

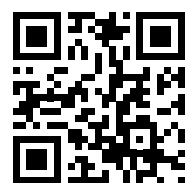


ilrish
newsmagazine

March 2024 | Volume 18 - Issue 3

**2024 *ilrish* Person
of the Year
Ohio Honorary Consul
Mark Owens**

SCAN
TO READ
ONLINE





The legacy of my Irish roots run deep and we are proud to carry on the traditions of our heritage with each generation.

Congratulations to all the 2024 Honorees.



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March 2024 VOL. 18 • ISSUE 3

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CONTACT
216.647.1144 • jobrien@iirish.us
14615 Triskett Rd, Cleveland, OH 44111-3123
Subscription: jobrien@iirish.us



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About Our Cover:

2024 iIrish Person of the Year
Ohio Honorary Consul
Mark Owens
Photo by Dan Hanson,
ClevelandPeople.com



Selfless and in Heaven

This week, much of our thoughts and time have been given to remembering and trying to pay adequate tribute to the many facets and love of Vera Casey, the founder and decades long proprietor of Casey's Irish Imports. Vera's love for family, for her Irish roots in Cong, C. Mayo and now in

Cleveland, and for her family, are evident all around us.

If I had to pick one word, among the very many compliments that apply to Vera, it is selflessness. She gave and gave to others, with a hand squeeze and a murmur of a prayer to accompany you on your way. Faith is an integral part of Vera's life; it carried her through tougher times and kept her in the present to squeeze moments out of each day and each meeting in current ones.

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TO THOSE I LOVE

When I am gone, release me, let me go.
I have so many things to see and do,
You must not tie yourself to me with tears.
Be happy that I have had so many years.

I gave you my love, you can only guess
How much you gave me in happiness.
I thank you for the love each have shown
But now, it is time I traveled on alone

So, grieve awhile for me, if you grieve you must
Then let your grief be comforted by "Trust."
It is only for a while that we must part
So bless the memories in your heart.

I will not be far away, for life goes on.
So if you need me, call and I will come.
Though you cannot see or touch me, I will be near
And if you listen with your heart, you will hear
All of my love around you soft and clear.
Then, when you must come this way alone
I will greet you with a smile, and "Welcome you home".

Author: Anonymous



She always made time to ask how are you really doing? Always made time for a hug.

Vera treated us here at iIrish with unwavering business and personal support, from our very first days through the near two decades since, always with a big smile, eyes shining in good humor, love and effortless class.

Casey's has always been an integral part of the Irish community, but Vera, Maureen, Kathleen,

Tricia and the next generation too gets involved as well, from being members of the Irish clubs, the Hibernians, the Rose of Tralee, the Pioneers – I can't capture the whole list, or adequately acknowledge the Casey impact. I just know it to be significant. I know we have been blessed with a great gift. I am forever grateful. •

To Read More to the Story, with more text, more pics and LARGER print, visit iirish.us or

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



How Gerrymandering (Mis-)shaped Irish History – and Warps Ohio Politics Today

By **Maureen O'Connor**

Ohio suffers from a bad case of gerrymandering, and those of us with Irish roots who know our history see an all-too-familiar tale: powerful interests abusing the system for their advantage at the expense of the citizens.

With roots stretching back to 1609, when King James I orchestrated the Plantation of Ulster, to the partitioning of Ireland in 1921, for five centuries our people have had to struggle against British hegemony.

If you think of gerrymandering as manipulating political borders for disproportionate political gain, then gerrymandering was one of the many tools the British used to maintain power.

In the U.S., the term “gerrymandering” comes from a salamander-shaped electoral district created in 1812 under Massachusetts Governor Elbridge Gerry’s administration. A political cartoonist highlighted the district’s odd shape by likening it to a mythological salamander, coining the term “Gerrymander.”

The British in Ireland didn’t do it with legislative districts, but with general political subdivisions. The result is the same: diluting the power of a majoritarian group to consolidate the power and influence of a chosen few.

In Ohio, we do not have such an epic struggle against a neighboring country, but we too have struggled to fight the scourge of gerrymandering almost since the very beginnings of our state.

But today a citizens-led, non-partisan movement is working to end gerrymandering to truly have

a representative government that serves the interests of citizens, not politicians.

With our Statehouse and Congressional electoral districts among the twistiest and most baldly partisan in the country, I’m confident all Ohioans who value fairness and democracy will support our current movement for reform.

Citizens Not Politicians, a bipartisan coalition I am a part of, is gathering signatures to put on the November’s statewide ballot a measure to create an independent, politician-free commission to redraw fair electoral maps every 10 years, instead of allowing whichever political party dominates at that moment to draw them to its own advantage.

As it turns out, Ohioans with Irish roots have special reason to oppose gerrymandering: The British used it for centuries to reinforce their power over their Celtic neighbors.

It goes back at least as far as 1603, when England ruled a united Ireland for the first time and King James was determined to make sure loyalties tilted toward the Crown. Along with overseeing the “plantation” of the northern province of Ulster – sending thousands of loyal Protestant British and Scots to settle on lands confiscated from Catholic chieftains, turning what was formerly the most Gaelic of the Irish provinces into the most Anglicized – the king directed key deputies to create new towns and boroughs throughout Ireland. These manufactured districts came with charters designed to ensure that only Protestants could represent them in Parliament.

But King James’ sleight-of-hand couldn’t make all of Ireland legitimately loyal to Britain in perpetuity; further tinkering with electoral districts was required from time to time to overcome the inconveniently persistent support of Irish Catholic voters for politicians who weren’t the Crown’s choice.

When migration transformed the northern city of Derry from majority unionist/Protestant to majority nationalist/Catholic by the 19th century, the “Londonderry Improvement Bill” of 1895 fixed Derry’s districts such that, despite a sizeable population advantage, Catholics could win elections for just 16 of the 40 seats on the city’s governing body.

And then there’s what some consider the ultimate Irish gerrymander: The partitioning of the island into north and south in 1921. In the years leading up to partition, republicans – those who favored independence for Ireland – were winning elections across the island, including in the north. Britain was determined to preserve a loyal Ulster.

The province historically consisted of nine northern counties, but when the time for partition came, Parliament declared Ulster to include only the six most unionist counties, guaranteeing that the new entity would remain loyal.

Here in the USA, our political battles haven’t generally been based on religious sect, but political partisans who aren’t willing to respect the rules of democracy have been every bit as willing to turn to gerrymandering to preserve their power. It’s been used by all parties whenever they happened to be in the majority – as my friend and former Columbus Dispatch editor Mike Curtin wrote recently, 19th-century Ohio Democrats used it to keep the Whigs down!

It’s time for this ancient abuse of democracy to end. Officeholders elected from gerrymandered districts don’t have to respect the will of the people. Their loyalty

lies with the party that put them in office, and they will serve the party’s interest over that of the people every time.

The Citizens Not Politicians measure, if approved by voters, will amend the Ohio Constitution to replace the current politician-driven redistricting commission with a 15-member Ohio Citizens Commission, which must include five registered Republicans, five registered Democrats and five independent voters – none of whom can be current or recent officeholders or lobbyists or their immediate families or employees. The amendment contains more exclusions and I urge you to read it.

Just as important, the amendment will require the Commission to operate transparently, instead of the back-room secrecy that has produced the blatantly partisan maps of recent decades. You can read more about the amendment at www.citizensnotpoliticians.org.

I am excited that Citizens Not Politicians volunteers are out collecting petition signatures now to put this citizens’ solution before the voters of Ohio. We’re fighting for the chance to consign gerrymandering to the political past, where it belongs.

Maureen O'Connor is the retired Chief Justice of Ohio and is the longest-serving statewide elected woman in Ohio history. She was selected by the Irish Voice newspaper in New York to become a member of the Irish Legal 100 in 2010. In 2018 she received the Walks of Life Award of the Irish American Archives Society of Cleveland. She has been recognized as an Irish Goodfellow at the annual St Patrick’s Day luncheon. She currently is Vice-President of the Thomas J. Scanlon Irish American Law Society of Cleveland.

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OUT OF THE MAILBAG

JOHN O'BRIEN, JR.

The 1981 Irish Hunger Strike An Account from Declassified British Documents

By Michael C. Mentel
023 McFarland 249 pages.
#978-1-4766-9395-8

Mike Mentel is an experienced and dedicated Irish American leader and jurist, active in the community of Columbus where he lives, and serves as elected state appellate court judge. Prior to that, he served three terms as a Columbus city council member and as its president. He has practiced law for 35 years. Mike has served our community publicly and privately to find out the truth, and explain it.

The 1981 Irish Hunger Strike

is meticulously researched, referenced, and tied together, with extensive notes and index, providing tools for research, and new insight. Then Mentel, in an easy, fact-based, and conversational style, takes the reader through how the melting pot of actions and reactions led to the painful decision to commence the 1981 Hunger Strike.

"Since it is impossible to experience the circumstances these men lived through, history will have to serve to illuminate what the circumstances were like and how these men lived in them. Once illuminated, it is possible to see the events of 1981 from the perspective of the men who went on that hunger strike and why they committed themselves to it."

We too often see that history seems to repeat itself to those who refuse to learn, especially in Britain's draconian relationship with Ireland. Just as the British government's decision to execute the 1916 Rising leaders did, the authorities poorly thought out, hard line response to the hunger strikers caused another world reaction, and

from that pressure, another pivotal turn in Ireland's fight for freedom.

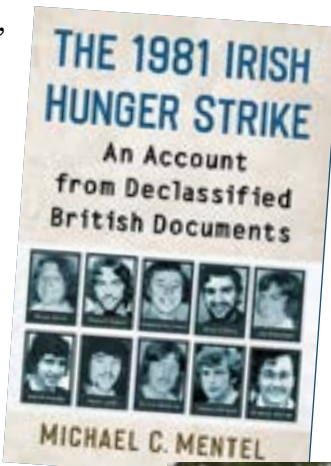
"The 1981 Irish hunger strike has been etched into my mind since the day it started. I remember watching reports on the nightly television news about a 27-year-old man, Bobby Sands, who had started a hunger strike in Ireland. I was nineteen at the time and finishing my first year of college. It struck me that a man almost eight years older than me and imprisoned was willing to die on hunger strike for his convictions. The nightly news reported almost daily on his deteriorating health using sketch artist depictions showing how he was wasting away..."

Mike continues: "The focus of this book is the civil disobedience carried out by ten men in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh prison who, in 1981, died while on hunger strike..."

For me in reading the book, the highlights are the utilization of the declassified documents to illuminate the journey, the good and bad actions, the milestones that led to the hunger strike, despite reactionary and in hindsight, exacerbating British attempts to keep it in a vacuum.

"The prisoners' reaction to the British government reneging on the deal would not end with the smashing of furniture and resumption of the dirty protest. Their next step would stun the Thatcher government and change the politics of the north forever."

Conflict, explained, not from some distant past with grainy photos, some might think it forgotten, but actions in many of our lifetimes, on the evening news. Mike ties it all together, going beyond the immediate action, and details much more of the background, the reasons why, which I love. My understanding



they came into play again and throughout, to dictate how the players of the time responded to them in 1981, and all the way into the Good Friday Agreement of 1998.

"The declassified documents chart the road that led to the Good Friday Agreement, a road that began in 1981 with the men who died in Long Kesh on hunger strike."

The 1981 Hunger Strike is highly recommended, a Top Shelf Selection, for the detail and the insight offered using the British declassification of key documents to shed great light on perspectives not seen, yet alone examined before. Mentel does a fantastic job connecting and explaining this part of Irish history, still alive and relevant today, to our past and present, and of course, our yet unwritten future.

You can find more at McFarlandBooks.com.

"Quis separabit?" (who shall separate us?)

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grew, and events on an island became more connected throughout Mentel's research, and book.

Document declassification offered British inside thinking, at least in those documents, and Mentel presents that as it is. Actions, reactions and policies put forth in and around 1916 to address what was going in and around 1916 had direct impact in 1981 (Reneging on negotiated deals, Internment, Special Powers Act ...). Near seventy years later, those policies hadn't fallen off the books into antiquity,

MILESTONE & SWEET SNAPS



50th Anniversary – March 30, 1974

Congratulations to /Irish columnist J. Michael Finn and his wife, Marion, celebrating their 50th Wedding Anniversary. They were married on March 30, 1974, in Worthington, Ohio.

A most notable milestone during those fifty years was the birth of their daughter, Kathleen, in 1983. Mike appreciates Marion putting up with his "Irish stuff" through the years, as well as the excellent care she has provided during several of his most recent illnesses and surgeries. Mike has been a columnist for /Irish since 2007!

An Urban Thrill Unlike Any Other, in the Heart of South Bend

Located in downtown South Bend, the East Race Waterway is a one-of-a-kind recreational facility. As the first artificial white-water course in North America, its rapids rival those of the Colorado River and can generate waves up to six feet or higher.

It is approximately 2,000 feet long, with a total fall of about 12 feet, depending on the flow of the river. The water level can be controlled via three headgates and the placement of obstacles that create whitewater turbulence from novice to professional levels.

The banks of the East Race offer more than five miles of paved and lighted walking/running paths along the scenic St. Joseph River. The East Race is open Saturdays (Noon – 5:00PM) and Sundays (Noon – 4:00PM) from June 3 – September 17.

Long time /Irish advertising partner Fiddler's Hearth is an annual sponsor for the greening of the East Race following the Saint Patrick's Day Parade.



/Irish advertiser Fiddler's Hearth is the annual sponsor of the annual greening of the East Race, following the St Patrick's Day Parade each year.



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iIrish person of the Year 2024

Announcing Mark Owens The 2024 iIrish newsmagazine Person of the Year

By iIrish Publisher, **John O'Brien, Jr.**

iIrish is proud to present to you, our 2024 iIrish Person of the Year. Mark is from Derry City, Northern Ireland, but has called Cleveland his home for more than 20 years, after attending John Carroll University as part of a scholarship program. Prior to this, he studied at Manchester University, where he graduated with a production management degree, and he recently completed his Executive MBA at South East Technological University (SETU), Ireland.

Mark was named the Honorary Consul for Ohio in March, 2023, and has made significant impact in and for Ohio, especially in bringing Aer Lingus direct flight service, Cleveland to Dublin, which launched its first direct flight in May, 2023.

Overseeing all elements of Team NEO's (Team North East Ohio) marketing and communications team, Mark is responsible for creating and accelerating the organization's marketing strategy and brand recognition across the Northeast Ohio region. He is focused on driving the vision of helping promote Northeast Ohio, offering local partners a more powerful platform to share their successes, market their assets, and attract more investment.

Mark currently serves as Chair of

the Business Advisory Committee at Cuyahoga Community College, President of the Cleveland Irish Business Network and Co-Chairs the Sister Cities Committee at Global Cleveland. He is involved as a member of the Irishtown Bend Park strategy and development committee.

Mark and Maria Owens have two children.

Ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na daoine

(It is in each other's shadow that people live)

Whelp, that's enough about Mark from me. Those that know Mark professionally, and personally, have much to say too.

"On behalf of Team NEO, I'd like to congratulate Mark on this well-deserved recognition. As the head of



Mark and Maria Owens with their two children.

our marketing and communications team, he has played a critical role in bringing awareness to the Northeast Ohio Region to attract investment, foster business growth, and enhance the overall economic vitality of the area. This includes an important role specifically with his work in helping to bring nonstop flights from Cleveland to Dublin, Ireland. This will connect Northeast Ohio to business opportunities to Ireland and other European countries."

Bill Koehler, Chief Executive Officer, Team NEO

"Mark Owens is a real asset to Ireland and to Ohio, as he develops his role as Ireland's Honorary Consul to Ohio. I have worked closely with Mark, and I see his dedication and enthusiasm, which is delivering dividends all round. I consider that we are lucky to have someone of Mark's caliber join our network of Honorary Consuls across this great United States. I see Mark's

appointment as a proud moment as we recognize the enormous contribution of the Irish community in Ohio to the enduring relationship between Ireland and the USA."

Geraldine Byrne Nason, Ambassador of Ireland to the U.S.

"Even before he took on his role as Ireland's first Honorary Consul to Ohio, Mark Owens was a key contact point in Ohio for the Irish Consulate in New York. He has dedicated his career to improving and enhancing relations between Ireland and Ohio. I am looking forward to seeing what his tenure brings, including his support for the first Irish ministerial visit to Cleveland for St Patrick's Day, which will be a fantastic opportunity to honour the Irish contribution to Cleveland and Ohio."

Helena Nolan, Consul General of Ireland, New York

"It has been a pleasure working with Mark as he is one to roll up his sleeves to assist whenever possible. One example was Cleveland Hopkins International Airport's effort to attract new non-stop transatlantic air service. He joined the team, spending many hours knocking on doors, attending meetings, working with Cleveland stakeholders. All these efforts resulted in the addition of a new destination on the CLE air route map – a dot representing Aer Lingus' non-stop service to Dublin, Ireland."

John Hogan, Deputy Chief-Marketing & Air Service Development Cleveland Airport System,

"I am fortunate to have known Mark Owens for a good number of years. Mark is a tireless champion of the Irish in Ohio, always willing to help and serve others. Mark is also a tireless professional, helping to bring Irish businesses to Northeast Ohio. Most impressive is his unwavering dedication to his wife and children. It's hard to

envision when Mark gets to rest.

Being named Honorary Irish Consul for Ohio is fitting, as Mark has long been a great ambassador for our Irish community, from hosting Irish dignitaries, to organizing events, to his help in securing a direct flight landing spot in Cleveland for Aer Lingus. We are all beneficiaries of Mark's efforts. Hats off, Mark! You certainly are the iIrish Man of the Year."

Patrick Murphy, iIrish 2023 Person of the Year

It is with great pleasure that I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Mark Owens on being named the iIrish Person of the Year. Mark's dedication to his family, his community, and his heritage is truly commendable. As a fellow member of the West Side Irish American Club, I have wit-



nessed firsthand Mark's unwavering commitment to serving others and promoting Irish culture in Cleveland and beyond.

Mark's selfless nature and willingness to assist others without hesitation are qualities that inspire us all. Whether it's offering a helping hand or simply lending a listening ear, Mark embodies the spirit of compassion and generosity.

Despite his esteemed title as the Honorary Irish Consul to Ireland, Mark remains humble and true

to his roots. His pride in his Irish American identity is evident in everything he does, and I am honored to call him a friend. Derry may hold your roots, but Cleveland is privileged to have you as one of its own. Congratulations once again on this well-deserved recognition.

Danny Chambers – President, West Side Irish American Club

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Congratulations TO THE 2024 IRISH HERITAGE MONTH ST. PATRICK'S DAY HONOREES!

Greater Cleveland United Irish Societies (UIS)

Grand Marshal:

Patrick T. Murphy

Patrick Thomas Murphy was born the third of eight children in Polranny, Achill Parish, County Mayo to Thomas and Angela Murphy. His family came to the United States in 1962 and have been active members of the West Side Irish American Club ever since. He lives in Avon with his wife Carlene and they have three children, Kelly (Kurt), Tim (Samantha) and Danny. Pat is the proud Papa of four grandchildren, Breck, Keegan, Maddie and Gabby.



Patrick T. Murphy

Pat is a former trustee and officer of the West Side Irish American Club. When he was young, he marched with the Junior Fife and Drum Corps, later becoming an instructor and leader of that unit. Pat also marched with the Senior Fife and Drum Corps.

In 1983 he became the Club's

Delegate to the United Irish Societies of Greater Cleveland. He was selected as Inside Co-Chair of the Parade in 1985, the same year his mother was the West Side Club's Woman of the Year. Pat went on to become a Deputy Director, Executive Director and now Director Emeritus of the Parade Committee.

As Director, Emeritus Pat had the idea to create a published history of the Cleveland Parade. He engaged and worked alongside the Irish American Archives Society to publish *The Day We Celebrate, 175 Years of Cleveland's St. Patrick's Day Parade*.

Pat is a member of the West Side Irish American Club, the Irish American Club East Side, and the Mayo Society. He is a founding member and trustee of the Thomas J. Scanlon Irish American Law Society of Cleveland. In 2016 and 2022 Patrick chaired the Law Society's symposiums in Galway, Dublin, and Cork.

Pat was honored with the Walks of Life Award from the Irish American Archives Society in 2020 and named the Irish Person of the Year in 2023. Recently Pat was selected to become a member of the Irish Heritage Advisory Committee for the Irishtown Bend project.

Pat graduated from the Cleveland-Marshall College of Law in 1986. He is a partner at Dworken and Bernstein Co. LPA, where he has worked for over 35 years. He focuses his practice on nursing home negligence, medical malpractice, and wrongful death cases.

Pat has been selected to the Irish Legal 100, named as an Ohio Super Lawyer and was voted as a finalist for Trial Lawyer of the

Year by Public Justice. He is a member of the American Board of Trial Advocates and is rated AV Preeminent by Martindale Hubble.

In addition to his love of all things Irish, Pat enjoys spending time with his family and friends, traveling and gardening. Pat is extremely proud of the mission of the United Irish Societies and having had the privilege of working on the Parade Committee for over 40 years.

Irish Mother: Patricia Homan

Patricia Homan, the daughter of John and Nora O'Donnell Corcoran of County Mayo, is a first-generation Irish American. She grew up in Euclid, Ohio, where she attended St. William's Grade School and went on to Villa Angela High School, graduating in 1967. Pat began her



Patricia Homan

working career at Mid-West Forge Corporation and retired in February 2015. She is married to Bill Homan; they are the proud parents of Heather, John (wife Marcella)

and Erin, grandparents of Louisa, Isabella and Declan.

Pat's commitment to the Irish community has spanned for more than 40 years. She has dedicated her time, talent, and treasure into many Irish organizations in the Cleveland area.

Pat is a founding member of the Irish American Club East Side, serving on the Executive Board. She has served the Club as Sergeant at Arms, Chair of the Anniversary Dance, member of the Ladies Drill Team and several other committees. Currently, Pat is the Circulation Manager for the Club's newsletter; *the Shanachie*.

In 2010, Pat was recognized as the Irish American East Club Member of the Year. In addition, she is also a member of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, the West Side Irish American Club, Cleveland Mayo Society, and the Irish American Archives Society. She is a supporter of the United Irish Societies, the Padraic Pearse Center, the Irish National Caucus, Cleveland Feis Society and many local Irish festivals.

Pat considers her greatest accomplishment as being a loving mother to her children. She has raised her family to appreciate their Irish heritage, spanning back to County Mayo, where her father, John Corcoran, fought for Irish freedom.

Her children were raised in the Irish community, participating in Irish dance, and marching in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in the Irish American Club's Fife & Drum Unit.

The Homans are active parishioners of St. Justine Martyr Parish in Eastlake and are proud to

Continued on page 12





Congratulations

TO THE 2024 IRISH HERITAGE MONTH ST. PATRICK'S DAY HONOREES!

Continued from page 11

follow their father Bill Homan, the 2019 Grand Marshal.

Inside Chair: David McLaughlin

David Joseph McLaughlin grew up in Middletown, Ohio. He is the eldest of three boys and the son of Betty and Dave McLaughlin. David's family attended Holy Trinity Grade School and Church.

Everything David learned about Irish Culture and heritage came from his home, school, and church. David attended Bishop Fenwick

High School in Middletown. After high school he attended St. Joseph College in Indiana and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in History.

David went back to Middletown, working for a finance company in Cincinnati. He was soon set up on a blind date with Nancy Kelley, a night that changed his life forever. David would follow Nancy to her hometown of Cleveland Heights.

They were married in 1979 and lived in East Cleveland and Cleveland before purchasing a house in Cleveland Heights. Dave and Nancy have two adult children, Patrick and Kelley Catanese, and three grandsons. Dave and his family are active members of St.



David McLaughlin

Philomena Church, Communion of Saints Parish, where he is a Eucharistic Minister and volunteer, trying to maintain the grounds and interior of the church.

Dave followed in his father's footsteps by becoming a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in Cleveland with the Western Reserve and then Bluestone Division. He is a past Vice President of Western Reserve and Bluestone Division and is chairperson for the Freedom for All Ireland committee. He also serves on the AOH Cuyahoga County Board as Secretary and was their past president.

David is one of the volunteer coordinators with the Irish Cultural Garden. He also is a volunteer with the Cleveland Cultural Gardens on One World Day and current treasurer of the new Scottish Cultural Garden. A longtime member of the Irish American Club-Eastside, he was 16-year member of the Jack McDonough Fife and Drum. He also enjoyed set dancing with the Cleveland Ceili Club at the IACES and was on the Float

Committee prior to joining Fife and Drum.

Dave joined the United Irish Societies as a delegate from the Irish American Club-East Side. He was later appointed as a Deputy Director, where he has been part of transitioning the application process from paper to an online version.

Dave initially joined the Line of March committee, and later concentrated on the new Parade participants, where he took the lead on contacting and meeting with all the new applicants to the Parade. In doing so, he created a required orientation process for all new Parade participants which included creating a short video on the history of the Parade. Dave also has been gathering and organizing the Certificate of Liability Insurance forms from the parade participants and continues to be a Marshall for the end of the Parade each year.

Outside Chair: Fr. Francis Walsh



Fr. Francis Walsh

Fr. Francis Walsh is the son of John and Cecelia Fallon Walsh. He was raised in Rocky River, where he attended St. Christopher. Fr. Walsh graduated from St. Ignatius High School in 1949 and attended John Carroll University before entering the Seminary. In 1957, Fr. Walsh was ordained by Archbishop Edward Hoban.

Fr. Walsh served many parishes in the Diocese of Cleveland as an Associate Pastor before being named as the Pastor of St. Jerome in 1976. In 1992, Bishop Pilla named him as Pastor of St. Luke's in Lakewood.

He served as Pastor of St. Luke's for 21 years. He has been an incredible blessing to the Irish community and every parish he has served over the last 24 years with his tireless dedication. He is active in the Irish community with membership in the Ancient Order of Hibernians Bluestone Division, Irish American Club, and the West Side Irish American Club. The Bluestone Division of the Ancient Order of Hibernians are honored that Fr. Walsh serves as their Chaplain.

Ancient Order of Hibernians / Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians Hibernian of the Year: Sarah O'Brien Dirk

Sarah and her brother Ricky were born to Timothy and Joyce (nee Goodwin) O'Brien. Sadly, Ricky passed away in 1986 from a brain tumor. Sarah's family relied on the strength of their Catholic faith, as well as the love and support from their family and Irish community to heal and carry on.

Sarah attended Holy Cross and St.

Justin Martyr Elementary Schools and Lake Catholic High School. She attended the University of Akron, followed by Ursuline College. Sarah became a Nurse Practitioner and has been taking care of cancer patients in Cleveland for the last 18 years. Presently, she is a Leukemia Nurse Practitioner at Cleveland Clinic.

She adopted her son, Eamon Marcel Padraig Dirk in 2019; he is the light of her life. He attends Our Lady of the Lake School. Sarah and Eamon live in Euclid and are

Continued on page 14

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David McLaughlin
2024 St. Patrick's Day Parade
Inside Co-Chair

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parishioners at St. Malachi Church.

Sarah's parents were founding members (Tim always reminded everyone he was Charter Member #2!) of the Irish American Club East Side and she is proud to carry on their legacy as an active lifelong member. She has served as an Executive Board member and has chaired and volunteered for different committees and events over the years. Sarah was a member of the Fife & Drum Corps throughout her childhood.

In 2007, she was appointed to



Sarah O'Brien Dirk

United Irish Societies as a Delegate from the Irish American Club East Side. She was later appointed as a Deputy Director, where she manages Line of March.

After years of wanting to establish a Ladies' Hibernian presence on the east side of Cleveland, Sarah and several other passionate women founded LAOH Division 11 Deirfiúr of Charity in March 2022. Sarah is serving as the Division's first President.

Under her leadership, Deirfiúr of Charity Division has grown to over 75 sisters.

The Division has been active since

its inception, holding various food and clothing drives throughout the year; establishing a monthly volunteer commitment at St. Philomena's Food and Clothing Bank; holding several fundraisers throughout the year, the proceeds of which help local charities, including Laura's Home, Project HOPE, Malachi House, Our Lady of the Wayside and Ronald McDonald House and establishing quarterly Hibernian masses along with AOH Bluestone in historic Irish parishes across the city of Cleveland.

In June 2023, Sarah was elected to the LAOH State of Ohio Board

as State Catholic Action Officer. In addition to her commitments in LAOH, Sarah also serves as Director of Cultural Programs for Bluestone Hibernian Charities, a non-profit organization whose mission is to support Catholic education through scholarships.

**Irish American Club East Side (IACES)
Co-Member of the Year:
Mary McCluskey**

Mary was born December 16 to her parents, Nora & Thomas Hastings, from County Mayo, Ireland. She has loved and studied Irish music and customs since early childhood, dancing with the Gaelic League Society Dancers with her sister Norine and brothers Thomas and Frank.

Mary attended St. Philomena Grade School and Ursuline Sacred Heart Academy in East Cleveland.

When she was a freshman in high school, Mary joined the West Side Irish American Club's Ladies Drill Team. By 1962 she became the leader of the Drill Team and continued for over 50 years, known as Sergeant Major," before handing over the reins to her daughter Katie. She assisted her sister Norine and Heather O'Brien with the Irish American Club East Side's Ladies Drill Team.

Mary met her husband Joe at the West Side Irish American Club; they were married February 3, 1962.

Mary & Joe had seven children, Mary, Christine, Kevin, Tom, Tricia, Maureen and Katie. She is so proud of her grandchildren, Andrew and Patrick Phillion, and Sean, Meghan and Cara O'Donnell. She has passed along her love of her Irish heritage to her family and enjoys traveling to the Irish Dance Feis's to watch her granddaughters Meghan and Cara compete.

Mary handles the club's hall rentals and Tuesday Ladies Cleaning Crew.

**Co-Member of the Year:
Robert (Fitz) T. Fitzgerald**

Robert Thomas Fitzgerald (Bob) is better known as "Fitz" to all who know him. He is the eldest

of six children (Jeanne, Mary Alice, Kathleen, Sharon, and Sean) born to Robert and Corrine Fitzgerald (Quinlan).

He attended St. Paul's School in Euclid and then St. Joseph High School. Bob earned the rank of Eagle Scout, which may surprise some, but not those who know him

well. After high school Bob attended The Ohio State University.

Bob married Shelly Gardner on September 14th, 1996. Gabrielle was born March 10, 1999, they reside in Euclid.

If Bob is not helping out at IACES, or at a friend or family's home, he

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Happy St. Patrick's Day & special congratulations to all of the 2024 honorees. Have a happy and blessed day from the members of the WSIA!

WSIA Queen – Erin Mackin
 WSIA Man of the Year – James “Jim” McGuirk
 WSIA Woman of the Year – Bernadette Campbell
 WSIA Co-Volunteers of the Year – Dan and Diana Flick
 Grand Marshal – Patrick T. Murphy
 Irish Mother of the Year – Patricia Homan
 Inside Co-Chair – David J. McLaughlin
 Outside Co-Chair – Fr. Francis Walsh

The West Side Irish-American Club
 www.wsia-club.org
 8559 Jennings Rd Olmsted Twp, Ohio 44138



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is most likely at his personal slice of heaven, their cottage in Andover. For many years, volleyball was Bob's passion. He played in several men's leagues for both the city of Euclid and Turners. Additionally, he coached both CYO and JO and helped found the Utopia Beach Club Junior Olympics Club.

Bob retired from the State of Ohio in 2017, where he was a tax auditor for over 30 years, then spent most days caring for his father with the help of his siblings. Meeting up with friends and family for morning coffee or a few beers at night is some of his favorite activities. He even claims he plays a weekly round of golf.

Fitz is a long-time member of IACES. He has been co-chairing the 317 Raffle since its inception; volunteered as a bartender; shows up on Tuesday for club clean up; and chaired the OSU vs. Michigan party.

“Banger Boards”, which have been used at many events to help raise money for the club over the years, was his brilliant contribution. He is also a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Bluestone Division, where he serves as an officer and their delegate to the United Irish Society.

**West Side Irish American Club (WSIA):
 Queen: Erin Mackin**

Erin's family has a long history in the foundation of the West Side Irish American Club. Her grandfather, Thomas Mackin, hailed from Clonbur, County Galway, while her grandmother, Mary Coletta (Dever) Mackin's family hails



Erin Mackin

from Achill, County Mayo. On her mother's side (McNamara), Irish roots originate from County Clare.

Erin is the youngest child of Tom and Bridget (McNamara) Mackin's seven children, attended St. Christopher grade school and is a proud graduate of Magnificat High School, where she was involved in student council, the Magnificat Outreach Service Club, and Campus Ministry Projects. She went on to further her education at Tri-C and now works as a Loan Officer for Rocket Mortgage.

Erin has spent a good part of her life marching for the West Side Irish American Club. She started her tenure as a Banner Carrier for the majorette unit. After a few years, she moved up to a majorette and then the Flag Unit. In

She joined the Junior Fife and Drum Corp, where she fided until high school, then marched in the Ladies Drill Team with her three older sisters. Erin continues to carry on the tradition today as a proud marcher of the Drill Team Unit.

Erin has been a volunteer with

the IA Cleaning crew for many years; er favorite part of the day is sitting down after the work is done, enjoying a cup of tea. She truly enjoys hearing stories about her grandparents and learning more about her Irish heritage from the individuals she volunteers with.

**Woman of the Year:
 Bernadette Campbell**

Bernadette is the daughter of John & Julia Togher (both deceased). She is the proud sister to Mary Ellen (English), Veronica (DeClemente), Bill and John Togher.

Bernadette's love for Irish culture and the WSIA was instilled at a very young age, when her father brought



Bernadette Campbell

her family to functions at the club. She remembers selling tickets for the “Drive for 75” that helped purchase the land that would be the current location of the WSIA.

While her sisters marched with the majorettes and drill team, Bernadette marched with the “Ireland's 32” pom-pom unit. She was the leader of this unit

throughout her high school years.

Bernadette grew up on the west side of Cleveland, attended St. Patrick's West Park school, Fairview High School and received a Bachelor of Business Administration from Cleveland State University in Statistics. After graduating college, she worked at local hospitals as a supervisor in the Financial Collection Department. She then began working for the State of Ohio Workers Compensation Division as a business consultant, where she worked until her retirement in 2019.

In 1983, she married Timothy Campbell. Together they have two children. TJ works as a truck driver for Kimble Recycling and Daniel works at the State of Ohio, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Department as a Senior Disability Adjudicator.

When her sons were in the marching units, Bernadette cooked hot dogs and burgers for the practices. She has also helped her husband for over 30 years in preparing the WSIA's award winning float. Bernadette brought back the Jim Caffrey WSIA Craft Show this past holiday season and is excited to keep this traditional craft show growing. Bernadette also helps as a volunteer around the club wherever help is needed.

When not at club volunteering, Bernadette is at home in Lagrange quilting blankets for her family and friends.

**Man of the Year:
 James “Jim” McGuirk**

Jim is the son of Catherine (Kilcoyne) and Frank (both deceased). He has six siblings: Frank, Anne McDonnell, John, Dennis, Mary Kay and David. He is

the grandson of Bernard Kilcoyne from Mulranny, Co. Mayo and Annie Egan from Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo.

Jim grew up in Parma, attended St. Anthony of Padua Elementary School, and graduated from Cleveland Central Catholic High School in 1975. Having been referred by his high school computer teacher, Jim found immediate employment with the Cleveland School Board of Education as a computer operator, where he worked until retiring after 36 years.

Soon after graduating, Jim joined the West Side Irish American Club on Madison Avenue, participating in the Ceili Dances/Competitions and Irish Language and Masses. Jim belongs to and held offices in The Cleveland Gaelic Society, The Greater Cleveland Feis Society, Ancient Order of Hibernians, Irish American Club East Side, The Pioneer Total Abstinence Association, the Irish Music Academy of Cleveland, Irish American Archives Society and the

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James McGuirk

Mayo Society of Greater Cleveland. Jim traveled around the country and Canada for dance competitions for the many Feis's and Oireachtas Rince. He is proud to promote his Irish culture. Jim was selected to be the Outside Co-Chair for the parade in 2000, and in 2004 was the Hibernian of the Year. Jim volunteers at Friday Night Pub Grubs, Tuesday volunteer days working outside in the gardens

or inside doing whatever is needed, as well as many other special events that take place throughout the year at the WSIA.

Volunteers of the Year: Dan and Diana Flick

The late Edward and Eleanore Flick gave birth to Daniel, the youngest of his three siblings (Eleanore, Laura, & John). The departed William T. and Patricia L. Wolff welcomed Diana into their world. She was also the youngest, with four siblings preceding her (Sandy, Billy (deceased), Terry (deceased), & Kevin). Both Dan and Diana were raised on the West Side of Cleveland. They married in 1984 and will celebrate their 40th anniversary this year. The best gifts from



Diana and Dan Flick

their union are three sons (Brian, Jason, & David). Dan worked 20 years for the City of Cleveland, 12 years at FedEx and three years at the Cuyahoga County Correction Center. Diana worked 15 years at Kaiser Permanente in the health care industry. Diana and Dan volunteered for over 20 years at WVIZ auction. Diana volunteered at the school library and was active in the PTA. In their spare time, they

enjoy attending concerts and sporting events. Diana also is an avid tennis player. The Flicks joined the West Side Irish American Club about 23 years ago. Dan started assisting with the Fish Fry's, working with the McDonough Brigade. Diana joined the team shortly after. They have assisted, chaired, and volunteered for over 20 years, including The Night at the Races, Pig Roasts, Christmas Concerts, and Easter Bunny Breakfast, as well as other organizations events, like Cleveland Irish Cultural Festival, Pioneer Dinners and more.

Columbus

Clann na Gael:
Rich and Karen Finn

AOH Patrick Pearse Division Hibernian of the Year:
Scott Robinson

Commodore John Barry Award:
John Homan, Kurt Wolf

Daughters of Erin Irish Woman of the Year:
Cheryl Costello
Member of the Year:
Karen Fahy

Emerald Society Member of the Year:
Gary McGovern

Greater Columbus Irish Cultural Foundation Irish Cultural Award:
Colleen Marshall

Shamrock Club of Columbus Irishman of the Year:
Mike Murphy
Parade Grand Marshal:
Tim Feeney

Member of the Year:
Christina McConahay
President Awards:
Kyle Collins, Mark Syx

Pittsburgh St. Patrick's Day Parade Grand Marshal:
Rob Tierney

Robert Tierney, a native of Lucan Co. Dublin, will serve as this year's Grand Marshal. Rob first came to Pittsburgh in 1997, where he led groups of young people experiencing inter-generational unemployment and sectarianism in Ireland. He returned in 2001, when he began working with Jim Lamb (a former Grand Marshal) and the Ireland Institute of Pittsburgh.

While at the IIP, Rob served as Vice President and oversaw the non-profit's via programs, which offers young people from Ireland and beyond the opportunity to spend extended time in the United States on work or internship programs. Rob also began working with the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) and held many integral roles within the Pittsburgh GAA, including Chairperson, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and most recently, Youth Officer. In 2016, he was appointed

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Games Development Officer of the USGAA and in 2023, he became the first Head of Operations and Games Development of USGAA.

In addition to his work at the IIP and GAA, Rob is a member of AOH Division 32 Sean McBride out of Carnegie, where he enjoys golf outings, parties, and other events with his AOH brethren. He appreciates the opportunity the AOH provides to meet many of the great Irish-Americans furthering Irish culture in Western PA and

particularly enjoys marching in the St. Patrick's Day Parade, where he carries the flag of his native county, Dublin.

Rob is the proud son of PJ and Catherine Tierney, proud Galway people who Rob credits with giving him his sense of identity, self-belief, and determination. His sister, Marie Young, is an Irish Language and Culture instructor at the University of Pittsburgh, while his other sister, Karen, is a high school career teacher

in Dublin. Rob's wife, Christy Sue, has embraced the Irish-American culture, supports Rob in all of his activities, and has shared many adventures with Rob over the years, which he deeply appreciates.

When asked to summarize his feelings about Pittsburgh and the honor of being named the 2024 Pittsburgh St. Patrick's Day Parade Grand Marshal, Rob said "the [Grand Marshal] sash represents the tireless work of



Rob Tierney

thousands of Irish American volunteers, throughout this region and beyond. We stand on the shoulders of those that have come before us, and ensure that our traditions, culture, and sports are kept alive and well for future generations to experience and love - Ní neart go cur le chéile (there is no strength without unity)." •

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*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.*

VERONICA F. "VERA" CASEY

July 25, 1930 – February 7, 2024
Vera Casey (nee Holian), 93, was born in Lackafinna, Cong, Co.



Mayo, Ireland and was a longtime resident of Lakewood and then Fairview Park, Ohio. Beloved wife of Thomas J. Casey (deceased) for 62

years. Mother of Maureen Casey, Patricia Casey, Thomas F. Casey and Kathleen Proctor (Jim). Grandmother of Shannon, Sara, Colin, Deirdre, Jack, Clare, Leah, Jack and Molly. Great Grandmother of Kaylee and Alana. Sister of Tom Holian (deceased), Bridget (Birdie) Davern (deceased), Jack Holian (deceased), Mark Holian of Galway Ireland, Mike Holian of North Olmsted, Ohio, Nancy (deceased). Aunt, Great Aunt, Godmother, cousin, and friend to many. Former owner of multiple beauty salons in Lakewood, Rocky River and Galway, Ireland. Founder of Casey's Irish Imports, Inc. in Rocky River.

Vera was born in Cong, Co. Mayo to Frank and Florence Holian. The third oldest, she had to drop out of school at age 13 to help raise her siblings when her mom died suddenly.

In 1949, she went to London in search of work and was "never bored, always broke." On St. Patrick's Day in London in 1952, she married her childhood sweetheart Tom Casey, of Carrick, Co. Galway. In 1956 Vera and Tom set sail on the Queen Elizabeth and ended up in Cleveland, where her

sister Birdie was living. For years Vera and Tom traveled back and forth to Ireland with their four children.

In 1975, they finally settled for good in Lakewood, Ohio. Vera, a former hairdresser who owned hair salons in both Galway and the States over the years, decided to expand her hair salon, Casey's House of Beauty, to Casey's House of Beauty and Irish Imports.

In 1988, she decided to "retire" from the beauty business and open Casey's Irish Imports. She ran Casey's until 2012, when her husband Tom was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Two daughter's, Maureen and Kathleen, still run it today; they just celebrated 35 years of business.

Vera was a longtime member of the West Side Irish American Club, Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, and The Mayo Society of Greater Cleveland. She has always been active in parish life, whether in her mission circle at St. Mark, founding member of St. Clarence Church, long time member at St. Angela, or participating in her St. Christopher Rosary Group.

Vera was the recipients of many awards throughout her life. She was selected in 2012 by the Cleveland United Irish Societies of Greater Cleveland as the Irish Mother of the Year for the Cleveland St. Patrick's Day Parade.

In 2016, Vera and Casey's Irish Imports were awarded the Celtic Warrior Award by the North American Celtic Trade Association for outstanding merchant and member. In 2018 the Rocky River Chamber of Commerce presented Vera and Casey's The Quality Business Award. In 2019 she was honored with a Walk of Life Award

by the Irish American Archives Society of Cleveland and Northeast Ohio.

She always said the key to her success was due to the love and support of her family and friends, and her faith in God. Vera said she never forgot the last piece of advice her dad gave her when she was boarding the train in Ballinrobe, Ireland back in 1949, "Vera always stay close to Jesus and Mary and

all will be well in life." In lieu of flowers, contributions to Little Brothers and Sisters of the Eucharist c/o Fr. James O'Donnell, 3675 West 165th St. Cleveland, OH 44111 or to the Monastery of the Poor Clares, 3501 Rocky River Dr. Cleveland, OH 44111 are appreciated.

Slan Abhaile~ Safe Home Mom
- Obituary courtesy of Chamber's Funeral Homes

ELLEN "NELL" BUCKLEY

Mar 24, 1934 - Jan 22, 2024
(nee McCarthy), age 89, native of Kenmare, Co.



Kerry, Ireland, devoted and beloved wife of the late Frank; loving mother of James Buckley (Kathie) and Clare Coleman

(Clinton); dear grandmother of Frank, Katharina, Erin, Diana

and Sean; beloved aunt of many nieces and nephews; sister of Philomena Keavney and the late Stephen McCarthy, Claire Hayes, Anna Pastores and Florence McCarthy; and a dear friend of many.

Passed away January 22, 2024. Memorial contributions are suggested to the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association c/o Maureen Bihn, 25754 Hidden Acres Dr., Westlake, Ohio 44145.

- Obituary courtesy of Chamber's Funeral Homes

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When friends ask us about planning a trip to Ireland, Dublin is always at the top of their lists. They ask about the pubs, Trinity, Guinness and the pubs. I am not much help.

We sprint from the city, having long exhausted the tourist sights. Dublin has succumbed to globalization. The city's small cafes and shops have morphed into the ubiquitous McDonalds and Gap. Their presence diminishes the elements of authentic Irish culture that we left home to experience.

One day last year, planning a visit and intent on keeping my time in the capital at a minimum, I was told to reconsider, at least bit. I "had" to go to the Wicklow Mountains.

Why? Because there is a majestic estate situated there that is a "must see." Big splashy houses always make "must see" lists, but they blur in hindsight, another opulent mirage.

The two qualities that make this one different are grounds and location, location, location. The estate is Powerscourt, and the estate is now much more garden than house.

Powerscourt

The history of Powerscourt is deliciously murky. Proximity to the medieval Glendalough Tower lends credence to the story that the estate was once the property of a religious order. What is now an impressive looking house was a damp castle in the 13th century. It was owned by a family named LaPoer, which anglicized into Power over generations.

However, the poor homonym suited the next owners well. After



the monks, The O'Toole family came to possess the estate. In the English tradition of "finding" cheap Irish real estate, the O'Tooles' lost the house.

This was the result of Phelim O'Toole participating in some rebellious act, murdered and then posthumously pardoned. The pardon came on the heels of the transfer of course. Powerscourt became a Wingfield property thanks to the generosity of Elizabeth I.

The house began its illustrious career as a country chateau, with three floors and 68 rooms, sitting comfortably on 47 acres of good land. The Wingfields spent their three plus centuries tenure, pruning and adding to the décor and feel of the place. Some of the biggest changes came right around the Victorian era, which was the Famine era in Ireland.

One of the many Sir Richards married what was either a real lady or a real dose, who complained

that the estate was uncivilized. She thought that an Italianate layout would bring some culture to the place. Her complaints preceded the biggest changes to the house and grounds.

The house itself went through many changes. There was an evolution from the medieval castle it began as. The 19th century renovations changed the estate, modifying both the house and gardens into Italian villa in style.

The photos that remain of the glory days of the house display a Balmoral quality to them; deer heads and portraits mounted all over, the kind of place you would ride out of on a fox hunt.

It was such a beautiful place that it was sought out often as a film location. Famously, Stanley Kubrick filmed "Barry Lyndon" here in 1971, using both the house and grounds extensively.

Then in 1974, a fire broke out. When it happened, the Wingfields

were preparing to open the house to the public in an attempt to maintain it.

The house burnt down to the brick. It was burnt so badly that the foundations of the original medieval castle were revealed. It stood in ash and brick for twenty years. It was saved by cousins of the Wingfields, the Slazengers who next acquired the house.

They fixed some areas but did not bother to restore the entire house. There is a ballroom and a small museum area. Most of the public part of the house is an upscale tourist mall and restaurant. More about the restaurant later.

Versailles

Whatever that Lady Wingfield was, her vision began the construction of the last great European garden. This is not a fussy little garden. Powerscourt's landscaping was inspired by no less than ultimate historic "home," Versailles.

Powerscourt is not as ornate as Versailles. Versailles does not have Sugarloaf Mountain as a backdrop though. The estate is nestled at the foot of the Wicklow Mountains. The Powerscourt Waterfall, the biggest in Ireland, is a few miles away and an amazing sight.

Because the location itself is naturally beautiful, it would have been easy to put in a lawn and call

it good. However, that would have been a loss.

Lime-rich Irish soil fosters the growth of flowers like roses. The rich colors and plain old hardiness of the plants is amazing. There are seven hundred different varieties of plants.

Walking out of the back of the house, you are no longer walking, but strolling through a beautiful symmetrical formal garden. There are sculpted hedges and Romanesque statues in abundance. The picturesque Wicklow Mountains are always in view.

It is a traditional formal European garden, complete with a large fountain framed by flying horses. The Japanese Garden is formal



but has a very different feel. The path wanders and it is cooling and relaxing to walk through the fragrant oriental plants and bonsai-like trees. It has a lovely meditative quality to it.

The gardens are gorgeous, but what I love best are the trees. The grounds are every bit as much arboretum as garden, if not more so. The demesne was my favorite, and has a more organic natural atmosphere, less fuss. There are so many huge and unusual trees.

The rock star tree here is a Douglas fir, standing at 202 feet tall, making it the tallest tree in Ireland. You might think that size doesn't matter, but it does.

Standing amongst those giants generates a combination of feelings. Awe is one of them. **Best Desert Ever**

About that restaurant. I travelled

with my sister-in-law, and she knows her stuff. She said not to be thinking about food but that we were definitely having desert. She was not wrong. All of the deserts were huge and not one of them disappointed. My Pavlova was one of the best ever.

This is probably not the kind of place that you would associate with Ireland. It is not a country which relies on formality for its appeal. That domain belongs to the English neighbors. Just because they don't do it that often, doesn't mean that they can't though. Go and see for yourself. You couldn't be anywhere better on a fine day and it's not so bad on not so fine one either. There's always desert. •

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Thems and Yous

When my son TJ was young, it was stressed to him the importance of reading. He had daily "reading time," yet it was not a chore for him. It appeared, at the time, he liked it. He was in a household of readers, and he saw us reading as well. It appears, now, he really liked it.

There are moments in a parent's life, the first days of school, the first communions, graduations, weddings, and the like that are the mileposts of life. I have found

the moments in between those mileposts are where life lives.

We were leaving Hersey, PA, and I asked my son, "What did you think of the Hersey factory?" He responded, "Dad, if Willy Wonka has taught me anything, you build a chocolate factory near the chocolate river." I knew in that comedic and joyful moment; I had been his parent.

Don't get me wrong, this whole PhD in Geochemistry at Columbia is nice. He really likes it, like his reading as a youth, but it ain't a Wanka Bar with a golden ticket.

It does denote a new period in life. You wake up one day and your kid is teaching you. Well, he is applying aspects of fractal geometry in nature to his geochemistry research. *The Fractal Geometry of Nature* by Benoit Mandelbrot is the suggested text he gave for my "reading time." This is hardly a fair exchange for Harry Potter.

Clouds are not spheres. Fractals involve chance. Shapes in nature are statistical in both their regularities as well as their irregularities.

Those natural shapes involve scaling and their degree of

irregularity and fragmentation is identical at all scales. The pictures in the book are really helpful in understanding the synthesis of mathematical and philosophical analysis.

In other words, think snowflakes (Chapter 2) and maybe skip Chapter 11, "Logic of Fractals in Statistical Lattice Physics." It doesn't hurt to sit next to Bob Samson for a Taco Tuesday either. He's a scientist and plays the ponies like Grace McGarry did.

Just as optimal foraging theory, behavioral ecology that discusses the maximization of energy while animals forage for food, can be applied to archival research, I began to ponder how fractal geometry in nature is applicable to the Irish narrative.

Benoit did not include anthropology or history in his seminal work and Mandelbrot don't sound Irish to me. He was, in fact, from a Lithuanian Jewish family that fled Warsaw for France before WWII. I pondered, none the less.

To be honest, the first few chapters my brain was pronouncing

fractal more like fraggle and couldn't get the theme to Fraggie Rock out of another part of my brain, "Dance your cares away, worries for another day. Let the music play, down in Fraggie Rock."

Then I thought of the patterns of behavior and cultural nuances that are commonly shared amongst the Irish people. Those things we do and may not know we are doing them.

It was my Aunt Irene who shared with me that I laughed like my grandfather, John Francis. He passed away when I was five years old. It was TJ's classmates that denoted the similarity in our laughs and mannerisms. Some are more regular and other more irregular, but fractals do involve chance.

Hibernian of the Year

It was Sarah O'Brien, the Hibernian of the Year, who thanked Bluestone President Bob Mullin at the Celebration of St. Brigid and St. Patrick. Before we made it back east, it was figured out they are cousins, Ann Mullin.

It got me thinking about William Joseph McGarry, who married Mamie O'Malley on 9/21/1921 and moved to West 65th. In our journey, we made a brief stop at Pride of Erin to sample one of the best Guinness pours in this town and to hang out with St. Joe's folks, before VASJ. It was one of their companions that noted he reads this paper but doesn't always feel like he fully grasps it, because he is not Irish.

"All those thems and yous are hard to follow." There are cultural antecedents that can go unspoken by those who share a culture. The critique was of the cultural nuances and not the syllables; that's a permutational precedent.

It is the immediate family relationships we know, the relationships of shared blood and a family name. Those stories are regular and irregular, but statistical, and hopefully regular is when everyone is amenable.

As our family relationships grow in number and in generations, we may lose track or grow apart. As we alter the scale, the fragmentation and irregularity is identical as our cousins are because by marriage or three times removed. We forget we laugh the same due to the silence of

familial fragmentation, but cousins are cousins.

When we increase the scale from individual stories to a shared narrative, we can see the commonality of our Irish people and the Cleveland Irish. In that scale there is no river or side of town.

In that scale we appreciate that we might read this paper differently than others might. That we are the thems and yous. This united cultural nuance is easier to see this time of year.

Just this week, every time I saw the word superior or a combination of letters that would spell superior, they jumped out at me. The same was true off the number 18 or 1 and 8. It felt like the Da Vinci Code and I was Godfrey de Saint Omer.

I am not a Templar, however. I am Cleveland Irish. The McGarry's are all Cleveland Irish, up and down the hill and three times removed. The Cleveland Irish know that on March 17th the intersection of Superior Avenue and East 18th Street speaks to us.

It is where the best St. Patrick's Day Parade in the country commences at 2:04pm this year. It is where we pray and honor our country. It is where Katie sings the Irish National Anthem in Gaelic, and we get goosebumps. It is where we march with bagpipes in the air and celebrate our commonality as Cleveland Irish.

Parade Honorees

Congratulations to this year's Parade Honorees: Pat Murphy, Grand Marshall; Bluestone Hibernian Chaplain Father Francis Walsh; Outside Co-Chair, Bluestone Hibernian Dave McLaughlin; Inside Co-Chair, Deirfiúr of Charity Hibernian Pat Homan, Irish Mother of the Year; and Deirfiúr of Charity Hibernian Sarah O'Brien, Hibernian of the Year.

I would also like to thank all the delegates and directors of the United Irish Societies of Greater Cleveland. Your time, effort and commitment is truly amazing and appreciated. It is because of your work we can all laugh the same and together on that most special day. Happy St. Patrick's Day. •

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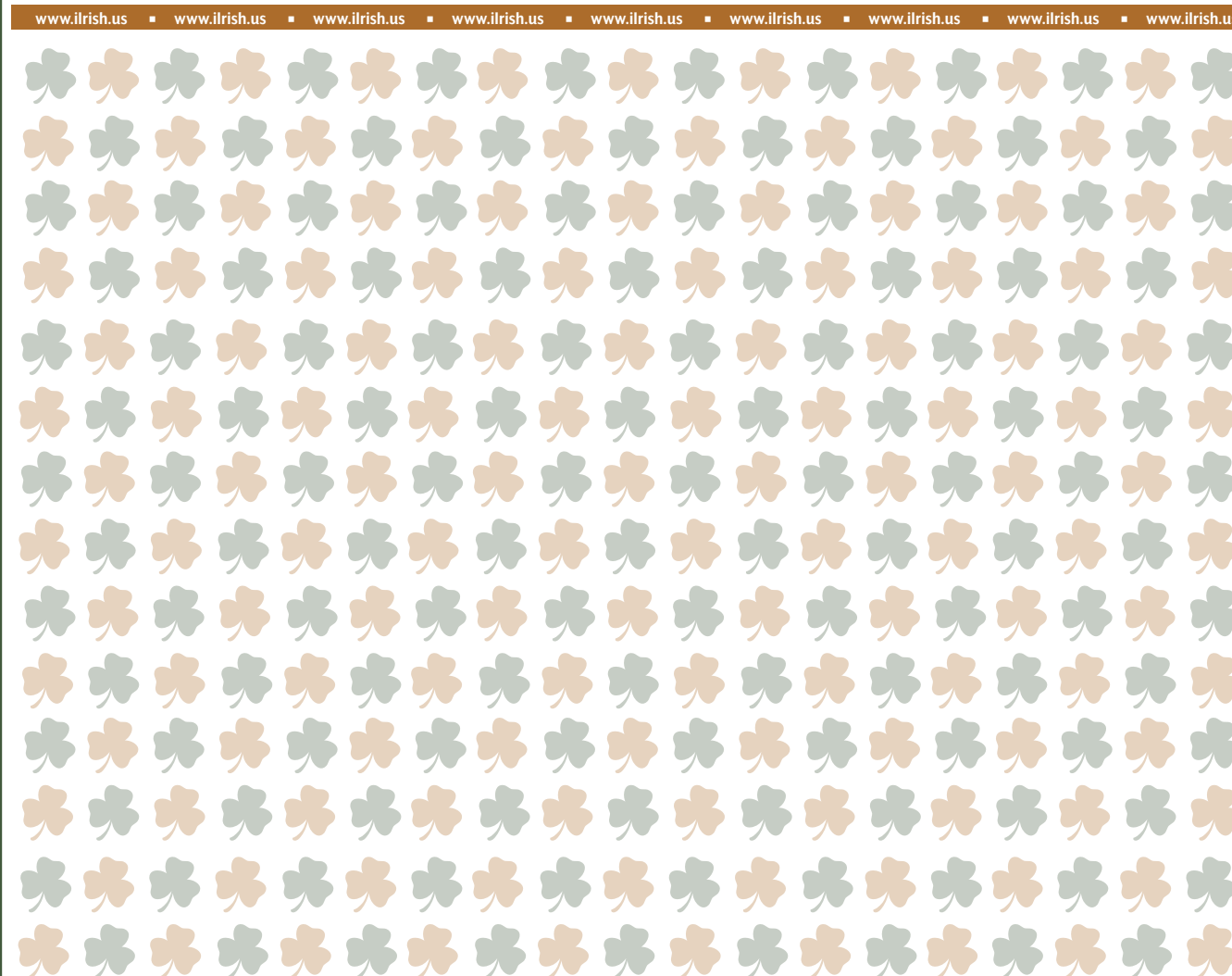
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ilrish's shamrock squares



Taking turns, connect a line from one shamrock to another. Whoever makes a line that completes a square, writes their initials in that box. The one with the most squares at the end of the game wins!



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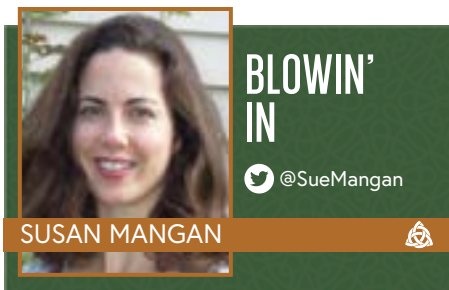
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The Goat

"Hidden under wild ferns on Howth. Below us bay sleeping. No sound. The sky. A goat. No-one. High on Ben Howth rhododendrons a nannygoat walking surefooted dropping currants." (James Joyce: *Ulysses*)

In my mind's eye I am sitting on the edge of an old water trough in the field by my Uncle Pat's milking barn. I have been told to sit and watch that the trough does not spill over with water. Used to my presence, the calves meander by, awkwardly bucking into one another.

Flies buzz around their crusty hind quarters.

Singing Kansas' "Dust in the Wind," I pretend that I live in this meadow, friend to the calves, the June Bugs, the barn cats, the dogs, the goat. With all my heart, I believe that I can talk to the animals.

A veritable Dr. Doolittle, I can soothe the creatures with my voice. I am alone, but not lonely.

Quite happy with my singing, my imagination, the calves, and buzzing field insects, I do not realize the trough is overflowing until rivulets of wet manure and dirt begin to pool around my green Adidas tennis shoes.

Hoping against hope that the relentless July sun will dry up the small flood before my uncle leaves the barn, I hurry to the water pump, faded red from the Ozark sun, and shut it down.

The calves look at me with large eyelash-framed brown eyes and softly mewl when my uncle comes to find me. Toothpick dangling from his mouth, he looks at me and then the drying moat by my feet. "Hey," my uncle drawls, "Let's find you another job, alright?"

And so, my time spent on the farm

was comprised of jobs to keep me busy and out of the way of farmer work. I was often put to the task of feeding the calves with oversized baby bottles and scooping feed down the chute to cows trapped in the milking stalls.

How I loved to talk with the animals, especially to a goat that I named Pierre. I was put to the task of milking Pierre before suppertime. It was only in my later years that I realized Pierre was not the most apt name for a goat producing milk, but alas the innocence of youth.

My mother often told me of her own childhood farm pet: Buck Buck the goat. Now, Buck Buck was all mischief, a regular Huckleberry Finn on the farm.

Buck Buck bucked my grandmother as she hung the laundry to dry in the hot sun. Shaking his head, Granddad laughed and laughed. One fateful day, Buck Buck, all fire and energy, chose to buck the wrong farmer. Milk cans went flying. My mother never knew exactly what happened to Buck Buck after that unfortunate event, but she reckoned that he became a fine Easter meal.

I would never make it as a farmer because in my heart I would love all the birds and beasts as family members. Never would I consider assigning Buck Buck a fatal sentence because he was simply doing what he does best, bucking.

Animals are among our greatest treasures. Imagine a spring morning without birdsong, an oak without a squirrel, the sea without fish. During my past visit to Ireland, I learned of a species that has roamed the rugged mountains and hills of Ireland since the Neolithic Age. Today, this animal is near extinction: the Old Irish Goat.

Old Irish Goat

The Old Irish Goat is mythic in appearance. Even though I spent most of my girlhood summers on my uncle's farm, I have never laid eyes on such a beautiful and majestic creature, until I wandered into Mulranny's Old Irish Goat Centre looking for local, hand-made crafts.

Perched on a rock behind a fenced pasture stood Norman, a goat with huge ringed horns that swept high upon his head and curved toward his back in elaborate spirals. His beard was long and soft. He stood twice as large as domesticated Pierre and the

infamous Buck Buck.

When I laid eyes on Norman, I thought of every fairytale, folktale, and epic story that I have ever read. Norman was a living version of Narnia's Mr. Tumnus. I was smitten.

Well accustomed to sticking my fingers into the mouths of milk hungry calves, my initial reaction to greeting Norman was to offer my fingers in peace. He flipped his lips and licked my fingers. He and his field mate Sherman smelled of the best goat cheese you have ever eaten.

Notes of warm, late-September fields, autumn heather, mown hay, and rutting season wafted into your nasal passages, and into your memory. Norman and Sherman smelled of Ireland's ancient past.

Recently, I have had the pleasure of sharing emails with Sinead Keane, Director of Marketing & Communication, resident researcher at the Old Irish Goat Centre, and self-proclaimed "Goat-Obsessive." If you plan a visit with the goats at the Old Irish Goat Centre in Mulranny, County Mayo, you will readily fall in love with these truly special creatures.

Dating back 5,000 years, the Old Irish Goat would roam in feral herds led by the females. Interestingly, some male goats would form "bachelor" herds. While the male goats bear the long beard and impressive horns, the females are a bit more delicate in frame. Both, however, possess ancient adaptations which allow them to survive the remote and rugged Irish terrain.

Herd survival was taught to the young goats through tests in which they would run and hide, a goat form of hide and go seek with the same peer pressure found in playground games. Much like young humans, not everyone is fast and athletic, some of us may fall behind the race, relying on our intellect for survival; and so, the slower goats would use a bit of trickery: hiding and looking for more efficient paths to keep up with their more athletic peers. Otherwise, the young goats would risk being ostracized by the herd, and survival would be at stake.

The Old Irish Goat is present in the annals of Ireland's history. In years past, Dublin foundlings or orphans, would be brought to the Wicklow Mountains and the more accommodating female goats would



Photo by Richu Needham

act as a wet nurse, providing the motherless infant with nutrient-dense milk. Strange, but true.

The Book of Kells

Illuminations of the Old Irish Goat date back to the ancient Book of Kells and the Book of Armagh. Carved drawings of the goat have been discovered in Megalithic tombs dating to the Celts and the Vikings.

Goat skin was used by the monks for parchment and even covered the frame of the Bodhrán, Ireland's traditional, hand-held drum. Archaeologists have excavated artifacts of the side-blow horn made from the Irish goat horn.

In literature, the goat is found in poetry and prose. In James Joyce's *Ulysses*, the goat roams among the gorse and heather of Howth foraging while Leopold and Molly Bloom share an amorous moment. Old time crooners remind us all, "Birds do it, bees do it, even educated fleas do it." For generations, humans have looked to our natural world for survival, as well as inspiration.

Unfortunately, over the course of time, the Old Irish Goat fell to the travesties of human choice. Sport killing of goat herds, crossbreeding with modern, domesticated goats, and changes in farming practices led to the slow decimation of the Irish Goat, until it was believed that the Old Irish Goat was lost, living only in myth and legend.

Old Irish Goat Society

Organized in the Burren, County Clare, the original Old Irish Goat Society formed in 2006. Lacking necessary support, the group disbanded and later reconvened in 2012 in Mulranny, County Mayo, Ireland.

Observations of curious looking

feral goats were noted. Ray Werner, a primitive goat expert based in London, flew to the west of Ireland and joined fellow researchers. Three goats were caught, and DNA was obtained. Clinical proof established that the goats were descended from a pure herd that belonged to the ancient breed assumed lost.

In 2013, the mission of the Goat Society was actualized, and the sanctuary opened in Mulranny. A breeding program was established to ensure that one of the most unique and ancient symbols of Ireland's remarkable heritage would be preserved for future generations.

Research continues into the past and future promise of the Old Irish Goat. The goats are doing what they do best: foraging on invasive gorse and heather, helping the environment and farmers with conservation grazing, a natural and sustainable form of land management.

While there is no exact count of the population of goats roaming the mountains of Ireland, we are assured of the authenticity of their species. Though elusive, wild goats can be spotted across Ireland.

Old Irish Goats and rabbits co-exist on the uninhabited Dalkey (Goat) Island located in the county of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, while colonies of seals swim among the waters of the Irish Sea.

Considered endangered, the Old Irish Goat is not protected by the state. Teams of dedicated citizen-volunteers work to raise awareness of the importance of protecting this species. Thanks to the dedicated non-profit groups, researchers, conservationists, scientists, historians, and self-professed "goat obsessives," the Old Irish Goat will continue to stand as a symbol of Ireland's ancient heritage.

There is indeed promise for our future when the birds and beasts of nature are allowed to live as nature intended.

Connect with the Old Irish Goat at info@oldirishgoat.ie or in person at the Old Irish Goat Visitor Centre and Craft Shop – Mulranny, Co. Mayo, Ireland. •

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COOKING UP
A HOOLEY

KATIE GAGNE

Perfectly Green

I have always loved cabbage in all forms: boiled, roasted, turned into sauerkraut and coleslaw. This recipe is a different take on this staple for many Irish.

5 YEARS
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Have you ever tried grilling wedges of the great green veggie on an actual grill? Well, let me assure you, it's not only delish and simple, but so versatile.

You can have it as a simple side



4-5 stalks of Green Onions (scallions) white and green parts, finely chopped

Salt and Pepper to taste

Directions:

Heat your outdoor grill to medium.

Cut the cabbage into thick wedges. A large head should give 8.

Place the wedges carefully on a plate or in a shallow bowl and drizzle with canola oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Carefully, so as not to allow the cabbage wedges to fall apart, place on the hot grill for 4-5 minutes per side. Watch closely so they do not overcook but achieve a nice soft and grilled texture.

Place the warm cabbage wedges in two bowls or on two large plates.

You can leave the wedges whole or break them up if you like.

Sprinkle with nuts and blue cheese crumbles and dried cranberries (optional)

Top with Salmon or a favorite protein (optional)

Drizzle with dressing.

Top with green onions and season with salt and pepper to taste.

Serve warm or room temperature.

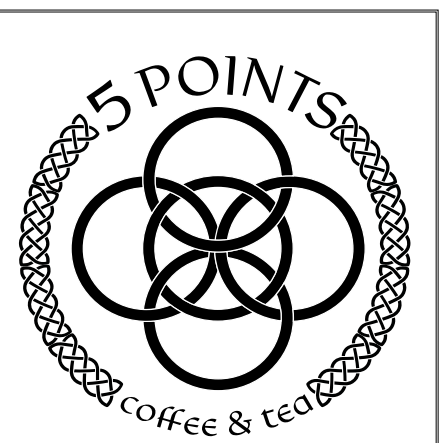
The bitterness of the cabbage as opposed to lettuces or other greens really make this uncomplicated dish unique.

Dried Cranberries can be added if desired for some sweetness.

This is also a great vehicle to add Salmon to as a protein. •

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dish wit salt and pepper added. It looks great and make the perfect bite served on a platter drizzled with your favorite dressing.

Here I made a larger meal-size salad that highlights this tasty vegetable.

Grilled Cabbage Salad

Ingredients

Makes approximately 2 large servings

1 large head of your favorite

Cabbage - Napa is very sturdy and hold up well on the grill. Green and Red Cabbage work great too and add a bit of color.

2 teaspoons Canola Oil
1 cup Spiced or Sugared Pecans
6-8 ounces Blue Cheese Crumbles

3/4 cup Ranch Dressing or any buttermilk flavored dressing, including more blue cheese if you prefer. This amount can be adjusted to personal taste.



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MADIGAN
MUSES

MARILYN MADIGAN

Celebration of Irish American Women

During March, we celebrate Irish Heritage Month. Did you know that March is also Women's Month? How did Women's Month start?

In 1978, a school district in Californian held a weeklong event to recognize women's contributions to culture, history and society. This idea spread and more school districts across the United States celebrated the contributions of Women.

National Women's History Month

President Carter issued the first Presidential Proclamation declaring the week of March 8, 1980, as National Women's History Week. In 1981, the U.S. Congress passed a resolution establishing a national celebration. The National Women's History Project petitioned Congress to expand the event. In 1987, it

was expanded to the entire month of March. Let us remember and celebrate the achievements of many Irish and Irish American Women. Most of those claiming Irish heritage in the United States are those whose ancestors came because of *an Gorta Mor* (the Great Hunger).

The most famous Irish American family is the Kennedys. When you think of the women in the Kennedy family, the first to come to mind is Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy, mother of the first Irish Catholic President.

The true matriarch of the Kennedy family is Bridget Murphy Kennedy, who emigrated to the United State during an Gorta Mor. If it was not for how Bridget survived all the challenges that she faced, we never would have heard of the Kennedys. I for one admire the way Bridget met her challenges and raised her son, Patrick Joseph, grandfather of John F. Kennedy.

The great granddaughters of Bridget have made impactful contributions, from Eunice Shriver and the Special Olympics to Jean Kennedy Smith, US Ambassador to Ireland, who was an advocate for the Good Friday Agreement.

All of our families can think of the strong women that have made us who we are. Our mothers hold a special place; that is why the United Irish Societies honor an Irish Mother of the Year.

Patricia Corcoran Holman has that honor this year. She has instilled her love of her heritage and her faith to her children. It is fitting that Pat is being honored this year as the theme

of the Parade is *Ireland One Island One Nation*, as her father fought for Irish freedom.

Congratulations to Pat Holman on this well-deserved honor. Let us also celebrate all of our mothers.

Hibernian of the Year

I am proud to be a member of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians (LAOH). The members of the LAOH throughout our country make a difference in their communities.

This year the Hibernian of the Year is Sarah O'Brien. Sarah is very active in the Irish community and the founding president of one of our new divisions, who will be celebrating their 2nd Anniversary.

Last month I recognized Bridget Linton as one of the Irish Echo's 40 under 40. This month during the month where we celebrate St. Patrick, I would like to highlight my sister Hibernian Patricia Coleman Lavelle. She has been the Chair of the AOH/LAOH Celebration of St. Brigid and St. Patrick since the celebration started.

Pat is committed to her Catholic faith and her Irish heritage. She follows the example of the patron saint of the LAOH as a model of feminine strength and leadership. Our Lady of the Rosary Division was privileged to have her as our President for the past four years.

This was the second time that she served as president. Pat was the

second president when Division 5 and 10 combined to make one strong LAOH Division. She is a quiet worker in many organizations, including the West Side Irish American Club, the United Irish Societies and the LAOH.

I personally know how hard she works on various events. This past November, the LAOH hosted a national event in my honor. I will never be able to thank Patty enough for all she did to make this event one to be remembered for years to come.

Under her leadership, my LAOH Sisters welcomed and made the many Hibernians attending to feel like Cleveland and the West Side Irish American Club was their home for the weekend. I know that Pat Lavelle is one that does not like the limelight, just like so many Irish women.

You are honored if you are able to have a cup of tea with Patty. Thinking of the many times that I have had a cup of tea with Patty, this quote comes to mind: "Women are like teabags. We don't know our true strength until we are in hot water." - Eleanor Roosevelt. Pat Lavelle is a strong woman that is always there for her family, friends, and our community. •

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Cleveland Public Library first opened as a Public School

Library for the Cleveland Board of Education in 1869. It was housed in a series of rented spaces and temporary homes until 1925, when the Main Library opened its doors on Superior Avenue in Downtown Cleveland.

By the early 1930s, 12,000 people a day were visiting and taking advantage of what the library was able to offer. In the 50s, the library's collection had tripled in size and the building was running out of room. In 1957, voters approved a three million dollar bond issue that allowed for the purchase and renovation of the former Plain Dealer Building.

The Main Library underwent major renovations in 1999, following a new eleven floor building named for Louis Stokes that opened adjacent to the Main Library in 1997. That building has thirty miles of bookshelves and can house 1.3 million books, along with the latest electronic resources. Cleveland Public Library also offers a variety of classes and events at the Main Library and its twenty-nine branches.

Irish, Scottish and Welsh Collections

Lisa Held works in the International Languages Department of the Main Branch. She has a graduate background in Irish history and interment era literature from NUI Galway, as well as Irish from time spent at University Ulster, Colrairie.

After joining Cleveland Public Library's International Languages and Foreign Literature Department, she persuaded her manager to allow her to take over the library's Irish, Scottish and Welsh collections that have been sitting in "Stacks" (the storage floor of the library) for over a decade. Lisa has managed to get a new vendor set up to acquire new Irish materials and has added to the collection. There are also orders ready for when the budget reopens.

In January, Lisa invited Mary and I to visit and offered us a tour of the International Language Department, and even up into "Stacks," which is not open to the public. It's been many years since I visited the Main Branch and had

forgotten what a magnificent place it is. The architecture alone is worth the visit! There are exhibits throughout the building (the Superman one is pretty impressive) along with artwork from local artists.

Lisa showed us the library's Irish language collection, which consists of language learning materials for all ages and levels, fiction for adults, young adults, and children, as well as non-fiction titles once again for all ages and levels.

There are also a number of Irish language films on DVD available. Lisa's goal is to expand the Irish language section because of the number of people in Cleveland of Irish ancestry.

Using and taking advantage of these books and resources helps Lisa in acquiring more. She told us that if a book is requested that the library does not have in its collection, if it's available through their vendors they will obtain it for you and add it to the collection so others may also benefit from it.

With Lisa's help, I selected a range of Irish language books to

check out and share with class members of the Speak Irish Cleveland class. We meet every Tuesday evening at PJ McIntyre's, and you're always welcome to join us.

100 Focal Tosaigh do do Bhabaí

by Edwina Riddell
Although this book was most likely intended for Irish speakers to teach their toddlers the language, beginners can benefit from it as well. It has illustrations that make it easy to see the meaning of the word. Pair it up with *Teannglan.ie* the online dictionary for aid with pronunciation.

Taibhsí sa Teach

by Kazuno Kohara

Murcha Mór

by Jane Clark and Charles Fuge
Both of these books are aimed at young readers or those that have a desire to start translating written Irish. This is something we do in our classes.

An Táin

by Colmán Ó Raghallaigh and the team at The Cartoon Saloon
This is a graphic novel (think of graphic novels as comic books grown up) that relates the story of the great cattle raid and Cú Chulainn.

Essential Irish

by G. Bannister

What's That as Gaeilge?

By Garry Bannister
These two books are great Irish phrase books. I liked the approach taken in the second book, useful

phrases based on a word in English. For example, the entry for man has the phrase, "Man cannot live by bread alone" "Ní ar an arán amháin a mhaireann an duine" and "Could I talk to you man to man?" "An bhféadfainn labhairt leat fear le fear eile?" along with a few others. It was easy to get lost in this book.

Irish is Fun

by Aodán Mac Póilín and M.Phil

Irish for Beginners

Usborne Language Guide
Introductions to Irish language in easy to understand cartoon form.

Fluid Scéal na mBlocanna H

1976-81

by Eoghan Mac Cormaic
For experienced readers of Irish language. It is the story of the protests by IRA prisoners and their attempts to be recognized as political prisoners.

Peig

by Peig Sayers
One of the great memoirs to come from the Blasket Islands. Peig was a gifted seanchaí.

I hope you take the time to visit the Cleveland Public Library soon. Stop and say hello to Lisa, she'll be happy to help you find just what you're looking for.

Slán go Fóill! •

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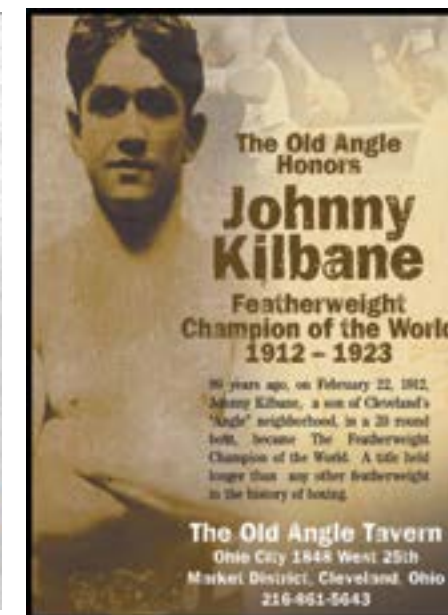
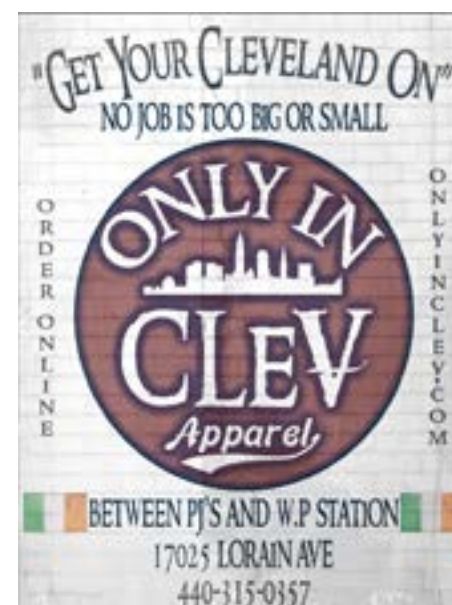


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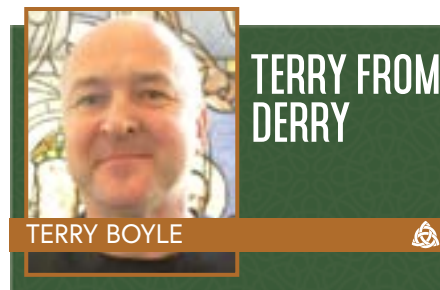
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Subject to Hype: Inclined to Fake

It's hard to believe that I've lived in the United States for twenty years, and still, I've managed to not go absolutely bonkers. While there is much that I love about being here, some things continue to whittle away my appreciation of the new home place.

When I first arrived in Chicago in 2004, I had to keep nipping at myself to believe that I was really living here. I had made a dream come true, taken that leap of faith into a new place, and made it become a reality.

It's hard to describe those early years of living in two places. Physically, I existed in a very different place than the one that occupied my mind. I'd left Donegal, the least populated and poorest county in Ireland, and now I was in the third-largest U.S. city.

The contrast between these two places was more than apparent. My new American life was filled with a host of new cultures co-mingling, co-existing in a way that excited me.

I loved the ethnic diversity with its rich array of diverging histories and common desire for a shared identity. The melting pot of humanity was alive on my doorstep in a way that I could never have imagined it to be.

Each day was another learning experience. Ordinary things such as grocery shopping became adventures. People's approach to the most basic things here left me with a sense of bemusement.

As an Irish person, I've always shied away from those things that might cause embarrassment or

offence, and now I was among people who didn't shy away from potential embarrassment or confrontation but who had a certain confidence that allowed them to stand their ground. From the questioning of the bill to the admission of not having enough to pay for something, it was all so different from the mindset that I'd grown up with.

Americans, it seemed to me then, had no problem about sharing personal things about themselves. My inherent sense of privacy was continually challenged by their unabashed approach to life.

The Shame Reflex

The shame reflex that had dogged me all my life was absent in this new culture and I liked it. People would share their most intimate secrets with strangers they met in the gym or on a bus and this casual sharing of personal details proved to be refreshingly liberating.

Instead of being ashamed of who I was, I began to see that we were all the same. We're all struggling to make sense of our lives.

The things that plagued my thoughts were no different to those around me. The freedom to talk freely about such issues enables you to feel a part of your community and not apart or alienated from it.

Things began to change for me in 2016, with the election of a person who was not worthy to be called a president. This man exposed the cracks in American society to his advantage.

Instead of unifying the country, he widened the divide. He created distrust of the media, made a circus of the political arena, and treated the judiciary as a rule of law that didn't apply to him.

In the four years that he took control, I hated watching the news. Every new outrageous antic of his was now prime-time entertainment. His oafish crassness had us fearing the worst outcomes.

Of course, the media loves him. His most blatant disregard for anything that we hold sacred to our democracy is a money spinner for news outlets.

Hours of my time were spent on a roller coaster of possibilities. Now, I distrusted the media. The spin of what might happen, of course never happened, coupled with a

man obsessed with taking center stage on every news channel was quickly wearing me down.

The amount of anxiety I experienced during those four years was tantamount to a complete meltdown of my sanity. Once he'd left office, and inspired an insurrection, I was done with salivating over every news story. When it came to what was newsworthy, I realized that I'd lost my sense of discernment, and it was time to get things back into perspective.

New Year's Resolution

Now, I take each news channel with more than a grain of salt. Their obsession with the bumbling oaf is unforgivable. If they cared about the news, they would ignore his ramblings and concentrate on what is rather than what might be. Their endless speculations are enough to make any clear-thinking person despair.

In January of this year, I made a New Year's resolution that I'm hoping to keep and that's to avoid sinking myself into the mire of news hype. Whenever I find my emotions hopping onto the bipolar

world of fruitless media analysis, I slap myself hard and force myself to wake up to the corporate world of media spin.

So far, all is good in this world apart, this world where I stand apart from the mayhem. This world where I've taken back control of my feelings instead of reacting to what I'm fed daily by sensationalist journalists who thrive on making up apocalyptic versions of the inevitable end of our democracy.

I can't say that I've become a fatalist who simply accepts things for what they are, but I plan to conserve my energy for what I can change. I have a vote. It means something to me.

My vote may not stem the tide of popular opinion, but it's my right to stand against the erosion of the things that I value most. I plan to use my vote to make my statement against the bully boys threatening to change this country that I loved when I first arrived here in 2004. •

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A Celtic Woman, from Cork to Cleveland

Celtic Woman's 20th Anniversary Tour started February 22, and runs through May 26. We are delighted to sit down with Celtic Woman Muirgen (pron. Muhr rin) O'Mahoney (pron. Oh' Mahan nee), the gorgeous and funny soprano from Cork, to get to know her, and her pre-Celtic Woman background.



[Editor's Note:] Because of space limits in print, a condensed version of the interview is below. See the full interview, with more text, more pics and video, at www.ilrish.us.

You have been performing as an actor, singer and instrumentalist for your entire professional career, and before that too. Tell us about being born and raised in Cork.

Ah, pride of place, definitely has pride of place with me. I moved from Cork, probably about eight years ago now. I remember when I first moved to Wales; I wanted to spread my wings, move to the UK, see the city.

Since leaving, particularly in the last three years, I have missed Cork so much. Every time I go back, I'm hit with how fantastic the city is. I'm so grateful to be from there. It's a fantastic city for music, it has an incredible Jazz Festival. It's a great city for food. If anyone is inclined to visit, I would highly recommend that if they are lovers of food.

Did you know from the very beginning or when very young that music was your future?

It's funny, there was definitely



Muirgen O'Mahoney

never a choice, or I never thought I'm going to do music as the career, I never thought it. There was no other candidate.

When I was going to study, it was always music. People ask, what are your hobbies? It's always music-based things, it was very much a lifestyle.

I think when I went to study in university, it was not so much a choice of will I do music, it was more so a choice of what could I, a classical flute player do? I wasn't sure whether I wanted to study classical flute for my degree or whether to do classical singing.

I decided to go with singing because I had done my teaching diploma in flute at that time, so I was straddling the two, which was really such a pleasure to be able to do.

Did you always view your voice as an instrument?

I probably didn't start singing (solo) in front of people until I was about 15 or 16. I always loved singing, but honestly, I suffered ferociously with stage fright. Often, I would still get a lot of nerves, that affects your breath a lot; that took a lot as a teenager for me to overcome.

Tell me how you became aware of and interested in Celtic Woman?

It's a group that I've watched since I was a young child, it's a

staple of growing up in Ireland, and particularly as a female - not even a female musician, but as someone who is watching TV. Then someone who pursues music, it's part of our culture.

I did a concert with Susan McFadden, she and I immediately got on very well, she actually recommended me for the [Celtic Woman] job when there was an opening. From there I auditioned, all during COVID times. It was all very strange doing online meetings, then meeting them in person. That's how we came to be a part of the group.

I remember seeing it and thinking that it was something that I could fit in. Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would actually be a part of it; I didn't even know at that point that singing was something that I could ever do professionally. It didn't even occur to me that it was a possibility.

I had teachers along the way, even in university, who almost warned me, they said you know, this is an extremely difficult career to go into. I understood that. I am among a very small percentage of people who have the fortunate opportunity to perform and travel.

I would never want to give anyone the illusion that it's all songs and dancing and all that. Aside from the work, the work isn't work - the

work is such a pleasure, it's the graft around it, the rejection, the missing out on family opportunities or just things along the way.

Even as you're studying, if it's something that you want, and I do, I believe that I did make the sacrifice along the way, you have to be laser focused, and that's a difficult thing to do. It's a sacrifice in some ways, but if you were lucky enough to avail of this opportunity, it's it is a dream come true. You would never regret going for that. You're getting more out of it than you're putting in, even though the amount you're putting in is massive.

People say, "Oh, well, there's a great singer, they were born that way." No, there's an awful lot of work that goes into that, yes?

When I did my undergrad, I remember thinking, I finished undergrad, now I do my exams and then I'll know what I'm doing. You never know what you're doing. The training never stops.

I think what's also quite beautiful is that there is never a feeling of complacency or being stagnant, because you want to be upskilling, you want to give the best that you can. You want to invest in yourself, in the music, as much as possible.

For me, I love singing technique, and I love teaching it. I like vocal anatomy; it is extremely interesting. That is something that I love, continuing to learn.

It's like anything, I think, it's like going to the gym and getting a personal trainer; "oh, you're actually doing that exercise wrong," and then you do it right; this has opened up a world of opportunity. I think it's great to have the opportunity to keep progressing. Like any job, you want to progress.

Did you have a musical family growing up?

Not professionally. My mother is very musical, she taught herself guitar and piano. She might not have been afforded the opportunity of going to lessons like I had as a child. She's very naturally musical and artistic. My brother is an artist, a fantastic singer and musician himself. His profession is in the art world.

My dad loved listening to music. He would classify himself as tone deaf. He loves music, he's obsessed.

We grew up around music. I probably would be the only one professionally going down that road; it's been instilled in me from my parents. They've always been so supportive.

I am sure every parent's hope is to not have a musician and an artist as children.

My parents [liked] those things, as long as you're not rockstar drum players, you're OK. They're just wondering about the pension; I'm like, we will deal with that later.

Celtic Woman certainly had

theaters in the US. I just, I wasn't. I didn't want to allow the moment to pass where I didn't clock every time that this is insane, this is incredible.

You went to Cork School of Music and then you went to the Royal Academy. What was the advantage so to speak, what was your thought on why you wanted to add more education?

My undergrad was in classical singing, and while I think it's an incredible skill to have and I was very grateful for the education that I had,



PBS will air the accompanying "20th ANNIVERSARY" TV special across 60+ local PBS stations. Filmed in The Helix Theatre in Dublin, where it all began 20 years ago, and in the very same theatre. The TV special features appearances from original members Lisa Kelly, Máiréad Nesbitt, Méav Ní Mhaolchatha and Chloë Agnew.

Celtic Woman has sold over ten million CDs and DVDs and amassed more than three billion streams. Named Billboard's #1 World Music Artist of the Year six times, 12 of the studio CDs have debuted at #1 on Billboard's World Album chart. They have achieved platinum-level sales in nine countries.

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For the complete tour schedule, tickets and more information: www.celticwoman.com/tour-dates. Sign up for Celtic Woman's newsletters at www.celticwoman.com to learn about new tour dates, album releases and special offers. •

to alleviate some stress about that part of it?

Yes, as far as knowing what I'm doing in a month time, it is a luxury I never knew existed. Seeing the world and travel is a passion of mine as well.

I remember on the last spring tour, on every single theater that we were in, I remember looking out into the auditorium and thinking, Muirgen, look at where you are, appreciate this; first of all, we just come out of COVID, I never thought I would perform again. But I never ever thought that I would be performing with Celtic Woman in these huge

I never connected to the classical repertoire as much. I had a really fantastic director when I was in my third year in Cork, who said to me, you should look into going to the Royal Academy in London. I was kind of like, OK.

I got a place there. Something like nearly 1,000 people auditioned and 30 people were offered. So then, I was, OK, I guess I'm doing this now.

I then went to study musical theater for a year in London. It was the most incredible, but also incredibly difficult, year. It was a lot of the time performing. Arts degrees are spread over three years [but] one year here.

It was the most intense experience. You're in college from 8 in the morning until 11:00 at night. There was no downtime. It was an incredible training for the industry; it really pushed you so incredibly hard past your limits, that anything after that couldn't be worse.

Boot camp for sure, but the education I had there was second to none. It really is why I am so interested in vocal anatomy and the workings of the voice, because we went a bit more in depth to that. It was amazing.

Would you say then, is it more of a presentation of acting if you will? What you are presenting, is it learning more skill than how to move, or is it more of a developing vocal everything?

We would have one-to-one vocal lessons; would have Rep lessons; we would have acting classes; so, it was all-encompassing. When I went to the Royal, I completely fell in love with acting. I actually left the university thinking, I want to be an actor, not a singer, because I found to get lost in that script was just intense, therapeutic.

I got my first professional job out of university, which was a singing job. The singing jobs continued, so I thought maybe I shouldn't be turning my back on all of the vocal years, but the acting side of things is really something that I was so taken with.

If you sang a song on Friday night, would you sing it the same way on Saturday?

I'm sure I would be pretty consistent with it. If I've rehearsed something a certain way, and maybe this goes back to the classical upbringing, if I ever heard something a certain way, I would likely stick to the format of it.

I say this to students that I teach, if you are connecting to something really strongly in your head while singing this lyric, that comes across. People might not know that you are connected to it, or what your meaning behind it is, but it makes people feel something. It makes them connect. •

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The Wounds That Bind Us: Irish-Palestinian Solidarity

By **Moyra Michelle Nguyen**

The best thing about being Irish in America is the level of love that I feel from and towards my Irish community. I remember my first ever trip to America was spending a summer in New York in my early 20s. It was like a home-from-home, being welcomed without question by the Irish American community everywhere I went.

I always thought that that was normal, until while amongst a group of international colleagues while living in London, they shook their heads in puzzlement at my belief. No, that's not how other countries do it, they felt, not understanding any concept of feeling any responsibility towards their countrymen.

They asked, "What is that about

anyway?" Now being on British soil at the time, I bit my tongue, but I can say it here. When you take away everything from other people, their land, their livelihoods, their food, their natural resources, their language, their schools, their churches, their customs, their religion, their reputations, and their dignity, what else do they have to cling to, but each other?

That brings me to the heaviest thing we experience in being Irish; the struggle that we carry in our blood and our bones from the violent oppression our ancestors endured over 800 years of British colonization of our homeland. We were a land of emerald riches; saints and scholars; of magic and luck; of community with nature and God. We had wild warrior queens and mythical giants.

As Celts we were fierce, yet we coexisted with the softness of the faeries. I'm not sure when we became 'the land of 100,000 welcomes,' but we had some very unwelcome visitors for a long time.

How can we comprehend 800 years of the struggle? 800 years. What capacity do we even have within us to consider this the enormity of the suffering and for our neighbors in Northern Ireland still their lived experience? For the rest of us, it lives on in our habits or ways of thinking and being, that

we find totally normal.

Numbing the Pain

Maybe it's always needing the cupboards to be filled full of food lest you might go hungry. Perhaps it's needing to finish everything on your plate because food still feels scarce. More commonly it is the drinking and other addictions to help us numb the pain that we feel, and don't even know why it's there.

Revisiting history is not easy; it can seem like opening old wounds. My mother doesn't even like the word 'Protestant' being used because of the division it has sown.

The first 400 years of colonization or settlements that were an intermingling of peoples; it happened for 1000s of years before that, and most settlers assimilated into Irish culture. It was from the 1400s onwards that the violent strategies of taking full possession of the land and domination of her

people took hold.

If I were to put myself in the shoes of my ancestors, I think for the first 100 years I'd be angry and ready to fight. The second 100 years I'd be even more angry and fight like hell.

Then the third 100 years, wow. I think I start to feel somewhat defeated and even hopeless. Then in the fourth century, I'd be ready for that famine to come and take me out.

So many generations and yet somehow, our ancestors did keep going. The population of Ireland halved at that time. Halved. The Sligo poet W.B. Yeats describes the despair and hopelessness it in his poem, 'The Ballad of Father Gilligan,'

'The old priest Peter Gilligan was weary night and day. For half his flock were in their beds or under green sods lay. I have no rest, nor joy, nor peace. For people die and die And after cried he 'God forgive!' My body spake not I'

How far we have come in the past 100 years since achieving the Irish Free State, building the Irish Republic and restoring the dignity of Eireann? Having decolonized our lands, it's now time to decolonize our hearts and minds.

It's time for healing. It's time to thaw out all the numbness, all the unspoken pain and unsaid traumas that have been allowed to turn into stony silence and addiction. This will truly be the hardest thing any of us Irish people will do in our lifetimes.

Not just because the sheer immensity of the pain, but its compounding by successive generations of parents, priests, teachers and leaders, who went through it with us.

Intergenerational Trauma

This is what intergenerational trauma is. It's like PTSD that is inherited without us even being aware. Pulling this pain from the past into the present day requires great emotional courage. And just in case we doubted we were ready, God brought it before us to witness in real time, so that we couldn't continue to look away. We can't go back and save our ancestors, but perhaps we can stop it happening

to anyone else ever again ... and find healing in this way.

Irish Palestinian Connection

The Irish Palestinian connection isn't obvious from the outset. Thousands of miles apart, we look different. We speak differently, but we share some very common stories and bonds.

They are devout in their faith and center family and community in their lives. They just want to live in peace on their lands and carry on the nationhood and customs of their ancestors.

They never asked for the war and occupation that was thrust upon them by Englishmen thousands of miles away. These stories are our stories, because we are them and they are us, on a more modern and different timeline.

As we were gaining our hard-won independence from a British Empire that the sun was finally setting on, their lives were about to be torn asunder by that very same force. The British Balfour Declaration of 1917 expressed support for a small political faction of Zionist European Jews who believed that Palestine was their homeland and revival of the Old Testament name of 'Israel.'

It wasn't much of a stretch for Britain to support their claiming of a foreign land as their own. This political support gave great legitimacy to their cause, elevating an obscure political idea into a colonial masterplan.

Meanwhile, back closer to home, the 'Ireland problem' persisted. The Irish people were conducting a quiet uprising through civil disobedience. This approach was difficult for the British because they needed violence to justify their usual methodical and brutal punishment.

Violence arrived on both sides. The Irish, with not much else to lose, took up arms and created the Irish Republican Army (IRA). They were ready to take the difficult actions needed to end the occupation.

Come Out Ye Black and Tans

The British met this with the Black & Tans, a paramilitary style policing unit still despised to this

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Story
Continued from page 39

day. Their job was to create chaos, disorder, and terror among the Irish civilian population, using any means to quell the uprising.

They conducted raids, committed arson, and left a trail of destruction throughout the country. Highlights include burning Cork city to the ground and massacring GAA fans in their seats as they watched a Gaelic match at Croke Park.

After much bloodshed, the Anglo-Irish treaty was signed in July of 1921, and the Black and Tans could finally leave our shores. With a honed skillset for state sanctioned terror, where would Winston Churchill send them next?

That's right, their new trenches became Palestine, where Britain had engineered political power for themselves following WWI. A gloomy future was being carved out by British colonizers stealing Palestinian land from under their feet under 'Mandate Palestine.'

Voyagers to Ireland traveled a long way to get to Ireland, often it being a last stop. The Middle East was very different. It was a melting pot of cultures and a hub for global merchants passing through for as long as history has been recorded. Christians, Muslims and Jews lived together peacefully on these lands for thousands of years.

The return of Jews to this area in the early 1900s was at first just another flow of people moving peacefully through the region. Many Jews found safety there during the times of the terrible Holocaust.

However, where we find Britain, we find conflict; their destabilization methods quickly wreaked chaos and inequality in the entire region. Now Britain wanted out of the Middle East, but were not willing to totally give up control.

Ronald's Stores, who was the British Military Governor for Mandate Palestine at the time, is quoted as saying, "We're trying to create a little loyal Jewish Ulster in a sea of potentially hostile Arabs."

They took their remorseless approach to Ireland and planted

it right into the resource-rich middle east, using Jewish Zionists to hold the reins of colonial power instead of their own men. Occupation by proxy was afoot.

An Gorta Mor

Ireland's great disaster is called "An Gorta Mor" (1845 to 1851), which is translated in sentiment as 'The Great Hunger' but the more literal translation from Gaeilge is "The Big Hurt." Hunger as gaeilge is 'Ocras'.

The Great Hunger is now widely acknowledged as an attempted genocide of the Irish people. The Irish were left to die after the potato crop failed for many consecutive years, while all the other food was exported to Britain.

The Palestinian great disaster occurred in 1948, and is called "the Nakba," which literally translates as "The Catastrophe." The UN estimates that upwards of 700,000 Palestinians were expelled from their homes and ancestral lands at this time, and millions more since. Jewish Zionists declared this new country, called Israel.

(Note: Jewish Zionists are not to be confused with or used as a synonym for people of the Judaic faith. Zionists are a sect of political belief that believes in the Israel project, using Judaism in much the same way that Europeans used Christianity as they colonized the world in earlier centuries. Many Jews are highly opposed to the Israeli project and recognize it as a trauma response to the devastation of the holocaust).

The Catastrophe that started in 1948 has never ended. War after war has claimed more and more of the indigenous lands and sacred lives of the Palestinians.



The current escalation of this war of occupation has been ongoing since October 7th 2023, after an offensive by the Palestinian freedom fighters Hamas.

At the time of this writing, the death toll was estimated at 30,000 people. That's almost the entirety of County Leitrim wiped out. That is Westlake, Ohio emptied of all its citizens. The loss is unimaginable, yet it is very much the reality that we are living with here in 2024.

An ever-diminishing number of brave Palestinian journalists survive to document the brutality of this war from their smartphones. This is the first war in history where media and government do not get to control what we see and know about these billion-dollar wars. Veterans who have seen so much will deeply understand what this means.

Every day, images of savagery are posted as pleas for help, with questions like, 'does anyone care?' I have seen videos of bodies being blown apart; hospitals being bombed with wards of babies in their incubators; children being pulled out of rubble; women shot while carrying white flags and falling, with their children's hands still in theirs. Those not killed by bombs are getting sick and being

starved to death, while food and aid sits at the border, unsafe to enter this bombarded territory.

And the men, I see these brave men run to the sites of each of these blasts and use their bare hands to retrieve dead and barely alive bodies from the rubble. I ask, how are these men to return to a normal life after touching this much death and destruction?

In our Irish communities, I see that men have been the most affected by our legacy of colonization, or perhaps that it is just more pronounced. Men are way more likely to suffer from alcoholism and other addictions, less likely to be able to ask for help, more common to suffer in stoic silence, more likely to commit suicide and are more common to suffer from host of chronic conditions.

No One Shows You How to Be Free

Outside of the bloodshed that accompanies war and colonialism, there is the loss of dignity that comes with a stripping a man of his ability to provide a safe home and put food on the table for his family. Us women didn't come out unscathed either; emotional support systems are easier to find to help us process these old emotions. No one

shows you how to be free. Tears don't come easily to me. I grew up in a stoic Irish family much like yours, I'm sure. Perhaps when a culture carries so much pain and sadness, it can seem like allowing just a few tears could easily turn into a tsunami; if the floodgates open, they might never be able to shut again.

But I weep as I watch the scenes of destruction and death, for I know it in my blood and my bones. I not only grieve for these sacred Palestinian lives being lost by the hundreds every day, but I grieve for myself too. I grieve for all my ancestors and your ancestors who lived and died through wars waged for land and power.

And I grieve for all the forgotten, past, present, and future, who have been touched by colonization and war. I shake my head and I ask, "How is this still happening?"

When I look into the eyes of our Palestinian brothers and sisters living here as immigrants and refugees, I think these are the only eyes who can see us Irish and understand us. To many, we are simply more white Europeans who came to America because of privilege and choices, not indigenous people of the lands of Eireann, whose land was stolen by people who looked just like us.

Did you know that in 1847, as the famine was ravishing Ireland, the Choctaw Nation, who had only recently arrived across the tragic Trail of Tears and Death, gathered a donation equivalent to \$5,000 to support the Irish? It often seems to be the ones with so little

will give so much. Other nations and institutions including the Ottoman Empire, of which ruled over Palestine at the time sent \$1,000 and ships full of food and aid in response to the suffering, an amount limited by the British crown for self-serving reasons.

I was taught in school that colonialism was over. Yet here we are. The border that separates the Republic of Ireland from the six counties of Northern Ireland still exists. Dotted all around the Northern Ireland streetscape are murals dedicated to Palestine by the Catholics of Northern Ireland and some dedicated to Israel by the Protestant Loyalists.

My belief is that Northern Ireland has the right to self-determination and we get to support that in a way that empowers those communities that have been waiting so long for peace. For far too long, decisions have been made by people who don't live on the lands that those decisions are being made about.

I believe the Palestine has the same right. We can use our power and privilege to help those who continue to go through what we went through. Palestinians don't need to suffer for 800 years like we did.

We need to find ways to let them know that they are not alone nor forgotten. There have been many protests throughout this country, in Ireland and all over the world. The Irish have been one of Palestine's most vocal supporters in the western world.

Irish lawyers are part of the legal team who partnered with

international world governments in the South African-led International Court of Justice, charging the Israeli government with genocide and other war crimes.

Our local and national politicians need to speak on our behalf. The spotlight of the world is on the plight of the Middle East and the morals of the western world.

Will we look away like so many did, as we starved? Or do we reach out a hand and do everything we can to say, never again.

Jesus Wept

Thinking of the most famous Palestinian man in history, we must ask ourselves, what would Jesus do? And I'm sure from there we can find the right answer, and the courage and initiative to follow it through.

B'fheidir go tiocfaidh ar la e anois. (Maybe 'our day will come' is now).

If you would like to express your support locally in Cleveland to encourage your representatives at Cleveland city council to call for a ceasefire, follow this link to sign your name. It will only take 1 minute.

Link: <https://forms.gle/HXQSivfQrYQxBmNn9>

Moyra Michelle Nguyen is a native of Sligo, Ireland. She has been living in Cleveland since 2011. She is a trauma healer helping people to overcome their pasts to mentally and physical feel better and to build better futures.

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Saint Kevin's Miracles

Saint Kevin, the sixth century Glendalough saint, was an ascetic and hermit who slept on stones, ate little but herbs and roots, prayed in freezing water, and wore mostly animal skins. He spent much of his time wandering the woods or meditating in a cave so low he could not stand up in it. His regimen did not seem to have affected his health: he died at age 120. Perhaps that last bit should tip us off that there are very few facts really known about Saint Kevin. He is part of the 'second order' of Irish saints, a term that derives from an effort around 750 by an anonymous author to describe the rise of Christianity. The first order were the church

founders, St. Patrick and early bishops; the second order were the monastery builders. Initially, Saint Kevin was reluctant for the CEO job: he preferred his barefoot, berry-eating ways. His cave had a lakeside view, and he even had a devoted otter who retrieved his dropped breviary from the water and brought him the occasional fish. But as fate, or more correctly, providence would have it, a cow wandered into his cave one day and began to lick his clothes or feet (accounts vary). One lick and the cow gave as much milk as fifty cows. Naturally, the curious farmer followed the animal to Kevin's cave where he was instantly converted. Soon the farmer brought the rest of his family to be baptized. Since converting pagan and getting rid of druids and their miscreant followers was the church's aim of the day, Kevin realized he needed to get back onto the grid (such as it was). Alas his plan to build his monastery on a nearby tract of land was temporarily foiled by the local pagan King O'Toole (full disclosure: might be my relative—it is my grandmother's maiden name). But for reasons of his own (read: weird) King O'Toole was inordinately fond of an old goose he had. In exchange for making the goose young again, which

Kevin did handily, the King granted the land.

In addition to the usual run of miracles like restoring sight to the blind and healing people having fits, Kevin's other miracles were fairly location specific. He rid the neighborhood of a dragon water monster; he got a bunch of willow trees to produce apples, and he commanded nettles to beat off a local lass with impure designs on him. Harsher accounts say he drowned the woman, but the evidence is sketchy. All in all, Kevin chalked up more of the requisite miracles, had a nice group of friends like Columba and Kieran of Clonmacnoise, stopped skylarks from waking everyone up too early with their noisy warbling, and was an all-around nice fellow.

So, Seamus Heaney wrote a poem about him. But Heaney didn't choose to write about any of the saint's great miracles, though the story he tells is admittedly improbable. The poem describes the time Kevin was praying in his wee cell with his outstretched holy (and no doubt very skinny) arms when a bird nested in his palm. Ever the gentleman (except for the nettled lady), Kevin holds still until the ladybird hatches her young and they all fly away. He writes:

And then there was St Kevin and the blackbird.

The saint is kneeling, arms stretched out, inside

His cell, but the cell is narrow, so One turned-up palm is out the window, stiff

As a crossbeam, when a blackbird lands

And lays in it and settles down to nest.

Kevin feels the warm eggs, the small breast, the tucked

Neat head and claws and, finding

himself linked

*Into the network of eternal life,
Is moved to pity: now he must hold his hand*

Like a branch out in the sun and rain for weeks

Until the young are hatched and fledged and flown.

So, with that story told, just like it happened, right in the middle of it all (why he starts with "And"), Heaney thinks about it a bit more and invites us to speculate further (another "And" and another four tercet stanzas which we recall (!) from sophomore literature are three-line stanzas often more somber in tone that can be either rhymed or unrhymed). Heaney writes:

And since the whole thing's imagined anyhow,

*Imagine being Kevin. Which is he?
Self-forgetful or in agony all the time*

From the neck on out down through his hurting forearms?

Are his fingers sleeping? Does he still feel his knees?

Or has the shut-eyed blank of underearth

Crept up through him? Is there distance in his head?

Alone and mirrored clear in love's deep river,

'To labour and not to seek reward,' he prays,

A prayer his body makes entirely

For he has forgotten self, forgotten bird

And on the riverbank forgotten the river's name.

Heaney himself has told listeners what his poem is about (in this you tube video <https://youtu.be/wKGmQcSFbMc>). He says it is based

"on the sense of doing the right things for the reward of doing the right thing." What is this right

thing Seamus Heaney is praising? First there is profound pity for the creatures of the world, the bird in the first part of the diptych, in the second, Kevin himself. The reader is called to see Kevin's pity and then to pity Kevin himself.

Saint's lives, when measured by their miracles, may strike wonder (or skepticism) but they are exceedingly difficult to actually emulate: it's very hard to stop early morning birdsong, or increase milk production fifty-fold, or de-age a goose. But Heaney is more interested in compassion than in miracles. Poor Kevin is "in agony all the time." If he is not in pain from the neck to the fingertip, it is only because the "underearth" has "crept up through him," deadening his pain but also connecting the saint to the soil, and hence to grace-filled humility.

Kevin prays St. Ignatius' prayer (an anachronism that Heaney knows we will recognize), and his body has itself become the prayer. Bone-tired Kevin persists: he does not fail the burden of pity or love or generosity. Saint Kevin's life story may not be known factually, but his spirit, as Heaney has recorded it, surely is. •

"Saint Kevin and the Blackbird." Seamus Heaney, *The Spirit Level*, 1996

A Smaller Social History of Ancient Ireland, 1906

<https://www.libraryireland.com/SocialHistoryAncientIreland/II-VI-3.php>

Jeanne Colleran, Ph.D., is Professor Emeritus, John Carroll University.

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TREELAWN SOCIAL CLUB

9th - The Ascension of Mary Mulligan movie, by Cleveland Christopher Johnson. 8pm 15335 Waterloo Rd, Cleveland, OH 44110, (216) 677-8733

THE HARP

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16th – Marys Lane, **17th – Irish Brunch:** Great Music, Great food.

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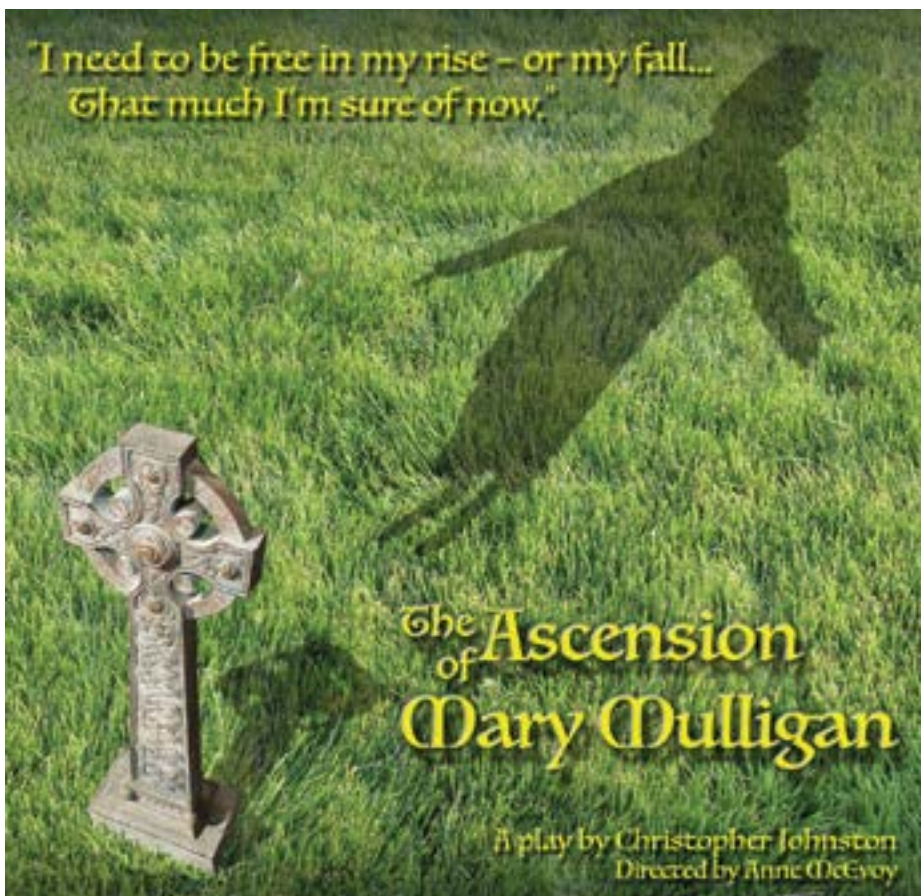
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The Ascension of Mary Mulligan movie, by Cleveland Christopher Johnson. 9th - Treelawn Social Club 8pm 15335 Waterloo Rd, Cleveland, OH 44110 (216) 677-8733. **15th - Akron Ancient Order of Hibernians Hall, 7pm. 2000 Brown Street, Akron, OH 44319**

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WILLOUGHBY

NORA'S PUBLIC HOUSE

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WILD GOOSE

No events sent to us. 4114 Erie Street, Willoughby 44094 wildgoosewlb.com



sessiúns:

Gormley's Pub – 2nd Sunday of the month, 5 to 8. 19500 Center Ridge Road, Rocky River, OH 44116

The Magic Tree Pub & Eatery – 3rd Sunday of the month, 5:30 to 7:30 7463 South Avenue, Boardman, Ohio 44512

Gormley's Irish Pub – Mondays: Music lessons w/ Samantha McNamara, followed by 8pm session. All ages, levels, & observers welcome. Info/Contact: McNamaraSchool.com

Rialto Theater – Gordon Shaffer First Tuesday of the month Irish Session. 7 to 9PM 1000 Kenmore Blvd. Akron, 44314

Ofie'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

Akron AOH – Last Wednesday of the month. 7-9 w/ Celtic Rush

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

The Harp – 1st Friday of every month, 9pm 4408 Detroit, Cleveland 44113

The 1035 Club – 1st Saturday of the month 1-3. 1035 Bridge Street upstairs, Ashtabula, OH 44004

Irish Language Classes:

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

Introductory to intermediate level, Thursdays 7:00 p.m., 745 Pleasant Ridge Ave. Bexley, OH 43209

traditional Irish social dance opportunities:

Tuesdays 7 to 9 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



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MEGAN LARDIE



kids craic

kids in the kitchen

Mint Oreo Cookie Bark

Ingredients:

- 6 oz white chocolate
- 12-16 Cool Mint Oreo cookies
- Shamrock Quins or any green sprinkles

Directions:

Arrange 3/4 of the Oreo Cookie Pieces on a baking sheet.
Melt White Chocolate in a small bowl either over a pot of boiling water or in the microwave.
Pour the melted chocolate over the cookies and smooth carefully with a spatula.
Sprinkle the rest of the Cookies and the Quins over the chocolate.
Refrigerate for about 30 minutes or until firm.
Break the bark into pieces and serve.



Lardie's Laughs

Q. Why do leprechauns recycle?

A. They like to go green!

Q. What happens when a leprechaun falls into the Irish Sea?

A. He gets wet!

Megan is a Reading Intervention Educator for the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. She may be reached at megan-lardie126@outlook.com.

A LITTLE HUG FROM GOD

The Celtic Cross is a fascinating symbol of Ireland that blends both Pagan and Christian traditions. It looks like a regular cross, but it has a circle around where the arms of the cross meet. This circle makes it unique!

Long ago, in places like Ireland and Britain, people started making these special crosses. They used them to show their love for God. The circle in the Celtic cross is like a hug from God. Before it became a Christian symbol, the Celtic cross was used by pagans (people who believed in different gods) to worship the Sun.

Legend of St. Patrick

It is believed that when St. Patrick brought Christianity to Ireland, he encountered several groups of pagans. He learned that they worshipped a large circular stone.

They called it the Sun Cross or Sun Wheel. St. Patrick drew lines through the center forming what we now call a Celtic cross.



St. Patrick used the symbol of Christianity combined with the Sun Wheel to convince the pagans that the cross was important. By joining the sun and the cross, he felt he could make Christianity more appealing to the pagan followers. So, the cross became a beautiful blend of both Celtic and Christian cultures.

The Celtic cross is now commonly seen in Insular art (art designed in Ireland and Great Britain from the 5th – 8th century). Some refer to it as a regular cross but with a magical halo. Artists often decorate the circle with intricate patterns that look like fancy weaving.

The Celtic cross is used in artwork, jewelry, and monuments and its popularity has spread across the world. Do you have any artwork or jewelry in your home with the Celtic cross? Now you know how the design started!

LITERATURE CORNER

Secret of the Ron Mor Skerry

By Rosalie K. Fry

This is one of my most favorite books ever!

After Fiona's family moves to Scotland, she learns she does not love city life. She is sent back to live with her grandparents in Ireland. She begins to wonder about her baby brother who disappeared during the island evacuation, but the fishermen have claimed to have seen. For ages 9-12, 96 pages.



Fiona's Luck

By Teresa Bateman

The greedy Leprechaun King has taken all the good fortune and locked it away. It is up to Fiona to come up with a plan to get the good luck back. Can she outsmart the powerful King and bring the good tidings back to the people of Ireland? For ages 4-8, 32 pages.



ᵿab in ᵿaelic

Happy Saint Patrick's Day

=
Beannachtai na Feile Padraig

(Pron: bann/ockt/tee nih fail/eh pawd/rig)





CLEVELAND COMHRÁ

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BOB CARNEY

Oisín and St. Patrick

For most Americans, the history of this place we call America begins with the arrival of the Europeans. The rich history and mythology of the native Americans that were here prior to that is largely ignored, except for the descendants of those early peoples. Ireland however, is a different story. History and mythology are intertwined, and the lines that would normally define are shrouded in a type of fog that weaves the two together crossing between historical fact and folklore. (*Tá siad fite fuaite ina chéile*) - an

Irish phrase that means just that. Manchán Magan reminds us of that in his book "Listen to the Land Speak" when he talks about placenames that have endured in modern times based upon the exploits of "gods and fighting men" from mythology. Mountains, lakes and rivers all have stories that have been passed down over the centuries, that often chroicle their beginnings.

St. Brigid and Imbolg

In many cases, characters from mythology blend with real life people, and the stories and actions from the folklore become attributed to the person. On the first of February, the Feast of St. Brigid is celebrated on the festival of Imbolg, a celebration of the coming of spring. Imbolg is closely associated with the goddess Brigid and the tales told are so interwoven that the goddess and the saint could be the same person.

The symbol we recognize as Brigid's Cross has its roots in the pagan celebration of Imbolg. Solar crosses were woven with four arms, equal in length, symbolizing the goddess Brigid's control over the changing of the seasons.

There is a story told of a chieftan in

Kildare that was dying. Christians in the house sent for Brigid to talk to the dying king about Christ.

By the time she arrived he was delirious with fever. She sat at his bedside and began to console him. As was the custom, the dirt floor was covered with rushes for warmth and cleanliness.

Brigid stooped down and picked some up and began weaving them into a cross with the points together as she spoke. The king asked what she was doing and as she weaved, she explained the significance of the cross as it pertained to her Christian faith.

As she talked, his delirium subsided, and he questioned her deeply about Christ and her faith. He was baptized before his death, and the cross of rushes continues in Ireland, but with a different purpose.

St. Patrick

Maewyn Succat was born either in Wales or Scotland, the facts are not certain, nor are the dates of his birth and death. According to tradition, he was abducted by an Irish raiding party and taken to Ireland to work as a slave.

He was a teenager at the time and spent the next six years enslaved. One night he had a vision and was shown his means of escape. He made his way home and began his studies, later to become a missionary and a bishop on the island of his imprisonment.

Patrick, as he was now called, was not the first to bring the message of Christ to Ireland, that distinction goes to Palladius, a frenchman. He was the first bishop of the Christian faith in Ireland. Scholars believe that some elements of their individual stories have become interchanged with one another.

Oisín and the Bishop

Oisín was a warrior of the Fianna, the son of the mighty Fionn Mac Cumhaill. Oisín's exploits were many and his fame among the Fianna and all the people of Ireland grew. One day when he was out hunting, he heard a lovely voice calling to him from the sea. Soon he laid eyes on the most beautiful woman he had ever seen.

Tír na nÓg

Niamh was from the Otherworld land of Tír na nÓg, the land of youth, where you never age or want for anything. She tells the warrior she loves him and wishes to marry him.

He returns across the waves with her to Tír na nÓg and together they raise a family and live a life of happiness and bliss. Oisín and Niamh are much in love, but one day she can tell he is troubled. He tells her he misses his home and his comrades and longs for a visit home.

She tells him she will give him her finest horse to journey across the waves, but warns him that as long as he remains on the animal's back he will be able to return to her in Tír na nÓg. If his feet touch the ground, he will age the three hundred years that have passed since he left Ireland and returning will be impossible. He promises to return and embarks on his journey.

He finds nothing as he remembers it. The people are changed, the Fianna are nothing but old stories the very old barely remember, passed down to them. As he travels looking for something familiar, he comes across a group of men struggling to build a wall.

They are barely able to move the stone and he reaches down to help. The saddle strap breaks, and he tumbles from his mount, hitting the ground, aging instantly.

Gods and Fighting Men

In Lady Gregory's 1904 book, she relates how the men take the now frail old man to the only person who might be able to help him, Bishop Patrick. Patrick takes the man to his monastery, where he is cared for and fed like any of the resident clergy.

Later Patrick visits Oisín and asks him about himself, why has he never seen him in his "flock"? Oisín tells him tales of his father, Fionn Mac Cumhaill, and the Fianna, of the great battles and raids he and his mates undertook.

He spoke of the great feasting, of songs and drink. He told Patrick of his wife and sons and of Tír na nÓg.

Patrick finds himself enjoying the tales Oisín tells him and returns every evening so that Oisín can regale him with more. Patrick does become concerned that he might be enjoying them too much and prays for guidance. God tells him it is good and the stories should be told, but that he must also work to save the soul of

the old warrior.

Patrick's attempts to speak of the Christian faith are met with a resistance stronger than Patrick has ever encountered. The two trade barbs back and forth, both extolling their own beliefs day after day, until one day Patrick becomes exasperated and says, "Leave off old man, leave your foolishness; let what you have done be enough for you from this out. Think on the pains that are before you; the Fianna are gone and you yourself will be going."

Oisín responds, "If I go, may yourself not be left after me, Patrick of the hindering heart; if Conan, the least of the Fianna, were living, your buzzing would not be left long to you."

Banishing the Snakes

How do you interpret this story? Is it a symbolic way of saying Ireland's pagan past is gone, or is it a longing for the way things used to be? Patrick's banishment of snakes from the Emerald Isle was symbolic of the banishment of the old ways. There have not been snakes there since the last ice age, but it was a good story making the case for Patrick's power. No matter how you celebrate your Irishness this month, be safe and be proud of all that is part of it.

Beannachtaí na Féile Padraig!

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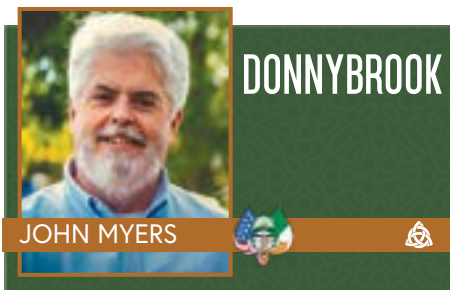
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HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY

JUDGE EMILY HAGAN	JUDGE ASHLEY KILBANE	JUDGE JENNIFER O'MALLEY
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Paid for by Friends of Emily Hagan, Friends of Ashley Kilbane for Judge, Friends of Jennifer L. O'Malley for Judge





DONNYBROOK

JOHN MYERS

Rebellion

As you review your choices for winter streaming drama, check out RTE's (The Irish BBC, only better) five-part miniseries, called Rebellion. While the series was produced for the centennial of the Easter Uprising in 2016, it is now readily available on Netflix. And, only five fast episodes, so you do not have to invest your life into it. Largely well produced, but like

any historical drama, the series sets itself up for pushback on the angle from which it is told. Rebellion gives the average Yank a good overview of the mid 19teens during WW1 and the 1916 Easter Rising era.

In some ways, like Upstairs/Downstairs, the series jumps from the average working folk to leaders of the Irish move to independence, as well as the upper-class engagement and some of the Brit rulers. Give it a look, you will enjoy your time with this historic period series.

Stormont Returns

Last month, the six county statelet known as Northern Ireland turned a historic page. After a two year walk out by the Unionists, who were having a hard time swallowing the democratic results of the 2022 elections, where Sinn Fein, the leading nationalist party, won the most votes, refused to take their seats. As the power sharing nature of the Northern Ireland Assembly

requires the nationalist and unionist parties to jointly govern, any walk out by the Orangemen and women left the Assembly unable to meet or govern.

For the last two years, London had to manage day to day affairs. Unionists were also upset about the Irish Sea Border created by Boris Johnson and the E.U. because of Brexit. Unionist howls of treachery have gone on for two years now.

Thankfully I believe the Loyalists saw there was no long-term benefit to their temper tantrum. The Northern Ireland Assembly is back in session at Stormont, let them lead forward.

History and Herstory in the Making

For the first time in the 100 years of Northern Ireland's existence, an Irish Nationalist is at the head of Government. And for the first time in Stormont history, two women are at the head of government, Sinn Fein's **Michelle O'Neil** is First Minister and **Emma Little-Pengelly** of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) is Deputy First Minister.

While both titles have equal authority under the power sharing government created by the Good

Friday Agreement, the title of First Minister has more stature and bragging rights. The DUP walk out in 2022 has forestalled this reality until last month in the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Emma Little-Pengelly

The loyalist new Deputy First Minister at Stormont (N.I. parliament) comes from a strong Orange family. Her father was a leader in the loyalist paramilitary group, "Ulster Resistance." He was convicted of trading stolen nuclear documents to the South African government in return for arms for loyalist paramilitary groups.

Emma Little-Pengelly started her own political career as a Special Advisor to the Rev. Ian Paisely. She served one tour as a Member of the British Parliament before losing her seat to the SDLP.

When Jefferey Donaldson resigned his seat in the Northern Ireland Assembly after the creation of the Irish Sea Border, Ms. Little-Pengelly was appointed to fill his seat. She is a 44-year-old barrister and attended Queens University in Belfast.

At the opening of the Assembly,

Michelle O'Neil and I come from very different backgrounds, but regardless of that for my part, I will work tirelessly to deliver for all in Northern Ireland." Her words are promising, time will tell.

Michelle O'Neil

The leader of Sinn Fein in the Six Counties has marked her place in history as the first First Minister of the Northern Ireland Assembly who comes from the Nationalist Community. Sinn Fein is Ireland's oldest political party, and really, the only party that competes in both the Six Counties and The Republic of Ireland. Michelle was born in County Cork, her father, Brendan Doris, was in the provisional IRA and a Sinn Fein Leader, her uncle is Paul Doris, who was a long serving President of Irish Northern Aid in the U.S.A.

Michelle largely grew up in County Tyrone in the North. She has been Sinn Fein Vice President, serving with Mary Lou McDonald, President. O'Neil said it is a "New Dawn" in Ireland, never would her parents or grandparents have conceived of the day she would be the leader in The Six Counties.

O'Neil said she will lead with an "open hand and an open heart." Her moniker has been that she will be a "First Minister for All."

At her swearing in, Michelle declared that "As First Minister, I am whole heartedly committed to continuing the work of reconciliation between all our people. The past cannot be changed nor undone, what we all can do is build a better future. I will never ask anyone to move on, but I do really hope we can all move forward.

"I want us to walk in harmony and friendship. My eyes are firmly fixed on the future. I believe in our young people; they can change our society; they can change our world, if we only give them a chance."

Both O'Neil and Little-Penny have started off with a positive and new approach. Let's hope the women can do a better job than the men have done during the last century of Northern Ireland's existence. Let us hope for continued peace and progress on the journey to One Island, One Ireland.

Sinead and Shane

A celebration will take place on March 20th at the venerable Carnegie Hall in NYC to remember the recent passing of Shane MacGowan and Sinead O'Connor. Leading the celebration will be Dropkick Murphys, Glen Hansard, Amanda Palmer, Bettye LaVette, Gordon Gano, Gogol Bordello's Eugene Hutz, Julia Coming, Kat Edmonson, The Mountain Goats and the Resistance Revival Chorus. O'Connor died at the young age of 56 last July and MacGowan at 65 this past fall. Looking forward to great music.

John Unionist RIP

Former Fine Gael Taoiseach John Bruton passed away last month. Bruton served as Taoiseach from 1994 to 1997. He served opposite U.K. P.M. John Major. Both lost in 1997, Bruton to Bertie Ahern and Major to Tony Blair.

Ahern and Blair went on to build the Good Friday Agreement with the push from President Bill Clinton and negotiator George Mitchell in 1998. Bruton was called "John Unionist" by some in the nationalist community due to his seeming deference to the U.K. government.

Fine Gael governments have seemingly continued this tradition. The current Fine Gael government in Dublin has failed to demand full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement and stood by for two years while the Stormont government collapsed. Shockingly no efforts are being made to plan or prepare the populace for the concepts or shape of an agreed upon united Ireland.

However, Sinn Fein President McDonald shared, "I wish to extend sympathies to the family, friends, and Fine Gael colleagues of former Taoiseach John Bruton. John gave many decades of service to the State and to his party. I extend, on behalf of Sinn Féin, my condolences.

"Ar dheis Dé go raibh an am." Literal: *At right-hand-side of-God may be his soul faithful.* Meaning: May his faithful soul be at the right hand of God. •

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- St. Francis of Assisi



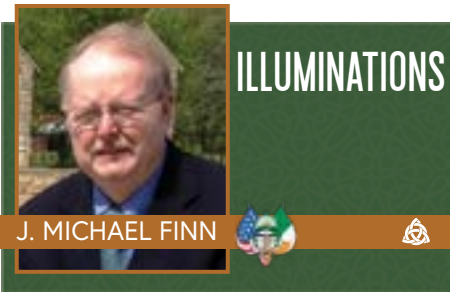
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ILLUMINATIONS

J. MICHAEL FINN

The Monastery at Clonmacnoise

“He was a lamp, blazing with the light of wisdom.”

The monastic way of life, which began in Egypt in the 3rd century, was introduced into Ireland by St. Patrick. He wrote of consecrating, “The sons and daughters of the leaders of the Irish are seen to be monks and virgins of Christ!” Monastic communities in the strict sense, involving vows,

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complete seclusion and discipline, owes its origins in Ireland to St. Enda of the Aran Islands.

St. Enda, after receiving his training and ordination from St. Ninian’s monastery at Whithorn Abbey in Scotland, founded his own monastery at Killeaney on Inis Mór, the largest of the Aran Islands off the western coast of County Galway. It was founded in about 484 and it is generally regarded as the first Irish monastery.

St. Enda began Killeaney with about 150 disciples. After its founding he also established a monastery in the Boyne Valley, and several others across Ireland. Along with St. Finnian of Clonard, Enda is known as the Father of Irish Monasticism.

One of Enda’s early pupils was St. Ciarán (Pron: *keer-an*), born about 516 at Rathcroghan, County Roscommon, Ireland. His father was a carpenter and chariot maker.

As a boy, Ciarán worked as a cattle herder. He became a student of St. Finian’s at Clonard and in time became a teacher. St. Colmcille of Iona said of Ciarán, “He was



Cross of the Scriptures

a lamp, blazing with the light of wisdom.”

The Twelve Apostles of Ireland

Ciarán became known as one of the Twelve Apostles of Ireland. The Twelve Apostles were twelve early Irish monastic saints of the sixth century who studied under St. Finnian at his monastery school at Clonard Abbey in County Meath.

In about 534, Ciarán left Clonard for Inis Mór, where he studied under St. Enda of Aran, who ordained him a priest and advised him to build a church and monastery in the middle of Ireland. About 541 Ciarán travelled to the monastery of St. Senan on Scatterry Island, an island at the mouth of the Shannon River off the coast of Kilmrush, County Clare.

In 544, Ciarán traveled further up the Shannon to Clonmacnoise. There he and ten companions founded the Monastery of Clonmacnoise. In Irish, Clonmacnoise is *Cluain Mhic Nóis* (Pron: *clou-in vik no-sh*) meaning *The Meadow of the Sons of Nóis*.

The monastic ruin is situated in County Offaly, on the left bank of the Shannon River, south of Athlone. The strategic location of the monastery helped it become a major center of religion, learning, craftsmanship, pilgrimage and trade.

As abbot, Ciarán worked on the construction of the first buildings of the monastery; however, he died in 549 of a plague, in his

early thirties. By the year 700, Clonmacnoise was surrounded by a large, thriving settlement. It was referred to at the time as *Ciarán’s Shining City*.

This lay community worked and farmed the large estates held by Clonmacnoise. There were masons, carpenters, metalworkers, and craftspeople of all kinds.

The Book of the Dun Cow, the earliest Irish illuminated manuscripts in existence today which is written almost entirely in Irish, was compiled by the monks at Clonmacnoise. It is known in Middle Irish as **Lebor na hUidre** (Pron: *lay-bor nah hud-re*) or **Book of the Dun Cow**, so called because the original vellum upon which it was written was supposedly taken from the hide of the famous brown cow owned by St. Ciarán.

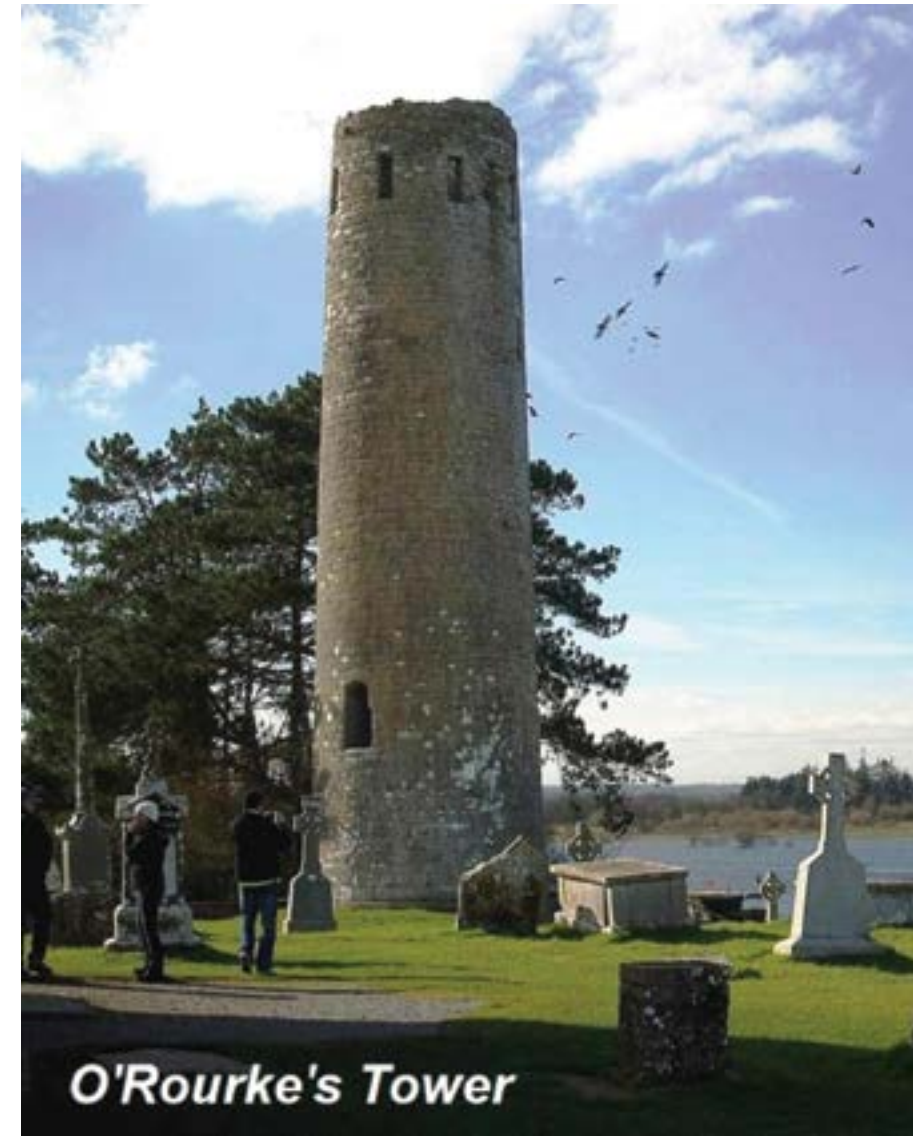
Compiled about 1100 by learned Irish monks at the monastery of Clonmacnoise from older manuscripts and oral tradition, the Book of the Dun Cow is a collection of factual material and legends that date mainly from the 8th and 9th centuries.

The Irish Ulster Cycle

It also contains some religious texts. It includes a partial text of *The Cattle Raid of Cooley* or *Táin Bó Cúailnge* (Pron: *tawn bow coole-in-ya*). It is the longest tale of the Irish Ulster Cycle and the one that most nearly approaches epic stature, as well as other descriptions of the conflict between Ulster and Connaught.

The monastery was not without its troubles. Being next to the Shannon River, the monastery provided easy access to its enemies. Clonmacnoise was burned down thirteen times between 722 and 1205; sacked eight times by Viking raiders who sailed up the Shannon; attacked twenty-seven times by native Irishmen in various feuds and disputes between 832 and 1163; and attacked six times by Anglo-Norman between 1178 and 1205. In 1552 the English garrison at Athlone destroyed and looted Clonmacnoise for the final time, leaving it in ruins.

The present monastery site includes the ruins of a cathedral, seven churches, two round towers, three high crosses and a large



O'Rourke's Tower

collection of Early Christian grave slabs. A few of the notable things to see at Clonmacnoise include the following:

The Cross of the Scriptures - one of Ireland’s finest high crosses in Ireland, the cross was carved from one solid block of Clare sandstone about the year 900 and stands slightly over 13 feet tall. The carved panels represent Christ’s crucifixion, death and resurrection.

The large base, in the form of a pyramid, is thought to represent The Hill of Calvary where Christ was crucified, while the capstone represents the Holy Sepulcher. The cross has one panel showing St Ciarán and King Dermot erecting the corner-post of the church at Clonmacnoise. The original cross was moved inside the new Visitor Center in 1993 to protect it from weathering, while an exact replica is displayed on the original site.

O'Rourke's Tower - stands in the

northwest corner of the monastic complex. It is quite difficult to date when it was actually built. The tower gets its name from the builder Fergal O'Rourke, who died in 964 AD.

The tower is superbly built and unusually wide. It was struck by lightning in 1135, which accounts for the tower only being 63 feet tall. It is estimated to be just two-thirds of its original height.

Clonmacnoise was largely abandoned by the end of the 13th century. Today, Ciarán’s monastery on the Shannon welcomes about 150,000 visitors per year. Pope John Paul II paid a visit to the site in 1979 during his trip to Ireland. •

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DR. FREDERICK PETERS

Why You Just Can't Seem to Lose Weight

Does this sound familiar? It's the new year, and you say to yourself, "this is the year I am going to get in shape!" You spend weeks sticking to your diet, eating salads every day for dinner. You make an effort to exercise as much as possible. You make sacrifices, like cutting out alcohol and skipping desserts. At the end of it all, you step on the scale and discover that...your weight hasn't budged. Or worse, it's

gone up. How is this possible? Is your body working against you and preventing you from losing weight? How can you know for sure? And importantly, what can you do about it so that you can progress in your weight loss journey? **Is Your Body Preventing You from Losing Weight?** While weight loss is largely dependent on "calories in versus calories out," there are other factors that could negatively influence this. Humans have built in mechanisms that try to prevent us from weight loss. This dates to our ancestor's ability to store fat in order to survive during times of caloric deprivation. Your hormones can also make it tricky to lose weight. For instance, your stomach produces ghrelin, which triggers feelings of hunger. When you lose weight, your body increases production of this hormone. Conversely, fat cells make a hormone called leptin, which tells you that you're full. If you lose weight, then your fat cells shrink, thus producing less leptin. So, you might not feel as full, and you might end up eating more. Genetics can also play a role. There

are several genes that seem to have a major influence on body weight. So, you can see that, even if you're in a calorie deficit, even if you're going to the gym every day after work, even if you've sacrificed all your favorite foods, there could still be other reasons why you might not be losing weight. There are several tests and panels that can determine why you're having such a hard time losing body fat. Namely, you want to check up on your sex hormones, thyroid functioning and hormones, stress hormones, insulin resistance, inflammation, and general health markers. What does all of this mean, exactly? Well, if you think that a hormonal imbalance might be stopping you from reaching your weight loss goals, these panels could help you pinpoint where the exact obstacle is. **How to Fix this Problem** There is no such thing as a "one-size-fits-all" nutrition (or exercise) plan. The best plan is a doctor-prescribed one made specifically for you (i.e.: The Fitness Doctor). That being said, here are a few general guidelines to help you start the process. Set short-term goals: they're easier to stick to than long-term goals because they're less overwhelming. Plus, they give you the opportunity to celebrate your progress and "wins"—which is important to keep you motivated and boost your self-esteem! When your goals are too long-term, you're not setting yourself up for success quite as much. Set realistic goals: bear in mind that if you're heavier than you'd like to be, the weight gain probably took months—if not years—to happen. This means that expecting overnight results isn't realistic, and you'll probably end up disappointed! Instead, look at your progress from month to month. This will give you enough time to really change your habits and see the impact. Approach weight loss holistically: it's not just about the calories you consume. Weight loss involves sleeping enough, eating nutrient-dense food, physical activity, and managing your stress levels. If you want to burn fat and lose weight, your approach must be all-encompassing. As a bonus, when you think about all aspects of weight loss, you enjoy benefits beyond looking slimmer—like improving your heart health and mobility.

Focus on adding, not subtracting: when people want to lose weight, they typically think, "What foods should I stop eating?" Rather, think about what you need more of. For instance, are you not eating enough protein? Try to incorporate more of that! Oftentimes, when you get more of what you need, you naturally eat less of what you don't need as a byproduct. Don't obsess over calories: yes, your total daily calorie consumption matters. However, by this point, you know that calories don't tell the full story. It's okay to monitor your calorie intake, but just bear in mind that it's only one piece of a very intricate puzzle. Avoid diet fads: our society loves to entice us with pills, potions, and magic tricks that promise quick results. For example, many "detox" and weight loss teas on the market are diuretics and laxatives in disguise. Waist trainers make you sweat, which gives the illusion that you're leaning out. However, with both things, you're only eliminating liquids from your body after you've already digested the food and calories that you've eaten. These methods are ineffective—you could hit a weight loss plateau or even gain weight. Furthermore, they can be dangerous for your health. Don't deprive yourself: skipping meals or adopting "Keto" (which can work under the right conditions), might lead to temporary weight loss (just like extremely low-calorie diets), but these habits are hard to sustain and could actually harm your health. Incorporate strength training: cardio offers all sorts of benefits, but so does strength training! Having more muscle mass on your body not only means you'll burn more calories at rest, but it gives you an added layer of protection (and no, ladies, weight training won't make you "bulky.") Just be sure that when it comes to physical activity, you vary your workouts between cardio and some sort of resistance training. High-intensity interval training (HIIT) can also be good for weight loss. Mind your gut bacteria: the type of bacteria you have in your gut—more specifically, Bacteroidetes—can influence your weight. Some experts call the gut the second brain. Getting that bacteria under control can be a game-changer. **What About Semaglutide, Ozempic, Wegovy (GLP-1 agonists)?** This certainly seems like an easy way to lose weight! Get an injection, skip the gym, and just like magic the weight comes off... if only it were that simple (I wrote an article for iIrish recently on the subject). These medications have not been studied in the general population and we already have reports of problems such as muscle loss and lower bone density as part of their overall weight loss. Furthermore, animal studies have shown that semaglutide injections may increase the risk of thyroid cancer, including medullary thyroid carcinoma. Remember: we have no data on long-term side effects. **Final Points of Consideration** Metabolism: some people may have a slower metabolism, which can make it more challenging to lose weight. However, metabolism is influenced by various factors, including genetics,

age, and muscle mass. **Medical Conditions:** certain medical conditions, such as hypothyroidism or hormonal imbalances, can affect weight. If you suspect an underlying medical issue, it's crucial to consult with a healthcare provider. **Medications:** some medications can contribute to weight gain or make weight loss more challenging. If you are taking any medications, discuss their potential effects on weight with your healthcare provider. **Hormonal Changes:** hormonal fluctuations, such as those that occur during menopause, can influence weight. **Stress and Emotional Factors:** stress and emotional factors can lead to overeating or unhealthy eating habits, impacting weight loss efforts. Developing coping mechanisms or seeking support may be beneficial. **Sleep:** lack of sleep can affect hormones related to hunger and satiety, potentially leading to weight gain. Ensuring proper sleep hygiene may support weight loss efforts. Ultimately it comes down to two things: patience and consistency. Easier said than done, I know. Remember, weight loss is not linear. If you're weighing yourself daily, then you might wake up one morning lighter, and the next morning heavier. This doesn't mean you're not making progress toward a healthy weight. To lose weight, you need to make peace with fluctuations. They're completely normal. Losing weight is a complex process, and it's not solely determined by a single factor. It often requires a combination of a balanced diet, regular physical activity, and healthy lifestyle habits. If you're struggling with weight loss, schedule a consultation with The Fitness Doctor; I can provide personalized guidance based on your specific circumstances.



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- Which of the following towns were originally founded by the Vikings?
a. Cork b. Waterford c. Dublin d. Dingle
- On what day of the year does the sun illuminate the passage tomb of Newgrange?
a. The Winter Solstice b. The Vernal Equinox
- Which of the following was a major Celtic mythic warrior?
a. Achilles b. Cúchulain c. Loki
- What is the major bridge that spans the Liffey at the city center of Dublin?
a. O'Connell Bridge b. Con nor Pass c. Carrigafoyle
- Which saint is the patron of the city of Cork?
a. St. Finbarr b. St. Patrick c. St. Brigid
- What is the name of the limestone rock surface that runs from County Clare to the ocean?
a. The Burren b. The Cliffs of Mohr c. Fiddler's Rock
- What are the two primary Irish traditional sports?
a. Cricket and Rugby b. Basketball and Golf c. Gaelic Football and Hurling
- What are the two names for the only intact walled city in Northern Ireland?
a. Derry and Londonderry b. Derry and Bogside
- What was the central headquarters for the 1916 Easter Rising?
a. The General Post Office b. Trinity College c. Dublin Castle

- a. Cork b. Waterford c. Dublin
- a. The Winter Solstice
- b. Cúchulain
- a. O'Connell Bridge
- a. St. Finbarr
- a. The Burren
- c. Gaelic football and Hurling
- a. Derry and Londonderry
- a. The General Post Office.

HEALTH MATTERS

**Navigating Allergy Season:
A Health Care Provider's Guide to Relief**

By **Gregory Grant, DO**



As we start to defrost from the long winter months and prepare for the warmer temperatures and bright blooms that come with spring, there's one unwelcome guest lurking in the shadows – seasonal allergies.

Congestion, sneezing and itchy, watery eyes are some of the hallmark symptoms of seasonal allergies. These pesky symptoms aren't just annoying for those unlucky enough to experience them, but sometimes they can impact a person's daily life.

Allergies result from the immune system's overreaction to environmental substances, such as pollen, mold spores, dust mites, and pet dander, releasing chemicals like histamines. These chemicals lead to symptoms like sneezing, itching, and congestion.

Allergy challenges certainly loom large on the health care radar this time of year. As a primary care provider for Mercy Health, we see many of our patients battle seasonal allergies. New blooms,

windy days that scatter tree and grass pollen and spring rains that cause the mold count to increase, it sometimes feels as if there's no way to escape them. However, there are some things you can do to navigate – and maybe even prevent – your seasonal allergies.

Managing Symptoms

It's important to stay on top of your allergies, so the bothersome symptoms don't stop you from going about your daily activities. There are many over-the-counter solutions you can explore like Claritin or Zyrtec.

Nasal spray, such as Flonase, can be purchased at any grocery store or pharmacy. It is also one of the best ways to find relief, but only when administered the right way.

If you're inhaling a nasal spray and you can taste that spray, then you've inhaled too hard. You should go a little easier next time. No matter what you choose to take, it is always important that you use all medications correctly, either as directed on the box or by your health care provider.

Environmental Control and Lifestyle Enhancements

You can also minimize exposure to allergens by using air purifiers,

keeping windows closed during peak pollen times and using allergen-proof bedding to reduce dust mite exposure. In addition, lifestyle enhancements, including regular cleaning, proper ventilation, and avoiding outdoor activities during peak pollen times can help reduce symptoms. It's also a good idea to take off your shoes and change into fresh clothes when you return home, so that you don't track pollen into your living space.

You may also consider postponing outdoor activities until later in the morning, as pollen counts are typically highest between 5-10 a.m. So, if you're hitting the trails for an early run or bike ride, you may want to see if you can adjust your schedule to give your sinuses a break. If you have any furry friends in your home, you should also wipe them off before they come back inside to limit any allergens that they may be hitching a ride.

When to Seek Additional Help

If you find that over-the-counter medication and other strategies aren't providing effective relief, you should consider reaching out to your primary care physician. You may need to undergo allergy testing. This testing can pinpoint specific triggers, enabling the development of tailored treatment plans that may include advanced options for more targeted relief. •

Gregory Grant, DO, is a primary care physician, caring for patients at Mercy Health – Oak Point Primary and Specialty Care. Dr. Grant is a board-certified family medicine physician. He is a graduate of the University of Pikeville, Kentucky College of Osteopathic Medicine and completed his residency with Case Western Reserve University/ University Hospital.

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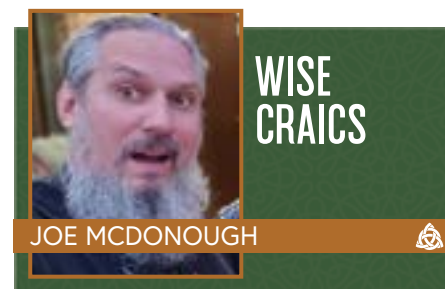
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Multi-Tasking

A small boy was sent to bed by his father. Two minutes go by and he hears, "Daaaaaad bring me a glass of water will ya?"

"No, you've had yer chance. Lights out!" Five minutes later, "Daaaaad – I'm thirsty. Bring me some water please!"

"I've told ya already. No water. Lights out. Ask me again and I'm gonna smack ya!"

A few minutes pass and he hears, "Dad?"

"WHAT?" says the father. "When you come up to smack me, bring a glass of water."

Goodbye For Now

A Dublin wife got so mad at her husband, she packed his bags and told him to get out. As he walked to the door she yelled, "I hope ya die a long, slow, painful death."

He turned around and said, "So then, you want me to stay?"

The Best Policy

My boss was honest with me today. He pulled up to work with his new car this morning and I complimented him on it. He replied, "Well son, if you work hard, set goals, stay determined and put in long hours, I can get an even better one next year."

Can't Bear It

A man is walking through the woods when he sees a bear charging at him. He books it, but he knows he can't outrun a bear for long, so he starts praying, "Dear Lord, I beseech thee. Please, O Lord, please let this bear be a Catholic!"

The bear catches up to him, knocks him down on the ground, then gets on its knees and says, "Dear Lord, thank you for this food I am about to receive..."

Long Distance

My girlfriend and I are trying this whole, "long distance relationship" thing. I have to stay 100 feet away from her at all times. Also, the police say I should stop referring to her as my girlfriend.

New Horizons

A taxi passenger tapped the driver on the shoulder to ask him a question.

The driver screamed, lost control of the car, nearly hit a bus, went up on the footpath, and stopped inches from a shop window.

For a second, everything was quiet in the cab. Then the driver said, "Look, mate, don't ever do that again. You scared the living daylights out of me!"

The passenger apologized and said, "I didn't realize that a little tap would scare you so much."

The driver replied, "Sorry, so it's not really your fault. Today is my first day as a cab driver – I've been driving a funeral van for the last 25 years."

Rising Prices

The wife and I took a long, leisurely drive down to The Lismore Loop, then pulled over to fill up our car's gas tank and tires. She was

surprised to see that the station had a fee to fill the tires and asked me, "Now why in the world do they charge for AIR?"

I responded, "Inflation."

Careful Sean

One day Paddy went to see Sean. Sean had a big swollen nose. "Aye! What happened, Sean?" Paddy asked.

"I sniffed a brose," Sean replied. "What?" Paddy said. "There's no 'b' in rose!"

Sean replied, "There was in this one!"

Higher Education

An MIT linguistics professor was lecturing his class. "In English," he said, "A double negative forms a positive. However, in some languages, such as Russian, a double negative remains a negative. But there isn't a single language, not

one, in which a double positive can express a negative."

A student from Ireland pipes in from the back of the room, "Yeah, right."

Wait For It

For a high school dance, the head boy asked out the girl he liked. To get flowers for her, he had to stand in a line outside the florist for an hour. To make things worse, he had to wait another hour in a line outside the tuxedo shop. Finally, he goes to the dance with the girl. The girl wanted to have some apple punch, so the boy went to get it, but to his surprise, there was no punch line.

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Celtic Woman Concert, Veteran's Memorial Civic Center in Lima	22nd – Passover Begins
18th – West Side Irish American Club (WSIA) Monthly Meeting	24th – iIrish eBulletin Arrives in your Inbox. Free Signup: irish.us #iIrish – Issue of iIrish hits the street #iIrish #LiveMoreLifeBeMoreIrish #IrishAmerican
19th – Celtic Woman Concert, Aranoff Center for the Art, Cincinnati	5/1 – iIrish May issue arrives.

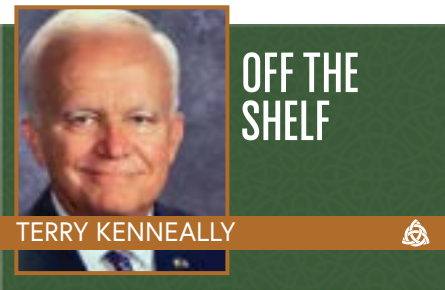
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OFF THE SHELF

TERRY KENNEALLY

The Plague of Souls

By Mike McCormack
Soho Press ISBN 978-1-64129-578-9
177 pp 2023

As the novel opens, Nealon (it's protagonist) is returning to his family home - a farm in rural Ireland - after a long absence. We learn that he has been in prison on remand, but we don't know why.

"Opening the door and crossing the threshold in the dark, triggers the phone in Nealon's pocket," is the novels opening line, in which action and a sense of the uncanny are immediately combined. An unknown voice, "male and

downbeat, not the sort you would choose to listen to in the dark," speaks to him as if they are old friends, assuring him they will speak again when Nealon is settled.

"Welcome home, Nealon," the voice says, the simplicity of his greeting, his ability to apparently see Nealon's movements hinting at supernatural knowledge.

This is the house he grew up in, alone with his father: "A house without a woman." Nealon never knew his mother. He had not expected to return to darkness and emptiness: So where is Olwyn? Where is she?"

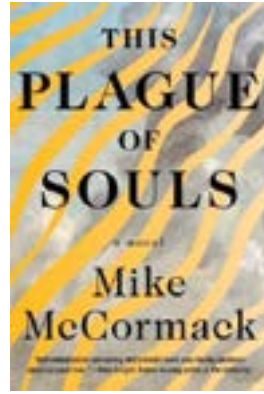
Olwyn is his wife, mother of his little son, Cuan, both missing. Memories of their lives together flash back to Nealon.

These memories make up the first third of the novel. In the second section, Nealon sets off for a nearby city, where he has a meeting to attend with the voice/person on

the phone. He looks forward to the driving and the author displays his gift for describing landscapes and situations that might seem unlovely, but for the fact that they are loved by the authors observing eye.

The novel's denouement sees Nealon readying himself for that meeting in the hopes that he'll learn the whereabouts of his wife and son. It would be a shame to give any details of it away. Some momentous world event - Nealon refers to it simply as, "their terror thing," but it remains hard to get your hands around.

It is here in the final section that the mysterious paths the novel has taken converge. It is a dark book in some respects but well written. I rate it a TOP SHELF read. ●



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On this day in IRISH HISTORY
MARCH

BY TERRENCE J. KENNEALLY

1 March 1981 - Bobby Sands, a Provisional IRA member serving a 14-year prison sentence for firearms possession, began refusing food. This was the start of the 1981 Hunger Strike.

5 March 1867 - Rebellion was staged throughout Ireland by the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB). This was the last of six times that the right to an independent Ireland had previously been "asserted... in arms."

5 March 1981 - Taoiseach Charles J. Haughey announced the establishment of aoidana ('Poet of the tribe') to publicly honour distinguished achievement in the arts and to provide members with an annuity to free them from non-creative employment.

8 March 1966 - A Republican bomb destroyed the top half of Nelson's Pillar in O'Connell Street, Dublin.

12 March 2001 - The first case of foot-and-mouth disease in the Republic of Ireland in 60 years was confirmed in a flock of sheep on a farm in Jenkinstown, Co. Louth.

20 March 1914 - In March 1914, tension was rising over the issue of Home Rule. 57 of the 70 officers in the Curragh, the main military base of the British Army in Ireland, opted to resign rather than follow orders to begin 'Active Operations in Ulster.' This became known as the Curragh Mutiny.

23 March 1847 - Members of the Choctaw Nation raised funds for the people of Ireland affected by the potato famine. In 2017, members of the Nation travelled to Ireland for the unveiling of Kindred Spirits sculpture dedicated to the Choctaws.

23 March 1943 - Thirty-six orphan girls in the care of the Poor Clare Order died in a fire at St. Joseph's Orphanage in Cavantown.

28 March 1973 - Irish naval service vessels apprehended the Claudia, a Cypriot coaster. On board were six men, including Joe Cahill, who were arrested for conspiracy to import arms.

31 March 1912 - More than 100,000 people gathered for a meeting held in Dublin in favor of the imminent Government of Ireland Act, better known as the Home Rule Bill.



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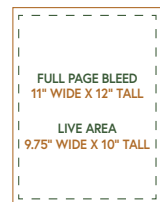
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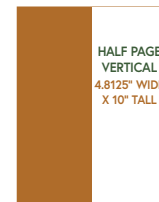
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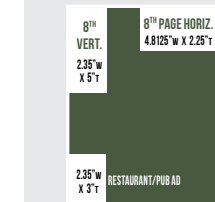
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