinion proving that there was actually no law passed forbidding praying for a dead Catholic in a graveyard. O'Connell pushed for the opening of a burial ground in which both Irish Catholics and Protestants could give their dead a dignified burial.

In 1824, the Act of Easement of Burial Bill was passed. This led

to the establishment of Glasnevin Cemetery. A site was initially purchased at Goldenbridge, Dublin, but proved too small, so a nine-acre site was secured at Glasnevin.

The cemetery was consecrated in September 1831 by Monsignor William Yore (1781-1864). It was opened to the public for the first time on February 21, 1832. The first burial was that of eleven-year-old Michael Carey of Dublin, who had died of tuberculosis.

The following are the burials of only a few of the hundreds of Irish Historical figures who lay buried at Glasnevin:

Daniel O'Connell

Daniel O'Connell was hailed in his time as *The Liberator*. He was the acknowledged political leader of Ireland's Roman Catholic majority in the first half of the 19th century. He was able to secure Catholic emancipation in 1829.

Following his death in Genoa,

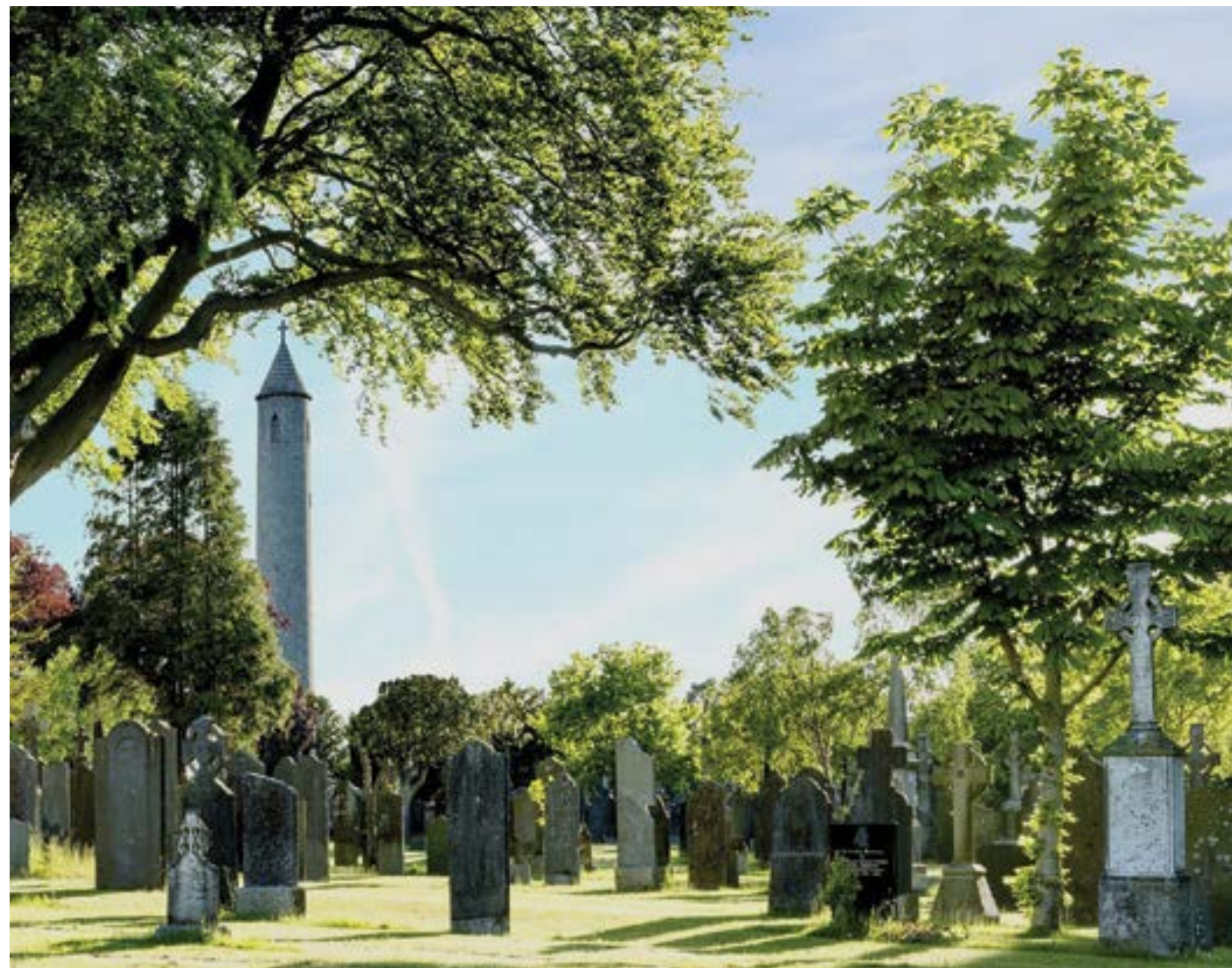
Italy in 1847, the man responsible for establishing the cemetery was buried in the O'Connell Circle in Glasnevin Cemetery. According to some reports, 50,000 people attended his funeral on August 6, 1847.

A campaign was begun to erect a more fitting memorial to O'Connell, and in 1855, the O'Connell Round Tower at Glasnevin was completed. Designed by Dublin architect Patrick Byrne, the tower measures an impressive 180 feet and is the tallest round tower in Ireland. Later, in 1869, Daniel O'Connell's remains were reinterred in an ornate crypt at the base of the tower.

Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa

One of the largest funerals ever witnessed at Glasnevin was that of former Fenian Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa. He died in exile in America and his body was transported back to Ireland to be buried at Glasnevin, August 1, 1915.

Continued on page 15



Patrick Pearse spoke at the funeral and uttered the famous quote, speaking of the English "*They have left us our Fenian dead, Ireland unfree shall never be at peace.*" The rallying cry was the opening verbal shots of the 1916 Easter Rising. On the day of the burial, twenty thousand marched behind the hearse from the Pro-Cathedral to Glasnevin with the streets lined by over 150,000 according to Irish Independent and the Freeman's Journal.

Michael Collins

On August 22, 1922, Michael Collins's was assassinated by Anti-Treaty forces near Béal na Bláth outside Macroom, County Cork. At the time of his death, Collins was serving as Chairman of the Provisional Government (Free State) and Minister of Finance. In the midst of a bloody Civil War, the Free State forces transported Collins's body via ship from Cork to Dublin, where his body lay in state for three days at City Hall.

The funeral Mass was celebrated on August 28, 1922, by the Archbishop of Dublin, Rev. Edward Joseph Byrne, along with 300 priests at St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral.

A gun carriage drawn by six black horses carried the coffin and fourteen further cars were required for the flowers.

The cortege itself was of immense proportions and included many troops of Irish soldiers. It extended between five and six miles and took over four hours to pass any one point on the route.

At Glasnevin, three volleys were fired by 50 men of the Dublin Guards and 10 buglers sounded the Last Post. A half a million people paid their respects to the fallen leader, followed by a graveside oration delivered by General Richard Mulcahy. Today, Michael Collins grave is the most visited grave in Glasnevin, it is set apart from the others, close to the Glasnevin Museum building.

Countess Constance de Markievicz

One of the largest funerals for a woman took place on July 15, 1927, when Countess de Markievicz was buried. The Countess (known as "Madame" to Dublin's poor) was a political activist and was the first woman elected to the British Parliament (1918), though she

refused to take her seat. She was also the only woman to serve in the first Dáil Éireann, in which she acted as Minister of Labor (1919-22).

Her family preferred a private, family funeral, but this was not to be. In death Constance Markievicz was even more openly appreciated and acclaimed than in life. Three hundred thousand people attended the funeral to pay tribute to "the friend of the toiler, the lover of the poor" the words of Éamon de Valera, who delivered the funeral oration.

Éamon de Valera

One of the survivors of the Easter Rising and a man at the heart of Irish history for over a quarter of a century, Éamon De Valera died aged 92 years on August 29, 1975. He led the anti-treaty forces during the Civil War and in its aftermath found a new party, Fianna Fáil.

He led the Government until 1959, when he became President of Ireland, serving two terms. Over the first weekend of September, his casket lay in State at St Patrick's Hall in Dublin Castle, and according to the Irish

Examiner, more than 100,000 filed through the great hall to pay their respects. More than 100,000 lined the streets of Dublin as the cortege travelled passing the GPO and onto Glasnevin for burial.

In addition to the above, Glasnevin is home to many Irish luminaries, these include the graves of Charles Stewart Parnell, Arthur Griffith, Maude Gonne, Kevin Barry, Roger Casement, Seán MacBride, James Larkin, and Brendan Behan. •


J. Michael Finn is the Ohio State Historian for the Ancient Order of Hibernians and Division Historian for the Patrick Pearse Division in Columbus, Ohio. He is past Chairman of the Catholic Record Society for the Diocese of Columbus, Ohio. He writes on Irish and Irish-American history; Ohio history and Ohio Catholic history. You may contact him at FCoolavin@aol.com.

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IRISH TRIVIA

1. The river port and county town of Carrick-on-Shannon is in what county?
2. American revolutionary war hero and “Father of the America,” John Barry is a native of what county?
3. You are enjoying the sites of the town of Ballbrien, what county are you in?
4. Under English rule, this county was known as Kings County. What county is this?
5. Who was the oldest signatory of the Proclamation of the Republic in 1916?
6. Who is the author of the historical novel of the 1798 rebellion titled, “The Year of the French”?
7. Who is the author of the song about his hometown of Derry titled, “The Town I Loved so Well”?
8. Who is the artist of the painting, “The Man from Aranmore”?
9. “H-A-R-R-I-G-A-N, a song about a proud Irishman in America, was written by whom?
10. What Irish leader signed the Treaty of Limerick in 1691?

1. Co. Leitrim
2. Wexford
3. Dublin
4. Co. Offaly
5. Thomas Ashe
6. Thomas Flanagan
7. Phil Coulter
8. Jack B. Yeats
9. George M. Cohen
10. Patrick Sarsfield

HEALTH MATTERS

Signs of Seasonal Affective Disorder and What to Do About It

By Dr. Balaji Saravanan



Winter brings warm blankets, hot drinks, and the holiday season. However, it also brings darker days. During this time, it's not unusual to feel

signs of depression or anxiety. This type of depression is called Seasonal Affective Disorder.

Seasonal affective disorder often happens to people in the winter because of the loss of sunlight common in the winter months. The lack of sunlight disrupts your biological clock, also known as your body's circadian rhythm, which results in drops of serotonin and melatonin levels. The drop in melatonin leads to low energy levels, while the drop in serotonin can lead to more feelings of sadness.

Mental illness and depression are topics that are often stigmatized and not the easiest topics to discuss. However, treating depression and seasonal affective disorders appropriately are your best way at keeping your high quality of

life – especially during the winter months.

Symptoms of seasonal affective disorder may include:

- Fatigue or low energy
- Oversleeping or other changes in sleep
- Appetite changes
- Weight gain
- Loss of interest in hobbies or activities
- Feeling of hopelessness or worthlessness

Seasonal affective disorder is more likely to affect women than men and shows up more frequently in younger adults than older adults. However, seasonal depression can affect anyone. For example, those working long hours in a place with very few windows are also more prone to this disorder.

Knowing the most effective ways in treating seasonal affective disorder can make all the difference in having a better quality of life.

Medical treatments may include light therapy, medication, or psychotherapy. Light therapy can elevate your mood, using bright lights to imitate the sun.

People who use light therapy typically sit about two feet away from a lightbox after they wake up for approximately 30 minutes. Talk to your doctor to make sure you're buying the correct light for your needs.

Antidepressant medication can help regulate the chemical imbalances that occur during the winter months. It is quite common for people with seasonal depression to stop taking their medications once the weather warms up. Antidepressant medications must be proscribed by a licensed physician.

Psychotherapy or Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is normally what we think of when someone says, “talk therapy.” CBT interventions decrease seasonal depression reoccurrence rates by

helping to change negative thought and behavioral patterns.

Lifestyle changes can make all the difference in boosting your mood. Many people tend to have mood shifts in the winter due to less outside activities.

Although more common in the summer months, walks outside are a great way to boost your mood. Going outside during the daylight is particularly useful to take advantage of the sunlight.

The exercise can boost your mood by producing endorphins that you can carry throughout your day.

Many people with seasonal depression oversleep. Keeping a consistent sleep schedule during the winter months is an effective way to combat the winter blues.

Lastly, a balanced diet can be a great way to ensure you're getting essential vitamins to keep energy levels high. Saying no to carbohydrate cravings, common among individuals with seasonal depression, may be beneficial.

If your seasonal depression symptoms increase substantially, be sure to reach out to a primary care provider for proper treatment. Your mental health influences your physical health and is just as important. •

Balaji Saravanan, MD, MRCPsych(England), FAPA is a Board Certified Psychiatrist and Medical Director of Behavioral Health at Mercy Health – Lorain. His previous experiences include Cleveland Clinic Physician, Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine, and Case Western Reserve University. His special interest includes treatment resistant mood disorders, Neuromodulation including ECT and Psychopharmacology.

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COLUMBUS IRISH

ANDREW SHUMAN

King of the Birds

“Peace on earth... good will to men (and birds)!”

The Christmas season is full of traditions from both Celtic and Christian custom. The holly and ivy represent the green of nature and it is brought inside to make homes festive. The points of the leaves were also thought to keep out or slow down spirits who might harm the family.

Families sought to atone for the Bethlehem innkeepers by lighting a candle to welcome weary travelers. Loaves of bread and milk were left out to feed them.

One of the most interesting traditions surrounds the Feast of Stephen, the first Christian martyr who was stoned to death for his teachings. Irish tradition, especially in the west of Ireland, call it *Wren Day*. Groups of young boys dressed in costumes or straw masks travel about on the day after Christmas singing for food or money.

Anyone who has seen the



Yankee Celtic Consort's Christmas performance at Byrne's Pub has probably heard the song describing this celebration. I never really caught all the words, but the rhythmic beat of the bodhran leads you along as if you were part of the procession:

The wren, the wren, the king of all birds,

On St. Stephen's Day was caught in the furze,

Up with the kettle and down with the pan

Give us a penny to bury the “wran.”

The tradition was that St. Stephen had been hiding from his persecutors when a wren gave away his hiding place. The mob then chased him down with stones and killed him, just as the boys do with the wren on St. Stephen's morning. The dead bird is tied to a pole and carried along with their procession as they go house to house. The money they collect was often used

later for a party for the village.

In recent years, the money and food collected was given to those in need. This hunt and sacrifice motif was also common in pagan tradition, as the wren was a symbol of wisdom and sacrifices of such sacred symbols would be made at year's end.

As noted above, the wren was also called the king of all birds.

This legend comes from a contest among the birds to see who was the greatest. As the eagle soared higher and higher, the wren followed under its wing. When the eagle could go no higher, the wren came out from under the eagle and flew several more feet above the eagle. When he returned to the ground, the wren boasted of his success and was honored as the king of all birds.

As we enter the holidays, let us remember the loved ones who have

passed away and those who are less fortunate. These seem to be two universal Irish traditions that know no season and know no limit. Let us also light a candle and say a prayer that 2024 will be a year of peace and blessings.

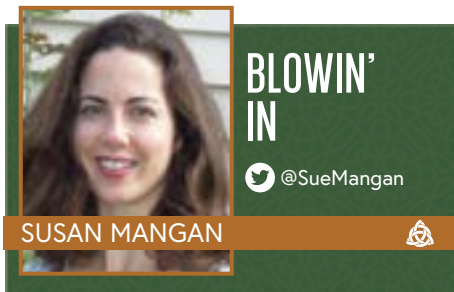
I'll see you down at the pub, I suppose. •

Andrew is a transplant to Columbus after graduating from The Ohio State University with a Major in History and Minor in Political Science and Folklore. He is a past president of the Shamrock Club and a lover of a good story and a pint. You can contact him at drushu@aol.com.

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A Tale for Christmas

As the sun dipped behind the rolling hills of McCracken's fields, Petey and Paddy Corrigan walked slowly home. Night fell early in late November, but the twins were in no hurry as they discussed the events of the day at school and filled their lungs with the scent of Scots pine and overly ripe apples.

"Petey, I can't imagine a world without the sweet scent of apples and cinnamon," mused Paddy. "Brother, no truer words were

spoken. I can hardly wait to taste Mammy's mince tarts at this year's Christmas pageant. Sure, hasn't she been perfectin' her own rectitude since last October when she won a first for her Barmbrack at the Rock Strand Samhain Fête?"

Now, Petey was known throughout the village for the clarity of his singing voice. Wasn't he God's own angel in the form of a mischievous, freckled young lad? Paddy was his quick-witted, equally mischievous brother. The more scholarly of the two, Paddy never missed the chance to correct his twin.

"Petey, don't ye mean *recipe*? It's a good thing ye have the whole of the village fooled with yer singin'. Otherwise, they'd likely think ye had sponge cake for a brain."

"Ah Paddy, tease all ye like, but doesn't one of Mammy's blackberry jam fairy cakes sound delicious right about now?"

The twin's willow baskets were filled with apples fresh from Mister McCracken's orchard. McCracken was renowned for his horticultural



the Christmas star?"

"Ach Petey, ye are as bad as that terrier fella Tramp in that Disney fil'm they showed at the pictures in town last year. Sure, don't ye remember it? *Lady and the Tramp*, it was. "Aye, but your ears stick out a bit more than that furry fella Tramp's," laughed Paddy.

"And you, Paddy, have a better chance of stealin' a kiss from Missus Honor's new spaniel Bella than gettin' a peck on the cheek from the delightful Rosie McCracken. "Sure, it's a good thing ye care more for McCracken's holly than Rosie," teased Petey.

Petey knew in his heart of hearts that his dear brother Paddy enjoyed his time preparing for the annual spelling bee with his class partner Rosie McCracken, as much as he himself enjoyed the company of Bridie McCracken during choir practice. Much like the Corrigan twins, the McCracken twins were well known for their singing and academics. The villagers of Rock Strand all had a talent to share and were generous with their gifts, especially when Christmastide dawned.

Each year, Mrs. Honor Jack, St. Patrick School's most beloved teacher, held a Christmas pageant. The children of St. Patrick's were abuzz with excitement as they would be performing a play in one act based upon the story of St. Francis and the Christmas Donkey.

As usual, Petey was cast as a singing Angel Gabriel and Paddy as St. Francis. The lovely sisters McCracken were cast as the narrator and the singing donkey. "Children, children, eyes on me! Bridie, let us begin with verse one of *Away in a Manger*."

"A- hee, a-haw," bellowed Bridie. "Bridie, you are to sing the part of the donkey, not act like a donkey. Please try again," gently scolded Mrs. Honor Jack.

With tears in her eyes Bridie began again, "A-hee, a-haw." "Missus Honor, with all respect, I think Bridie may have a bout of laryngyropous," explained a very earnest Petey.

"I should know Missus. I do seem to get it every Christmas. This

Continued on page 19

year's my lucky year, but not so for Bridie. Maybe all's she needs is some of her Mammy's honey. That did the trick for me at last year's pageant."

Paddy rolled his eyes at Petey and muttered beneath his breath, "Laryngitis, you donkey." Laryngitis or *laringyropous* aside, it did appear as though Mrs. Honor Jack was going to need yet another Rock Strand Christmas miracle.

Late November quickly passed into December and Bridie's voice had still not fully returned. Much like the donkey in the play, all poor Bridie could do was *hee* and *haw*.

One moonlit night after supper, Petey thought to ask his mother, "Mammy, d' ye think Paddy and I could deliver one of your flaky mince tarts to Bridie McCracken. Sure, all the vitamins in that sweet will fill her throat with song."

"Petey, you are a dear dote! Won't that make Bridie feel grand? I'll pack up a hamper filled with tarts. You and Paddy run along to the McCracken's but be sure not to let our spaniel Blarney out the door. He has been noseying around the church, near Missus Honor's gate, when he and Da go walkin'.

"I don't want Blarney meetin' up with Missus Honor's new spaniel Bella. Poor Honor's got enough worries with the pageant so near."

Like two playful young goats, Petey and Paddy rushed to the door with the basket. Sure, didn't they almost spill the tarts on the flagstone floor! With all the laughter, the twins didn't realize that Blarney had slipped out, running high tail toward the church at the top of the town.

"Paddy, Blarney escaped! Grab the basket and wait at the gate, so Mammy doesn't know that Blarney is gone. We'll deliver the tarts after I collect that silly spaniel," cried Petey.

Petey ran down the rocky road toward the town and stopped abruptly at the church. There beneath the moonlight, stood an alabaster donkey.

"Was that donkey there after pageant practice today?" whispered Petey to no one but himself.

Petey blanched as white as yon donkey. The twins had learned about the appearance of our Lady

at Knock. Could this be yet another miracle? Could the vision of St. Francis' Christmas Donkey be the next miracle of Rock Strand?

Frightened by the sight of the life-sized donkey, Blarney crept out of a cedar shrub and leaned against Petey's leg.

Blue eyes wide, Petey listened to what could only be the donkey singing:

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

"Sure, if our Lord hasn't given us a sign! Francis' singing Christmas Donkey is actually here in Rock Strand. Won't Bridie be delighted to know that a miracle is on the wings of Christmastide!"

With a jig in his step, Petey and Blarney fled back to the road above town and did not see Father Colm walking out of the shed with a little old man wearing dusty coveralls, and a great smile beneath his silver mustache.

"Ahh Father, I am just about finished sculpting the ox and lamb to accompany the Holy Family for your nativity scene. Won't the children be surprised when they arrive for their pageant?" laughed Arcangelo, a cousin of Father Colm's sister-in-law and an opera singing sculptor who was almost as famous for his art as McCracken was for his apples.

"Saints above Ang, what is that thundering racket!" roared Father Colm.

Father Colm and Arcangelo laughed as they saw two sets of twins and a basket-toting spaniel come to a skidding stop in front of the alabaster donkey.

"Father, Father! Surely, you must have heard the donkey sing this holy night? Tis' another Rock Strand miracle!" cried Petey.

"Children, children," laughed Father Colm. "This is not a singing donkey. It is simply a donkey for the nativity. This is my dear friend and distant relation Mr. Arcangelo Corelli. He sculpted the donkey and will surprise the congregation as the singer *behind* the donkey! As poor Bridie is without her proper singing voice, Mrs. Honor Jack and I thought it best that Bridie play the non-speaking, but most divine role of Mary."

"Ah Petey," Paddy teased, "You might be a singing angel, but you can sometimes act like such a

donkey!"

With that, Bridie laughed a joyful hee-haw and kissed Petey on his pink freckled cheek.

"Francis had finished his story. It was evening now. Snow had begun to fall. He took the donkey's head tenderly in his hands, and together they walked out of the woods."

(An excerpt from Saint Francis and the Christmas Donkey by Robert Byrd) •

Susan holds a Master's Degree in English from John Carroll University and a Master's Degree in Education from Baldwin-Wallace University. She may be contacted at suemangan@yahoo.com.

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The Winter Solstice

Before Christianity came to dominate Ireland's religious practices and culture, it's people believed in a number of gods and goddesses who had ties to the natural world and aspects of life the celts did not understand. The celtic people occupied much of Europe as well as Ireland and the British Isles.

These pagan gods and heroes were thought of as being extremely well versed. They were intellectuals, poets, prophets, seanchaithe or storytellers, warriors and healers. In other words, they were everything that the celtic people admired and aspired to be.

Religion and superstition played a key role in everyday life for the celts. A community would have a druid priest or priestess, who would have studied with an elder druid priest for twenty years before becoming masterly in the knowledge and discipline required. They were far more than spiritual

advisers, they influenced all aspects of life in the community and it's affairs.

Regrettably, we do not have a printed text to know all of the details of early celtic beliefs. The druids received their education orally and passed it down generation to generation. They did have a written language called Ogham, but only the inscriptions that were carved in stone survive.

We do know that the most sacred time of the year for the celts occurred at the solstice. The solstice happens twice a year, when the sun appears at it's highest or lowest point on the horizon.

In the Northern Hemisphere, the winter solstice or *grianstad an gheimhridh*, occurs between December 20th and December 23rd. Alban Artuan, sometimes referred to as Yule, was celebrated at the time of the winter solstice. Yule is a word more closely associated with the Old Norse word jöl, which was their winter solstice celebration.

The word lul, which means wheel, is an Anglo-Saxon word used to describe the solstice and is pronounced the same as yule. It's more likely that the ancient Irish celts would have used this name.

Druid priests would harvest mistletoe from the giant oak trees in the forest on the day of the solstice as they celebrated the rebirth of the sun. The oak tree was very sacred in celtic life and the parasitic plant that made it's home in the branches of the oak was revered as well.

Mistletoe was a healing plant,

believed to hold the soul of the mighty oak tree. With the help of the oak, mistletoe possessed magical powers to heal, give fertility to humans and their livestock, and it could protect them from evil spirits and witchcraft. This would assure the community good fortune in the coming year.

The Oak King and the Holly King

The celts believed that on the day of the solstice, the on-going struggle between the Oak King, the god of the waxing light, or the divine child, and the Holly King, the god of the waning light or the dark lord would be decided. Each year, on the day of the winter solstice, the Oak King would be the victor in the battle and would rule until he would be defeated by the Holly King at the summer solstice.

Newgrange

The winter solstice has been celebrated in Ireland for well over five thousand years. Sid in Broga Cairn at Newgrange in Co. Meath is the most well known of the ancient sacred celtic sites in Ireland. The alignment of light in the tomb that happens at sunrise during the winter solstice has been interpreted as a "ray of light by the sun god into the womb of Mother Earth" to bring about the creation of new life in the coming spring.

The winter months were a hard time for the celts. The weather was cold and wet, the growing season over and grain supplies would be diminishing. The celts would slaughter some of their livestock to save on the stores of grain and also provide for the feast that would be enjoyed by all as part of the solstice festivities. Wine and ale that had been fermenting all year would flow freely in celebration.

Bonfires would be lit during the solstice to warm the celebrants during the night as they waited for the dawn, drinking and sharing stories of the battles between the Oak King and the Holly King, along with other tales of their gods and heroes.

During the coldest, harshest time of the year, the celts celebrated the old and the new, death and rebirth. The festival of the winter solstice celebrating the rebirth of the sun worked well for the Christian

celebration of the birth of the Son of God, bringing light to the world and was adpoted by the growing Christian population as the time to celebrate the Mass of Christ.

Christianity

Christians even borrowed many of the traditions of the pagan celts and incorporated them into their Christmas festivities. The Christmas tree and it's decorations originated with the celts bringing an evergreen into the home and decorating it with ornaments representing the sun, moon and stars, gifts to the gods and goddesses.

Holly and mistletoe, once used to ward off evil spirits and provide shelter to the fairies, now decorates our homes and tables. Mistletoe was so sacred, that enemies would lay down their weapons and declare a truce if they encountered one another beneath it in the forest. Christians used it over a doorway to symbolize peace to all who entered. The Victorians took it a step further and introduced the practice of kissing under the mistletoe

Many of the Christian practices in Ireland have made it here as well. A candle in the window to light the way for Mary and Joseph on their way to Bethlehem. A fire in the fireplace Christmas morning comes from the celtic yule log tradition. Milk and cookies for Santa came from the Irish practice of providing food and drink for Joseph and Mary on their journey.

Gheimhridh Sona, Happy Winter agus Nollaig Shona, Merry Christmas •

Bob Carney is a student of Irish Language and history and teaches the Speak Irish Cleveland class held every Tuesday at PJ McIntyre's. He is also active in the Irish Wolfhound and Irish dogs organizations in and around Cleveland. Wife Mary, hounds Rian, Aisling and Draoi and terrier Doolin keep the house jumping. He can be reached at carneyspeakirish@gmail.com

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By Yvonne Corcoran Loftus, Curator, Michael Davitt Museum

The Michael Davitt Museum in Straide, County Mayo had the great privilege of accompanying the Pat Chambers Civil War Collection to Cleveland from October 25th to the 30th. Pat, a sheep farmer from Newport in West Mayo, discovered important papers relating to the Irish Civil War, carefully concealed in a jar in the gable wall of an old barn he was renovating. He immediately transported this extraordinary find to the Michael Davitt Museum, where staff with relevant expertise advised on organisational, archival and conservation issues.

Two letters from the collection originated in Cleveland and were posted to West Mayo. One was sent by Frank Gallagher to the local West Mayo newspaper, *the Mayo News*, a publication that remains very much in existence. This outlines the strength of feeling against the recently signed treaty among the Irish community in Cleveland at the time.

A second letter, written by John Chambers to Tom Mulchrone, Doontrusk, Newport, laments the death of Jim Moran on March 7th, 1923, by Pro-Treaty forces in Glenhest, Newport. It also reveals details of significant funding by the Cleveland Irish for the purposes of the Irish independence struggle in

Ireland.

The remainder of the papers revealed details of a visit by Sean Lemass to West Mayo. Lemass would become Taoiseach (Prime Minister) of Ireland in 1959. Receipts and payments pertaining to the Newport Sinn Fein Club and tensions between local IRA Units and GHQ are also documented and form part of the collection.

The papers were exhibited at three separate locations in the city - Great Lakes Brewery, West Side Irish American Club, and Irish American Club East Side. This allowed the attendees, many of whom were from the West Mayo area, to reconnect with the Irish States independence struggle through their ancestors who played such pivotal roles before emigrating to Cleveland.

The events at Great Lakes Brewery and Irish American Club East Side were enhanced by a PowerPoint presentation, which provided further relevant information and context. Large, knowledgeable, enthusiastic crowds engaged with the exhibits at each location.

A superb itinerary was organised by the Secretary of the Greater Cleveland Mayo Society, Colleen Corrigan-Day. No task was too big, and no detail was too small, in her efforts to ensure that our trip to Cleveland was an unforgettable and momentous experience.

The itinerary included meetings

with the Mayor of Cleveland, Justin Bibb, Cuyahoga County Executive Chris Ronayne, and Honorary Irish Consul General Mark Owens.

While positive engagement with a diverse range of cultural, business, and political leaders was enormously uplifting, what really shone through was the warmth, enthusiasm and justifiable pride displayed by a hard working yet gregarious Irish community. The kindness and the hospitality of the Cleveland Irish went way over and above what we could ever expect.

There is a long history of Irish settlement in Cleveland, many of whom eked out a living in the Irishtown Bend area of the city, an area that will be comprehensively developed in the coming years. It is to their great credit that the Irish community have achieved great success in their chosen fields of endeavour.

A particular connection exists between West Mayo, Achill Island in particular, and the city of Cleveland. The trip coincided with the 20th Anniversary of the Achill – Cleveland twinning relationship. The visiting contingent included members from the Michael Davitt Museum, The Pat Chambers Civil War Collection, Achill Development Company, Údarás Na Gaeltachta and Mayo County Council.

The Davitt Museum are grateful for support received from the

Heritage Council's Capacity Fund to assist with the collections archival and conservation needs. Mayo County Council also kindly supported costs involved relating to five-day visit to Cleveland.

A sincere thanks to Colleen Corrigan Day, Margaret Lynch, Gerry Quinn, John Myers, Sean Gallagher, John O'Brien, Sr., John O'Brien, Jr, Mayo Society of Greater Cleveland, Great Lakes Brewery, Westside Irish American Club and the Irish American Club East Side. •

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BY TERRENCE J. KENNEALLY

3 December 1925 – W.T. Cosgrove, James Craig, and Stanley Baldwin signed the Boundary Commission Agreement, to resolve the issue of the border on the island of Ireland.

6 December 1922 – The Irish Free state, independent of the United Kingdom was formerly established a year to the day after the Anglo-Irish treaty was signed.

7 December 1995 – Seamus Heaney accepts the Nobel prize for Literature at a ceremony in Stockholm.

10 December 1998 – John Hume and David Trimball, the respective leaders of the largest nationalist and unionist parties in Northern Ireland, received the Nobel Peace prize.

19 December 1973 – The Supreme Court of Ireland ruled that a ban on importing or selling contraceptives was unconstitutional.

22 December 1691 – The Flight of the Wild Geese, the mass exodus of around 12,000 Irish Jacobite soldiers to France after their defeat at the Battle of Aughrim on 12 July that year.

27 December 1904 – The Abby Theatre which became the permanent home of the Irish National Theatre Society, opened its doors in Dublin for the first time, with a double bill of Yeats On Baile's Strand and Lady Gregory's Spreading the News.

28 December 1969 – The provisional IRA splits from the official IRA.

29 December 1937 – The constitution of Ireland comes into force, having been approved by 56.52% of the voters at a plebiscite on 3 July that year. The Constitution established that the name of the state is Eire, or in the English language, Ireland.

31 December 1759 – The premises of a defunct brewery in St. James Gate area of Dublin was formally leased to Arthur Guinness for an unprecedented 9,000 years.



AKRON
IRISH

LISA O'ROURKE

Charity's End

The holidays mark the time of year that we focus on giving. We call this time of year the giving season. What does that mean? It is a cliché that reminds me of another one, charity begins at home. Why would anyone need to say that?

Don't we homo sapiens, by nature, give to those nearest and dearest to us? This giving promotes our very survival. True charity should be so self-interested. So, if charity does begin at home, then where does it end?

There is a man who could answer the question had he not passed away a month ago, Charles

Feeney. If he could, he would tell you that charity ends when there is nothing left to give.

For an Irish American, he was more than the "plastic Paddy" that he called himself. How have we never heard of him?

Chuck Feeney's privacy matched his humility. Anonymity was often a condition of his gifts. His early life was almost Dickensian. He grew up during the Depression in a New Jersey, Irish American neighborhood. He had an adoring mother who spent time helping neighbors and other less fortunate souls.

His mother's compassion made a clear impression on him. He, on the other hand, looked for ways to help the family out financially. He was known for doing all kinds of odd jobs like shoveling snow. Compassion and hard work were the two main legacies of his childhood.

Feeney served in the Navy in World War II. That experience changed his life. An idea was born then as he watched soldiers buy goods with no import tariff.

The other benefit of his service was the GI Bill. It allowed Feeney to realize his dream of being



the first college graduate in his family. Since he was going to school, Chuck did not shy away from aiming high. He applied and was accepted at Cornell. This experience shaped him intellectually and socially.

At Cornell, he met the friends who would become lifelong business associates. But he was not a typical Cornell student. He stood out as he showed his ability to find ways to earn money while he was studying. He made and sold sandwiches to other hungry college students.

The first duty-free store started in, where else, Shannon Airport, in 1946. Duty-free was the idea that Feeney had in the Navy, and he wanted in. The group that Feeney co-founded was Duty Free

Continued on page 23

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Shoppers.

DFS opened their first store in Hawaii; selling liquor and perfume to Japanese tourists. The concept of duty-free shopping spread around the world right when travel became affordable for most people.

Suddenly, Chuck Feeney had more money than he knew what to do with. He had never been comfortable with the conspicuous consumption lifestyle of the rich and famous. He was a guy who owned a Casio watch, took public transportation, and lived in an apartment with his wife.

His biggest vice was entertaining well at times. He had realized his dreams, but the thought of having so much money began to haunt him. Troubling his thoughts were two ideas; that money could crush his family and the Irish proverb, "There are no pockets in shrouds."

Feeney decided that there was nothing to do but get rid of all that money, but how? He devised a plan to give away eight billion dollars, and being him, he followed through with it.

His decision turned his attention backward, to the country of his ancestors. Ireland in the 1980s was at the peak of another significant wave of emigration. He believed that the education system was what needed to be fixed. It had been underfunded for years and had not kept pace with the global economy.

Where else would an underdog go but to the underdog county, Limerick? He started building. In 1989, the Institute of Higher Learning, Limerick, became the University of Limerick.

This transformation was due in part to Chuck's donations. In total, Feeney contributed over 730 million dollars to higher education in Ireland.

Feeney's grandmother came from Fermanagh, Northern Ireland. With the university up and running, he wasn't long seeing something else in Ireland that he wanted to fix. Enniskillen had been a recent scene of violent unrest. An IRA bomb killed eleven people on Remembrance Day in 1987.

Gerry Adams US Visa

While the Troubles had peaked a decade earlier, there was still destabilizing unrest in the North. Feeney met Gerry Adams and found in him a man that could do business. Their relationship was one of the building blocks of the Northern Irish Peace Process. Feeney helped to persuade then President Bill Clinton to issue a US Visa to Gerry Adams.

From there, Feeney was central in negotiating Bill Clinton's visit to Belfast. That visit is often referred to as a watershed moment in the Northern Irish peace process. Feeney felt that both sides needed to sit down in face-to-face talks

and that the US needed to be involved. Feeney funded a Sinn Fein office in Washington DC. He paid for that himself.

His charity group, Atlantic Philanthropy, did not get involved in politics. While many of these gestures created controversy, they also built inroads that led to the Good Friday Agreement. Feeney was the invisible force that helped break centuries of bad faith and resentment.

A few things that Feeney put his hand to in Ireland did not turn to gold. He formed an agency to investigate government corruption, the Centre for Public Inquiry. That was a mistake.

He must have sensed that all his donations were not hitting their marks and being used as he intended. Through the agency, he tried to correct it. The story that followed that agency is so confusing that I won't even attempt it. We can leave it at, Feeney's appointed whistleblower found himself in hot water and sending the whole thing up in smoke. Feeney found an Irish wall that he

could not knock down.

Feeney continued to give his money away. Atlantic Philanthropy succeeded in giving away his eight billion dollars. Ireland received 1.2 billion of that money. It is safe to assume that the Celtic Tiger had New Jersey roots and wore a Casio watch when no one was looking.

Charity may begin at home but it ends when we do. ●

Lisa O'Rourke is an educator from Akron. She has a BA in English and a Master's in Reading/Elementary Education. Lisa is a student of everything Irish, primarily Gaeilge. She runs a Gaeilge study group through the AOH/Mark Heffernan Division.

She is married to Dónal and has two sons, Danny and Liam. Lisa enjoys art, reading, music, and travel. She likes spending time with her dog, cats and fish. Lisa can be contacted at olisao7@icloud.com.

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Flat Iron Café
1114 Center St. Cleveland 44113-2406 216. 696.6968. flatironcafe.com

TREEHOUSE
6th - Ray Flanagan; 13th - Rob Samay; 20th - Nathan Henry; 17th - Customer Holiday Party w Christmas Karaoke; 27th - Ethan Timm. 820 College Avenue, Cleveland, 44113 treehousecleveland.com

PJ MCINTYRE'S
No events sent to us. PJ McIntyre's is a Local 10 Union establishment. Home of the Celtic Supporter's Club and the GAA. Book Parties & Events in our Bridgie Ned's Irish Parlor Party Room. 17119 Lorain Road, 44111. pjmcintyres.com 216-941-9311.
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Smug Saints 31- Irish New Year with The New Barleycorn 4-7pm. 117 West Liberty Medina, 44256 sullysmedina.com.

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19500 Center Ridge Rd, Rocky River, OH 44116 (440) 990-7468 GormleysPub.com
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STRONGSVILLE

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1st - Crawley & Sofranko, 2nd - Big 10 Championship Game, 8th - Country Redford, 16th - The Other Brothers, 22nd - New Barleycorn. 500 Southpark Center #G110 (Southpark Mall Main Entrance), 44136 440.638.4852 thehooley.com

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Mon: Open Irish Music Session 7ish; Tue: Open Old Timey Music Session 7ish;Wed: Open Mic - 7:30pm - 9:30pm, sign-up 6:30pm. 127 North Main Street South Bend, IN. 44601. 574.232.2853 FiddlersHearth.com

Pennsylvania

PITTSBURGH

ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS PA.
2nd - PA. State Board Meeting, Southpointe Hilton Garden Inn, Canonsburg 1pm. dnkpggh.comcast.net.
2nd - Sean McBride Div. 32 Christmas Party, Fairview Sunset Room, 3326 Washington Pike, Bridgeville @6:00 p.m. www.aohdivision32.org. \$30 Per Person. Paul Towhey (484) 571.7131 / ptowhey@gmail.com. Diaper Drive for Genesis House.
9th - Div. 4 Irish Christmas Basket Raffle Drawing full of wonderful Irish treats. aohdiv4.org
GAELIC ARTS SOCIETY OF PITTSBURGH
1st - Christmas Party! Holiday Inn Parkway Center Mall pghgaelicarts@gmail.com

CELTIC PITTSBURGH
9th - A Celtic Christmas Show @ Mullaney's Harp & Fiddle, 6 p.m. 412.642.6622. Proceeds benefit Mullaney's Harp & Fiddle.

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3rd - Christmas Party, Fox Chapel Yacht Club maryfmcIntyre56@gmail.com



sessiúns:

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The Magic Tree Pub & Eatery - 3rd Sunday of the month, 5:30 to 7:30 7463 South Avenue, Boardman, Ohio 44512
The 1035 Club -1st Saturday of the month 1-3. 1035 Bridge Street upstairs, Ashtabula, OH 44004
The Harp - 1st Friday of every month, 9pm 4408 Detroit, Cleveland 44113
Mondays: Music lessons w/ Samantha McNamara, followed by 8pm sessiún. Gormley's Irish Pub. All ages, levels, & observers welcome. Info/Contact: McNamaraSchool.com
Otie's Tavern - Tuesdays 7-9. 5344 Center Street, Hilliard, OH 43206
Nora's Public House - Scottish & Irish Sessiún 1st Wednesday of the Month 7:30 4054 Erie Street Willoughby, OH 44094
Logan's Irish Pub - 3rd Wednesday of the month, 7:30 414 S. Main Street, Findlay, OH 45840
Plank Road - Thursdays 7 - 10. All ages and experience welcome 16719 Detroit Road, Lakewood, OH 44107
Spoon Market & Deli - every Thursday, 7-9 PM, all are welcome, 144 W Liberty St., Wooster, OH 44691
Dempsey's - Fridays: 8-10. 346 S. High Street Columbus, OH 43215

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Tuesdays, 6:15 - 8 p.m. P.J. McIntyre's Irish Pub 17119 Lorain Road, Cleveland, OH 44111
jobrien@iirish.us

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Thursdays 7:00 p.m., 745 Pleasant Ridge Ave. Bexley, OH 43209

traditional irish social dance opportunities:

Tuesdays 8-10 pm, set dancing lessons, St. Clarence Church, North Olmsted, OH. 44070

Tuesdays 8-10 pm Lessons @7:15. Sessiún Musicians, Dance Caller w/ Pittsburgh Ceili Club. Mullaney's Harp & Fiddle Strip District Pittsburgh, PA. pittsburghceiliclub@gmail.com;

Wednesdays 7-9 pm set dancing lessons: Irish American Club - East Side Euclid, OH;

Thursdays 7:00 - 9:00 (except Mtg nights) Ceili Dancing. West Side Irish American Club, Olmsted Twp, OH. 44138

CeiliClubCleveland@gmail.com





Los Altos por Siempre, Part One

It was clear from the beginning of the State of Ohio that the Cleveland area was a prized possession. Moses Cleaveland agreed to survey east of the Cuyahoga to ensure that his party had proprietary rights to the jewel of the Cleveland area, the Heights. As it was in the beginning, it was also true of the War of 1812. It was the Irish that protected the Heights during the War of 1812; however, truth be told, it was the Irish who

wanted to conquer it. Confusing maybe, but it is the story of the War of 1812. Historian Alan Taylor has classified the conflict as a “civil war.” His work, *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels & Indian Allies*, details the complexity and fluidity of the war and those who participated in it. If there are simple truths to the conflict, it was that they are maritime commerce, impressment of American soldiers and the future of Native Americans in the America.

Not My King

The British Navy consisted of 16,600 sailors in 1793, and in four years’ time had grown to 119,000 sailors, numbers that were maintained beyond the war. American merchant marines increased from 558,000 tons in 1802 to 981,000 tons in 1811.

The sailor population did not keep pace with that growth. So whatta you gonna do? Well, England being British, it declared that if you were born in their empire, you were a subject of the crown for life. Americans took offense to ignoring its sovereignty and the ability to naturalize new citizens.

That put the Irish in a precarious position. “Erin, revenge your murdered sons,” was the Irish Republican call to the Irish in the American forces. However, it was not that clear.

The shortage of soldiers and sailors made both the English and the Americans fight this war on the battlefield, but also diplomatically. British ships would impress sailors from American ships if it was believed that they were ever British subjects. Impress, as in take you prisoner on their ship and force you to sail it, at least for a bit.

As the Royal Navy patrolled the American coast before the war, they were forced to obtain provisions on the mainland. Not so “impressed” sailors would jump ship and join the Americans.

The Irish regarded the British warships as floating prisons. The question of citizenship continued during the war, and charges of treason were leveled against captured Irish soldiers fighting for America.

In 1813, a prison ship at Quebec selected 23 prisoners of war thought to be Irish and transported them to England for trial, “traitorous Irishmen, who had been fighting

against their King and country.” Four months later, the US Congress approved retaliation on any British prisoners of war. When an exchange was discussed, half of the British prisoners of war held by the Americans were Irish. The Irish fought on both sides of the war, died on both sides of the war, and without question killed their fellow Irishmen during the war. By 1814, The Americans held 1,700 British POWs and Britain held 4,300 American POWs.

Irish Navy

Irish sailors fled the Royal Navy when opportunities were made available. Many joined the US Navy or merchant fleet, so many that, even before the war in 1808, 42% of American sailors were American citizens.

Irish soldiers in the British Army fled as well. Emigration enlistment was employed by Irish soldiers sent to Canada by the Crown. British regiments like the 5th, 41st, 49th and 100th were largely Irish, especially the 100th. Many fled as soon as they had the opportunity, in numbers considerable enough to force the

Continued on page 27

English to restrict the Irish regiments to the barracks in Quebec.

While the Irish were deemed the property of the Crown for life, the British promised freedom and property to those held in American slavery. Enslaved people made their way to the floating prisons to gain their freedom, which was denied by America.

Along the Chesapeake Bay between 1813-1814, over six hundred enslaved individuals joined the British. At the time, the US Army did not permit them to join the American forces.

Some of the Irish leaders in America, primarily United Irishmen, supported opening the US military to all humans within the Republic. James Madison opposed that, as did James Monroe, who owned slaves in Virginia.

As the Irish deserted the Royal forces, American farmers who aligned with the loyalists fled north to Canada. Some of those American born loyalists joined the Canadian militias and fought against American troops. In general, the Irish were not treated as equal citizens in Canada.

Scottish merchants had considerable clout and a network of trade based in Montreal with contacts from Detroit to Niagara. The Scots were subjects for life as well, adding to the situational dynamics.

Ohio

As the Atlantic World prepared for another war, violent earthquakes occurred in the Mississippi and Ohio valleys in January and February of 1811. Some feared it was a sign, but the world was not ending; it was transitioning to economic empires. The world did not end, and the war of 1812 began, and the Irish were in Ohio and Great Lakes.

Niagara was under the command of Brigadier General George McClure. George was born in Ireland and in America was a miller, farmer, trader, postmaster, county judge, state legislator and eventually a Brigadier General.

Irish born General James Wilkinson was in charge in the Lake Ontario area. There were plenty of excursions and battles in the Great Lakes, but neither side could take a clear advantage in the early years of the war.

William Henry Harrison was the commanding officer in Northwest

Ohio in 1813. In 1841, the Ohioan was the 9th President of the USA. Harrison was in command at Fort Meigs, constructed on the Maumee River near present day Maumee and Perrysburg. The British lay siege to the fort but retreated by the end of July 1813.

George Croghan was born to Lucy Clark and William Croghan, a Dublin born Irish Catholic. George graduated from William and Mary in 1810 and fought at the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811. He was 21 years old when he was promoted and named to command Fort Stephenson.

Major Croghan commanded the small (300x150) fort with 160 men

and a cannon named “Old Betsy.” Croghan was ordered to retreat by Harrison. He did not, to the ire of Harrison; as a result, he was relieved of his command.

Major Croghan, despite enemy forces in the area, immediately went to discuss the matter with Harrison. He was given his command of Fort Stephenson and summarily defeated the British and Native American forces. The nation honored him for his much-needed victory and defense of Cleveland.

It was this victory by a fellow with Irish blood that forced the British to reevaluate its war plans. Next month we will discuss another fellow with Irish blood who won

the Battle for Lake Erie. • Francis McGarry holds undergraduate degrees from Indiana University in Anthropology, Education and History and a Masters in Social Science from the University of Chicago. He is the founder of Bluestone Hibernian Charities. Francis is a past president of the Irish American Club East Side. He is the founder and past president of the Bluestone Division of the Ancient Order of Hibernians.

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COOKING UP A HOOLEY

KATIE GAGNE



Cookies Perfect for the Holidays

My column this month is one I have shared before, but these cookies are too delish to pass up. Chocolate Chip Cookies are always a favorite. Yet, at the holidays, many people shy away from these cookies and instead make traditional and more inspired pastries. Sometimes, though a chocolate chip cookie is what you are craving. These cookies are unique and fit just perfectly with the Christmas season.

Red Velvet Chocolate Chip Cookies
Ingredients Makes approximately 3 dozen

3 cups + 2 tbsp of All Purpose Flour
1/2 cup Unsweetened Cocoa Powder
2 teasps Baking Soda
1/2 teasps Salt
1 cup (2 sticks) Unsalted Butter - room temperature
1 1/2 cups packed Light Brown Sugar
1/2 cup white Granulated Sugar
2 Large Eggs – room temperature
2 tbsp Buttermilk
4 teasps Vanilla
3 teasps Red Food Color
2 cups Semi-Sweet Chocolate Chips
2 cups Dark Chocolate Chips

Directions
Whisk flour, cocoa powder, salt, baking soda in a large bowl and set aside.
With a hand-held or stand mixer, cream butter until light and fluffy. Add in sugars and mix until blended.
Add in eggs one at a time.
Add vanilla.
Add buttermilk and food coloring



and mix until combined.
You will want to use a good, strong red food color – the ones in with the baking supplies in Walmart or Craft stores are much more intense and you need that for the deep red color.
Add more food coloring until the dough is very bright red. Cookies will brown in the oven and the color becomes faded if you do not use enough.
Add in the dry ingredients and mix until combined.
Stir in the semi-sweet chips.

Dough will be sticky. Cover and chill at least 1 hour.
Roll into balls and place on cookie sheet covered with silicone mat or parchment paper.
Bake in a preheated 350* for 10 min.
They should be slightly puffy when done. Watch the time so the bottoms do not become too dark.
Remove from the oven and press 3-4 dark chocolate chips into each cookie while still on the warm cookie sheet.
After 5-10 minutes, transfer to a rack to cool. •

Katie Gagne teaches English at Trinity High School in Garfield Heights. She is also the owner of her in-home bakery Sassy's Sweets and Oh So Much More. You can contact her at (440) 773-4459 or at mkbluebows@aol.com, or find her on Facebook at @sassyssweetsandmore.

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THE FITNESS DOCTOR

DR. FREDERICK PETERS



Intermittent Fasting

Intermittent fasting has a plethora of benefits, however most people following this plan discourage eating breakfast. Here is why that is completely wrong.

With intermittent fasting, breakfast is not only optional, but also discouraged. The most common method is a 16-hour overnight fast, followed by an 8-hour eating window.

However, my contention is that breakfast is critical! If you eat a balanced meal that includes protein, complex carbohydrates, and healthy fats, you will start the day feeling energized and enjoy a host of benefits that come with “the most important meal of the day.”

The Case for Breakfast

First, there is evidence to support the premise that breakfast can help jump-start your metabolism. If you eat dinner at a reasonable time, then sleep through the night, that's a lot of time without any sustenance. Some people even experience headaches, blood sugar dips, faintness and

difficulty concentrating when they skip breakfast.

Studies suggest that eating breakfast can also help keep blood sugar and blood pressure levels steady and improve cholesterol levels, provided you select healthy options (not pastries and doughnuts). In fact, popular breakfast foods often pack important nutrients like fiber, calcium, folate, and vitamin C. Breakfast can increase your energy, focus, memory, problem-solving skills, and mood; improve metabolism, digestion and bone strength; and decrease your risk of heart disease, high blood pressure and obesity, according to Johns Hopkins Medicine and the International Food Information Council Foundation.

To get the most nutrient bang for your breakfast buck and start your day on a high note, choose foods with a mix of carbohydrates, protein, fat, and fiber. Carbs will give you energy right away, protein will sustain you through the morning and fiber will help you feel full for at least a few hours (probably more).

Why People Skip Breakfast

Healthy or not, up to one-quarter of Americans regularly bypass breakfast because they believe intermittent fasting is good for their bodies, or simply because they're not hungry. A study of over 30,000 people from 2005 to 2016 showed those who skipped breakfast consumed significantly more total calories, carbohydrates, total and saturated fat, and added sugars during lunch, dinner and snacks than those who consumed breakfast. They also had lower quality diets and consumed

fewer micronutrients throughout the day.

The Metabolic Perspective

We all have a circadian rhythm that makes our metabolism better at certain times of the day. Eating at the right time of the day, when your metabolism is naturally higher, may improve your health. Research suggests that the time of day when you eat affects your blood sugar, weight, and blood pressure. There's even evidence that changing when you eat may help people better control their diabetes, lose more body fat, and have more energy.

The Evidence on Intermittent Fasting

Intermittent fasting is basically a form of calorie-restricted eating. According to recent research, “intermittent fasting may have a beneficial role in improving anthropometric and cardiometabolic outcomes, especially for adults with overweight or obesity.” Research also shows intermittent fasting may reduce inflammation, possibly also reducing odds of inflammation-related brain diseases like Alzheimer's disease and stroke.

In the study, researchers tested different schedules for time-restricted fasting and discovered those eating from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. had healthier levels of regulatory hormones (like insulin and leptin) than people eating later in the day. The authors wrote, “It seems better for healthy improvements not to skip breakfast and start the fasting window close to sunset to improve

sensitivity to anorectic hormones and help prevent obesity.”

One of my earlier columns discussed the fact that time-restricted eating influences gene expression across more than 22 regions of the body and brain. The findings have implications for a wide range of health conditions where time-restricted eating has shown potential benefits, including diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, and cancer.

This column also outlined the importance of breakfast for cognitive health. The general premise was that the author's conclusion that “breakfast skipping was associated with significantly worse cognitive function and faster cognitive decline over time.”

The Bottom Line on Breakfast

I recommend eating within an hour of waking up. Some good options include:

- Oatmeal with nuts and bananas
- Whole grain toast with nut butter
- Nonfat Greek yogurt with berries
- Eggs scrambled with veggies like bell peppers, spinach and onions
- Whole-grain waffles with sliced strawberries

Remember, the key to health is consistency! •

Dr. Peters is the founder of “The Fitness Doctor” (www.thefitnessdoctors.com) and a professor of Health & Human Performance.

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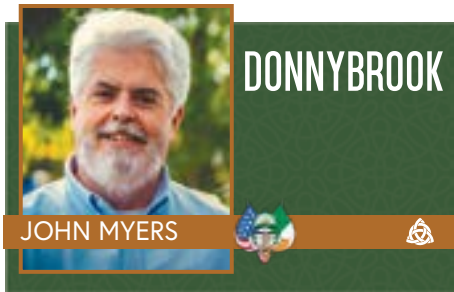
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- 18th – West Side Irish American Club (WSIA) Monthly Meeting
- 31st – February Issue of [ilrish](http://ilrish.us) hits the street.





Kings Speech

Last month marked the first “Kings Speech” in over 70 years. King Charles III presided over the first Kings Speech of his Reign, rain? Accompanied by all the pomp and circumstance, regalia, and officiousness the British are known for, Charles and Camilla travelled in style in the Diamond



Jubilee State Coach the one-mile distance between their royal crib at Buckingham Palace to the Houses of Parliament at Westminster.

Essentially the Kings Speech, or as it was labeled, the Queen’s Speech during his mothers reign, is the official opening of Parliament, akin to USA’s State of the Union Speech.

In this case, the government of the day writes the speech, outlining its priorities for the year. The King acts as the audio actor delivering the words of Rishi Sunak’s Tory government. The King has no input.

The King and Queen arrived in full dress, the King could barley walk in his outfit, trailed by a 20ft long heavy cape that took four young boys in tow just to maneuver. The Queen’s cape/train only took two young lads to orchestrate. The King wore the Crown with its precious metals, velvets and encrusted by almost 3,000 diamonds and gems.

The Speech is delivered in the House of Lords, over 800 members strong, each wearing their own red velvet robe with white ermine collar. The House of Commons crosses the length of Westminster to join the House of Lords for the Speech, where the door is ceremoniously closed in their face until someone named Blackrod pounds on the door three times, (secret code?) and

the Commons is admitted. This was also Sunak’s first Kings Speech as Prime Minister. The unpopular Sunyak government will likely stand for election during 2024. Charles and Sunyak represent themselves as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Well, no surprise, but tell our loyalist friends in the Six Counties that there was no mention of Northern Ireland. The fact that His Majesty’s Northern Ireland Assembly has failed to meet for almost two years was of little consequence nor a priority of the Tory Government. And remind our Catholic friends that a part of the annual Kings Speech ritual is to sweep the basement of parliament looking for explosives.

This a reminder of the Catholic Guy Fawkes attempt way back in 1605 to blow up the parliament (and they say the Irish have long memories). The British Crown and Government continue this four-century year dig at Catholics to this day, i.e. Catholics really can’t be loyal to the Crown. Perhaps they are right.



Boston Tea Party at 250

It was on December 16th, 1773 that one of the critical sparks that ignited the American Revolution took place on a cold night in Boston Harbor at Griffins Wharf. Incensed at being taxed without representation in Parliament, American Colonialists expressed their opinion as to taxes on their tea.

Among those patriots that night was Thomas White, a native of County Kilkenny, Ireland. This month lets honor the memory and deeds of the Sons of Liberty who laid the foundation for the American Revolution and the birth of the World’s greatest democracy.

If you can’t make it to Boston on December 16th, one is still invited to



participate. All are invited to send clean, dry loose tea to The Boston Tea Party and Ships Museum at 306 Congress St., Boston, MA., 02210. Know that your state or town is truly a part of the celebration. Any tea received will be added to the tea that will be thrown into Boston Harbor this December 16th, 2023.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy Rest in Peace 60

Last month we called to mind the tragic events of November 22nd, 1963 in Texas. One always laments at what was lost in the assassination of one of America’s most dynamic leaders.

The Irish American community is especially proud of Kennedy’s place in history as the first Irish Catholic President, doubly sad at him being stolen from us in his prime in such a horrific way. JFK was a member of The Watertown Division of The Ancient Order of Hibernians. JFK’s daughter was appointed by President Joe Biden, America’s Second Irish Catholic President, as the American Ambassador to Australia.

This past summer, Caroline and her son Jack visited the Solomon Islands, the site of PT109’s sinking. With members of the local island community, Ambassador Kennedy and son swam a mile in the same sea where their dad and Grandda swam several miles in the middle

of the night, August 1, 1943, to Plum Pudding Island, now officially known as “Kennedy Island.”

Unfortunately, Plum Pudding Island had no food or water. They risked life again, Kennedy, towing his severely burned and wounded comrade, and nine other sailors swam to a neighboring island, which had coconuts for hydration. Local native coast watchers eventually located Kennedy and his PT 109 crew, and the rest is history.

Michael Davitt

A native of Straide, County Mayo, and became one of the most significant figures in Irish History. His family was one of the many victims of Irish Landlord evictions.

His family was forced to move to England, where he became part of the many casualties of the Industrial Age’s use of child labor. Davitt lost his arm in the machinery around age 12. While a horrific tragedy, it presented the opportunity to receive an education.

Eventually Davitt returned to Ireland and founded and lead the Irish Land League, pushing for reforms so that the Irish could own their own land. Previously, the English feudal system of absentee landlords, mostly remote members of the English ruling class, owned and controlled land. The landlord could set any rents they wanted and could evict you at any time.

Continued on page 31



Davitt became active with the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) and spread the word to America, including a couple of trips to Cleveland. Read more on him; his land league, along with the Gaelic Athletic Association and the Gaelic Revival that laid the foundation for the 1916 Easter uprising. There is a museum in Straide County Mayo that tells his story. [Ed. Note: See Page xx for more about Michael Davitt].

History in a Jar

Recently leaders of the Michael Davitt Museum travelled to Cleveland to share an exhibition of the “Pat Chambers Civil War Collection” papers. The papers were a collection of personal letters written by John Chambers from Cleveland to Tom Mulchrone in Newport, County Mayo in 1921, amongst others. The letters are a treasure trove of everyday history from the post war era of Irish Independence during the time of the Irish Civil War (Pro-Treaty v. Anti-Treaty).

One of the remarkable things about these papers are that they were hidden or lost for almost a century. Pat Chambers, a local sheep farmer from Newport, was renovating an old stone shed on his farm when he discovered a jar in the walls of the shed. This jar contained these Chambers Civil War era letters and papers, a remarkable find.

Pat Chambers instinctively realized the potential significance of these papers and looked to the expertise and skills of the Michael Davitt Museum in County Mayo. The Museum under the direction of

Yvonne Corcoran Loftus and John Reid reached out to local historians, Sean and Peggy Cadden, to determine the context of the letters and who the “John” from Cleveland was; no last name was included.

Having completed significant local and genealogical research, they made the connection to John Chambers, who lived at Lawn Avenue, Cleveland, in the St. Colman’s Parish neighborhood. John Chambers was a native of Newport and a brother in the cause of the Irish War of Independence.

In his letter, John told of the significant dollars raised in Cleveland for the Irish struggle. John still has two daughters, Mary Patrice Chambers and Sheila Caco, who live in the Cleveland area. His other children, Billy, Rev. Clarence, Francis, Louis and Emmett are deceased.

Mayo County Librarian Austin Vaughn and native Clevelander and historian Mick Mulchrone, who now lives in County Mayo, added to the research and travelled with the Museum group to Cleveland recently on the occasion of the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the Cleveland-Achill Twinning. The group made several presentations and brought the papers and the jar to share with all the Yanks. Thanks to all who worked to discover and keep these ties with America fresh and relevant today. [Ed. Note: See Page xx for more about The Pat Chamber’s Collection]. •

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Student Stories

By Meghan Osekowski

For as long as I can remember, Irish culture has been one of the biggest parts of my life. My grandfather, originally from Connemara, Galway Co. has continually passed down traditions and stories to his daughters and grandchildren, which has given me various opportunities to embrace my lineage. I was fortunate to be given the opportunity to begin taking Irish dance lessons with the Burke Conroy School of Irish Dance when I was nine years old, to begin curragh racing for the Pittsburgh Irish Rowing Club when I was 11 years old, to learn how to play traditional Irish music on the tin whistle, and to now be able to learn another aspect of Irish culture, Gaelige.

I am a Senior at the University of Pittsburgh, where I am studying nursing with a minor in social work, now accompanied by a minor in Irish language. I began learning Gaelige with Marie Young my junior year of



college, but within that short amount of time, I have progressed through three levels of Irish.

Through my studies with Marie, I have loved learning such a beautiful language, giving me a chance to incorporate my heritage into my everyday learning. I tend to have a very packed schedule of classes each semester between both nursing and social work courses, so adding Gaelige to my courses has not been easy, but I feel that it has been worth every second. This has been one of the most incredible experiences.

In addition to taking Irish language classes, I have had the opportunity to compete with the Irish Dance Team at Pitt, also known as *Rince na gCathrach Cruach*, meaning Steel City Dance. I competed regionally and nationally with the Burke Conroy School of Irish Dance for nine years, where I had the opportunity to not only compete, but also perform with bands such as Gaelic Storm and The

Chieftains. I also was able to learn how to play the tin whistle from one of our alumni, and friend, Katie Grennan.

Going to college, I did not imagine that I would be able to continue with Irish dance, however, I discovered the Irish Dance Team at Pitt. I joined the team my freshman year, dedicating my time to being on the executive board as the Mental Health Liaison, while we formulated our practices to work with the COVID-19 pandemic. My sophomore year, I took over the role of Public Relations Chair, which I held for two years, and we were back to in person practices as we prepared to compete at Villanova University’s Intercollegiate Irish Dance Festival.

Competing with the Irish Dance Team has given me the chance to continue with Irish dance, while being able to share that with an amazing team of girls. As we prepare for another run up to Villanova this December, and now being the Vice President of the team, I am excited for the things we have planned and to enjoy my last year of college with my team.

In addition to Irish dance, I have competed in curragh racing with the Pittsburgh Irish Rowing team for the past 11 years. My grandfather, along with his brothers, began the curragh racing team in Pittsburgh in 1984, passing this tradition on to their children and grandchildren. This being the case, most of the team is made up of my family, but there are also other members who have embraced rowing alongside us.

This sport is a part of a national

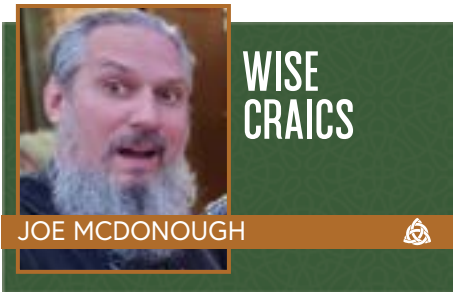
organization referred to as NACA, the North American Curragh Association, of which there are eight teams registered: Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Boston, New London, Albany, Leetsdale, Annapolis, and Milwaukee. The season usually runs from June until late September or early October, with each city holding a regatta for the other teams to compete at, with the ultimate goal being to win the NACA cup at the end of the season.

The 2023 season finished up in Leetsdale the last weekend of September, where my team won the NACA cup after a hard fought season against both Philadelphia and Annapolis, 2nd and 3rd overall respectively. Being a part of curragh racing has been such an incredible part of my life, allowing me to share in the Irish culture with my family as well as with such a tight-knit community like NACA.

By having Irish culture be involved so heavily in my life, I have been graced with so many amazing opportunities that I do not believe that I would have experienced otherwise. I could not have envisioned myself ever learning how to speak Gaelige, let alone work through 3, soon to be 4, levels of it.

Being a part of the Irish Dance Team at Pitt has also been such an incredible experience, as I have been able to continue Irish dance both competitively and for show. I am so grateful to have had people at the University of Pittsburgh, such as Marie, to form a community and share Irish culture with. ●

Meghan Osekowski is a senior majoring in nursing with minors in social work and Irish language at the University of Pittsburgh. Originally from just outside of Pittsburgh, she has been Irish dancing for 13 years and curragh racing for 10 years. She is also a part of the Pittsburgh CCE, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, and plays the tin whistle. Upon graduation, I plan on working in the pediatric intensive care unit at UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh as a nurse.



Stereotypical

“Sorry, love, can I have a pint of Guinness and a packet of crisps where you’re ready there’.

‘Oh. You must be Irish,’ she replied.

The man was evidently offended and responded, ‘The cheek, just because I order a pint of Guinness, you assume I’m Irish. If I ordered a bowl of pasta, would you that make me Italian?’

‘No’ she replied. ‘But this is a Waffle House.’”

Overjoyed

Paddy’s missus was in the City Hospital, ready to give birth to their first child. The nurse asked, ‘How dilated is she, sir?’

Paddy replied, ‘Delighted? She’s over the flippin’ moon!’

Waste Not

An Englishman, a Scotsman, and an Irishman wander into a little old pub in Kildare. They each ask the barman for a pint of Guinness. After the pints are placed onto the bar, a house fly drops into each man’s freshly poured pint.

The Englishman pushes his pint away in disgust and orders up another. The Scot reaches in and plucks the fly out.

The Irishman reaches in, picks the fly out, holds it up close to his face and shouts, “Spit it out you little rascal.”

Name names

An English lawyer was sitting with his Irish client. ‘Marty’ he sighed, ‘Why is it that whenever you ask an Irishman a question, he replies with another question?’

‘Bollocks, who told you that?’ asked Marty.

Logistics

Paddy and his wife were lying in bed in their house in Dublin one Saturday morning. It was 8 o’clock and the neighbor’s dog was going mental.

‘Enough of this’, shouted Paddy as he ran out of the room.

He arrived back up the stairs ten minutes later. ‘What are you after doing?’ replied his wife. ‘I’ve put the little yapper in our garden. Let’s see how they like listening to him!’

Perception

Two lads were on opposite sides of the river Lee in Cork. ‘How do I get to the other side of the river?’ shouted one lad to the other.

‘Sure, you’re on the other side’, replied the second.

Waste Not, Want Not

Two Irishmen were walking out of a funeral. One turns to the other and says, ‘It was a beautiful ceremony, wasn’t it?’

‘It was’, replied the friend. ‘Listen – when I die, will you pour a decent bottle of whiskey over my grave, as a toast?’

‘I will,’ says the friend. ‘But would you mind if I run it through my kidneys first?’

Father Christmas

A little Irish girl was talking to her little sister.

‘You know Father Christmas?’ said the little Irish girl

‘Yes,’ answered her little sister.

‘Well, I think it’s Daddy.

‘Why?

‘Because he never shaves and only works one day a year.’

Quickies:

Did you hear about the fella from Mayo that was born with two left feet? He went out the other day and bought some Flip Flips.

What do you call an Irishman with a case of chickenpox? A leper-chaun.

What do you call a bulletproof Irishman? Rick-O-Shea.

What does an Irishman get after eating a load of Italian food? Gaelic breath.

Did you hear about the cross-eyed teacher in the national school in Westport? He resigned because he couldn’t control his pupils.

What do you call a huge Irish spider? A Paddy-long-legs.

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Our Recommendations for Music That Makes Great Christmas Gifts

Tara McNeill and Alexander Bernstein, Across the Atlantic, 2023. 12 Tracks

When I last interviewed Tara McNeil in April of 2022, as part of Celtic Woman's *Postcards from Ireland* U.S. tour, she spoke of the desire to someday record an original works album with her husband, Alex Bernstein, a gifted and accomplished concert pianist who has performed with orchestras throughout America and Europe and is a faculty pianist at Shenandoah Conservatory.

How the world changes. Someday is here. Tara and Alex finally get to share that album, that dream, *Across the Atlantic*, with the world. "What started as something meant to increase our time spent

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Tara McNeill and Alexander Bernstein

together has turned into much more than that. *Across the Atlantic* now signifies so much and for that I am especially grateful and proud of the music we have created," said Alex. "We really hope you love what has come out of a very special project for us!"

Tara shared her thoughts on the release of the album as well:

"We are so excited to share this album with you. It is all our own original music and lyrics that fuses our love of classical and traditional Irish music. We are so proud of what we have created together.

"What I think is amazing about Irish music is that people connect to it no matter where we are in the world. Definitely in America people really relate to it because there are so many with an Irish heritage, but then we go somewhere like China and I think, how are these people feeling this music like we do?"

"The thing is, Irish music is all about love, and loss, like leaving home, losing the family and losing loved ones. So much of Irish music is just melody, and these melodies carry much weight and history, and they tell the story without words, so in that way, the universal language

is music. People feel that no matter where they are. I think that is why people love our music, no matter where they are."



By the sea they both love, that inspires such compelling and soulful music, their stories are easily imagined in your own mind.

Rogue – Such a lift to start the album, I look for and hear the ocean's beat in Alex's playing.

The Reach – The power, the range and the beauty of Tara's voice never ceases to move me. Aptly titled, Tara's voice is showcased in soaring fashion on The Reach

The Current – On land or on

sea, currents carry us, to joys and sadness, but here pounding joy prevails.

A Legend Untold – such a beautiful, haunting melody, I kept coming back to this track, and thought of the many legends untold in my mind – the piano and fiddle dance together, forever.

Donegal – Tara's fiddle and harp may be her most well-known instruments to date, but her voice is fast catching up in due attention. Donegal is just another example of the richness.

A New Season – Like the seasons, the ups and downs, the racing river of our life, we go too far too many funerals to not dance at the weddings - be sure to dance.

Red Morning – It feels like a mad scramble, with no time to contemplate, just keep moving, hopefully forward.

The Swallows – In flight, what do you see? Which way do you choose to go in a wide-open world of possibility?

Where You Are – A more patient contemplation, longing for reunion. I imagine Tara and Alex battling this often as each toured on

Continued on page 35

McNeill & Bernstein
Continued from page 34

different continents, hugging their memories until together again.

An T – Oileán – (The Island, or isolated place) The heaviness of the piano and the lightness of the fiddle trade turns and twists.

Lion's Mane – A sudden jump in pace from An T - Oileán, before returning to the soulfulness of the fiddle played with so much emotion.

Lay Your Head – So beautifully sung, without unnecessary dramatic decoration, the emotion and reassurance embraces the listener with love.

The last line applies to the whole album. What a memorable and masterful debut album for McNeill and Bernstein together. I will be listening to Across the Atlantic when I need that embrace from the large part of my life that is music.

www.taramcneill.com. Instagram/ facebook @taramcneillmusic. www.alexanderbernsteinpiano.com. Facebook @ alexanderbernsteinpiano



Runa - When the Light Gets In
2023. 13 Tracks

We Irish, at least through my generation, are known for our love of the auld songs, and sing-a-longs, perhaps a bit too nostalgic for the next generation, who are removed from *The Troubles*, and 1916 memories our parents or grandparents shared memories and stories of with us. The next generation live on a different plane, happier, less concerned about the past and concentrating more on creating their future.

I can't think of a more joyful band then Runa, who take every

stage with energy, soul and a mix of song and dance that is a well-crafted blend of trad, ballad, Celtic rock, and fresh interpretations that never wain. Their joy is sincere, contagious, and released without reservation.

In English or Irish, and even French, their own original songs are mixed with tunes or work that goes back a day or a ways, crosses cultures, and celebrates the news and quirks of a life dedicated to letting the light in.

From Runa:

"Light finds a way in - always. Even in the darkest hours, there exists a light, a joy, to be found and cherished.

Choosing that joy despite the darkness can, itself, become an act of courage.

We have, humbly, witnessed great courage over the past three years, as people around the world have continued to find goodness, continued to choose joy, continued to seek the light, even amidst their darkest moments. It is only when the sky is at its darkest that we can truly see the stars at their brightest.

We have always felt incredibly grateful to be able to create music together and to share it with all of you. Now, more than ever, we cherish each and every one of those moments together, as bright lights - a sea of stars.

We have loved creating this album and we have put every bit of ourselves into it!

We wanted to celebrate the light that we have found in each other and in all of you. We wanted our joy in every note to be explosive and palpable!

May you join us singing, dancing, celebrating, and always searching for the light!"

1. *O Dheara, 'Sheanduiue (I Married an Old Man)* / The Inheritance Polka - Traditional / Fionán de Barra - Advice from the road, the joyful sounding tune warns – Don't Do It!

2. *Indiana* - Andy Mitchell song mourning for Ireland, despite the American dream, and leaving for what will always be considered home.

3. *Hùg air a' Bhonaid Mhòir*

Continued on page 36

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Runa
Continued from page 35
(Celebrate the Big Bonnet) – Traditional, air put to lyric by Julie Fowlis. I'd love to tell you what it is about, but the sing-song lyric and melody must be enough.

4. *The Fox Went Out on a Chilly Night* – Traditional. A fun sing-along tells of the fox on the town (gathering food for his family), pushing his luck in evading the farmer.

5. *The Clowns / The Killavil / The Kesh Jig / The Cat Rambles to the Child's Saucepan* - Jake James / Traditional – Forced to move your head to the push of the fiddle, your legs must follow the jigs.

6. *La Ziguezon (Smiling Boot)* – Traditional - What will the baron get if he frees the woman, whose heart is already given to her warrior love?

7. *Jutland / The Lobster / Castlerock Road* - Tommy O'Sullivan / Traditional / Damien O'Kane – A beautiful ballad about The Battle of Jutland between English and German navies in 1916 - but really about the heartache for those left morning their dead

soldiers.

8. *O Mirk, Mirk is This Midnight Hour* - Robert Burns – Rebuffed by Lord Gregory, the wanderer seeks rest.

9. *The Northwest Passage* - Stan Rogers. The trials and enticements for those seeking The Northwest Passage. Runa also crafted a ship-based video for the song: <https://youtu.be/zNHkSyGszTE> that I love.

10. *Liam's Lullaby* – Written by Fionán, dedicated to Shannon and Fionán's son, Liam. Fionán is a master at telling a story without using words. I can picture Liam falling asleep to this, his parents love soothing (willing?) him to sleep.

11. *Until Morning* - Kate Rusby. Beautiful vocals and soul in Shannon's warm and emotional Until Morning.

12. *For All That You Do / In Memory of Coleman / The Flooded Road to Glenties* - Jake James / Ed Reavy / Jimmy McHugh – a wonderful, light set of reels, that brought to mind all the gratitude of this season.

13. *Ar an dTaobh Thall den mBogha-Sin (Somewhere Over the Rainbow)* Harold Arlen & Yip



Harburg. (Leagan Gaeilge: Róisín Uí Chuill, Nessa Ní Thuama, Éamonn de Barra). I have never heard Over the Rainbow in Irish before, but Shannon owns this, with moving emotion and soaring hope. Dreams do come true.

Runa is Shannon Lambert-Ryan - vocals, bodhrán; Fionán de Barra - guitars, bass, vocals, mandolin, bodhrán; Cheryl Prashker - percussion, vocals; Tom Fitzgerald - fiddle, mandolin, vocals; Jake

Continued on page 37

Runa
Continued from page 36

James – fiddle.

When the Light Gets In is Runa's 8th album. You can get this one, and all the others, at runamusic.com, Facebook and Instagram; follow band news there too.

Each song tells a story, and each album does too. I love this story. *When the Light Gets In* is highly recommended; you will love Runa's newest work.

Link to previous Runa columns in iIrish: <https://iirish.us/out-of-the-mailbag-comes-songs-stories-gifts-and-good-times/>

Ryan Young, Just a Second,
2023 9 Tracks

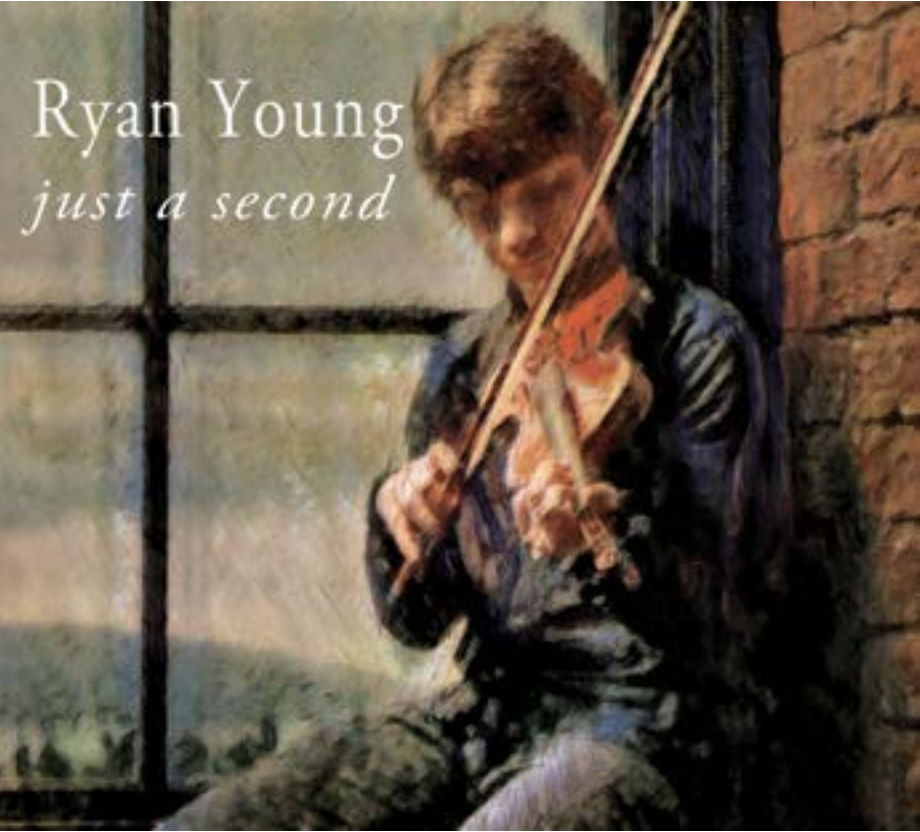
Words get thrown around, especially in flattery, in music

reviews. One applied to Ryan Young has been virtuoso. I do not know many virtuosos, but it seems to me that Ryan Young is joining the great, gifted, and sedulous fiddle players that I have seen perform in person.

Those who reside at another level to me include Eileen Ivers, Liz Carroll, Frankie Gavin, Martin Hayes ... It is not a long list, but it is an accomplished one. Both Carroll and Hayes have expressed that they are Young fans too.

Ryan earned a Master of Music degree from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. He is well-taught, well-developed, with all the hard work requisite in attaining the degree. Yet the ascent to that higher level after came through a willingness to explore, to innovate, and to learn from those that came in the past, and from those he has met along the way. Perhaps the influences never end, perhaps that openness is where the greatness lifts to the artist to

Continued on page 38



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Ryan Young
Continued from page 37

virtuoso.
Ryan has an innate ability to assimilate different influences and different styles of play from his life and learning into his own, unique, emotion-packed, but now recognizable Ryan Young signature sound.
After his self-titled debut recording in 2017, Ryan overcame significant health issues,

a confusing and frustrating medical battle involving his left hand. He has now returned to the fore of talent to watch for and never miss in a very crowded talent field.
“When your hands don’t deliver what your heart feels, you can easily fall into despair and when an injury puts you further away still, it can feel like an impossible battle,” he said.
Thankfully to music lovers everywhere, Ryan has won the battle, and the awards and

recognition are piling up once again for the Glasgow man. May the good health remain always Ryan. In you there is much impact left to give.
Just a Second features Ryan accompanied only by the guitar playing of **Craig Irving**. Nothing more is needed.
Woo’ed an Married an Á / Fingal’s Cave – a great warmup is a soft sway before
Willie Macrae’s Jig / The Monday Morning Reel – you can feel a lot of emotion in tempo ins and outs of this jig and reel.
The Bird’s Nest / ‘S Iomadh Rud Á Chunnaic Mi – a little more haunting, I wonder at the writer’s thoughts as they composed it.
Ben Lomond / Mrs MacGlashan’s Jig
The Fox / Flora MacDonald’s / Little Donald in the Pigpen – I see here the deftness that others far more knowledgeable than me talk about in Ryan’s playing.
The Rock and the Wee Pickle Tow
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Bandcamp for any Downloaders: <https://ryanyoungfiddler.bandcamp.com/album/just-a-second>

Whether you are a pure trad exponent, or just a music fan who loves great music, *Just a Second* is highly recommended for the beauty, the gentleness, the approach of warmth that is given to each tune. It is also a chance to listen to a star on the rise. •

To Read More to the Story, with more text, more pics and LARGER print, visit ilrish.us or: scan the code:



ACROSS

- 4 _____ out the Bells for Christmas
- 5 A _____ Noise
- 8 _____ of a King
- 10 Beautiful _____ Of Bethlehem
- 12 _____ was the guiding star
- 13 Away in a _____
- 16 I Saw Three _____
- 17 A Christmas To _____
- 21 Little Child is _____ tonight
- 22 The First _____
- 24 The _____ Song
- 26 _____ Came Down at Christmas
- 27 Christmas _____ carol
- 31 Happy Birthday _____
- 33 A Christmas _____
- 34 _____ Yuletide
- 35 The _____ Carolj
- 37 It Came Upon the _____ clear
- 38 God _____ Ye Merry, Gentlemen
- 39 _____ in the East
- 40 _____ Carol
- 41 O _____ Night
- 42 _____ Night

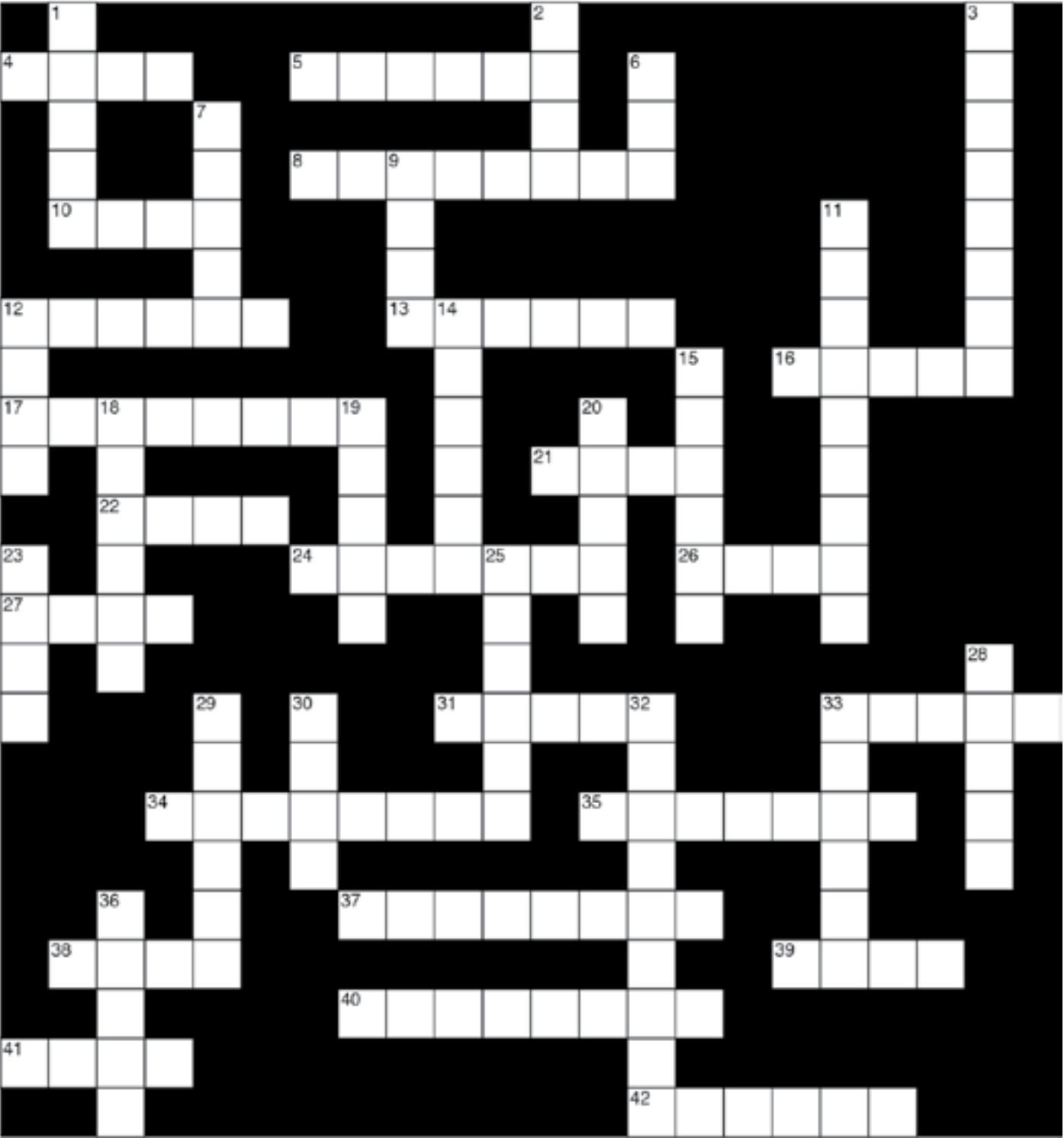
DOWN

- 1 We Three _____ of Orient are
- 2 Shout the _____ Tdings
- 3 _____ Child, so sweetly sleeping
- 6 _____ to the World



Happy Christmas Carols

By Linda Fulton Burke



- 7 _____ Today Rejoices
- 9 No _____ in the inn
- 11 O Little Town of _____
- 12 When A Child is _____
- 14 _____ We Have Heard On High
- 15 _____ Mary Laid Her Child
- 18 Away in a _____
- 19 To us a Child of _____ Birth
- 20 A Holly _____ Christmas
- 23 A _____ Is Born
- 25 from the Realms _____
- 28 The _____ and the Ivy
- 29 _____ Night
- 30 _____ the Herald Angels Sing
- 32 While _____ Watched
- 33 When _____ was born in Bethlehem
- 36 Merry, Merry Christmas _____

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December
1- The Island Doctor
2- New Barleycorn
8- Twin B Project
9- Nathan Henry
15- Other Brothers
6- Gabrielle Haddad
22- Crawley and Sofranko
23- Music Men (Music Trivia)
30- Smug Saints
31- Irish New Year w/New Barleycorn
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14th - Forever Young Christmas Luncheon 1P
21st - General Meeting 7P
30th - New Year's Adam Party 4:30 - Midnight
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