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Scythian Releases Brilliant
Roots & Stones



EDITOR'S CORNER

By John O'Brien, Jr.



of our neighbors. They may be ours, but they are not absolute.

Regular checkups are always recommended. Reality checks cut through the glasses and filters of our limited experience, to listen to those with different ones. Then and only then, can we deliberately choose what filters we want to wear going forward, framed by listening, empathy, values, and if you are Christian, hopefully, the word of God. We cannot drink from the chalice, the blood of Christ; the mass is ended, go in peace, and then close our hands and our eyes to those less fortunate, of wealth, of equal justice or equal opportunity, lying nearby. They are asking for help, and the equal opportunities we and/or our predecessors received. Someone fought to give them to us. Shouldn't we appreciate that experience

in our DNA even more, for having gone through it, and then open our hand, reach down and clasp the hand of those coming after?

One Country/One Ireland? Growing up Irish, we have that code in our DNA. Why shouldn't that same ideal be the mantra for America; be the same for us here in the U.S.?

We all bear hurts and dreams and goals - let us not repeat the mistakes of our past, of a divided Ireland and the sins of the father taken out on the son, whether here or across the pond.

Let us return to neighbors, over the fence conversations over lemonade, an icy cold beer or a steaming (Irish or not) coffee, and a willingness to put a little bit of ourselves aside, to sacrifice for the good of all our siblings. It's what built America, and the existence of a dream, that can and does come true. That dream cannot depend on whether you are a black child watching VP Harris on TV and seeing doors open for the first time, or an old white guy like me, who cares just as deeply, that achievement of that little girl's dreams isn't just a dream, but equally reality for everyone. The only criteria that matters is equal access and the performance of the dreamer.

We all dream of One Country/One Ireland. Why can't we all dream of One Country/One America too?

Nuair a stadann an ceol, stadann an rince (When the music stops, so does the dance)

John



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About Our Cover:

Irish & World Music rockstars Scythian Release their new CD, Roots & Stones. See the Review and how to get your copy on page 18.



WILLIAM LUTHER

North Olmsted, Ohio
March 26, 1953 - October 21, 2020



WILLIAM (Bill) LUTHER, age 67, passed away October 21, 2020 after a long battle with cancer.

He is survived by his devoted wife Dianne (nee Gabrenya), his sisters Colette Bender, Marie Glasow, Helen Tonsing, Jean Peters and the following deceased: Marian Smith and Carl (Bud) Luther. He is the son of the late Carl and Dorothy (nee Cozzens). Bill is loved by many nieces, nephews and friends.

He was a board member and held the position as Recording Secretary for the West Side Irish-American Club. He was a founding member of The McNeeley Library Foundation at the WSIA. In 2018, Bill was honored as "Man of the Year" for The WSIA for St. Patrick's Day.

Bill attained his electrical engineering degree from Cleveland State University. After graduation he was Maintenance Engineer for Pioneer Mfg., then Plant Engineer and Safety Director for Abex

Corp. Bill then worked for Ridge Tool Co. as the Division Facilities & Environmental Manager, whereby had responsibilities for environmental compliance and loss prevention at the company's domestic & international locations.

In this capacity he traveled to operations in the U.S., Europe, China and Mexico. After retirement from Ridge Tool, Bill secured a position at RTA and was responsible for facilities & maintenance at the west-side rapid stations.

As a volunteer for the WSIA, Bill assisted in the maintenance of the building and grounds and was also involved with the Open Mic Night sessions. He volunteered for Habitat for Humanity and for his home parish, St. Clarence. Bill enjoyed working on home improvement projects and playing his guitar.

Memorial contributions are suggested to Village Project, 27378 W. Oviatt Road, Bay Village, OH 44140 or The McNeeley Library Foundation at the West Side Irish American Club, 8559 Jennings Rd., Olmsted Twp., OH 44138.

Obituary courtesy of Chamber's Funeral Homes.

DEIRDRE K. HART

1982 - 2020

Age 38, dearly beloved daughter of

Mary B. (nee Mulloy) and the late Patrick R. Hart; sister of Conor Hart and Patrick Hart; granddaughter of the late Anne (nee O'Donnell) and Stephen L. Mulloy and Kathleen (nee Fitzpatrick) and Joseph E. Hart,



Jr.; cherished niece of many; beloved cousin and friend of many. Passed away unexpectedly November 16, 2020.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions are suggested to Magnificat High School, 20770 Hilliard Blvd., Rocky River, OH 44116 for Tuition Assistance or Euclid Beach Cat Project, P.O. Box 200611, Cleveland, OH 44120. Deirdre gave the gift of life through organ donation. Obituary courtesy of www.chambersfuneral.com

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ON THIS DAY IN IRISH HISTORY - DECEMBER

7 December 1979 - Charles J. Haughey defeated George Colley to become leader of Fianna Fail; he was elected Taoiseach on 11 December.

8 December 1939 - James Galway, the 'man with the golden flute,' was born in north Belfast, the son of a shipyard worker.

10 December 2009 - The Pope publicly apologized for the behavior of Irish priests who sexually abused children and then had their actions covered up after a damning report is published the previous month revealing that archbishops in Dublin had routinely hidden abuse for decades.

13 December 1955 - Grace Gifford Plunkett, Irish patriot, died. She famously married Joseph Plunkett hours before his execution in 1916 for his part in the Easter Rising.

21 December 1971 - Heinrich Boll, author of Irish Journal (1957) and Nobel Laureate (1972), born in Cologne.

22 December 1969 - Bernadette Devlin was sentenced to six months imprisonment for her activities during the Battle of Bogside.

22 December 1989 - Death of Samuel Beckett, playwright and winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature (1969).

27 December 1591 - Escape of Red Hugh O'Donnell from Dublin Castle, where he was imprisoned since his kidnapping in 1587 at the age of fifteen.

27 December 1904 - The original Abbey Theatre in Dublin opens with Yeats' 'Baile' s Strand and Lady Gregory's Spreading the News.

29 December 1937 - The Constitution of Ireland comes into effect, drafted by Eamon De Valera.

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A Foot in Each Country

2020 has so many alliterations: COVID, the election, hindsight and insight. We all have blurry vision, framed by the glasses and filters of experience that we wear. Our experience is not absolute, not the experience

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SPEAK IRISH

By Bob Carney

@BobCarneyCTR

Nollaig Shona Daoibh

OH COME LET US ADORE HIM

Taraigí a Phobail

Oh Come All Ye Faithful

Taraigí a phobail le háthas agus mórtas

Taraigí, taraigí go Bethlehem

Oh come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant

Oh come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem

Taraigí 'gus amharcaigí rugadh Rí ar aingil

Come and behold Him, born the King of angels

Taraigí 'gus adhráimís é

Taraigí 'gus adhráimís é

Oh come, let us adore Him

Oh come, let us adore Him

Taraigí 'gus adhráimís é, Críost an Rí Canaigí le lúcháir córacha na n-aingeal
Oh come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, Canaigí uile thuas ar Neamh Glóir do Dhia ins na hard
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above Glory to God in the highest

Repeat chorus

Fáilte a Thiarna ar an dea-mhaidin seo A Íosa, a Íosa gach glóir duit Briathar an Athar anois I gcolainn dhaonna

Yea, Lord we greet thee, born this happy morning

Jesus, to thee be glory given

Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing

Repeat chorus

It's that time of year, Christmas music is everywhere you turn. Hearing carols sung in Irish, however, requires a little bit of searching. With the technology of today at our disposal, you can find many of the carols you recognize and even some new ones by a variety of artists in Irish.

Find a favorite and follow along. Our memory adapts easily to rhymes and melody. I can't be the only one that

hums the abc's when I'm filing something.

Most of us can hear a song we haven't heard in years and easily remember the chorus. So as you're enjoying your favorite Christmas songs sung in the beautiful language of Irish, you may find improvement in your pronunciation and how you "hear" the language.

We'll also work on some greetings and blessings that can be used this time of year, and some toasts that can be used year round. First some seasonal vocabulary.

FOCLÓIR (FOHK-LORE) VOCABULARY

sneachta (shnak-ta) snow
fear sneachta (fíhr shnak-ta) snowman
sioc (shuk) frost
a gheimhreadh (sa ghivra) in winter
féirín (fayr-een) gift
fuar (foo-ar) cold
crann Nollaig (krann null-ug)

Christmas tree
Lá Nollaig (law null-ug) Christmas day
Oíche Nollaig (ee-ha null-ug)

Christmas Eve
Daidí na Nollaig (dad-ee na null-ug)
Santa Claus

Lá na Bliana Úire (law na bleena oora)
New Years Day

réalta (rayl-tuh) star
Iosa (ee-uh-suh) Jesus

Muire (mwir-uh) Mary
Seosamh (shoh-suh) Joseph
Aingeal (ayn-gul) angel
cór (khor) choir

carúil (cahr-oo-il) carol
cuileann (qwill-un) holly
drualas (dhroo-ah-lus) mistletoe
stoca na Nollaig (shuk-ah na null-ug)

Christmas stocking
Aifreann Meán Oíche (af-runn mahn ee-ha)

Midnight Mass
Ciste Nollaig (kish-ta null-ug)

Christmas cake
iosaid (us-kidh) ham
gé (gay) goose

turcaí (turkey) turkey
cloigín (klegg-een) bells
cártaí Nollaig (char-tee)

Christmas cards

FRÁSA (FRAH-SA) PHRASE

Nollaig Shona Duit (null-ug hoe-na gwit)

Merry Christmas to you (singular)

Nollaig Shona Daoibh (null-ug hoe-na yeev)

Merry Christmas to you all (plural)

Beannachtaí an tSéasúir (bahn-uhk-tuh an tay-soor)
Seasons Greetings (lit. Blessings of the Season)

Beannacht Dé Leat (bahn-uhkt day laht)
God's Blessing with you

Rath Dé ort (rah day ort)
God bless you

Nollaig faoi shéan agus faoi mhaise duit/daoibh
Christmas happiness and goodness to you/y'all
(null-ug fwee hayn ah-gus fwee vuh-shuh gwit/yeev)

Athbhliain faoi mhaise duit/daoibh
A happy prosperous New Year to you/y'all
(ah-vleen fwee vuh-shuh gwit/yeev)

"Agus dúirt an t-aingeal leo: "Ná bíodh eagla oraibh: óir féach, tá dea-scéla agam daoibh a chuifidh áthas mór ar an bpobal uile: rugadh Slánaitheoir daoibh inniu - is é Chríost an é i geathair Dháiri."
Lucás 2:10-11

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord."
Luke 2:10-11

Merry Christmas to you all. The greatest gift we can give is of ourselves.

Síocháin agus Grá Nollaig Shona Daoibh! ■

Bob Carney is a student of Irish history and language and teaches the Speak Irish Cleveland class held every Tuesday @PJ McIntyre's. He is also active in the Irish Wolfhound and Irish dogs orginations in and around Cleveland. Wife Mary, hounds Morrighán and Rían and terrier Doolin keep the house jumping. He can be contacted @ carneyspeakirish@gmail.com

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BLOWIN' IN

By Susan Mangan

@SueMangan

Illumination

My mother brought light to Christmas. Our Chicago bungalow did not allow the sun to peer brightly through the windows. Built stout and sturdy, the homes in our neighborhood stood like toy soldiers ready to take on the Nutcracker's Mouse King.

December days were dark by 4:30, but my home was lit with festive lights in every room. Our tree, a rainbow in winter, stood by our grandfather clock.

I would lie beneath it when I was small and look up into the branches imagining I was saintly like our Mother Mary or Bernadette. I was not. Oftentimes, after my parents went to sleep, I would look for Christmas presents, shaking boxes and upending closets.

I will never forget that Christmas when my mother wanted to surprise my dad with a new cribbage board and the pegs to the game were nowhere to be found. Little did they know, I found the cribbage set next to the Mousetrap game I longed for and thought it was mine.

Curious, I took out the pieces and tried to create an image with the pegs on the board. Meanwhile, I heard my mother open the basement door and I quickly tucked the game away, dispersing the pegs all over the floor, forever lost among the boxes and crates in which the presents were hidden.

Like any good Catholic child, I felt guilty and lay beneath the tree, looking at the colorful lights and praying that one day I could still be canonized as a saint. My life did not prove beatific, but I did find the pegless board tucked into a box among the heirlooms my mother left for me. Perhaps my mother knew of my misdeed and wanted to share a heavenly laugh?

To a precocious child like myself, Christmas meant magic. My father went through a musical instrument phase and purchased both a grand

piano and an organ. These two instruments alone filled our small house. My mother would set up a second, tabletop tree in our family room decorated solely in gold lights and glass baubles, while I would pretend to play carols on the organ delighting in the various keys and pedals.

After the tree was trimmed, she would light a three-wicked bayberry candle thought to bring good luck to the family home at Christmastime. I would lay on the floor in that room, snug in my footed pajamas, curled up next to our dog, transfixed by the woodland scent of the candle and the glory of the golden tree.

Out of all our senses, that of smell is our keenest reminder of days past. At the holidays, our home brimmed with bayberry and the smell of orange and bourbon emanating from my parents' weekend Old-Fashioned cocktails. December Sundays smelled like melting butter, allspice, and pumpkin. Winter weeknights were filled with fragrant soups and beef barley stew.

In those days, the air was cold and thick with snow. After long days spent teaching high school English and shoveling snow, my father smelled of professorial Aramis aftershave, wool, and frost. Comfort and magic. My parents did indeed bring light into our home.

The scent of Christmas is ubiquitous in our commercial world. Candles smack of cranberry punch and Frasier fir promising champagne and mistletoe.

For some, the scent of Christmas does not elicit wonder and joy. The smell of church candles may remind us of loved ones who have passed days

before Christmas. Woodsmoke on a barren night reeks of solitude rather than comfort. Those who suffer during the holidays may need a gentle reminder that light always follows darkness.

Perhaps all that lonely neighbor needs is a tumbler of take-away coffee and a slice of fragrant apple pie. Christmas is not really about grand, expensive gestures, but rather about seeing into the hearts of others and offering of ourselves.

To believers, the Magi introduced the tradition of gift giving when they arrived at a primitive stable to pay homage to the infant Jesus. Fitting gifts for the divine baby, the Magi offered gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These ancient presents were symbols of light, royalty, sacrifice, and death.

So many of our Christmas rituals evoke the promise of the Nativity. The treasured Irish custom of lighting the *coinneal mor*, the Christmas candle that rested in the main window of the cottage is still present in our homes today. Harkening back to the travails of the Holy Family, the candle symbolized a warm welcome for weary travelers or lonely strangers in need of comfort; therefore, it was important that the candle remained lit throughout the night on Christmas Eve.

During the old times, candles were neither fragrant, nor evocative. Molded from tallow or animal fat, the beauty was not in the perfume of the candle, but rather in the value of the light.

Regardless of our religious affiliations, it is impossible to ignore the need for illumination during winter's darkness.

Located in the Boyne Valley of

County Meath, Ireland, Newgrange is a Neolithic monument. This structure is older than Stonehenge. The narrow entry into the structure leads into a large open chamber. During the Winter Solstice, sunlight enters through the roof-box at dawn and illuminates the darkness of the chamber and its passageway. Ancient people knew that the time of light would soon arrive, and the natural cycle of the earth would begin again.

Perhaps this Christmastide we need to expect less from the artifice of the season, balancing our golden baubles with the crisp beauty of the winter stars. Just maybe, that candle in the window will be bayberry; its light will bring good health and joy to the loved ones who sit at our table and at our hearth. Perhaps the brightest light that shines this Christmas will be that which emanates from a selfless heart. ■

*Internet Source Consulted: Newgrange-World Heritage Site. Newgrange.com.

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

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TOLEDO IRISH

By Maury Collins

@MauryCollins

Hibernian Christmas Celebrations Past

The history of Toledo Hibernian Christmas celebrations is special to us here in Toledo. The earliest celebrations were all day affairs. Members brought their children and grandchildren in for an afternoon session of activities and snacks followed by a visit from Santa Claus, played with enthusiasm by Sister Ann McManus. The adult Christmas party began with a Mass.

I remember one year when the crew putting up the tables and chairs decided to “taste” the refreshments to make sure they were good. Father Tom Quinn arrived and voiced his displeasure at people drinking just before Mass. I believe it only happened that one time.

Mary Miller and the Celtic Kaleidoscope band provided music for the Mass as well as entertainment



between Mass and dinner. Hibernians who belonged to the Celtic Kaleidoscope were Mary Miller, Matt Cassidy and Dave Lymanstall. Dinners for the most part were potluck, although it was decided to have the event catered a couple of times.

INSTALLING NEW AOH / LAOH OFFICERS

Usually the LAOH ladies provided the main dish and the AOH men provided the refreshments, then the installation of newly elected officers took place after the meal. The AOH Division officers and the LAOH Division Officers were installed on alternating years. State Presidents were invited to install the officers.

Ohio State AOH Presidents who attended include Dan MacDonald, Thomas O’Mahoney, Mike McKenzie, Jim Magee R.I.P. and Ron Hagan. National AOH Director Bill Byrnes R.I.P. was also a guest on a few occasions. Former Michigan State President Patrick Maguire, along with his wife Angela, were frequent guests. Ohio State LAOH Presidents who attended include: Colleen McKenzie and our own Ann Dollman. National LAOH President Maureen Shelton was also a guest.

Each member brought an item for a silent auction, conducted by Madonna Pauken, who also was in charge of making Irish coffee. Profits from the silent auction went to various soup kitchens. Mike Cassidy, who ran a beverage dispensing company, received donations from the Coca Cola Company. Items included bikes, scooters, patio umbrellas and even a toboggan. Those items usually were part of raffles. One year, it was decided to auction the larger items.

Since there was no auctioneer available, it was decided that since I was the division president, I should conduct the auction. I thought I did a pretty good imitation of an auctioneer,

but I had a wee bit of Jameson before we started, so maybe it wasn’t all that good.

Sometimes the smaller the hall the better the party because we were all squished in together! I remember some of the ladies getting up and dancing a bit to a special song, sharing a nip or passing the bottle. But this was always our time together.

The January 2009 Toledo Hibernian newsletter included the following: Christmas Was a Great Success! On December 13th, the Lucas County Hibernians held their annual Christmas Mass and Party along with the installation of officers. Bishop Donnelly celebrated the Mass. Guests of honor included Ohio State President Jim Magee and his wife, Linda, and former Michigan State President, Pat Maguire and his wife, Angela. Ann Dollman and Dan McCarthy were the Co-chairs for the event. Proceeds from the raffle went to help the less fortunate in the form of donations to the soup kitchens at St. Louis Church and Our Lady of Lourdes Church.

Another Christmas celebration was the Brigid’s Cross Christmas show at St. Clement Hall, filled with Toledo Irish taking a break from their Christmas preparations, to just enjoy each other’s company and the music and comedy of Brigid’s Cross. One of the non-Christmas songs Brigid’s Cross would perform was “The Dutchman.”

MAURY IS NOT THE DUTCHMAN

Paul Baker would introduce the song by saying “The next song is called “The Dutchman.” It’s about a crazy old guy and his lady, who looks out for him. And, no, it’s not about Maury Collins.” This of course, brought lots of laughter. The Ardan Academy Irish dancers put on their usual wonderful performance. All in all, they were wonderful festive evenings.

I have great memories from a better time for Toledo Hibernians. Looking

back, I can’t help but remember Jim Mack R.I.P. with his Santa hat and green apron taking over the kitchen duties, in what was to be his last Christmas celebration with us.

Then there was the time Father Marty Donnelly R.I.P. was saying Mass for us in the Blessed Sacrament Gym (which Father let us use at no charge). I had on a “Christmas tie,” which played “We wish you a Merry Christmas” when I pressed the button.



Father Marty had just finished reading the Gospel, everyone was seated, and Father was about to start his homily when I accidentally hit the button. Father looked around to see where the strange little noise was coming from. He looked at me sitting there red faced and said, “Only you, Maury.” We all had to laugh and then he started his homily.

There are others who are no longer with us, who helped fill a hall for both events each December. Tom King R.I.P. John O’Halloran R.I.P., Maurice Buckley R.I.P., Larry Maher R.I.P., Clarise Burkard R.I.P., Betty Mears R.I.P. and Joann Cassidy R.I.P. Leaders all, their enthusiasm and humor are surely missed today.

We Wish You a Merry Christmas! ■

Maury Collins is a Charter Member and past president of the John P. Kelly Division AOH and a proud first-generation Irish American. Contact him at maurycollins61@gmail.com

Web https://maurysirishnewstoledo.weebly.com

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OFF THE SHELF

By Terry Kenneally

@TerryKenneally

Strange Flowers

By Donal Ryan

Doubleday

ISBN 9780857525222 2020 230 pp.

One of my favorite writers, Donal Ryan, has now written five novels. Strange Flowers is set in North Tipperary in the mid-1970s.

Paddy and Kit Gladney live in a hillside cottage belonging to wealthy landowners and employers, the Jackmans. Paddy’s a grounds man on their farm estate and does the postal run for the local village.

The couples twenty-year-old daughter, Moll, vanishes one morning, disappearing from their lives and causing a fracture of grief through their rural existence, which is crippling. It can mean only one of two things: Moll Gladney was either pregnant or dead, and it was hard to know which one of those was worse.

And then Moll walks back through the gate five years later; thin, sheepish with a smoking habit, and tight lipped about her departure. Shortly thereafter comes soft spoken Alexander. He, a policeman, warily informs Paddy and Kit, he is not only English, and “a stranger



Strange Flowers is a TOP SHELF read. ■

Terrence J Kenneally is an attorney and owner of The Kenneally Law Firm in Rocky River, Ohio. Mr. Kenneally represents insureds and insurance companies in legal defense throughout the state of Ohio. He received his Master’s Degree from John Carroll University in Irish Studies.

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to the area,” but a “black man.” Like Moll’s desertion, Alexander’s arrival will upend life in the farmhouse. The motif that that runs through Strange Flowers is the separation of parents and their children and the anguish this causes. The idyllic life of Paddy and Kit Gladney was shattered when their daughter disappeared. The prodigal’s return five years later initially brings joy but when they learn she left behind in London not only a husband but also a son, Joshua, their lives are upended again.

Joshua’s appearance gives the novel its title: “the perfect, unblemished whiteness of this strange flower.” A generation later, history will repeat itself when Moll’s son suddenly runs off to London to “find himself.”

Ryan has enjoyed a remarkable rise since his debut, The Spinning Heart, which won the Irish Book of the Year and Guardian First Book Award. Ryan’s writing has been praised for the beautiful paragraphs.

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ILLUMINATIONS

By J. Michael Finn

Professor Mike Donovan

The sport of boxing came to the United States from England in the late 1700s and took root in the 1800s, mainly in large urban areas such as Boston, New York City, Philadelphia and New Orleans. Boxing was illegal in the United States until the early 1900s, but matches and championship bouts continued under the threat of police raids and arrests.

Many Irish and Irish-Americans found themselves taking up the sport. Sadly, many of them ended up being exploited for their skill, often dying from injuries sustained in the ring. A few went on to gain celebrity status and



were able to utilize their skills to train others. Such was the case with 'Professor' Mike Donovan.

Donovan was born Michael J. O'Donovan in Chicago, Illinois on September 28, 1847, to Irish-born parents. He attended school in Chicago until the outbreak of the Civil War. In 1862,

at the age of 15, Michael quit school and enlisted in the Union infantry. He served under General Ulysses S. Grant and later served in Georgia under General William T. Sherman where he participated in Sherman's "March to the Sea."

After the war, Michael began a boxing career that would associate him with some of the best-known people of his age. He adopted the ring-name of Mike Donovan, dropping the O' from his name. He was nicknamed the "Professor" due to his great boxing knowledge and his ability to figure out the opponent's style, then exploit their weaknesses.

Mike Donovan fought as a middle-weight, although the weight categories were not always strictly followed in the early days and he often fought heavy-weight opponents. Donovan fought both in bare-knuckle fights and in gloved bouts. He fought only gloved bouts starting in 1871.

Donovan lost his first professional bout on January 3, 1866 against Crowley Davis in St. Louis, but he went on to win an impressive number of fights. On July 4, 1869, Donovan fought John

Shanssey at Cheyenne, Wyoming in front of 3,000 spectators. Mike defeated Shanssey in 10 rounds. The referee for that bout was 21-year-old Wyatt Earp.

From 1872 until 1879, Donovan was considered to be the Middleweight Champion of America. Oddly enough, after defeating Jim Murray for the US middleweight title, both fighters were arrested for prize-fighting and spent four days in jail, in the same cell.

Donovan went on to become one of the biggest names in boxing and one of America's first sport celebrities, fighting several memorable battles against the then famous heavyweight contender John L Sullivan. In 1888, Donovan also defeated one of the greatest middleweights in boxing history, Jack "The Nonpareil" Dempsey.

Calling upon his skills as a boxing trainer, Donovan trained Jake Kilrain, who defeated Sullivan in 1889 in what was the last recorded bare-knuckle heavyweight championship. Donovan worked in Kilrain's corner. Working beside him as a bodyguard for the corner was one of the legends of the American West, Bat Masterson.

Donovan also landed a position that

would assure his legacy and lead him to teach another famous pupil. In 1884, he defeated Walter Watson for the right to become the boxing instructor at the prestigious New York Athletic Club. There he would meet and befriend one of the most colorful personalities in American history, Teddy Roosevelt.

The two men first met when Roosevelt was the New York City police commissioner. Roosevelt was an avid boxing fan and the two men forged a bond in and out of the ring. Their sparring sessions were held in the New York Governor's mansion after Roosevelt became governor.

Later, when he was elected President, they were held in the White House. President Roosevelt ended his sparring sessions with Donovan because he felt it was inappropriate for the President of the US to be seen with a black eye.

The Professor actually wrote the book on boxing. In 1893 Mike Donovan published *The Science of Boxing* (Dick and Fitzgerald, NY). In 1909 he also wrote *The Roosevelt That I Know: Ten Years of Boxing with the President* (B.W. Dodge Co., London), regarding his sparring sessions with the President of the United States.

Donovan supported the US effort during the First World War. He conducted boxing lessons with soldiers. He caught cold while teaching boxing in a cold and drafty New York City armory, and died from pneumonia on March 24, 1918 at age 70 in St. Francis Hospital, Bronx, New York.

Donovan's funeral was held at Sacred Heart church in the Bronx. He is buried in Old St. Raymond's Cemetery.

In recognition of his remarkable career, Mike Donovan was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1998. One of Donovan's fourteen children, Arthur Donovan, also began a boxing career under the instruction of his father, but his career was interrupted by his commitment to his country when he fought in France during World War I, with the 27th New York Infantry Regiment. After the war he found a new career as a boxing referee. He refereed fourteen heavyweight title bouts from 1933 to 1946. He also refereed twenty bouts for heavyweight champion Joe Louis.

Arthur is also enshrined in the International Boxing Hall of Fame as

a referee. Mike and Arthur Donovan were the first father-son combination to be inducted into the International Hall of Fame. Even though it had been more than thirty years since he was the most famous official in the ring, when Arthur died, in 1980 at the age of ninety, he was still remembered as one of the legends of the sport. He is also buried in Old St. Raymond's Cemetery in the Bronx.

But the Donovan family story does not end there. Arthur's son, Art Donovan, Jr. was born on June 5, 1924, in the Bronx. He played high-school football at St Michael's and went on to play at Notre Dame for two years.

In 1942, he went to Notre Dame on a football scholarship. But that would be short lived. America was at war and Art answered the call, just as his grandfather and his father had. In 1943, at the age of 18, Art Jr. joined the Marines and fought in the South Pacific.

At the end of the war, Art Jr. returned to the US, to resume his college football career. He wound up going to Boston College.

In 1950 he was drafted by the Baltimore Colts, for whom he would make his mark as defensive tackle. He was a five-time Pro-Bowl selection and part of the legendary team who won NFL championships in 1958 and 1959. He was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1968. Art Donovan, Jr. authored a book about his remarkable family titled: *The Fighting Donovan's: The Boxing and Football Family*.

Art Donovan, Jr. died August 4, 2013, at Stella Maris Hospice in Baltimore from a respiratory ailment at age eighty-nine. He is buried at the Dulaney Valley Memorial Gardens in Baltimore. ■

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

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Traditions of Christmas

Christians have been celebrating the birth of Christ for almost two thousand years, but why December 25? The date of Christ's birth is not mentioned in the bible, yet it is celebrated during the coldest, darkest time of the year in the northern hemisphere. Early Christian priests and missionaries often facilitated the spread of the Christian faith by incorporating the beliefs and customs of the existing religions of the people they wished to convert.

The celts occupied much of Europe as well as Ireland and the British Isles in pre-Christian times. Most of what we know about them was written either

by their enemies or by the Christian monks, primarily Irish monks centuries later.

The most sacred times of the year for the celts occurred at the solstice. The solstice happens twice a year, when the sun appears at its highest or lowest point on the horizon. North of the equator, the winter solstice usually occurs between December 20 and December 23.

Alban Arthuan, also known as Yule, was celebrated at the time of the winter solstice by the celts. Druid priests would gather mistletoe from the oak trees in the forests for its magical and healing properties on this day as they celebrated the rebirth of the sun. The day after the winter solstice, the sun moves higher into the sky, proof to the druids, that it had been reborn.

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

NEWGRANGE WINTER SOLSTICE

The alignment of light at Newgrange in the Boyne Valley in Co. Meath, Ireland that happens on the winter solstice has been interpreted as a "ray of light by the Sun god into the womb of Mother Earth" to bring about the creation of new life in the coming spring. During the coldest, harshest time of the year, the celts celebrated the old and the new, death and rebirth. The festival of the winter solstice celebrating the rebirth of the sun, worked well for the Christian celebration of the birth of the Son of God, bringing light to the world and was adopted by the Christians as the time to celebrate the Mass of Christ.

The Christmas tree has its origin in pre-Christian celebrations during Yule. An evergreen tree, usually a pine, was brought indoors to symbolize life and decorated with ornaments representing the sun, moon and stars. The tree also represented the spirits of those that had passed away during the year. Gift giving evolved from the celtic tradition of hanging gifts on the Yule tree as offerings to pagan gods and goddesses.

The holly we use to decorate our homes at Christmas in the form of wreaths or floral arrangements also comes from the druids. They would put holly leaves and branches around their homes and structures during the winter months to give shelter against the cold to the faeries that lived in the surrounding forests. They believed the holly would also entrap evil spirits before they were able to enter the dwelling.

The oak tree was incredibly important in celtic life and the parasitic plant that made its home in the branches of the oak was revered as well. Mistletoe was a healing plant, believed to hold the soul of the mighty oak tree.

With help from the oak, it possessed magical powers to heal, give fertility to humans and animals, and to protect them from evil from spirits and witchcraft. Assuring the celtic community of good fortune and prosperity in the coming year.

MISTLETOE MEANINGS

Mistletoe was so sacred, that enemies would lay down their weapons if they encountered one another beneath it in the forest and keep a truce until they met again. From that, we began to hang mistletoe over a doorway as a symbol of peace. The practice of kissing under the mistletoe came about in English Victorian times from the early celtic customs.



Some Christmas traditions practiced in Ireland have roots in the celtic world as well. A candle burning in the window to light the way for Mary and Joseph on their way to Bethlehem, may have been inspired by the celtic ritual of lighting the way for the spirits to pass a dwelling peacefully at night. In a modern Irish Christian home, holly represents the crown of thorns and ivy recognizes pre-Christian times in Ireland.

The practice of a fire in the fireplace on Christmas morning, regardless of the weather, originated with the celtic yule log tradition. Here in America the custom of leaving out milk and cookies for Santa, comes from the Irish tradition of leaving food and drink for Mary and Joseph on their journey to Bethlehem.

Love and Peace to All
Merry Christmas ■

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

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Irish Music Retailer Golden Discs Launches in the U.S. Ireland's oldest home-entertainment retail chain sets up online sales outlet in time for the holidays

Record retailer Golden Discs was established in 1962 by Jack Fitzgerald and Tom Rogers under the name the Trans-Atlantic Record Agency (TARA) in Dublin, Ireland. Today Golden Discs caters to a global customer base across more than forty countries. It is Ireland's oldest music retail chain, with twenty-two outlets nationwide. The site's focus is on Irish music, be it Traditional folk, 'Celtic' music and modern singer songwriters and bands.

The site also sells books, t-shirts and merchandise. Golden Discs is now looking to reach the Irish American music fans with the launch of www.goldendiscs.com.

In 1966, the name The Golden Disc was chosen as the name of the first store in the first shopping center in Ireland; Stillorgan Shopping Center. "The Golden Disc" was originally associated with an accolade presented to artists upon sale of 500,000 vinyl albums, which at the time was very rare and impressive, thus a seemingly fitting name for the new store, considering the



achievements of the company in the previous years. Every store thereafter was given the name Golden Discs.

In the 1990s, the business was taken over by Stephen Fitzgerald, the son of Jack, who had spent many years in the States monitoring the evolution of the industry. The catalog of music the company carries reads like a complete history of Irish music.

U.S. LAUNCH

Says Stephen about the US launch, "We've been getting inquiries from the US for years and have been promising to launch a separate site dedicated to

traditional and contemporary Irish Music away from the full range we offer on our domestic site. With the renewed interest and resurgence in Vinyl we thought the time was right to launch this year.

"Ireland punches way above its weight in music talent and has produced some incredible artists over the past century... from Trad giants such as Christy Moore, Planxty and The Chieftains to more contemporary bands like Thin Lizzy, Van Morrison and U2 to recent upstarts like Hozier, Imelda May and The Script."

As well as all the Irish catalog product, the site will also carry new releases such as the forthcoming new Christy Moore album; The Pogues - The BBC Session 84 - 86; U2 - All That You Can't Leave Behind 20th Anniversary edition, released with Vinyl and boxsets; A

Woman's Heart - rereleased later this month on CD and on colored vinyl; Thin Lizzy - Rock Legends box set and vinyl, to name but a few.

The success story and legacy of Golden Discs is testament not only to the vision of Jack, Tom, Stephen and the entire staff pool over the years, but also to the millions of Irish music lovers that walk through its doors and log-on to its website every year in support of this fully Irish-owned, family-run company.

For more information on the history of Golden Discs and how to purchase your favorite Irish artists, or to simply to sign up for the Golden Discs newsletter, go to www.goldendiscs.com. ■

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By Dottie Wenger
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KIDS CRAIC

Happy Christmas!

Christmas is celebrated in Ireland very similarly to how it is in the United States, with a few exceptions:

St. Stephen's Day - In Ireland, this is a national holiday, and a day of feasting, celebrated on the day after Christmas. It is named in honor of the first Christian martyr, St. Stephen, and is referenced in a familiar Christmas carol: "Good King Wenceslas looked out on the Feast of Stephen..."

Little Christmas/Women's Christmas is January 6th in Ireland. This is when Christmas decorations are taken down and the Christmas season officially ends. Until 2013, this marked the last day of holiday break for Irish primary and secondary schools.

Some people in Ireland greet one another with the phrase "Happy Christmas!" – a phrase used in England, rather than the American counterpart, "Merry Christmas!"




Rudolph Peanut Butter Celery Sticks

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- Peanut butter or hazelnut spread
- Candy eyes
- Cranberry or red m&m's for Rudolph's nose
- Mini pretzel pieces for Rudolph's antlers

Christmas Trivia Time



Q: In the song "Frosty the Snowman", what made Frosty come to life?
A: An old silk hat

Q: According to legend, what holiday treat is shaped to resemble a shepherd's staff, as a way to remind us of the shepherds who visited baby Jesus?
A: Candy Canes

Q: What type of red bird is featured on many Christmas cards?
A: Cardinal

Q: What do many families (in America and in Ireland) leave out for Santa on Christmas Eve?
A: Milk and cookies...and sometimes, carrots for Santa's reindeer!

Q: How many reindeer are featured in the poem "Twas the Night Before Christmas?"
A: Eight (no Rudolph!)
**In the past, it was common for Irish families to leave Santa a Guinness and a mince pie!*

Literature Corner:



An Irish Night Before Christmas, written by Sarah Kirwan Blazek, illustrated by James Rice.

A narrative poem with colorful, full-page illustrations. The book features the customs and language of the Irish.

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Gab in Gaelic

Nollaig Shona Duit!

(pron. NO-lihg HO-nuh gwich),

which means **Happy Christmas!**

Dottie taught kindergarten and second grade for a total of thirty-two years, and she now handles marketing and promotions for Yorktown Service Plaza in Parma Heights. In her spare time, Dottie is a baker extraordinaire, and also enjoys participating in 5K events in order to offset collateral damage from this hobby.



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Winners will be showcased in the OhioIANews.



AKRON IRISH

By Lisa O'Rourke

Lá an Dreolín (Wren Day)

Men were marching down the main street in a small village, looking both determined and frivolous. What was striking was their appearance. They were unrecognizable, not only from each other, but really, anything mundanely human.

They had crudely assembled outfits woven together from what looked like stalks of wheat, topped with large matching conical hats. The overall effect was an insurrection of Children of the Corn.

These were the Mummings, on their annual parade through the streets of Dingle, occurring each December 26. I experienced a bit of buyer's remorse at what was then, my burgeoning enchantment with Ireland.

I may have gotten these people completely wrong! My confusion was compounded on another St. Stephen's Day in Ireland, when a knock at the door revealed a group of boys, disguised in a variation of what my Grandma used to call a "tramp" costume; dirty, ragged clothes, with faces covered in dirt or another mask. They played a song or two on the tin whistle, sang and were rewarded by my husband with some money, which send them scurrying off to the next house.

The experience, happening also on December 26, was a variation on the same theme as the straw men, but was a little more satisfying than the horror of large people dancing around completed covered in some stalks of wheat. It still left me asking why?

One of the things that we Americans cannot resist about Ireland are the ties to an older culture. We are still newcomers to the cultural arena, and I am not sure how some of our institutions will hold up. How is Black Friday is going to age?

WREN DAY

So, Wren Day had me in its grasp, seeming both old and deeply strange. Some of the strangeness of these old practices comes from multi-layered origins. It is nothing new to hear that many of the pagan holidays were absorbed and transformed into Christian ones.

The early Christians in Ireland were canny operators. They knew that they could not convert directly, so they added a god to the many and whittled away at the many gods while transforming times of celebration into ones with a Christian focus.

But in Ireland, it feels like the connection to the Catholic world is still fresh and not completely secure. The traces of old beliefs are at the surface. Late December was celebrated well before it became Christmas.

The Winter Solstice was a significant point in the calendar for people who lived so connected to the earth. What is the shortest day of the year but the return of daylight to us, had a heightened effect on people long ago.

To our agrarian ancestors, it represented hope. The sun was coming back, the cycle returned. Irish archeologists

are finding more and more of the ancient Irish monuments have a strong relationship to the Winter Solstice. The best example being Newgrange, with its amazing alignment to the sunrise which directs a beam of sunlight into the middle of the monument on the solstice.

ST. STEPHEN

So, we have our celebration timeline, but how does the wren fit in? The Christian version of the story tells that the wren betrayed St. Stephen, whose feast day falls on December 26. Another story has the appetite and noisy beak of the wren causing a Viking camp to awake prematurely, thus destroying the Irish element of surprise and leading to defeat.

Either of these faults could lead to the wren being persecuted. However, there is a paradox, because while the wren had a few possible missteps, it was a venerated bird in ancient Europe, called the king of birds. Many cultures had a strong mistrust of most birds, with the wren and the robin transcending that negativity.

They did more than transcend, it was considered extremely bad luck to kill a wren in multiple countries, including Italy, France, Ireland and England. There was a one-day moratorium on that bad luck, December 26. The old ritual of Wren Day was that the wren was hunted, killed and festooned upon a ribboned bundle of holly and ivy. Poor wren!

First, on the symbolism of the wren: it is said to be the first and loudest bird to sing in the morning, here we find its association with the sun as it is its chief herald or 'king among birds.' Its name in Irish, dreolín, is noted for its connection with the words for a druid (druí) or magic (draoi-, draoicht); here the name is thought to derive from contraction of the words draoi- and éan (a 'bird), to mean 'druid-bird', or 'magic-bird'. Druids are thought to have consulted the song of the wren to divine omens and uncover secret truths, in this way they were seen as messengers of the gods.

The above quote solved it for me. So, this was a venerated bird of the old druid order being absorbed into the Christian culture and given a newly minted bad reputation. Killing the wren on the day after the birth of the Christian King could have been a part of conversion, a rejection of the old ways.

MUMMERS

But the old ways persist. The Mummings, the straw men, maintain their December 26th annual parade in Dingle, Co. Kerry. It is appropriate that Dingle is the home of the parade too.

Dingle is situated in the largest Gaeltacht area, where many elements of Irish culture thrive. What about other parts of the country? The wren is a tradition that is falling out of practice. While they no longer kill and parade the body of the wren, the other traditions of the parade and the boys persisted well through the last century.

In the 70s, it was common practice for neighborhood boys particularly, to get dressed up in ragged or crazy outfits and adopt a false face, by donning a pillowcase or wearing a mask. The boys travelled door-to-door singing and playing a few tunes.

Refusing to come to the door or give the boys some money would result in a prank being played on the house, like doors and windows being banged on. Old standards had that the money raised went for some kind of party. However, more likely now, the money raised for the wren is donated to anything from a local sports club or another charity like Trócaire, an Irish group focused on poverty.

Mysterious and odd as they can appear, our traditions define us. From the outside, they vary from the day-to-day, which is what makes them unique. Their origins make our practices unique to our groups. But what is really beautiful about traditions is what they have in common, a framework that allows us to connect, celebrate and enjoy. That is my wish for you in this Holiday Season. ■

Lisa O'Rourke is an educator from Akron. She has a BA in English and a Master's in Reading/Elementary Education. Lisa is a student of everything Irish, primarily Gaelic. She runs a Gaelic study group at the AOH/Mark Heffernan Division. She is married to Dónal and has two sons, Danny and Liam. Lisa enjoys art, reading, music, and travel. She likes spending time with her dog, cats and fish. Lisa can be contacted at olisa07@icloud.com.

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AN EEJIT ABROAD

By Conor Makem

Someone Needs to Put a Stop to the Madness

I think it's high time this festering American wound was brought into the sunlight. To quote Popeye, I've had all I can take, I canst take it no more.

No, I'm not referring to politics or religion, the national debt or competition between states. This particular problem affects just about everyone in the country and it is insidious: stickers on fruit.

Now, before I ruminate any further, I'll throw you a little-known fact. There was a meat shortage in the United States in the 1940s, not surprisingly because of World War II, and all of the soldiers off fighting the good fight. The shortage led to rationing, and eventually to "Meatless Tuesdays," where it was forbidden to hold any meat transactions on said day. So, when J. Wellington Wimpy (aka Wimpy) told Popeye, "I would gladly pay you Tuesday for a hamburger today," the skinflint was just swindling a free meal.

Of course, Popeye didn't need to deal with stickers on his canned spinach. Since about 1990, people across this great planet began to see these wretched mini-patches on each piece of individual fruit purchased at the store. I understand the aim, which is to make checkout more seamless, but it's getting the danged things off that raises my ire.

I'll admit that the stickers with little tabs are a definite plus. My question is, why aren't they all at least this sensible? We can put a man on the moon, but we're still more often than not required to scrape away these stickers with our fingernails, striving for that perfect balance between removal of the sticker and removal of the skin.

BANANAS AND APPLES AND PEACHES, OH MY

My number one fruit is the banana, a nearly perfect consumable, but past that I start to lean toward apples, and this is where the problem starts. I simply cannot pry the little things off without bruising or piercing the flesh. You see, I like to wash all my fruit when I get home from the supermarket so that it's ready to go when I want a piece. So, any bruised or pierced flesh just gets unsightlier in the fridge over a few days.

Then, of course, we get to the worst of the worst, items like pears, peaches and plums. Holy cow, peeling a sticker off of a plum is darned near impossible. Word on the street is that the stickers are edible. I don't know about you, but I will never knowingly eat a sticker. It's just not my DNA.

The main catalyst behind this article was a dream I had earlier this week, where I returned from the store only to realize that I'd purchased a bunch of grapes, each one bedecked in its own sticker. I woke up in a cold sweat with an ironic craving for a glass of wine.

So, what can be done about this, other than constant complaining, to which I am quite prone? As luck would have it, I did some research on the old internets and discovered some very promising possibilities.

There is currently a process used only minimally—and mainly just for citrus fruits—wherein a laser is utilized to change the pigment color on a piece of fruit, thereby leaving the fruit wholly intact and the PLU number readily readable. The fruit maintains its shelf life and eating quality. Brilliant!

There's a New York inventor who is working on an even more impressive feat. He is designing a sticker that dissolves in water and turns into an organic fruit wash. Can you imagine rinsing your new produce under the tap and coming away sticker and bacteria free? Oh my, what the future holds!

SO, WHAT'S IN A STICKER?

For those of you who have held on this long, through what could only be described as an incredibly interesting article, congratulations. You have more free time than most people. And that grit is about to pay off, because I am about to tell you what the numbers on these stickers actually tell us.

Four-number codes designate con-

ventional fruit. A small Granny Smith apple is 4138. A producer of conventionally grown fruit and vegetables could use harmful synthetic pesticides and herbicides on this produce. Additionally, they can use sewage sludge to grow the crops (life is a giant circle, isn't it?).

Five-number code starting with a 9 is organic. This limits the pesticides, herbicides and antibiotics the farmer can use on the fruit. It also means the fruit was not genetically modified, although it can still hybridized, which can alter its genetic and chemical makeup. An organic Granny Smith apple would be 94138.

Five-number code starting with an 8 has been genetically modified. Some folks aren't bothered by genetic modification, and the fruit can be larger and juicier, for example. A genetically modified Granny Smith apple is 84060.

There are over 1400 unique PLUs just for produce and produce-related items. The International Federation of Produce standards assigns the numbers after detailed reviews are conducted both nationally and internationally.

AS FOR THE SAILOR

Popeye's friend Wimpy is reputed-

ly the origin for the term wimp, that being someone timid and cowardly. It's been suggested that the Army's "general purpose (GP)" vehicle, received its name from Popeye's dog, Eugene the Jeep.

General purpose was abbreviated GP and Eugene was only able to mutter the word jeep. Furthermore the cartoon was often shown to soldiers to boost morale.

So, there you have it, more than you ever wanted to know about fruit stickers and Popeye, all in one convenient column. You never know what you'll find in the *Ohio Irish American News!* ■

Conor Makem spent 22 years traveling and honing petty gripes as an Irish musician, and enjoyed a further 13 years of people not returning his calls as a journalist. He is fluent in English, American and old Kerry farmer. More of his photos are on Instagram under cb.makem.

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ERIN GO BRAGH

Eastern Lake County Chamber of Commerce
2019 BUSINESS OF THE YEAR



AT HOME, ABROAD

By Regina Costello

The End of the Year That Was

“... and shut the door after you.”

Yep, that’s essentially our farewell to 2020! During this holiday season, our hearts ache for too many families who suffered loss of life during this turbulent year of sickness and civil unrest.

Without a doubt, this year is a turning point in the life of our generation, but in the life of our human history – it’s just another year. The rumbling undercurrents of Mother Nature are camouflaged by the perpetual ebb and flow of the tide, and the unpleasantness of Mankind is cloaked by the grind of everyday life.

Mother Nature has played dirty with humans since the beginning of time, but we have stood our ground and survived much worse than the lousy hand she dealt this year.

MOTHER NATURE’S WRATH

A brief look at her dirty plays

unearths some atrocities. The Antonine Plague stole five million lives in 165AD. The Plague of Justinian, also known as the Bubonic Plague, killed twenty-five million. From 1346 to 1353, the Black Death had a death toll of between seventy-five and 200 million. One million lives were lost in the Third Cholera Pandemic in the mid-1800s. The Russian Flu took another million lives in the late 1800s.

And of course, the now well-known Spanish Flu claimed between twenty and fifty million lives in the early 20th century - clearly worth a mention. Let us also note, *An Gorta Mór, The Great Hunger, in Ireland in the 19th century, that killed more than one million.*

It is reassuring that despite Mother Nature’s wrath, Mankind’s survival ability since ancient times is phenomenal. Keeping in mind that equipped with little or no medicine, no cross-country collaboration, and limited science, we managed not only to survive but also grow steadily from these catastrophes over the centuries.

Given what the human race has endured and survived, I remain optimistic that we will more than survive Covid 19 and turn the corner for real. In some respects, this virus could not have come at a better time.

We have reached stellar points with science and technology that have equipped medicine and therapies to finally arm us with the best fighting chance ever in this latest battle against Mother Nature. I take comfort in the simple solution – because let’s face it, the solution is simple. Wash hands frequently - Keep your distance - And for shamrock’s sake wear a mask.

Do masks really need to come with instructions? Please cover your nose. These solutions, if effectively applied, would work much better and save a lot more lives. The scientific and medical community alike tell us that this is our only shelter until the arrival of a vaccine. While we cannot control the acts of Mother Nature, we can control those of Mankind by protecting each other with full compliance.

DARWIN’S THEORY OF SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

Darwin’s Theory of Survival of the Fittest has reached an all-time low. Today, survival for many is not necessarily based on the fittest or the need to

literally survive. It is based on discriminating against and stomping on ethnic groups that we just don’t like, simply based on the color of skin, country of origin, or by who they call God.

WE CAN HOPE THAT WHEN MANKIND UNBOLTS THE LOCK TO GREET 2021 THAT WE WILL DO SO WITH GREATER HEARTS AND KINDER SPIRITS TO THOSE AROUND US.

Really, have our better angels abandoned us? We are the cruelest animal on the planet. As of May 2020, active armed conflicts existed in many countries, including Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, Mexico, Turkey, Somalia, the Maghreb and Sahel Regions of North Africa, Iraq, and Libya. War is war and its’ creator is Mankind, not Mother Nature.

Yes, we mask it in the name of religion, economics or political gains. The ultimate goal is power and control. Not survival.

For many of us to feel powerful, we must have someone to control. William James, a Harvard graduate and one of the leading psychologists of the late 19th century, is considered to be one of the most influential thinkers and philosophers of the United States.

His life’s work focused on the relationship between internal states and external behaviors. His thoughts on war and its’ prevalence conclude that it provides positive psychological effects. This is so, because the coming together of many provides a focus and unity to face a threat and to do so unselfishly and honorably.

One can liken Williams’ take on war and apply it to Darwinism. For Darwin, people fought purely to survive, with zero concern for opponents’ ethnicity, color or beliefs.

James adds a new dimension to this for modern times. Much strife in the world in recent centuries is at the creation of human beings and extends well beyond the need to just survive. Much of it is born out of greed and hate for others, not for deviant or threatening behavior.

What seems to drive it, James tells us, is the psychological bond of unity it

instills and a purpose for the bullying group. The actions and behavior of the oppressed that include African Americans, Jews, Hispanics and Asians in no way justify the discrimination from other human beings.

The outgoing year saw too much civil unrest against the black community, a faction that has suffered more than any other ethnic group in the world and for the longest period. Mankind can and must do better. The eve of a new year is an opportune time to make a serious dent in that direction.

THE WORLD IS A STAGE

Sean O’Casey said, *“The world’s a stage and most of us are desperately unrehearsed.”* An apt description of 2020 in some respects. And so, we will bolt the door shut to another year with shouts of *“don’t ever come back!”*

We can hope that when Mankind unbolts the lock to greet 2021 that we will do so with greater hearts and kinder spirits to those around us. We will continue to play ball with Mother Nature. She will have to fight hard as we use shields of science and medicine to win the game at hand.

During this holiday season, I am thinking about the healing that is so very badly needed in my home abroad. I take comfort more than ever in the bosom of my small family, grateful that we are together and well as the holidays approach.

I hope the joys of the Holiday Season will provide respite from recent strife and sadness and with that, a reboot of the best of human nature that is innate in all of us. Wishing you a peaceful Christmas, restful holidays and a happier healthier new year. ■

Regina is a Graduate from the National University of Ireland, Galway and a Post Graduate from the National University of Ireland, Dublin. She is the former Curator of the Irish American Archives at the Western Reserve Historical Society, former Executive Director of the Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Monument Commission and former Executive Coordinator of the Northern Ohio Rose Centre. She serves on the Board of Directors of the Mayo Society of Greater Cleveland. She can be reached at rcostello@ameritech.net

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OUT OF THE MAILBAG
By John O'Brien, Jr.
@jobjr

Roots & Stones
SCYTHIAN
2020. 13 tracks zz minutes.



There has never been a time where I have wanted to dance more, to see friends and have a pint over great music and past memories more and to simply let loose and forget the troubles. The last part isn't available yet, the others are under construction, or containment.

It didn't matter—I dropped the CD; I danced, had a Smithwicks or three, and ran a full movie in my mind of past Scythian shows that I have attended, punctuated with the memories of laughter, a few after's parties at festivals,



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those friends and the fantastic music that moves me. They are my roots, and the stones of my foundation.

Despite COVID, and because of frantic livestream concerts, Scythian pulled it all together, music, funding, promotion and more, to release Roots & Stones, their brand new, fan-funded CD that is vintage Scythian, ever evolving in the march of time and personal development, but rooted in the stories of those barrier and back breaking immigrants dear to us, that came before us.

1. *Broken String* (Trad., arranged by Scythian) - is of course a reel and the group really wanted to start off the album with a big beat. They succeeded; the toe tapping, head nodding reaction is involuntary, and immediate. I can see the boys dancing across the stage so prevalent in a live Scythian show.

2. *Sail Away Johnny* (Alexander Fedoryka) - an emigration tune set in Ireland, Alex sings of the ache, but in a vintage Irish (and Scythian) way, with fire, crowd encouraging chorus, and music meant to dance to – the American Wake's bitterness and hope. Catch the lyrics; you'll know the lament.

3. *Duffy's Cut* (Catie Parker Fedoryka & Alexander Fedoryka) - a song about

the Irish rail workers who cut a tunnel through the impassable Lehigh Valley only to be worked to death.

4. *Fire in My Heart* (Danylo Fedoryka) - a song Dan wrote for his wife Therese. They were married earlier this year. I do believe he is in love, and so happy.

5. *The Motherland* (Alexander Fedoryka) - a Ukrainian themed song inspired by the overwhelming support the band received during the memorable COVID stay in place orders Live Facebook concerts, i.e. Quaranstreams. It's a nod of thanks to all the fans, who showed up online in force, and helped fund this CD. I could see Alex doing the dance of his heritage; down low, one leg out, half jump, kick out comes the other leg.

6. *Galway City* (feat. Shane Hayes of Socks in the Frying Pan on accordion, Alexander Fedoryka) – The song was written about all the great times Scythian has had in Galway during their Irish Tours fan trips. With over 400 fans and ten trips to Ireland, the Scythian Tours have become legendary for the craic, the music, and the memories, kinda just like the band.

"Galway always produces great stories," said Alex. – "What is to be expected from the Galway City song? If Nashville and

Galway had a baby, this song would be it!" This is a very fun sing-along waiting to happen.

7. *Ju Suis Courier Des Bois* (Danylo Fedoryka) - is a song Dan wrote about the French-Canadian fur trappers. Coreur Des Bois means "Heart of the Woods" and these men always inspired Dan; heading off into the great unknown alone and returning with pelts. They were the first documenters of the native languages, and echo the lifestyles of touring musicians.

This song was inspired by two French Canadian brothers, the Davain Brothers, who shared their music. Dan cites his exposure to Levaunt du Nord at the Dublin Irish Festival that factored in as well. He was mesmerized by their music.

8. *Men of the North* (Alexander Fedoryka) - a poem Alex wrote after his first visit to Donegal. It sat as a poem for years until the tune finally came to the guys in time for the album.

9. *Sweet Maryanne* (Danylo Fedoryka) - a love song capturing what it's like to be a road warrior.

10. *The Bruce* (Alexander Fedoryka) - a tribute to those of Scottish Heritage (the guys best friend is related to Robert de Bruce) and is the one song on the album where they absolutely let it rip.

11. *The Fight* (Alexander Fedoryka) - a song which Alex always dedicates to the fathers in the audience for, as he says, "our mama's teach us how to love and our daddy's teach us how to fight." Believe it or not, it's a song of encouragement.

12. *Virginia* (feat. Catie Parker Fedoryka) - Catie Parker, a Jersey girl, met Alex and soon fell in love with him and his home state. She wrote this song as a tribute to those things that stole her heart.

13. *Best Friend Song* (Danylo Fedoryka) - This is a song Danylo wrote for his two best friends, which he has known since he was seven years old. It is a fitting closer to the album, especially during these COVID times. The song points to hope that "we'll find our way back here again," together.

Roots & Stones is a true representation of Scythian's eclectic live show, full of power, dance, and fan feeding interaction that flows both ways. Dan noted they are pleased with how many Celtic inspired tunes are included. I'm struck again, by the shared experiences so many

Continued on facing page

Athenry: An Odyssey of Sacrifice, Survival & Love
By Cahal Dunne, 2020. 324 Pages

My favorite singers always are those who tell the best stories, in their songs, preamble's or explanations of connections and emotional or physical prices we pay. Our history comes alive to us. We remember the songs and lyrics long after, because of the impact they create in us. Perhaps the song or background educated us for the first time, or changed or challenged our perspective.

Author Cahal Dunne weaves a tapestry in Athenry – perhaps what has become the very fabric of our being. Most know some of the history of the Irish; *An Gorta Mor* (The Great Hunger) is the authentic name of the hell that the mid-1800s Irish lived through. It was a hunger, not a famine, because it was an act of man, not of God.

Shiploads of grain, cattle, and more left Ireland day after day, while the people wasted away on the docks, the roads and the ditches. They had limited choices – emigrate, if they could afford it, and were not banned from the boats for already being sick; they starved; or they were sentenced to death or slavery in Van Diemen's land for the horrible

Scythian
Continued from previous page

of our cultures have lived through, in their journeys, evident in the lyrics and emotions contained in the songs on Roots & Stones.

Roots & Stones is highly recommended, and I suggest getting two or three, for the car, the family at Christmas and the safe for work headphones too.

You can get it on Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/scythianmusic>

Scythian is:
Alexander Fedoryka: Vocals, Fiddle, Viola, Mandolin, Harmonica; Danylo Fedoryka: Vocals, Guitar, Accordion; Ethan Dean: Vocals, Electric Bass, Upright Bass, Guitar, Banjo; Johnny Rees: Vocals, Drums, Percussion, Hammond Organ; Catie Parker Fedoryka: Vocals, Harmonies (*Sail Away Johnny*, *Best Friend Song*).



crime of stealing food for their families. Athenry treads softly through the very real and hard obstacles they faced in effort to survive.

It wasn't the first famine, it wasn't the last, but 1845 to 1850, and the epicenter of Black 47, certainly contributed to the reasons the Irish Diaspora adopted emigration to survive the genocide and ended up all across the world. Now, the sun never sets on the Irish, no matter where they live at that moment.

Some books are masters in immersing us in a time we only hear about incomplete snatches or clips. My dad, raised in Ireland, never heard about An Gorta Mor in school. Cahal's book makes sure

Engineer: Frank Marchand Studio: Waterford Digital Studios
Record Label: Scythian Fans

Scythian raised \$52,300 through their indiegogo campaign. The final \$11,000 came during a St. Patrick's Day live stream from Ethan Dean's kitchen just days after everything shut down due to COVID! The epic three-hour rally got Scythian over the hump and beyond, to fund a CD that absolutely shines. Dan reiterates: "We have the best fans on the planet!" ■

Scythian | scythianmusic.com
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the true depth and deliberation of man inherent in genocide, lives on.
"Between 1788 and 1886, approximately 164,000 convicts – 80% men and 20% women – were transported to the Penal Colonies in Australia from England and Ireland. Fewer than 5% of them made it home."

Dunne walks the far too typical personal journey with a family trying to survive, despite the attempts to stop them. The absolute hate for the Irish, in Ireland, lived by the ruling British government is no exaggeration. Nor is the length that most of those rulers would go; the obstacles were extensive and designed to crush, to drive the Irish Catholic, for the most part – not off the land, but off the planet, has been illustrated time and time again.

But we, and some of the great characters in Athenry, survived and often, flourished, over time, and across the oceans. Athenry is a book of hope, inspiration and an illustration of what was overcome.

We cannot condone what was done, but we must learn it, to not repeat it.

Athenry is a captivating and yes, even entertaining read, no matter the centuries old heartache the Irish are all too familiar with. The Irish pronunciations and name meanings included throughout the book, and in a handy index at the end are illuminating and appreciated.

Cahal Dunne is a singer, songwriter, pianist, storyteller and author, from Cork City. He earned his Bachelor of Music from University College Cork and represented Ireland in the Eurovision Song Contest with his own song, Happy Man, in Israel. He now lives with his wife and family in Pittsburgh and performs throughout America.

Athenry: An Odyssey of Sacrifice, Survival & Love is recommended, both for your knowledge and for your library. It makes a great Christmas gift as well. You can order Athenry on Amazon/Kindle for \$8.99, or order the Hard Copy for \$19, at cahaldunne.com. ■

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Irish Whiskey Fans of America Lock-in Watch Party

Irish Whiskey is in a major resurgence. Where there used to be just a handful of distilleries across the isle, now you need a detailed map to find them all.

America is not left out in loving this recent trend of new offerings from Irish distilleries and have been lucky enough to follow new developments in the market through Barry Chandler of Stories and Sips (and also of Cobh, Ireland in Co. Cork) and his Friday Night Lock-Ins. Barry created the Irish Whiskey Fans of America group on Facebook and has been amassing members to his cause of appreciating Ireland's most loved export.

Before the global pandemic, Barry hosted whiskey tastings around the Columbus area, converting one bourbon lover after another to Ireland's favor-

Continued on facing page



Ed Gaughan doing some Irish Road Bowling.



The official Irish Road Bowling map.



Columbus Irish *Continued from previous page*

ite spirit. Building from the Facebook group and the isolation of what the pandemic has thrown at us, Stacie Stearns and Scott Robinson organized a group watch in what was the first meeting of the Columbus Chapter of the Irish Whiskey Fans of America. Barry interviewed Shamrock Club President Andy Shuman while relaxing by his peat fire in Cork, as well as Stacie and Scott, on what the chapter will bring to Columbus and the Shamrock Club of Columbus.

Sharing history, sips were poured and enjoyed, and the Hooligans played into the night. If you would like to watch the replay of the lock in, check out Barry's website www.storiesandsips.com. It is a treasure trove of information about Irish whiskey and the history that surrounds it. Sláinte!

7TH ANNUAL IRISH ROAD BOWLING

October 31 featured a full moon, Halloween, and most importantly, a beautiful day for the Greater Columbus Irish Cultural Foundation's (GCICF) Irish Road Bowling event. This is the first time in three years that it wasn't freezing cold and didn't rain. Participants took off layers as they rolled their steel balls down the roads of Deer Creek State Park towards the finish. This year's winners came from West Virginia, the Pre-Gamers; second was Past Shamrock Club President Pat Byrne's team, and third was Past Shamrock Club President Brian O'Reilly's team.

Irish Road Bowling gets its origins from 1600s Ireland with its first official match being held in 1928. The first GCICF Irish Road Bowling event took place in 2014 with seven teams.

Two years later it became a fund-



raiser and brought in twelve teams. In the four years since, 2020 has been the biggest turn out, with twenty-three teams (ninety-four players) and raised \$1,400 for the Foundation.

The GCICF was originally part of the Shamrock Club of Columbus, but separated in 2004 to continue supporting Irish culture and activities in the greater Columbus area. If you

would like to donate to the GCICF and help it support the many scholarships and events they host, check out their website: <https://columbusirishculture.com> ■

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My Father: Custodian and Calligrapher

By Sheila Ives

"Between my finger and my thumb the squat pen rests. I'll dig with it." Seamus Heaney

My father Maurice Ives was born in 1896 in Oberlin, Ohio. He was the only child in his family to be given a first name that would be considered Irish. Maurice, pronounced "Morris," was a forename prevalent in the province of Munster. It wasn't until a few years ago that I discovered that he most likely was named for his mother's uncle, Maurice Quinn.

Frank Ives, my grandfather, was descended from a long line of New England Protestants. His great-grandfather James Ives had moved his family to Portage County, Ohio, in 1815 from Connecticut. They were part of the great migration from New England to the Connecticut Western Reserve.

Frank's maternal great-grandfather had been a Baptist minister, proud to be distantly related to Oliver Hazard Perry, hero of the 1813 Battle of Lake Erie. So, it isn't surprising that Frank's family was not at all pleased when Frank, the eldest son and presumed heir of the family farm, courted a poor Irish Catholic immigrant woman. Frank, however, defied his family, converted to Catholicism, and he and my grandmother, Mary Ann Quinn, were the first couple to be married in the newly constructed St. Mary's Catholic Church in Elyria.

Mary Ann Quinn, born in Kanturk, Co. Cork, arrived in the United States in 1881. She was sixteen years old. Like many young Irish women

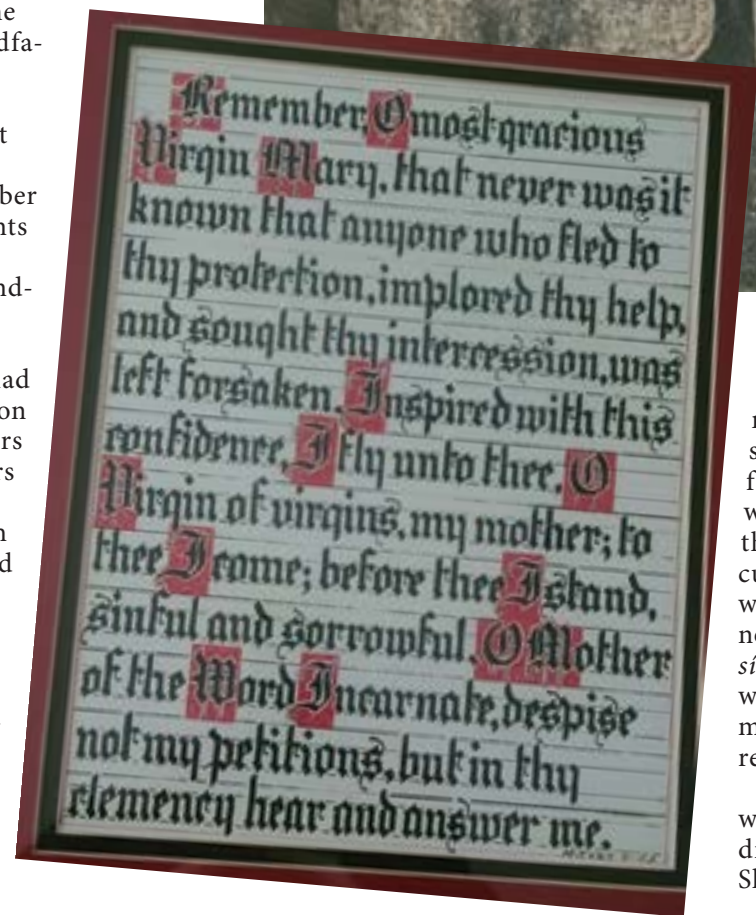
immigrants, she came by herself, unaccompanied by any family members.

THE DOMESTIC PATH

She lived for a few years with her uncle, Father John Quinn, in Wakeman, Ohio. He then arranged for her to get a job as a domestic servant in the nearby town of Oberlin. She was like so many Irish immigrant women who worked for prosperous families who could afford a servant. She cooked, cleaned houses, and did laundry for these families before she married my grandfather.

At the time my grandmother first lived in Oberlin, there were a number of Irish immigrants who lived in the town and surrounding townships. Some of the Irish immigrant men had farms or worked on farms, while others worked as laborers on the railroads.

The young Irish women often lived with the families where they worked. Some were uneducated and couldn't read or write. My grandmother had a sixth-grade education, so she did have



functional literacy.

Irish was my grandmother's native language, but she rarely spoke it in the home. She became friends with some of the other Irish women domestics and spoke of how they were superstitious. One of their customs was to take off their shoes when walking in the fields so as to not hurt "the little people," the *aos sí*. Some of these Irish immigrant women worked for years as domestics, others married, and a few returned home to Ireland.

After marriage, my grandmother was a housewife. She had six children, five surviving to adulthood. She made a few traditional Irish

dishes for her family, including Irish stew, soups, and what my father called "salt rising bread" (Irish soda bread).

For entertainment, she went to quilting bees, and after the quilting, there was a little food and dancing, and someone would play a violin, mouth organ, and accordion. They danced Irish jigs. Neighbor people came, and they brought lanterns to see at night.

My father's family didn't have much money. My grandfather worked for over fifty years in the sandstone quarries in South Amherst--the family farm not surprisingly went to a younger brother.

My grandmother valued education, and three of her children graduated from high school. My aunts also received piano lessons so that they would have a desirable social skill of that era. She was disappointed when my father quit school after 10th grade.

She was well aware that education was critical to improving one's chances in life. Her uncle, Father John Quinn, had pursued an education and had held a better position in life than others in his family had by becoming a priest.

G.W. MICHAEL PENMANSHIP

My grandmother decided that she also wanted to improve one of her skills and began taking penmanship lessons with a noted teacher of that subject, George W. Michael (1845-1933). G. W. Michael established five business colleges, including one in Oberlin in 1882.

He was most famous for developing the system of Rapid Writing that was taught in many business colleges. Good penmanship was considered an important business skill at that time.

My father also became interested in penmanship through watching his mother, and he studied under Claude A. Barnett (1874-1955), who became supervisor of penmanship for the Cleveland public schools.

In September of 1935 my father received the permanent position of fireman-laborer for the Oberlin Post Office. His job was to keep the post office building clean and maintain the grounds. He went to work at 5 a.m. and would return in the evening to lower the American flag at sunset.

He was employed at the post office for thirty-three years, retiring when mandated by age.

At Trinity College in Dublin, I had a chance to see an exhibit on the magnificent *Book of Kells*. I could only marvel at the beauty of the ornamentation and was in awe of the artistry of the Columban monks who created this illuminated manuscript masterpiece, knowing what it took for my father to create his works.

When my father died at the age of 95, I remember the priest remarking that the only thing that gave his age away was his hands. My father's hands had been so strong and capable, enabling him to support his family and create beautiful documents. Arthritis and illness had made his hands look frail and wasted.

I thought of him going into work at the post office for thirty-three years, each day wearing the same uniform of a grey shirt and matching grey pants. Probably most people didn't notice him as he went about quietly and diligently doing his job.

What do we miss knowing about a person, when we dismiss or fail to notice them because of their occupation or appearance: the steelworker who paints wonderful portraits; the library circulation clerk whose rich contralto voice soars when singing in a gospel choir; and the telephone lineman who carves the most intricate snowflakes out of wood.

When I was a young girl, my father would go by himself to a local store each year to purchase a nice Parker pen for my Christmas present. The Parker Pen Company still manufactures pens available in a variety of styles and prices.

President John F. Kennedy gave Parker pens out to official visitors to the White House. I liked the feel of these pens in my hand and the way the ballpoint effortlessly glided on the paper. I wish I could say that my handwriting improved when using these pens, but that is beyond the magic of any pen. Still, when I hold one of these pens in my hand, I think of my father, and how with a few deft strokes and some flourishes, he could turn any letter or word into a thing of beauty. ■

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TAKING THE FIELDS OF GLORY

By Vincent Beach

Midwest Gaelic Athletic Association

GAME ON – that’s the news coming out of the recent Midwest GAA annual general meeting (AGM) for the 2021 season. Clubs from Akron, Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and Rochester gathered in Pittsburgh on October 24th to discuss the season that was, the season that will be, motions, and officers for the upcoming year.

All clubs experienced lower participation numbers and very few played more than one weekend of sport due to the pandemic. There was a confidence stemming from the lessons learned during the year that the pandemic and outdoor sports were no longer unknowns – players, teams, and clubs knew the protocols, actions to take, and results. With that experience clubs and Divisional leadership are preparing for the 2021 season.

THE NEW MIDWEST GAA BOARD

The New Midwest GAA Board consists of Chairperson Paul Mulcaire (Buffalo Hurling); Vice-Chairperson

Matthew Lomot (Buffalo Fenians); Secretary Rob Tierney (Pittsburgh Celtics); Treasurer Sarah Dunn (Cleveland St. Pat’s – St. Jarlath’s GAA); Registrar David Roberts (Pittsburgh Celtics); Public Relations Officer Seán Staydubar (Pittsburgh Pucas); Youth Officer Garrett O’Donohue (Detroit Harps); *Go n-éiri an t-ádh libh. Good luck.*

IN OTHER NEWS

Akron Celtic Guards Hurling Club hosted their annual Al O’Leary Tournament at the West Side Irish American Club in Olmsted Township. Seven a-side teams came in from Akron, Cleveland, Indianapolis, and Pittsburgh. Each team played each other throughout the day and Cleveland recorded their first hurling win.

The final saw 5-time champion Indianapolis face off with the Midwest’s divisional champion, Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh came out firing on all cylinders, sinking Indy’s hope for the all-illusiv 6-in-a-row.

Comhghairdeas le Pittsburgh. It was great to

see games played again and such a temperate October day.

LOOKING AHEAD

Cleveland will host their club annual general meeting on December 5 to assemble the 2021 board, discuss officer reports, and vote on any motions to change the club constitution.

Further, further ahead Cleveland is embracing the ‘Game-On’ spirit with the scheduling of the Cleveland Memorial Football 7’s. Save the date for Saturday, May 8th, at the West Side Irish American club for a day of Irish culture, sport, and comradery. We are sure we will all be ready for it after this winter, and this writer looks for-



Cleveland Hurling Club recorded their first hurling win at the annual Al O’Leary Tournament at the West Side Irish American Club in Olmsted Township.

ward to reporting on regular games across the Division!

From the Cleveland GAA to all our supporters, sponsors, and friends, *Nollaig Shona Daoibh* – Happy December to You All. Keep Safe.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh (thanks y’all) to our readers and supporters. We need your help and involvement but would most like to share the fun of Irish sport and Cleveland community with you. Consider getting involved at any level. Fáilte (welcome) to all.

GAELIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

The Gaelic Athletic Association is Ireland’s largest sporting organization and a bit of home for the Irish abroad here in the US of A. Beyond sports, the Association also promotes Irish music, song and dance, and the

Irish language as an integral part of its objectives. Cleveland GAA is open to all who want to play competitive sports, meet new people, and join an athletic, fitness-minded club for all ages.

Follow @ClevelandGaelic on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter for the 2020 activities for Men, Women, and Youth. Or, visit ClevelandGAA.com. ■

Vincent Thomas Francis Xavier Beach is a proud Greater Cleveland and emigrant of Michigan. He joined the St. Pat’s Gaelic Football Club in 1999 and, with much help, is the current caretaker of the Cleveland GAA.

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TERRY FROM DERRY

By Terry Boyle

Taking the Secret Out of ‘Open Secret’: Here’s My Story

For many years, I taught Irish literature in Chicago, and I would always tell my students: the Irish love to debate, and argue about anything that’s not personal. We like to pontificate with the best of them but when it comes to personal matters, we become awkward, uncomfortable, and unusually quiet.

So, when it comes to approaching intimate subjects, decorum is required. You do not rush in where angels fear to tread. Instead, you avoid the subject.

For instance, my coming out was not accompanied by a fanfare. There was no great catharsis to be followed up by a rainbow party.

I was forty years old and quite happy inside the musty old closet of my own making. When it came to coming out, I simply moved from Ireland and took up residence with my partner Larry in Chicago. Everyone knew, but no one really said anything about the new situation.

My father, a very pious Catholic, never suspected that one of his five sons might be gay. The closest we came to having a discussion on the subject happened quite accidentally. We were driving downtown, when all of a sudden, he pointed at a man walking down the street and said, “See him? He’s a wee bit gay.” When I later told this story to my partner, he said: “You should have asked him, which *bit* of the man was gay?”

In retrospect, this moment might have been the perfect opportunity for disclosure, but I’m Irish and we don’t do that sort of thing. It’s too personal. My father died none the wiser about my sexual orientation.

But when it came to my mother, that’s a different story. She and I never discussed the subject, even though she had stayed at our Chicago home several times. She knew, and I knew she knew, and she knew that I knew she knew. It was an open secret after all.

There’s no doubt in my mind that the matter of my sexuality was scrutinized, dissected, and interrogated by the other family members, but never directly with me. Having my domestic setup an open secret among the family worked for me. It meant that there were no embarrassing questions to answer and no awkward silences to quickly fill with mindless trivia.

I could navigate my visits back home without fear of confrontation. At least, I thought I could, until one of the last trips back before my mother also passed away.

We were driving home from the casino. She loved a little flutter and, in Irish terms, our spell at the casino was quality family time. Joined by a common hope of winning, we bonded over the one-armed bandits.

On the way back, from a not so lucky afternoon, we ran into traffic and were slowed to a crawl. Music played on the radio, and we laughed about our misfortune.

All seemed good until traffic slowed to a halt. As if on cue, the conversation dropped to a more serious tone.

As soon as mother started with “I just want you to be happy,” my heart started racing. I’ve never had an anxiety attack, and I’m not claustrophobic, but in those moments the car wasn’t big enough for both of us, and my nerves were shot.

I was convinced that the prelude to mother’s opening comments was inspired by Jerry Springer. For a conservative Irish Catholic, mother enjoyed the freakish absurdities that Springer managed to find. I suppose I should be grateful to Jerry since against the backdrop of these offbeat characters my being gay must have seemed normal to her.

I desperately tried not to fixate on what she was saying. Watching the traffic lights in the distance, I prayed for a distraction, but none came.

I’m convinced God was up there laughing his ass off at my increasing discomfort. Her speech hit a crescendo

when she confessed to be disappointed at not having grandchildren from me.

It was at that point I wanted to laugh out loud. She already had twenty-plus grandkids as it was. One more from me would not have made her life any easier or fuller. “I thought you’d get married and settled down with children.”

I tried to make light of the conversation. “You should be grateful that never happened. There’s enough Boyles around to re-populate the world, should they be called upon to do so.”

My diversion tactic came to naught. Mother could not be dissuaded from her mission. This was the conversation she had wanted to have for years, and I could not stop her. And given that I couldn’t very well push her out of the car, I was forced to accept my fate.

As I sat there in my discomfort, I began to understand what an important step this talk was for her. Since it was foreign to our culture to say the things she was attempting to put into words, it was quite a brave thing for her to do.

I can never remember my parents ever being very demonstrative. If they were proud of you or thought well of

you, you heard it from a third party. When I graduated with my doctorate, I could tell they were pleased, even if they didn’t fully appreciate the achievement. I didn’t need them to say anything. They came to the ceremony and that was that.

Academic accolades are one thing, but they are not personal. Mother was attempting to unlearn her own cultural conditioning, and all I could do was squirm in my seat.

In what seemed like an eternity, but was most likely only ten minutes, she had surpassed me in her ability to evolve beyond our Irish limitations. I was the one more traveled. I was the smart one. But she was the one more open to change. In those minutes, I knew that it is never enough to live with an open secret. ■

Terry Boyle, originally from Northern Ireland, is a playwright, poet, and former professor of literature who lives in the Palm Springs area with his husband Larry and their two dogs.

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CLEVELAND IRISH

By Francis McGarry

The Irish Vote

There was a time when it was the Irish vote that politicians courted. There was a time when people actually called it the Irish vote. Despite the shift to a more diversified Irish American voting bloc, we still get voted for in good numbers.

My Aunt Irene would always vote for the Irish name if she was unsure in a particular race. As this article is authored, an Irish Catholic has been named President-Elect.

If that holds to be true, Joe Biden would be the second American President who is of Irish decent and a practicing Catholic. His second great grandfather was Edward Blewitt, a brick worker who immigrated from Ballina, County Mayo in 1850 to Scranton, Pennsylvania.

On May 31, 1849, second great grandfather Owen Finnegan, the son of John Finnegan and Mary Kearney from the Cooley peninsula in County Lough, arrived in New York aboard the ship Brothers. He procured work in his trade as a shoemaker and sent for his family a year later.

The Finnegan's made their way to upstate New York to pick apples. James, Biden's great grandfather, didn't like them apples and moved to Scranton. It was there his son Ambrose met Edward Blewitt's daughter.

He would not be the first Irishman to hold the office. Andrew Jackson was the first almost 200 years ago. His father was born in Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim, and his parents in Boneybfore, Co. Antrim as well.

The Roosevelts, Andrew Johnson, Chester Arthur, Grover Cleveland, William McKinley and Jimmy Carter all have family ties to Co. Antrim. The majority of the twenty-two American presidents with Irish roots are from Ulster: James Buchanan and James Polk, Donegal; Ulysses Grant and Woodrow Wilson, Tyrone; Gerald Ford and the Bush family, Down; William Harrison and Harry Truman, Ulster.

William Taft has roots in Co. Louth. Richard Nixon has roots in Co. Kildare. Lyndon B. Johnson has roots in Galway. Barack Obama has roots in Tipperary. Irish Catholic roots are considerably less common.

Ronald Reagan's Irish Catholic great grandfather Michael was from Ballyporeen, Co. Tipperary. His son John, Reagan's grandfather, was born in London, before the family emigrated to Illinois via Canada in 1857.

John Francis Fitzgerald, born in Boston in 1863 to Thomas, Co. Limerick, and Rose Anna (Cox) Fitzgerald, Co. Cavan. "Honey Fitz" became the first American-born Irish Catholic to

serve as mayor of Boston. He founded the Jefferson Club to organize the Irish Catholic voters of South Boston.

Cleveland also had a Jefferson Club. His grandson was John Fitzgerald Kennedy, this county's first Irish Catholic president. Kennedy and Biden are the only Catholic presidents.

The City of Cleveland is not known for an Irish political machine like Boston, New York and Chicago. The Irish in Cleveland were well represented on city council and in municipal positions. The city has had four elected mayors of Irish heritage: Robert E. McKissom, John H. Farley, Ray T. Miller and Thomas A. Burke.

Robert McKissom, mayor from 1895-1898, was of Protestant Irish descent. His father was born in 1834 in Northfield, Ohio, the family arriving in northern Summit County in the early 1800s. His tenure as mayor is often referred to as Tammany Cleveland because he built a political machine based upon the tight-knit Irish immigrant community that had arrived in those waves. Under his leadership, the Cuyahoga River was widened and straightened and new bridges built to span it.

John Farley, known as "Honest John," was mayor from 1883-1884 and again from 1899-1900. In the interim, he served a director of Internal Revenue under Grover Cleveland. His father Patrick Farley was born in Ireland, emigrating to Cleveland in 1833. He won the city commission for all mail and express freight arriving in Cleveland, making him a wealthy man.

Farley was very active in the Irish community and a Hibernian. After John Farley was elected the second time, he had to call in the state militia to support Cleveland police in maintaining order during the streetcar strike in 1899. Farley suffered a stroke while riding a streetcar in downtown Cleveland in 1922 and died in an ambulance in route to Huron Road Hospital.

Raymond Miller, mayor from 1932-1933, was born into a traditional Irish Catholic family in Defiance, Ohio. He oversaw the completion of Municipal Stadium on the lakefront and was instrumental in the creation of the Cleveland Browns.

He and his four brothers all played football for Notre Dame, Ray backing

up Knute Rockne. They all earned their law degrees at Notre Dame and became Cleveland lawyers as well as Democratic Party stalwarts. After his tenure as mayor, Ray become chair of the Democratic Party in Cuyahoga County, building a potent coalition of local nationality groups and black citizens.

Thomas Burke was elected mayor in 1946 for the first of four terms. Thomas Burke's grandfather, Thomas, was born in Ireland and emigrated in the 1850s. He became a captain of a Great Lakes schooner. His son, Thomas, was born in Cleveland in 1864 and became a doctor. Thomas's son, Thomas, graduated from Holy Cross College, earned a law degree from Western Reserve University and was elected mayor.

He was active in the Hibernian Rifles, the friendly Sons of St. Patrick, and the Knights of Columbus. As mayor, Thomas Burke focused on capital improvements, including a landfill along the Cleveland waterfront that would become the Burke Lakefront Airport. All three Burkes are buried in St. John Cemetery.

Only two Catholics in forty-six presidents, yet five Supreme Court justices and another who was raised Catholic. A nod to the Irish American influence in the legal field and a question as to why only two?

The Congressional Friends of the Irish National Caucus has over fifty members and is a nonpartisan organization for justice and peace in Ireland. Sherrod Brown is a member. They actually work together, across party lines, in support of Ireland. That would make Aunt Irene happy to see her voting approach in practice. The O's and the Mc's as she would say. ■

Francis McGarry holds undergraduate degrees from Indiana University in Anthropology, Education and History and a Masters in Social Science from the University of Chicago. He is an assistant principal and history teacher. Francis is a past president of the Irish American Club East Side. He is the founder and past president of the Blue-stone Division of the Ancient Order of Hibernians.

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MADIGAN MUSES

By Marilyn Madigan

Reflections

Every year in December, we look back and reflect on the past year. This year will be one that most of us would like to forget. We should not want to forget this year. This year helped a lot of us focus on what is really important in our lives: Family, friends, health and most importantly our faith in God. Hopefully we will be able to celebrate Christmas

I LOOK FORWARD TO 2021. HOPEFULLY WE WILL BE ABLE TO HAVE OUR ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADES, HIBERNIAN CONVENTIONS AND IRISH FESTIVALS

AND WHAT A CELEBRATION THEY WILL BE.

with our families and not place anyone's health in jeopardy. Christmas is a time of blessings for all that God has given us. Look back this Christmas and tell those you love how important they are on this journey of your life.

As I write this article, I reflect on two important events in the life of Americans. The first was the election of our 46th President of the United States. Thank you to all my fellow Americans for voting in this election. I realize that everyone is not happy with the results but let us move forward for the Country we all love. Although I do not agree with many of President Trump's policies, I would like to thank him for his service. The American people have made their decision. I pray that we can unite for the good of the Country. The other important event is the recognition of Veterans Day. All that have served our Nation have placed their lives on the line to preserve the founding principles of this Nation. Every American owes the Men and Women of the Armed Services their thanks and gratitude for our freedoms.

On New Year's Eve, we will look back on this year remembering our disappointments and challenges. I was disappointed that St. Patrick's Day

activities, Irish Festival, the Hibernian Convention, family reunions and vacations were cancelled. I was grateful that our technology was able to keep us together and also strengthened our relationships. Masses being streamed, recorded and shown on facebook or Youtube allowed me to attend Mass in Ireland and many areas of America. Hosting a Virtual Convention allowed more of our Members to attend. Hosting ZOOM Meetings with participation for Hibernians from all areas can only help the Organization. Many of the Irish Festival musicians are hosting Concerts virtually. Please support them if possible.

I look forward to 2021. Hopefully we will be able to have our St. Patrick's Day Parades, Hibernian Conventions and Irish Festivals and what a celebra-

tion they will be. We will again be able to travel to Ireland and other vacation spots. Enjoy time with family and friends and not be worried that any of us could be spreading the virus. If we spread anything let us spread faith and love in each other. ■

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Wise Cratics

By Maury Collins

@MauryCollins

Sarah and her thirteen-year-old sister had been fighting a lot this year. This happens when you combine a headstrong two-year-old, who is sure she is always right, with a young adolescent. Sarah's parents, trying to take advantage of her newfound interest in Santa Claus, reminded the two-year-old that Santa was watching and doesn't like it when children fight.

This had little impact.

"I'll just have to tell Santa about your misbehavior," the mother said as she picked up the phone and dialed. Sarah's eyes grew big as her mother asked "Mrs. Claus" if she could put Santa on the line. Sarah's mouth dropped open as Mom described to Santa how the two-year-old was acting.

But, when Mom said that Santa wanted to talk to her, she reluctantly took the phone. Santa explained to her how there would be no presents Christmas morning to children who fought with their sisters. He would be watching, and he expected things to be better from now on. Sarah, now even more wide eyed, solemnly nodded to each of Santa's remarks and silently hung the

phone up when he was done.

After a long moment, Mom asked, "What did Santa say to you, dear?" In almost a whisper, Sarah sadly but matter-of-factly stated, "Santa said he won't be bringing toys to my sister this year."

A guy bought his wife a beautiful diamond ring for Christmas. After hearing about this extravagant gift, a friend of his said, "I thought she wanted one of those sporty four-wheel-drive vehicles."

"She did," he replied. "But where was I going to find a fake Jeep?"

As a little girl climbed onto Santa's lap, Santa asked the usual, "And what would you like for Christmas?" The child stared at him open mouthed and horrified for a minute, then gasped: "Didn't you get my E-mail?"

A lady lost her handbag in the bustle of Christmas shopping. It was found by an honest little boy and returned to her. Looking in her purse, she commented, "Hmmm... That's funny. When I lost my bag there was a \$20 bill in it. Now there are twenty \$1 bills."

The boy quickly replied, "That's right, lady. The last time I found a lady's purse, she didn't have any change for a reward."

A lady was picking through the frozen turkeys at the grocery store, but couldn't find one big enough for her family. She asked a stock boy, "Do

these turkeys get any bigger?"

The stock boy replied, "No ma'am, they're dead."

According to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, while both male and female reindeer grow antlers in the summer each year, male reindeer drop their antlers at the beginning of winter, usually late November to mid-December. Female reindeer retain their antlers till after they give birth in the spring.

Therefore, according to EVERY historical rendition depicting Santa's reindeer, EVERY single one of them, from Rudolph to Blitzen, had to be a girl. We should have known... ONLY women would be able to drag a large man in a red velvet suit all around the world in one night and not get lost.

If you see a large man who's jolly and cute, Wearing a beard and a red flannel suit, And if he is chuckling and laughing away, While flying around in a miniature sleigh, With eight tiny reindeer to pull him along, Then let's face it... your eggnog's too strong! ■

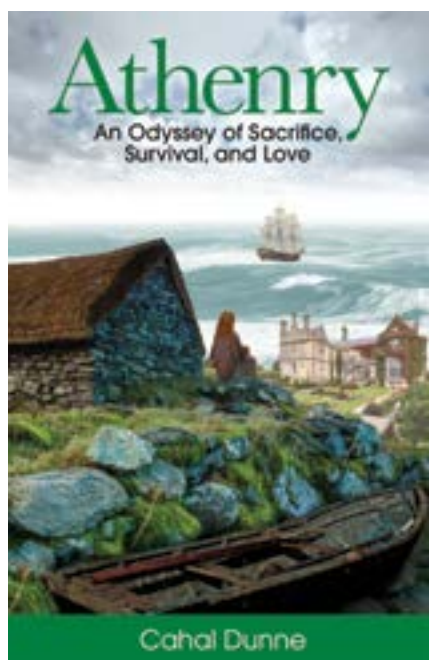
Maury Collins is a Charter Member and past president of the John P. Kelly Division AOH and a proud first generation Irish American. Contact him at maurycollins61@gmail.com Web <https://maurysirishnewstoledo.weebly.com/>

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MERRY Christmas & HAPPY NEW YEAR

23 writers from Northeast Ohio's Irish community and Beyond the Pale.

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COOKING UP A HOOLEY

By Katie Gagne

Not Completely Your Mother's Chocolate Fruit Cake

Charles Dickens had it right when he had us reflect on the past, see into the future and do something new with the present. A much-debated Christmas tradition is the likability of fruitcake. The subject of countless jokes, many people have come to dislike and even fear this holiday treat.

I LOVE fruitcake. My mom made small loaves of this every year. My job was to drizzle the brandy over the top of each one weekly in the weeks leading up to Christmas. Fruitcake is one of those things that gets better with age and a little spirit.

Wanting to bring this dessert from Christmas past to the present day, I am sharing with you an updated and unique twist on this cake, in the hope that this will become a favorite in the future.

NOT COMPLETELY YOUR MOTHER'S CHOCOLATE FRUIT CAKE

This modern, and slightly more sophisticated version of a Christmas staple is easy to make. Don't let the long ingredient list scare you. You can make it using just a whisk and rubber spatula, you can use any size and shape pan you would like and you can play around with the fruit and nut mix of ingredients.

Ingredients

Dry:

- 3 cups AP Flour
- ½ tsp Baking Powder
- 1 ½ tsp. Baking Soda
- 1 ½ tsp. Salt
- 1 tbsp. Cinnamon
- 1 tsp. Allspice
- 1 tsp. Cloves
- ½ tsp. Ginger
- 1 tsp. Nutmeg
- 3 tbsp. Dark Cocoa Powder

Wet:

- 4 Eggs
- 2 cups Brown Sugar
- ½ cup (1 stick) melted Unsalted Butter
- ¼ cup Maple Syrup
- ¼ cup Cherry Juice
- ¼ cup Vegetable Oil
- ½ cup water
- 1 tbsp. Vanilla

Fruit/Nut Mix

- 1 cup each of the following:
- Dried Apricots -- cut in quarters
- Dried Cherries
- Dried Cranberries
- Candied Pineapple



- Dried Dates – cut in quarters
- Dark Raisins
- Chopped Pecans
- Chopped Walnuts
- Chopped Hazelnuts
- ¼ cup Candied Orange Peel
- ¼ cup Candied Lemon Peel
- 1 cup Irish Whisky – and more for later to baste the fruitcakes.
- 6 oz. (1 ½) Dark or Bittersweet Chocolate Baking Bars – roughly chopped

Preheat oven to 325* Spray your pan(s) with cooking spray.

Combine all dry ingredients in a large bowl and set aside.

Mix all ingredients in fruit/nut mix together in a bowl and pour whisky on top. Stir well and leave to soak for 30 minutes.

In a large bowl, whisk eggs and brown sugar together until smooth. Pour in melted butter and mix until smooth.

Whisk in the syrup, cheery juice, oil, water, and vanilla until smooth.

Add dry ingredients to wet and using a rubber spatula, stir until combines.

Drain excess whisky from the fruit/nut mix and add to the batter and stir until fully combined. Add in the chopped chocolate and stir until fully blended. Batter will be very thick.

Spray your pan with cooking spray and fill 2/3 of the way with batter. Bake at 325* for approximately 1 – 1 ½ hours. Cakes are done when toothpick inserted comes out clean.

Cooking times will vary. I usually start out checking on them after 40 minutes, depending on my pan size. For these I typically use standard size, disposable foil loaf pans. This recipe made four loaves.

Once cakes are out of the oven, I use a pastry brush and coat the top with a thin layer of light Karo Syrup to give it a beautiful shine.

NOW COMES THE GOOD PART

Poke about a dozen small holes in the top with a toothpick or skewer and then drizzle a small amount of whisky over the top, allowing it to sink in.

Wrap the fruitcakes in their pans tightly with plastic wrap and store in the refrigerator.

Once a week up until you serve these, unwrap them and repeat the process of drizzling them with whisky and wrapping back up.

I make mine anywhere from 4-6 weeks before serving them or giving them out. ■

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

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

By Linda Fulton Burke

ACROSS

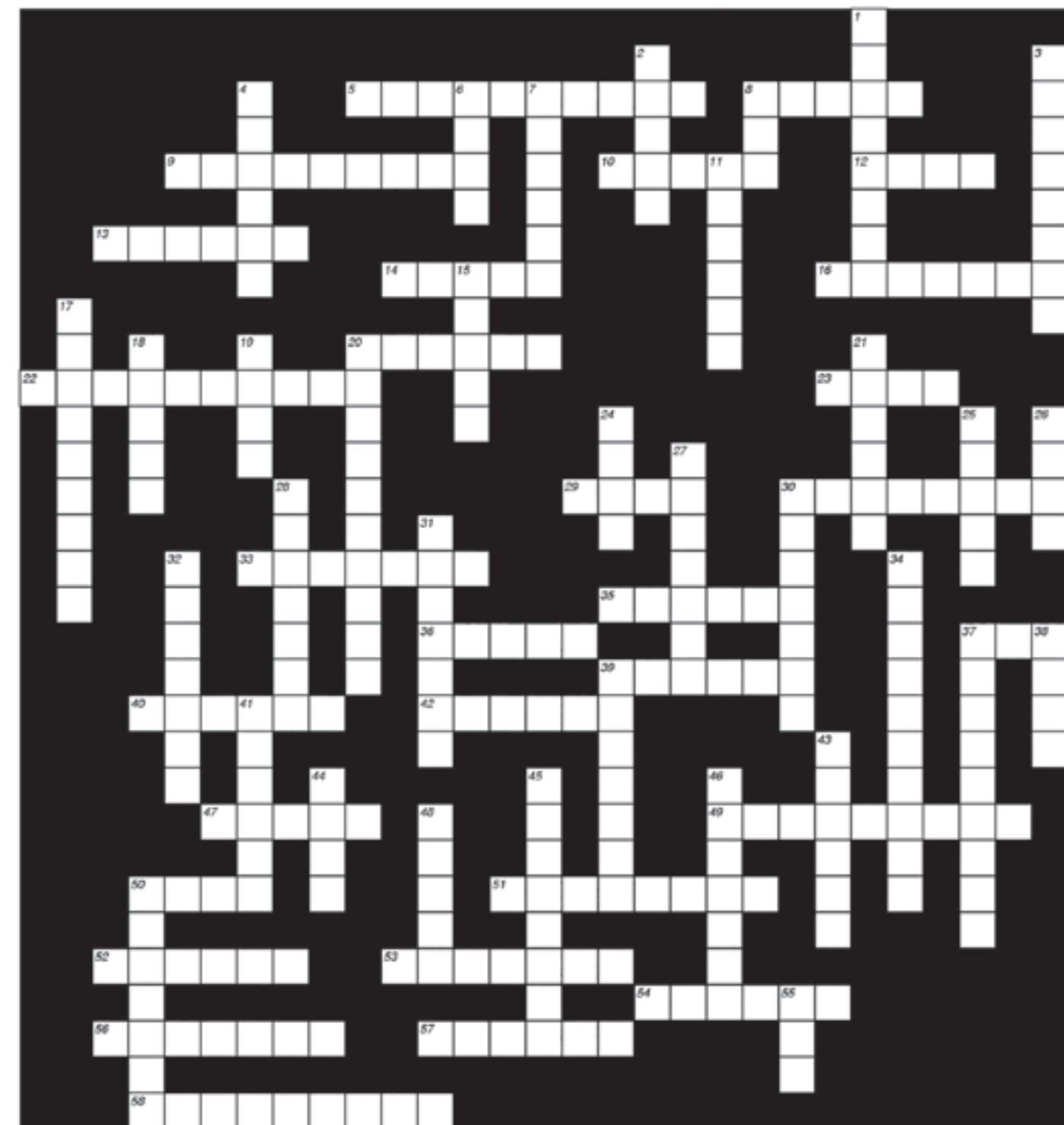
- 5 The Boys of _____
- 8 _____ Flowers
- 9 The _____ ' Song
- 10 _____ married Joseph Mary Plunkett
- 12 Shall My _____ Pass through Ireland
- 13 A _____ Once Again
- 14 _____ McCorley
- 16 _____ Munroe
- 20 The _____ of the Moon
- 22 _____ aka Father Murphy
- 23 Billy _____
- 29 _____ the People
- 30 James _____
- 33 Ireland _____
- 35 the One _____
- 36 The _____ Dew
- 37 _____ Williams
- 39 _____ McBride
- 40 Only Our _____ run Free
- 42 The Wind That _____ the Barley
- 47 _____ Barry
- 49 Soldiers of the _____
- 50 The Men From the _____
- 51 _____ ' Motor Car
- 52 The _____ of Knockanure
- 53 Go On Home _____ Soldiers
- 54 The Bold _____ Men
- 56 _____ Gaughan
- 57 Four Green _____
- 58 Sean South of _____

DOWN

- 1 Down by the _____
- 2 Back Home in _____
- 3 John _____
- 4 _____ Me Up to Carlow
- 6 Take it Down From the _____
- 7 The _____ Boy
- 8 Manchester Martyrs
- 11 The _____ Boy
- 15 _____ Rebel
- 17 _____ of Loughlinn

Rebel Tunes

Linda Fulton Burke



- 18 Come Out, Ye _____ and Tans
- 19 _____ Green Fields
- 20 Irish _____ Army
- 21 The Men _____ the Wire
- 24 The Boys from County _____
- 25 _____ the Boy From Killane
- 26 _____ of the Old Brigade
- 27 _____ Brigade
- 28 Broad Black _____
- 30 It's a Grand Old _____
- 31 _____ Brigade
- 32 Irish _____ Boy
- 34 The Valley of _____
- 37 So Far Away
- 38 The Boys From County _____
- 39 _____ Road
- 41 Bold Robert _____
- 43 Something Inside So _____
- 44 _____ La Quinta
- 45 Wild _____ Boy
- 46 _____ on the Moor
- 48 _____ Casement
- 50 _____ Of the Green
- 55 O'Donnell _____

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