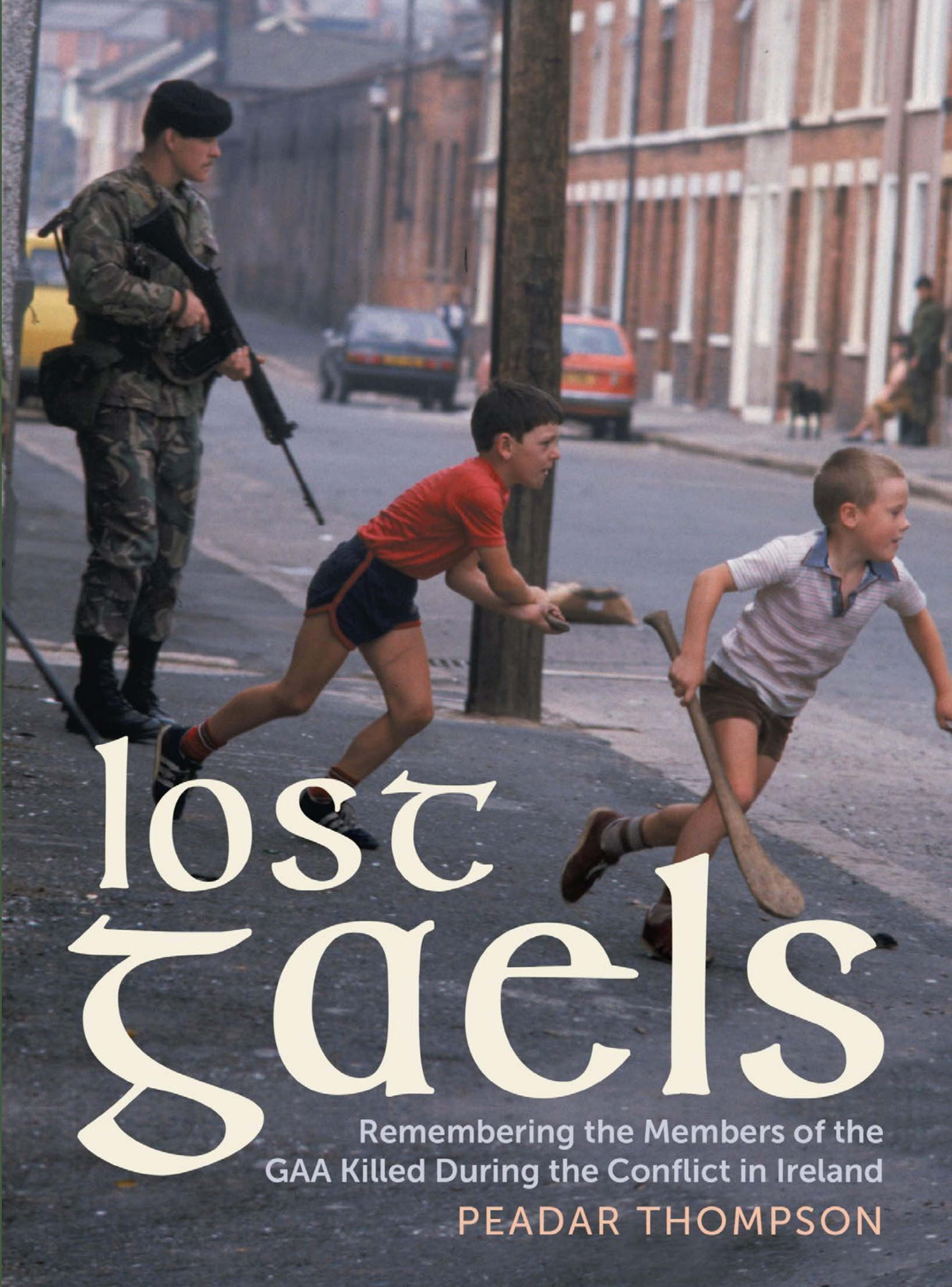


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February 2025 | Volume 19 - Issue 2



lost gael

Remembering the Members of the
GAA Killed During the Conflict in Ireland

PEADAR THOMPSON



Not That We Need a Reason to Celebrate, But...

So much to celebrate, I had to take notes to insure I didn't miss:

Hibernian of the Year



Congratulations to our own *Cleveland Irish* columnist, Francis McGarry, named the 2025 Hibernian of the Year! Hibernian

Brother Francis has been an *iIrish* columnist for more than ten years now; a confidant and counselor to me and many others, and a man in



the know, who shares it readily with whoever asks for help, after doing most of the grunt-work himself.

Happy Anniversary as well Francis! We are so fortunate to have you on our team, and in our community

Irish Heritage Month

First officially proclaimed by President George H.W. Bush in 1991, Irish Heritage Month gains wider-spread recognition in word and deed each year, as we see organizations outside the immediate and dedicated Irish community that is active all year,

celebrate it with us in events, spoken word presentations, and yes, even shenanigans. The shenanigans are second only to the 1/2 Way to St. Patrick's Day parties ubiquitous to Irish America.

We receive a load of requests and will fulfill slightly less than a load of requests for those spoken word presentations, dance school and piper contacts and even band requests, from now until March, far too late to fit in schedules often filled months ago. We continue to try of course, helping is part of our fabric, but early birds do get the best bards.

St. Patrick Starts with St. Brigid

Locally, the often-sacred season kicks off with the Hibernian celebrations of St. Brigid held on and around February 1st. After Mass at the West Side Irish American Club, the year's honorees are introduced and a fantastic meal, dance and celebration follow.

The honors are well-deserved in-person recognition, often for a lifetime of service to others. We mourn at too many funerals to not dance at doings that let people know in person the love and respect the community has

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About Our Cover:

Lost Gaels is the first comprehensive account of the devastating impact of the Troubles on the GAA. See back cover for more info/to meet author Peadar Thompson March 2, at the Cleveland book signing & presentation.



for them, while they are still here, to hear it.

Exciting New Gaelic Athletic Association / Hibernian Collaboration

This week, The Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians (LAOH) announced a new collaboration with the Gaelic Athletic Association (USGAA in America) and our own Cleveland GAA. This collaboration to promote Irish culture, heritage, and sports across the United States brings together two influential organizations dedicated to fostering community, preserving traditions, and building a strong foundation for future generations.

The first event of these efforts locally is the U.S. Launch of the *Lost Gaels* Book Tour. Cleveland's stop is on March 2nd – see *Taking the Fields of Glory* column on page 5 for more info about the new partnership, promotion and the *Lost Gaels* book and Tour.

Cleveland St. Patrick's Day Honorees

It is hard to combine, present and be inclusive of all the Honoree and event news around St. Patrick's Week and Irish Heritage Month. Yet we must. Folks express criticism to us or online for things not included.

When we ask if they submitted it to us, invariably they say no, expecting us to know about it; find the info; find a good picture that we have permission to use; and write about it, without doing anything themselves to have it included. Our offerings are well-known and easily available to leaders and organizations. We can no longer exhaust countless efforts and uncountable hours trying to hunt you down.

Please be sure your honorees,

congratulations to honorees ads and events are included by submitting them to us by the 8th of February for the Mighty March Irish Heritage Month issue, which hits the streets February 26th. We share your enthusiasm; share the info to us to share it with our readers here in print, and on our multiplatform digital offerings too.

What's the Craic

Each month, places to be and things to do are well-highlighted in listings and ads within, and the above-mentioned digital platforms, including the *What's the Craic?* and *Taking the Fields of Glory* pages with all the craic, and the details too. There is so much more inside.

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

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

John

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

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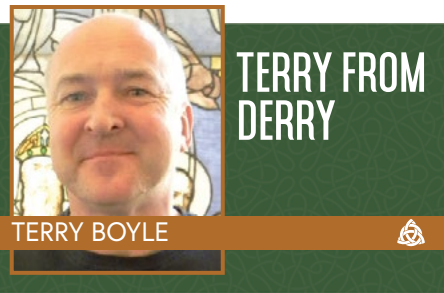
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iIrish's What's the Craic? feature is free for all current advertisers!

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Submissions are due by the 8th of each month, for the following month.



A Brave New World

Recently, my sister sent me a bizarre video. Our niece used an app to create an extraordinary scene between my dead sister



and herself. The 'hugging app' uses two-dimensional photographs to construct a three-dimensional experience. The static

person in the two-dimensional picture is brought to life and is seen hugging a person from another photograph.

When I first saw the video, I was quite shocked. Technology has advanced at a much greater rate than I thought possible. The creation of such developments raises a lot of moral and ethical questions.

Some would argue, that bringing the dead to life in such a way could bring comfort to those

grieving. It could also be argued that it creates a false reality that does not enable the grief-stricken person to let go of the dead.

If an app can fabricate reality in this way, what else might be possible? A hug may only be the beginning.

I'm sure you've heard about Google's quantum chip. The chip, named Willow, can complete tasks in a much faster time than any of our supercomputers. The claim is that Willow completed a task that would take the fastest of our computers ten septillion years, in five minutes.

While there is speculation that some of the news around this development is nothing more than hype, there is enough evidence to suggest that it's only a matter of time before this technology finally becomes a reality, and that will change everything. Once we have mastered the necessary codes to create such a rapid problem-solving machine, who knows where it will lead?

The hope is that it will aid in pharmacology and speed up the development of new drugs. The development of quantum chips could also produce less greenhouse gas emissions.

AI and the Legal System

But as we've seen with every development, there is also a downside. Technology in the wrong hand can also be used in nefarious ways. This leads us to another problem; can the present

legal system keep up with these developments?

In other words, our present system of creating laws to protect its citizens from such abuses is too slow. By the time a law is passed, it's too late, the horse has already bolted. We're already seeing how difficult it is to rein in such misuse of technology.

In the time it takes to create a law, the damage has been done, or the creators have found another way to facilitate their not-so-good intentions. If we are to really take control over these areas and prevent catastrophic consequences, we need to find ways to speed up our legal system.

There must be some degree of skepticism when it comes to celebrating such breakthroughs in the technological field. If we listen only to the companies, they will of course spin us a lovely story of the future potential of their creations. They're in the business of selling us the positive outcome for their financial benefit.

We need people who can be objective enough to ask the hard questions. Asking such questions doesn't make you a luddite. You're not a technophobe when you're curious about the dangers of technology.

New Developments in Technology

I love technology. We've come a long way in such a short time. Who, from my generation, would've thought it possible to carry around in our pockets a small computer with the capability to do so much? We can use it as a phone, a camera, send messages, pay bills and a host of other things.

These new developments have become an intrinsic part of our everyday life. You only have to leave the house without your mobile phone to realize how important it has become. These technological devices continue to serve us well, so well that we've weaned our children on them. We have become so dependent on these devices that we are at a loss without them.

I'm reminded of the child

used to using an iPad who is given a book and is completely flummoxed by it. The child tries to scroll the book as if it were an iPad.

Skepticism is not a bad thing when it comes to technology. It should make us feel cautious about what we're attempting to do. Someone who asks difficult questions does so to ascertain the full scope of what a thing can do, both bad and good.

AI Skepticism

We need such sceptics in a time such as this. We need scientists like Stephen Hawking, who questioned the idea of developing Artificial Intelligence, wondering if we might be creating our own destruction.

We need to be skeptical of those who dismiss such questions as fear-mongering, or worse again, treat such opinions as irrelevant and far-fetched. The most important discovery may not be the invention, but the motivation behind the creation.

Is this futuristic step forward motivated by evolution or monetary gain? Sometimes it's hard to get beyond the promoter's pitch to see their true motivation. That's when we need people who see beyond the hype.

We are creating a new world, a world that will cultivate an even greater dependency on technology. If we want to ensure that this new world is a safe and good one, we need to be brave enough to question those who are in the process of developing our future.

It's not enough to be sold on the idea that all technology is good; we need to also know how it will negatively affect us in the long term. What is the trade-off for such developments?

If children are weaned on technology, will they understand what it is to play with other children? If AI is given the ability to make decisions regarding our future, are we in safe hands?

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USGAA and LAOH

United States Gaelic Athletic Association (USGAA) and the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, Inc. (LAOH) have signed a Memo of Understanding to Preserve and Promote a shared Irish-American Heritage.



The United States Gaelic Athletic Association (USGAA)

and the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, Inc. (LAOH) is proud to announce an exciting collaboration to promote Irish culture, heritage, and sports across the United States. This partnership brings together two influential organizations dedicated to fostering community, preserving traditions, and building a strong foundation for future generations.

The USGAA, the governing body for Gaelic games in the United States, is committed to expanding the reach of traditional Irish sports, such as Gaelic football, hurling, and camogie across the United States. These games not only celebrate athleticism but also serve as a cultural bridge, connecting Irish

Americans with their heritage while also introducing many others to the culture of Gaelic Games. Similarly, the LAOH, an organization with deep roots in Irish-American history, has been a steadfast advocate for education, charity, and cultural preservation since its founding in 1894.

Through this partnership, the USGAA and LAOH aim to:

Promote Irish Sports and Culture:

Organize community events, workshops, and tournaments to introduce Gaelic games to new audiences and provide opportunities for individuals of all ages to engage with Irish traditions.

Support Youth Development:

Collaborate on youth programs that combine sports, education, and cultural activities to inspire the next generation to embrace their heritage.

Empower Communities:

Enhance local initiatives that foster unity, cultural appreciation, and the spirit of volunteerism within Irish-American communities nationwide.

“We are thrilled to join forces with the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians Inc.,” said USGAA Chairperson Paul Keane. “This partnership highlights our shared commitment to community life across the United States and creating meaningful opportunities for people to connect through sports and culture.”

LAOH President Mary Ann Lubinsky, echoed these sentiments: “The LAOH is

honored to partner with the USGAA to promote our rich Irish traditions. Together, we can provide inspiration through our shared heritage and strengthen the bonds within our communities.”

About USGAA

The United State Gaelic Athletic Association are the governing body responsible for promoting the sports of Hurling, Camogie and Gaelic football in the United States (except NYC). There are over 200 adult and youth clubs within the organization. Clubs participate in Divisional competitions to qualify for the National Finals in their respective sport and grade of competition. Presently, Gaelic Games are being organized and played in approximately 75 cities across the US. The USGAA also maintains a close relationship with GAA units in the neighboring regions of Canada, New York and the Caribbean.

About the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, Inc.

The Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians Inc. (LAOH) is a charitable and cultural organization with a mission to foster Irish heritage, promote education, and support charitable works. Established in 1894, the LAOH continues to be a pillar of the Irish-American community, advocating for unity and cultural preservation. The LAOH has over 188 divisions based in 30 states

For more information about the partnership and upcoming events, please visit www.USGAA.org and www.LadiesAOH.com or Marilyn Madigan at laohnationalorganizer@gmail.com or 216-470-3773

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A LEGAL LOOK

JUDGE MICHAEL MENTEL



The New Dáil Éireann: It Is Time To Plan for Unification

On November 29, 2024 Ireland held a general election to select Teachtaí Dála to the Dáil Éireann. Since 1919, Ireland has convened thirty-four Dáils including the one recently elected.

The results from the November election reflect little change from the previous coalition government led by Fine Gael. Fianna Fáil prevailed taking 21.9 percent of the vote followed by Fine Gael with 20.8 percent. Sinn Féin followed with 19.0 percent of the vote. Finna Fáil is now the lead party in a likely coalition with Fine Gael. A simple reverse of roles from the previous Dáil.

Finna Fáil will need additional coalition partners to lead the Dáil and to select a Taoiseach, likely Micheál Martin. One party that will not be part of that coalition is Sinn Féin.

Martin has made it clear that entering a coalition with Sinn Féin is unacceptable for policy reasons. However, one policy issue that the new coalition government will face in the new Dáil is the rise in support for Irish unity. A policy staunchly supported by Sinn Féin and ignored by Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael.

There are two legal frameworks that specifically govern the question of Irish Unity. First, the Irish Constitution. Amended in 1999, it states that “a united Ireland shall be brought about only by peaceful means with the consent of a majority of people... in both jurisdictions in the island.”

The second is the 1998 Good Friday

Agreement. In summary, it states that it is for the Irish people, in the north and south, to give consent to unification by ballot initiative.

The increased interest in Irish unification stems from multiple socio-economic developments. The most significant has been Brexit and the decline of Unionism in the north.

Brexit changed the economic structure of the north. Removing the north from the European Union, the “EU”, created economic instability in the region. Albeit the north and south enjoy an “open border” for goods, services, and travel, it is not enough to overcome the stresses placed upon the northern Irish economy because of Brexit.

By contrast, the Republic enjoys relative economic stability through its membership in the EU. Its citizens enjoy ease of travel among the other EU member countries. Millennials, Gen X, and Gen Z young adults desire the economic stability and travel freedom that EU membership provides.

Additionally, the politics of Unionism is on the decline in the north. It no longer holds the political clout it once had. For the first time, Unionists are a minority party in the Northern Ireland Assembly and on many local councils. Elections in the north are reflecting young voters’ rejection of the politics of Unionism and are seeking a new path forward.

Conversely, Sinn Féin is the largest political party in the north. It controls the majority in the Northern Ireland Assembly, holds the office of First Minister, controls the majority of local councils throughout the north, and has the largest elected delegation to Westminster (Sinn Féin abstains from its seats in Westminster. As a matter of policy, they refuse to swear to a required oath of allegiance to the crown and do not recognize British authority over the north).

Clearly, the unification of Ireland is not at a precipice. However, the advancing socio-economic and political change in the north and the Republic warrants governmental planning for unification.

Sinn Féin has been the most vocal advocate for unification planning. Sinn Féin President, Mary Lou

McDonald, commenting on its report from the Commission on the Future of Ireland, stated that, “Sinn Féin is saying very clearly that the next government in Dublin must prioritise [sic] planning for constitutional change and reunification and for the unity referendums as provided by the Good Friday Agreement”.

Sinn Féin is not alone in this call. The Labour Party (Ireland), the Social Democrats, the Green Party, and the SDLP in the north have advocated for unification planning by the next government.

The Labour Party declared that “[o]nly the Irish State can lead on the political and administrative processes leading towards a unity referendum, so this task will have to be taken up by the next government to ensure adequate preparation... moving towards a standalone [sic] senior ministry in advance of a referendum”.

The Social Democrats stated in their manifesto that “supporting the unification of our island will be an important objective... We are still missing a roadmap for how to get there... New and stronger arguments must be presented to persuade a majority to vote for it and people should be able to see a solid plan for what would happen after unification.”

The Green Party has affirmed its commitment towards reaching a consensus on unification. At minimum, it advocates for the recognition of “the evolving political and demographic landscape”.

In the north, the Social Democratic and Labour Party, the “SDLP”, has called for unification planning. Following Sinn Féin’s lead, the SDLP formed a New Ireland Commission to dialogue with political parties in the Republic on Ireland’s unification.

Former SDLP leader Colum Eastwood said that “I have heard people talking about it that I wouldn’t have heard talking about it before and I think we now have really a responsibility on those of us who want to see change to make it happen, but also to make it happen in a way that brings people with us.”

The two parties who will form the bulwark of a coalition government in the Republic, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, have been absent or non-

supportive of a planning process.

Fianna Fáil, and its leader Micheál Martin, have effectively obfuscated on the issue. Although its manifesto supports unification, it leans into supporting the Shared Island project instituted in 2020 by then Taoiseach

Martin.

Simply described, the Shared Island project establishes partnerships with the north to maintain a status quo that is short of unification. Martin has recently stated that he would not support a “boarder poll” on unification.

Fine Gael and its leader, Simon Harris, share a similar viewpoint with Fianna Fáil towards unification. In his first interview as Fine Gael leader in early 2024, Harris was clear that unification of Ireland is “a legitimate aspiration” however, it is not a priority he would seek as the new Taoiseach. “That’s not where my focus and priority is right now and quite frankly, it’s not where I believe our focus and priority should be...The Good Friday Agreement provides that framework. You can [recognize] different political aspirations and a clear pathway for those to be achieved.”

The new Dáil Éireann will have to come to terms with the reality that is Irish unification. It must heed to this reality. It must establish a governmental vehicle to initiate the necessary planning and commence such efforts at the earliest opportunity.

Judge Michael C. Mentel is an appellate court judge on the Ohio Court of Appeals for the Tenth District. Notably, he participated in round table discussions at the National Committee on American Foreign Policy concerning the British government’s proposed Legacy Bill and participated in a question-and-answer session at the New York City Bar Association. His question-and-answer secession focused on the 1981 hunger strike and the Troubles. Judge Mentel is an author and columnist with Irish newsmagazine.

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St. Brigid's Day and the LAOH

For the past 130 years, the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians has been celebrating the Feast of St. Brigid. The Feast is making a comeback in Ireland. In 2023, St. Brigid's Day was observed for the first time as a National Holiday in Ireland, the first honoring a woman.

That year, we hosted a webinar with Herstory, the organization that advocated for the Holiday for St. Brigid. Also in 2023, we were able

to meet up with Melanie Lynch and the Herstory Displays at Queens University in Belfast during the FFAI Tour.

1,500th St. Brigid's Anniversary

In 2024, the 1,500th Anniversary of the death of St. Brigid was commemorated in Kildare. The theme of the commemoration was *Celebrating a Woman, a Life, a Legacy*.

Many events were held in Kildare, including an ecumenical service at St. Brigid's Cathedral. We were honored to visit the Cathedral for a tour. A highlight was each of us ringing the church bell and making a wish.

In addition to visiting the Cathedral, members on the 2024 Freedom for All Ireland (FFAI) Tour visited the National Shrine in Faughart, Co. Louth. The LAOH donated to the restoration of the Shrine in 1997, to honor our Patroness, St. Brigid.

We also had the privilege of visiting Solas Bhride, a center to "welcome pilgrims and to foster

the spirituality inspired by Brigid." Brigid's flame was rekindled in 1993 and continues to burn at Solas Bhride as "a beacon of hope, justice and peace for the world."

To honor St. Brigid and the 1,500 Anniversary of her death, the LAOH have initiated a new program, *Brigid's Hearth*, which is still a work in progress, to assist those in ministry to our church. St. Brigid was a woman of hospitality, charity, peace, feminine strength and leadership. We hope that this program will assist both our Clergy, men and women in religious life to share the example of St. Brigid with all those they minister to.

The Committee of Fr. Duns, Fr. Spicer, Fr. Harris, Sr. Lisa Breslin, Sr. Kathleen Smith, Brianna Curran and I plan to meet shortly. Any ideas for this program are welcome, please email me: laohnationalca@gmail.com or laohnationalorganizer@gmail.com.

Prayer to St. Brigid

*Brigid of the Mantle, encompass us,
Lady of the Lambs, protect us,
Keeper of the Hearth, kindle us.
Beneath your mantle, gather us,
And restore us to memory.*

*Mothers of our mother,
Foremothers strong.*

*Guide our hands in yours,
Remind us how to kindle the
hearth.*

*To keep it bright, to preserve the
flame.*

*Your hands upon ours,
Our hands within yours,
To kindle the light,
Both day and night.*

*The Mantle of Brigid about us,
The Memory of Brigid within us,*

*The Protection of Brigid keeping us
From harm, from ignorance, from
heartlessness.*

*This day and night,
From dawn till dark,
From dark till dawn
Amen*

I hope this year that all of us have wonderful St. Brigid's celebrations. I look forward to visiting St. Brigid's sites again this year on the FFAI Tour as we honor a Woman of Peace.

On February 1, the Our Lady of the Rosary Division and the Boland Berry Division of the Ancient Order of Hibernians held their annual celebrations of the Feast of St. Brigid and St. Patrick. This year the United Irish Societies of Cleveland Parade Theme is *Celebrate the Life of St. Brigid*. Celebrate the day starting at Mass at St. Colman's or St. William and Robert and then join with our St. Patrick Day Honorees: Shannon Corcoran, Mary Murphy Joyce, Katie Schmitt and Michael Conkey, as they lead the St. Patrick's Day Parade.

Marilyn Madigan is the Immediate Past National President and National Organizer of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians and a Deputy Director of the United Irish Societies of Cleveland. She received a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from St. John College and retired from Nursing at University Hospitals of Cleveland.

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MEGAN LARDIE

kids CRAIC

Love, Loyalty, and Friendship

The Claddagh ring is a special piece of jewelry that comes from Ireland. It was first made over 300 years ago in a small fishing village called Claddagh, which is near Galway. The ring was created by a man named Richard Joyce, who was captured by pirates and sold as a slave in Algeria. While he was a slave, he learned how to make jewelry. When he was finally freed, he returned to his village and made the first Claddagh ring for the woman he married.

The Claddagh ring has a unique

design, with three important parts: a heart, a crown, and two hands. The heart represents love, the crown stands for loyalty, and the hands symbolize friendship. People often give Claddagh rings to show their love and commitment to someone special. It is believed that it is bad luck to buy one for yourself. The way you wear the ring can also have different meanings. If you wear it on your right hand with the heart facing out, it means you are single. If the heart is facing in, it means you are in a relationship.

Wearing it on your left hand with the heart facing in means you are married.

In recent years, the Claddagh ring has become a symbol of solidarity and resilience in the face of tragedy, particularly in the wake of the September 11th attacks. The design of the ring has been adopted by many as a badge of unity and hope in the face of terror, fear, and destruction. Many firefighters and first responders view the ring as a symbol of bravery and strength in the face of danger.

Today, the Claddagh ring is popular all around the world. It has become an internationally recognized symbol of commitment across many cultures. Many people wear it as a symbol of their Irish heritage or to show their love and loyalty to someone special. The ring's beautiful design and rich history make it a cherished piece of jewelry for many people. It is no surprise that the Claddagh ring has endured as symbol of hope and unity.

LITERATURE CORNER

The Unicorn Quest By Kamilla Benko

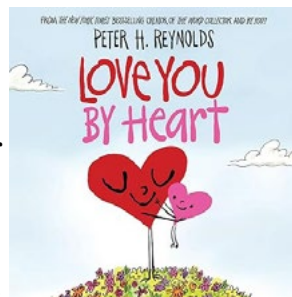


Claire Martinson still worries about her older sister Sophie, who battled a mysterious illness last year. But things are back to normal as they move into Windermere Manor . . . until the sisters climb a strange ladder in a fireplace and enter the magical land of Arden.

There, they find a world in turmoil. The four guilds of magic no longer trust each other, the beloved unicorns have disappeared, and terrible wraiths

roam freely. Scared, the girls return home. But when Sophie vanishes in the night, it will take all of Claire's courage to climb back up the ladder, find her sister, and uncover the unicorns' greatest secret. For ages 8-12, 336 pages.

Love You by Heart By Peter H. Reynolds



A poetic, universal, and joyful celebration of how we feel about the most beloved people in our lives - we love them BY HEART! The author brings to life this ode to unconditional love with a delightful and poetic tribute to the rare and beautiful love that binds us together.

From the intimate and unbridled love parents and caregivers have for their little ones, to the tremendous love of a lifelong friendship, and the boundless love of a grandparent - this is a heartfelt message to share with the people we cherish; like a song we have known all our lives, we love them by heart. For ages 2-8, 32 pages.

kids in the kitchen

Roasted Veggie Quesadilla

Ingredients:

- 2 medium red potatoes, quartered and sliced
- 1 medium zucchini, quartered and sliced
- 1 medium sweet red pepper, sliced
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1 cup shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese
- 1 cup shredded reduced-fat cheddar cheese
- 8 whole wheat tortillas (8 inches), warmed



Directions:

In a large bowl, combine the first nine ingredients. Transfer to a 15x10x1-in. baking pan. Bake at 425° until potatoes are tender, 24-28 minutes.

In a small bowl, combine cheeses. Spread 1/3 cup vegetable mixture over half of each tortilla. Sprinkle with 1/4 cup cheese; fold tortillas to close. Cook in a greased cast-iron skillet or griddle over low heat until cheese is melted, 1-2 minutes on each side.

Megan is a Reading Intervention Educator for the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. She may be reached at meganlardie126@outlook.com.





Milk and Fire

*“He wanted to sack the organist.
Not because she’d burst into
her own rendition of
‘Under the Boardwalk.’
The main problem he had
with her
was saying that February
was the start of spring,
and she said it non-stop
on Saint Brigid’s Day.”*
 (“Coming Out of Winter”
by Rita Ann Higgins)

Milk and fire, both act as metaphor for nourishment and warmth, hearth and home, birth and creation. Before Christianity flooded the ancient bogs and fields, mountains and strands of ancient Celtic lands, Brigid was revered as a triple deity, a powerful Celtic goddess. Brigid was the pagan goddess of



poetry, crafts, and prophecy. Filid, an ancient class of Celtic poets, worshipped her power over fertility and art.

Imbolc

During pre-Christian times, the half-way point between the winter solstice and the spring equinox was celebrated as Imbolc. Today, Wiccan and pagan cultures still revere Imbolc as the start of spring.

Christians celebrate the first of February as St. Brigid’s Day. She is the patron saint of newborns, nuns, dairy maids, and cattle. Interestingly, pagan lore has it that Brigid was born with fire in her head and drank milk from a mystical cow.

Historically, Imbolc and the Feast of St. Brigid coincides with the natural mating cycle of sheep. The deep connection between human creation and the gifts of land and animal are present today.

Milk and fire. Earth and creation. The hope of Spring. Poetry and heart.

The Gift of Presence

Presence is a great gift. Oftentimes we are so distracted by the noise of life that we forget to look to the inspiration, the hope that we are given at each turn of season.

During my December holiday to the west of Ireland, I walked daily, completely present to the gift of a new moment. I noticed how great branches of holly, more tree than bush, stood regal where autumnal



boughs of blackberries once tangled every hedge. I noted that gorse bloomed yellow against the varying shades of midwinter brown and green where spring bluebells once littered the fields.

In winter lanes populated only by donkeys, sheep, and the occasional mare, I breathed deeply of the pure air and opened my heart to the gift of our earth. Whether on land or sea, city or town, seekers often encounter other seekers during chance meetings. At the Newport Christmas Market, I had the pleasure of meeting two women, both writers and healers, seekers on a journey of wellness and words, poetry and love.

Nicole Rank is a poet who found her heart and the presence of

universal Love in Ireland. A poet, author, mindfulness coach, and writing teacher, Nicole is inspired by the green of Ireland’s fields and the purity of nature. She has collected her poems in her publication *Limitless-Sharing the Wor(l)d Through Love’s Eyes*.

Nicole’s journey as a writer begins with love; love of self, the earth, words both written and those that lie in “every stone, every leaf, and every drop of rain.” She believes in the human potential for kindness, mindfulness, and love. Love is such a simple answer to the pain of the world, but at times is seemingly impossible to reach.

Finn McCool

Nicole writes under the pen name

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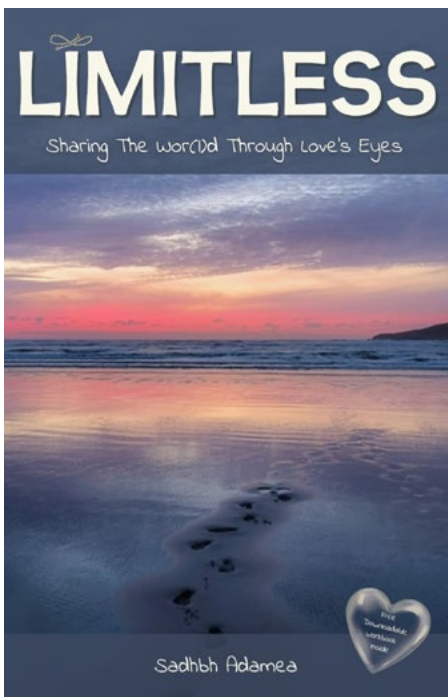
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of Sadhbh Adamea (pron. Sihve). The myth of Sadhbh, love of Fionn mac Cumhaill and mother of Oisín, speaks of transformation, bravery, motherhood, and the power of the female heart.

As punishment for her refusal to marry a Dark druid, the beautiful Sadhbh is changed into a doe and left seemingly helpless in the forest. Rather than be killed by feral hounds, the dogs recognized her grace, protecting her from harm.

Upon Nicole's first journey to Ireland, she had a chance encounter with a beautiful fawn at Ross Castle in Killarney. The deer, Sadhbh, has become Nicole's spirit guide and metaphor for the grace of love and presence in her creative journey.

Nicole believes that we all "carry magic inside" and that "poetry is a portal to presence," a true "spiritual practice." In this world of division, we can all benefit from the "beauty and magic of a poem," and the hope that we are all part of "a shared essence."

Helping others to see how love promotes personal productivity and spiritual fulfillment, Nicole is developing future co-creative writing retreats that involve conversation and the art of channeling poetry. Perhaps this is the key to community, the key to human connection.

Perhaps the answer lies in "the magic we all carry inside," in the

"mystery between the spaces" that connect strangers during chance encounters. Perhaps the answer to love lies in the gentle power of Nicole's poetry, in the wisdom of her words, and the fire of Ireland's ever-shifting light.

Words have the power to inspire and heal. Doreen Dempsey began her journey as a writer when she started a long-distance pen pal friendship with a Finnish girl named Tiia. Their thirty-five-year friendship has brought them through the trials of youth, the independence of adulthood, and the pain of chronic illness and loss.

Doreen knows the healing power of human connection and how to face truth with courage. In her book, *The Magic of Insight*, Doreen discusses her personal health struggles. With further candor and authenticity, she writes of the sudden death of her older brother by suicide.

Rather than distance herself from the pain of life, Doreen has channeled her gifts to bring hope, consideration, and relief to others who seek healing. Celebrating her twenty-seventh year as a chartered physiotherapist, Doreen has "sought a deeper view of health and well-being" that has led her to the practice of Emotion and Body Code to ensure her patients are cared for holistically. Doreen also practices the healing art of energy tapping to help her patients achieve mind, body, and spirit wellness.

Some of Doreen's most rewarding work has occurred while practicing physiotherapy in an "acute hospital setting with women who experienced traumatic birth injuries." Doreen has always felt connected to the plight of the woman, the mother.

Milk, fire, creation, and loss. Doreen has sought comfort and inspiration in the beauty of nature. She has conducted a holistic self-care retreat on Achill Island. In the future, Doreen plans to combine her passion for the healing power of nature and her life-long study of physiotherapy to inspire and counsel other seekers to "feel less alone" through continued holistic retreats.

A wise nurturer who realizes that "acceptance is so sweet when the

shame is gone. When safety and peace have been invited in," Doreen possesses the maternal heart of Brigid and Sadhbh.

In truth, the milk of life lies in the hearts of all who enter the unpredictable joys and trials of life with grace and a brave willingness to follow a most uncertain path. For on this journey, we are drawn to others who radiate kindness, patience, and love. As Bono sings, we are all part of "one love, one blood, one life."

Doreen Dempsey is the author of *The Magic of Insight* <http://www.love-eyes.com>

Nicole Rank, under the pen name of Sadhbh, is the

author of *Limitless: Sharing the World Through Love's Eyes*. Amazon.co.uk:Adamea, Sadhbh:9781068779206:Books.

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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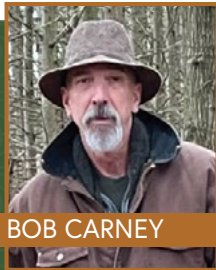
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BOB CARNEY



Belfast and the DMC -12

The story of the rise and fall of John DeLorean is widely known in business and the automotive world. In interviews throughout his life, DeLorean spoke of growing up poor and working relentlessly to eventually lead General Motors' most important car division to its largest sales and profits ever. He was the youngest division chief in the company's history.

9 YEARS
WRITING FOR
Irish
COMMUNICATION

DeLorean managed the development of numerous vehicles during his time at GM, including the Pontiac GTO, the Firebird, Grand Prix and the Chevrolet Cosworth Vega. It wasn't all good for him at General Motors; reports of his lifestyle and constant criticism of top management was troublesome to his bosses, leading to his termination from the automotive giant in 1973. The media reported it differently, stating that, "John DeLorean has fired GM."

DeLorean was good looking and

charismatic, and used those attributes to get what he desired. At GM he was a maverick, ditching the suit and tie of a top engineer and executive and the media loved him for it.

He was a jetsetter, married four times to beautiful women, and lived a lavish lifestyle. He could be found on the covers of business and fashion magazines alike.

After leaving GM, the beginnings of the DeLorean Motor Company were formed. There were a series of business disasters, with DeLorean being sued by investors for fraud.

Still, he continued dealing with some of Wall Street's biggest brokerage and banking institutions. The following year DeLorean married his third wife, cover girl and actress Christina Ferrare, who was twenty-five years his junior. The media had made him a celebrity and he now ran in the same circles as movie stars.

DeLorean Motor Company

In 1975, the DeLorean Motor Company launched. DeLorean designed a futuristic sports car to be named after him. It boasted a stainless steel body and gull-wing doors, in the style of Mercedes' 60s era sports cars.

Even before he had investors, DeLorean reported the vehicle would be built in Canada. He needed about \$22 million dollars to begin operations and pitched his dream car to whom ever would listen.

In 1977, DeLorean learned of substantial aid packages that Puerto Rico offered to potential investors, in particular to foreign firms that would provide jobs and prestige to its people.



DeLorean managed the development of numerous vehicles during his time at GM, including the Pontiac GTO.

A high profile automobile factory would do just that.

Negotiations soon began. DeLorean did fairly well in his first experience dealing with a government. His only real regret later was that he agreed to put up \$25 million to start the project.

Saudi Investor

He did have a Saudi investor, Ojje Axram, who was excited by the potential prospect, but DeLorean had only eleven days to raise the money. Ojje was not going to take DeLorean's word without doing some research of his own. He asked his principal American bank to conduct a "top secret," for his eyes only, investigation of the viability of the project.

The report ended up being the best analysis of the DeLorean project. No one would invest in DMC if they had access to the report handed to Axram.

The DeLorean might have been a viable product prior to the OPEC oil crisis, but not in 1977 or beyond. The market had changed, but John DeLorean's idea of a car had not. The report stated that only those making \$75,000 dollars a year would consider a high performance American sports car, and those that might prefer a car that had an established sex-appeal name, like Mercedes, Porsche or Jaguar.

The 55 mph speed limit had been imposed and those buyers would prefer the top down when cruising in their expensive toys, impossible to do

in a car with gull-wing doors. There was also the matter of the stainless steel finish, it's difficult to put your own stamp on a vehicle that only comes in one color.

In a nut shell, the report concluded the product was wrong, over-priced and not exceptional enough for the current market. Ojje Axram pulled his support without explanation.

For the next year, DeLorean stalled Puerto Rico. He did manage to lock in 150 dealers to sell the car, the minimum of the 400 the agreement with Puerto Rico required. All the while, DeLorean was a regular in the media, pitching his fledgling company where ever possible.

In early 1978, Liam Keilthy, Ireland's Industrial Development Authority (IDA) man in Chicago, was driving through Detroit. Keilthy's job was to attract American companies to go to Ireland and build factories, creating jobs and wealth for the Republic of Ireland.

He tuned in a Detroit radio station and listened to a report on DeLorean's project. He pulled off and called his boss. A couple of hours later he was in a meeting with John DeLorean's top project man.

DeLorean had learned much from his negotiations with Puerto Rico and thought that he could easily manipulate a deal to his advantage with the Irish. He quickly learned the Irish were not the pushovers he had hoped for. They had their own ideas

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DeLorean designed a futuristic sports car to be named after him.

about what would occur and what the DMC would do for Ireland.

Belfast

DeLorean was frustrated and instructed his team to resume dealings with Puerto Rico. As DeLorean was stepping away from a deal with Ireland, a Dublin based lawyer suggested he look north.

Belfast was an industrial town, much more than the proposed site in Limerick. For well over a hundred years, Belfast had been producing fine linen, and was a major shipbuilder site.

Harland and Wolff shipyards had built the Titanic. Textile machinery, aircraft and even guided missiles were manufactured there.

But there were problems; the recession had hit the north hard.

Britain's car industry was in serious decline, textiles were down. Unemployment was as high as 50% in some parts of Northern Ireland. And there were the "Troubles."

Many politicians believed the best way to defeat the IRA was "Jobs, homes and hope." John DeLorean was seen as part of that approach.

Forty-five days after negotiations began, a deal was struck. A 550,000 sq. ft. factory would be built on a 72 acre site in Dunburry, just six miles southwest of the city.

DeLorean was estatic, no more bowing to Arabs, no more Puerto Rican officials trying to pin him down and no more questions from the Irish in Dublin. He would soon have real

money for the first time for his dream.

Northern Ireland and the British government had offered twice as much as Puerto Rico and three times as much as Dublin. The project was pushing ahead far past 55 mph.

Two prototypes were built and the dealers loved them, putting up \$25,000 in advance and agreed to take all of the first years production. DeLorean's financial people on Wall Street were doing their job and things were falling into place.

One thing DeLorean overlooked was his own financial compensation. Now, there is an abundance of evidence to show that when the opportunity arose, he diverted \$17.8 million raised for the venture for himself.

Assembly lines started in 1981, after delays and budget overruns. There were also quality control issues that were expensive to repair.

The cars themselves received a lukewarm reception from the public and the automotive world. By February 1982, half of the 7,000 cars produced were unsold.

DMC was \$175 million in debt and the factory in Dunburry was placed in receivership. DeLorean implored the British government for aid but was refused unless he could find a matching amount from private investors.

Unknown to DeLorean, he became the target of an FBI sting operation, in which agents and informants posed as bankers and wealthy investors. On October 19, 1982, an informant

picked John DeLorean up from LAX and took him to a hotel room, where he presented him with a suitcase full of cocaine before FBI agents burst in and arrested him on drug trafficking charges. The British government shut down the Dunburry factory the same day.

After a long trial, DeLorean was cleared of all charges; the jury had ample evidence that he had been entrapped. Two years later, he was charged with tax evasion and managed to be cleared in that trial as well.

The British government believed DeLorean embezzled millions of British taxpayers money for his personal use, but never got around to extraditing him. In what has been called an act of spite, the government sequestered £990,000 from what

they deemed to be surplus money from DMC's pension for Belfast employees.

The dream was over.

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

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Follow Michael D.

Lord knows, I have asked, prayed and burnt incense to get leadership skills. But, no matter what I do, they have eluded me.

I can barely get our Irish Setter, Connie, to sit.

Leadership is something akin to art. It is a little hard to define, but we

know it when we see it. Leaders are constantly evolving, stepping up, stepping down and leaving the stage altogether. Does it matter? Some people say no.

A neighbor surprised me with the comment that he wasn't voting this year. He asked me, "Does it change how you sleep or the taste of your morning cornflakes?" I think that it does.

Leadership Style is Everything

All you must do to confirm that



it matters is look at the latest deposed dictator, Bashar al-Assad. OK, that is an extreme example, but the fact that dictatorships and the accompanying atrocities are still happening make a good case for caring.

The election of the current president of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, was begun with the opposite of indifference. He won

the presidency 14 years ago with the largest electoral majority in Irish history.

Wee Michael D

I was introduced to the legend of Michael D. by no less than the Saw Doctors. It's not every day that a politician is honored with an unsolicited anthem, "Michael D. Rockin' the Dail," especially by the Docs. [video: [Michael D. Rockin' the Dail](#)]

That is a testimony to the 40 plus years of service that Michael D. has given to Ireland, and the West of the country in particular.

The "wee" part of his nickname is because he is 5'3". The Lord gave him some large gifts to compensate for his small stature. He has the air of a jolly leprechaun, his body language is warm and he is nearly always smiling.

Within that friendly

countenance reside a fierce intellect and the courage to share it. To paraphrase a favorite statement of his, "Why go to the trouble of learning things if you don't share them?" He might be small, but he stands tall with his often-controversial opinions.

No Silver Spoons

For Michael D., being a man of the people is no act. It is who he is.

He was born in Limerick in 1941, a time when you were more likely to see an ass and cart than a car on the Irish roads. His family was poor, and he was sent to live with an aunt and uncle in Clare.

Talking about his childhood, he said that poverty is a thing that gets in your bones and never really leaves you. Despite lacking other things, the family never lacked things to read. Academia provided a level playing field for Michael D., where he flourished.

Irish Social Justice

Looking at the early images of Michael D., he is more firebrand than elder statesman. He is all ginger hair and pointing fingers.

The lessons learned in his early life gave him a fierce compassion for those in need. It made him a tireless political advocate for them. The courage to speak his mind has made him some enemies.

For example, in the last few years, Michael D. has been one of the Israeli government's harshest critics. He has repeatedly condemned the killing of innocent civilians in the name of retaliation.

His criticisms are in line with the feelings of the Irish people.

Due to the criticism, Israel closed their Dublin embassy just before Christmas. How could the Irish fail to empathize with colonized, displaced people?

Irish Presidency

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do? The position of president in Ireland is essentially ceremonial. It is all attending events and kissing babies.

But Michael D. has put his mark on it. One of his goals was to use his position to help to heal the Irish British relationship. He believes that all parties need to move on from the wounds of the past.

To that end, he was the first Irish president to address the English Parliament and to attend a coronation, Charles'. Those actions led to some eye-rolling on both sides of the Irish Sea.

But Michael D. does Michael D. Not only was he doing what he thought was right, but he also displayed his formidable knowledge and intelligence, quoting everything from the Magna Carta to Sean O'Casey.

Looking at what I have written so far, you might imagine a dour

little man. Nothing could be further from the truth. One of the reasons he is beloved must be that he has a joi de vie about him. He is almost always smiling and not half-heartedly, but a full-on beam of a smile.

He has been married to a woman he met and married in his youth, Sabina. As often as he was pictured with his wife, he was just as often photographed with two beloved Burmese dogs, Broda and Misneach. The small man with the big dogs made for some charming portraits.

More than anything, Michael D. embodies authentic Irish culture. He is a fluent Irish speaker and is not shy about inserting some Gaeilge into his speeches every chance he gets. He has patronized and promoted all kinds of Irish arts, particularly writing and theatre.

This last Christmas, Michael

D. gave his final holiday address. It was full of reminders of all the people who are suffering around the world. [video: Michael D Christmas message: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uMn1uOhnkA8>]

It might have seemed a little depressing, but he is determined to not allow the world to ignore people in need. It feels really Irish, the refusal to turn a blind eye, like much of the world did during the Famine.

But, at 84, he is ready to retire. He had a health scare last year that hospitalized him for a few days. When his term is up, he will finally retire.

I don't believe that he will go quietly though. Michael D. is incapable of witnessing suffering and war in silence. He is such a warrior for peace, justice, equality and the climate. It seems as long as he draws

breath, he will stay that way.

What else could a real leader do? Why would anyone want anything else?

Lisa O'Rourke is an educator from Akron. She has a BA in English and a Master's in Reading/Elementary Education. Lisa is a student of everything Irish, primarily Gaeilge. She runs a Gaeilge study group through the AOH/Mark Heffernan Division. She is married to Dónal and has two sons, Danny and Liam. Lisa enjoys art, reading, music, and travel. She likes spending time with her dogs, cats and fish. Lisa can be contacted at olisao7@icloud.com

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For Hither

National Catholic Schools Week is the annual celebration of Catholic education. This year it ran from the last Sunday in January, the 26th, until the following Saturday, the 1st of February. Schools observed the week with daily themes, honoring those who make Catholic schools succeed.



Today, the Cleveland Diocese has 108 schools, with 39,720 students, and is the 6th largest Catholic school system in the nation. In 1878, the Diocese of Cleveland instituted annual reports for the parishes. Those annual reports included data on their Catholic schools.

There were 11 parishes reporting in 1878 and the Diocese had 4,633 students.

Those students were primarily taught by nuns. The Sisters of St. Joseph were welcomed to the Diocese in 1872 and the Sisters of Notre Dame were welcomed in 1874.

The Ursuline Academy was established in 1877. Those sisters comprised the majority of 73 teachers in Cleveland's Catholic schools, one teacher for every 63.5 students.

Cleveland Catholic Schools 1878

The Cathedral of St. John had 176

First Communion and baptisms, included 298 children and six adults. St. John's performed 65 marriages that year. There was not a register of deaths.

The school employed 14 teachers, of which five were males and nine were females. That included seven Ursuline Sisters, five Brothers of Mary and two "ladies."

The enrollment was 1,143, comprised of 573 boys and 570 girls. Father Thorpe reported about a dozen children in the parish attended public schools, which he attributed to "bad parents."

St. Augustine's reported 46 First Communion, and 60 baptisms were performed, including four adults. Father John O'Conner celebrated five marriages and recorded 12 deaths.

Its school had four teachers, all Sisters of St. Joseph, for 200 enrolled students. There were five boys and four girls in the parish who attended public schools. Father believed that was due their parents being "bad Catholics."

St. Bridget's performed 35 First Communion, and 81 children and three adults were baptized. Father William McMahan performed 16 marriages and 15 funerals.

The school had 182 students, 80 boys and 102 girls. They were instructed by three teachers, one male and two Ursuline Sisters. There were 18 children in the parish who attended public schools, "Some of the children of mixed marriages & others of indifferent Catholics, and two think it better."

St. Mary's of the Holy Rosary, which would be renamed Holy Name, witnessed 102 First Communion. Five adults and 148 children were baptized. Father Joseph Gallagher

performed 11 marriages and no deaths were listed.

St. Columba's School, named after one the patron saints of Ireland, was staffed with eight teachers, seven were "Ladies of the Sacred Heart of Mary," for 689 pupils. There were no parish youth listed as public school students.

St. Malachi's had 127 First Communion and 195 children baptized. Father James Maloney performed 11 marriages and denoted 93 deaths. The school was staffed with nine teachers, two were male and seven were female. That included four Ursuline Sisters and five "secular."

Enrollment was 700 pupils, 288 boys and 412 girls. Only one or two parish kids attended public school and there was no causality noted.

Annunciation listed the First Communion of 28 children and three adults. There were 65 children baptized. Father Augustine Gerardin celebrated 14 marriages and there were no deaths or funerals listed in the report.

The school had 201 students who were instructed by three teachers. No information was provided as to teacher affiliation. Similarly, no public school attendance numbers were included.

St. Mary's of the Assumption had 62 children receive their First Communion. 128 children and two adults were baptized. Father Stephen Falk celebrated 22 marriages, three were noted as "mixed." There were 64 deaths reported.

The school enrolled 450 students, 250 boys and 200 girls. Six teachers were on staff, three males from the Community of St. Mary's in Dayton and three Ursuline Sisters. Six kids attended public school. That was attributed to "the parents are bad

Cath, (or) of mixed marriages."

St. Patrick's (soon to be) on Bridge did not include First Communion data. It did baptize 200 children, including eight from ages 13-18. Father Eugene O'Callaghan performed 40 marriages, and there were 111 deaths in the parish.

Ten teachers, three Brothers of Mary and seven females, including four Ursuline Sisters, were employed for 825 pupils, 390 boys and 435 girls. 20 parish kids attended public schools, which was attributed to the distance to the school, but those who lived closer didn't attend due to "pride and vanity."

St. Peter's witnessed 51 First Communion, 29 boys and 22 girls. Father Francis Westerholt baptized 131 children and celebrated 16 marriages. They reported noted 36 deaths.

The school 386 students enrolled, who were instructed by six teachers, three Brothers of Mary and three Sisters of Notre Dame. "3 or 4" kids went to public school and that was due to "mixed marriage or indifferent Catholics."

St. Prokop's listed 34 children receiving their First Communion. 91 children and 3 adults were baptized in the parish. Six marriages were celebrated by Father Joseph Koudelka and 12 deaths were reported.

Two Sisters from the Community of Notre Dame taught 189 pupils, 87 boys and 102 girls. The "many going to Public Schools" were determined to be bad Catholics.

St. Stephen's had 60 First Communion and baptized 99 children and 2 adults. Father Casimir Reichlin performed 18 marriages and denoted 29 deaths.

The school enrolled 367 students.



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There were five teachers, one male and four Notre Dame Sisters. Ten children attended public schools as a result of “mixed marriages.”

St. Wenceslas’s reported First Communion for 66 children. 31 were from the parish and 35 were “nonmembers or infidels.” 164 children were baptized who were from church families. 174 children of “freethinkers”, including 4 pairs of twins and one of the 5th pair, were also baptized.

33 marriages were celebrated by Father Anthony Hynek and there were 99 deaths listed. 326 students were enrolled in the school. Three teachers were employed, one male and two Sisters of St. Joseph. Those who attended public school did so,

“because they have to for hither.”

Old School

The Diocese was just 30 years old in 1878. Just to put things in context, that was the year the Superior Street Viaduct opened. Cleveland’s population was 92,829 in 1870 and grew to 160,146 in 1880, 12th largest in the country. The Cleveland Telephone Co. began service in 1880.

As Cleveland grew, so did the Catholic schools, as well as the quality of education. We have the opportunity to continue this legacy.

Bluestone Charities held their Scholarship Raffle on February 1st, the conclusion of Catholic Schools week this year. Most Catholic schools, and the Diocese, have Scholarship

Granting Organizations.

Bluestone Charities is also an SGO. Donations to any of these SGO’s may be eligible for a non-fundable tax credit, both individual and household. Catholic Schools Week has passed, but donations before April 15, 2025 can be claimed when filing.

Francis McGarry is the Director of the Food Rescue Program at the Hunger Network of Greater Cleveland. He holds undergraduate degrees from Indiana University in Anthropology, Education and History and a Masters in Social Science from the University of Chicago. Francis is the founder of

Bluestone Hibernian Charities. He is a past president of the Irish American Club East Side; the founder and past president of the Bluestone Division of the Ancient Order of Hibernians; a Trustee for the Irish American Archives Society; a member of the Irish Heritage Advisory Committee for the Irishtown Bend Project; a member of the Hibernian Society of Baltimore and a member of the Planning Committee for the St. Malachi Run.

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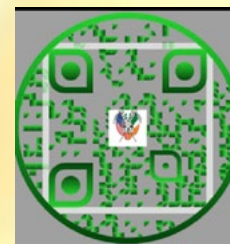
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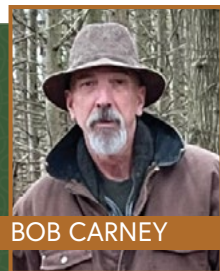


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An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
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SPEAK IRISH

@BobCarneyGTR

BOB CARNEY



Iomáin

This coming May will mark my fifty-second year in the automotive service industry. I started as a general technician and later specialized in advanced diagnostics. Now, I'm the service manager of a very busy auto repair shop.



One of the things that always makes me slightly apprehensive, is when someone comes in with a problem and states that he's a "car guy". I know our service advisers are going to have their hands full.

Their job is to educate, in the simplest way possible, the reasons for the repairs needed to our clients, on increasingly complex vehicles. The average new gasoline powered vehicle produced today boasts approximately fifty microprocessors that need to communicate with one another to ensure a safe, comfortable driving experience.

Got a Guy

The truth is though, I am a car guy. That's why I'm still in the business and look forward to many more years if possible. I'm as excited by the new technology as much as I am about our own two old sports cars.

A few years back, Mary and I stayed in the small village of Sneem, on the southwest coast of Ireland. On an early morning walk, we happened on a fellow in front of a small building changing a flat tire. He was an older gentleman, I'm thinking early eighties or so. I asked if I might help, he laughed and said this was his shop, pointing with his thumb at the building behind him.

I asked if I might look inside, explaining my own occupation. Now, our shop is filled with the latest diagnostic equipment, numerous expensive scan tools and scopes, specialized tire equipment and balancers, the latest alignment machine and so on. The shop is almost clinically clean and brightly lit.

This little shop in Sneem was not full of any of these things. It was dark and looked as it probably did a few decades ago.

But there was something about it, and I was quickly reminded of my grandfather's garage. You could feel the history in the place and imagine the time when only

an occasional car would cross the bridge in the middle of town and stop at this little shop. Even when we were there, you were as likely to see a tractor outside the pub as you were a car.

I love driving on the west coast of Ireland. The roads are beautiful, from Shannon up to Galway Bay hugging the coastline is my favorite drive. People are pleasant, I love the wave, two fingers lifted from the steering wheel and a nod of the head, as a car passes in the opposite direction.

Driving in Irish

Iomáin (eh-mayn) driving Gluaisteán (gloosh-tawn) is the word for automobile, but carr (kahr) is also common. If you plan on taking little ones you will need a suíchán paiste (see-hawn posh-tche) or child seat. The trunk or boot is called cófra bagáiste (kowfra bagawshta). The inneall (inniyall) or engine is usually covered by the boinéad (bun-yade) bonnet or hood, also called a cumhdach (koodock).

An córas leictreach (un kore-ass lyekht-ragh) the electrical system is protected by na fiúsanna (na fuse-ah-na) fuses, located in na cóifrin fiúsanna (koe-freen fuse-ah-na) fuse box. Cóifrin is also the word for casket.

It is important to have good cuimilteoirí gaothscátha (kwimilchoree gee-skawha) windshield wipers on your car when driving in the west of Ireland. A lot of damage to the bonn (bunn) tire or roth (ruh) wheel is common on rental cars. Rothar (ruh-her) is a bicycle by the way.

Bóthar (boe-her) is a road, while a bealach bóthar mór (bah-lach boe-her more) is a highway. Uillin ar bhóthar (ellen ar woe-her) is a sharp turn in the road or elbow in the road. You would say "Tá alt sa bhóthar" (taw alt suh woe-her) to indicate there is a rise in the road.

Traffic Signs in Irish

Comharthaí Soilse Trácht A (cor-hee sawlsha trawkt uh) Traffic Signs or Lights

On our first drive up the coast, we had left Shannon very early in the morning. After an hour or so of driving, a cup of something

warm and a bite to eat sounded like a good idea. Mary suggested we stop at the mall up ahead, they surely would have a place to grab a cup of tea.

I asked why she thought there was a mall ahead, she had seen a sign. If you see the sign, Go Mall (guh mahl) slow down, it means drive slowly. You'll have to look elsewhere for your tea.

If you encounter a sign saying sioc (shuck) slow down as well, that means ice. Aire (arra) is beware, and dáinséar or contúirt (dawnshare / konturch) both mean danger.

Bealach aontreo (ballagh ayne-trow) is one way. Bóthar príobháideach (boe-her pree-vaw-jah) lets you know it's a private road.

An lár (un lawre) means center and refers to the center of the city or town. You'll likely find a carrchlós (koo-klowss) car park or parking lot there. You may have to pay a dola (dulla) toll to park there.

Cá háit a n-íocfaidh mé? (kaw hawtch ny-eek-ay may) is "Where do I pay?" If you can't find a place to park, you could ask, "Cá bhfuil an carrchlós?" (kaw will un korr-khloss) "Where is there a car park?" Or try "An bhfuil cead agam páirceáil anseo?" (un will kayd ah-gum parkawl un-sho) Can I park here?

To ask if there is a toll on the motorway, you would say, "An bhfuil dola ar an mhótarbhealach seo?" (un will dulla air un wowtar-vallagh shoh).

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

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Let's Talk Bout Ireland's Current Troubles

By Timothy F. Gibbons

Ireland Housing Crisis

The Irish housing crisis is currently characterized by a significant shortage, leading to high rental prices and limited availability, making it difficult for many people to afford housing. Estimates place the housing deficit between 212,500 and 256,000 homes, primarily due to underinvestment in construction following the global financial crisis. This is further compounded by a large number of households on social housing waiting lists, highlighting the affordability issue for low-income earners.

Key points about the Irish housing crisis:

Large deficit:

There is a substantial gap between the number of available homes and the demand, resulting from years of under-construction following the financial crisis.

High rental prices:

Rental costs have risen significantly, making it challenging for many people to find affordable housing.

Growing social housing waiting list:

Many households are on the waiting list for social housing, indicating a significant affordability problem for low-income earners.

Government efforts to address the issue:

The Irish government has increased spending on housing initiatives, aiming to build more homes and provide support for those struggling with housing affordability.

Factors contributing to the crisis:

Land availability and cost: Restrictions on land development and high land prices can hinder new housing construction.

Investment in buy-to-let market: A large portion of investment in the housing market has gone towards buy-to-let properties, reducing the availability

of homes for owner-occupiers.

Planning regulations: Complex planning processes can slow down new housing development.

What is Being Done to Address the Crisis

Increased public housing development:

The government is actively investing in building more social housing units.

Policy changes to stimulate construction:

Reforms to planning regulations and incentives for housing development are being implemented.

Rent controls:

While controversial, some rent control measures are in place to mitigate price hikes.

Ireland Healthcare Crisis
Ireland's healthcare system has several issues, including:

Access

Ireland's healthcare system doesn't have universal coverage for primary care. Access to public services is based on an individual's circumstances.

Cost

Most of the population pays the full cost of general practitioner visits, outpatient prescriptions, outpatient medical supplies, and dental care.

Hospital overcrowding

The number of hospitals in Ireland has decreased in recent years, leading to a shortage of beds. This has resulted in a "trolley crisis," where a record number of patients wait for a hospital bed on a trolley.

Staff shortages

There are significant staff shortages across the healthcare sector, including in mental health services and services for older people.

Performance

Ireland's healthcare system is one of the lowest performing in the northern hemisphere.

Austerity

The healthcare system was weakened by a lack of investment in services and infrastructure during the austerity years, leaving the system under pressure when faced with the COVID-19 pandemic. Ireland's healthcare system is dual (both public and private options). The public system is regulated by the Health Service Executive (HSE).

Specialist Care is in Galway and Dublin

The Mayo Medical Academy is a branch of the University of Galway Medical School, and located in Castlebar, Co Mayo. Positive and supportive, the academy is on the grounds of Mayo University Hospital, with 60 students in their third, fourth, and final year of training

Senior Housing/Long-Term Care

Ireland's senior housing and long-term care sector is in crisis due to a number of factors, including:

Aging population

Ireland's population is aging faster than its EU neighbors, and the number of people over 85 is projected to increase by 46%. The need for long-term care increases with age: about 22% of people over 85 in Ireland require long-term care.

Nursing home closures

Nursing home closures has more than doubled in the last four years; more than 20 nursing homes have closed since 2019.

Funding crisis

Nursing homes are facing a funding crisis due to rising costs and only marginal increases in income. The Fair Deal Rate pricing mechanism is no longer suitable for the current operating environment.

COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the long-term residential care (LTRC) sector, with high rates of infections, mortality, and staff absenteeism.

Feminization of care

Women are more likely to provide unpaid care and are often the primary caregivers. This can negatively impact women's participation in the labor market.

To address the crisis, some have called for immediate action to stem nursing home closures, and an urgent review of the Fair Deal pricing mechanism.

Ireland: Refugee Crisis 2024

The current state of refugees in Ireland is marked by a high number of refugees and asylum seekers, increased immigration, and a shortage of accommodation:

Number of refugees and asylum seekers

In 2022, the Republic of Ireland hosted over 61,000 refugees and asylum seekers, and Northern Ireland hosted over 3,200. In 2023, Ireland's refugee statistics were 113,902, a 40.18% increase from 2022.

Immigration

Ireland has experienced net immigration every year since 2015. In 2023, the estimated net immigration was just under 78,000, the highest since 2007. This includes many Ukrainians fleeing Russia's invasion.

Accommodation shortage

The Department of Integration is unable to provide accommodation to all international protection applicants due to a severe shortage.

Disinformation

Disinformation campaigns about the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum have been used to manipulate public opinion and incite violence.

Timothy F. Gibbons, M.Sc. is a retired Healthcare Executive and Digital Dummy.

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Submissions are due by the 8th of each month, for the following month.





Thomas Patrick Ashe – Carrying the Cross

Thomas Patrick Ashe (1885–1917) was born on January 12, 1885 at Lispole, near Dingle, County Kerry. He was the fourth son in a family of seven boys and three girls born to Gregory Ashe, a farmer, and Ellen Hanafin.



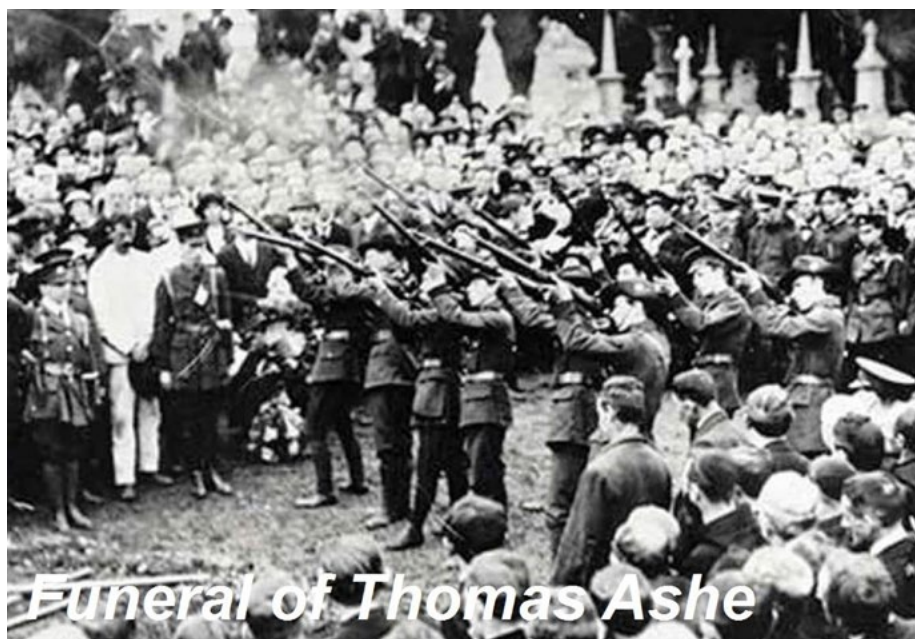
Both Irish and English were spoken in the Ashe home. Thomas's father was an Irish scholar, storyteller and singer. Learners of Irish used to come to listen to his stories.

Thomas attended Ardmore National School (1889–1900), where he was a promising student, winning two county scholarships. He joined the Gaelic League while at school, becoming a local organizer. He was also active in the Lispole Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA).

Ashe trained to be a teacher at De La Salle College, Waterford (1905–7), where he again excelled. After briefly teaching at Minard Castle National School, County Kerry (July 1907 to March 1908), he became a master at Corduff National School, near Lusk, in north County Dublin (March 1908 to April 1916). As a teacher and as school principal he was both efficient and popular, but his tendency to press his political nationalism upon his pupils often brought disapproval from government school inspectors.

Irish Republican Brotherhood

Ashe joined the IRB in the spring of 1913. He regularly met other leading members, including



Funeral of Thomas Ashe

Seán MacDermott and Diarmuid O'Hegarty, and in November 1913 he became a founding member of the Irish Volunteers. Locally, Ashe played a leading role in forming the Black Raven Pipe Band in 1910. The Black Raven won the championship of Ireland at the Oireachtas (pron: *oh-rock-tus*) in Galway in 1913.

Historian Peter Hart noted, "Ashe was a gentle, devout and much loved man, cut from the same idealistic cloth as Patrick Pearse and Joseph Plunkett."

From February until the summer of 1914 Ashe took leave from his job and travelled to the USA, where he collected money for the Gaelic League and (secretly) for the IRB. Sometime between October 1915 and the outbreak of the 1916 Rising, Ashe became commandant of the 5th (Fingal) Battalion of the Irish Volunteers, which ultimately formed part of the Dublin brigade.

Easter Rising

Commanding the Fingal Battalion of the Irish Volunteers, Ashe took part in the 1916 Easter Rising. Ashe's force of 60-70 men engaged British forces around north County Dublin during the rising.

The battalion won a major victory in Ashbourne, County Meath, where they engaged a much larger force capturing a significant quantity of arms and 20 Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) vehicles. This group also successfully demolished the Great Northern

Railway Bridge, disrupting access to the capital.

Twenty four hours after the rising collapsed, Ashe's battalion surrendered. On May 8, 1916, Ashe was court-martialed and was sentenced to death. The sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life.

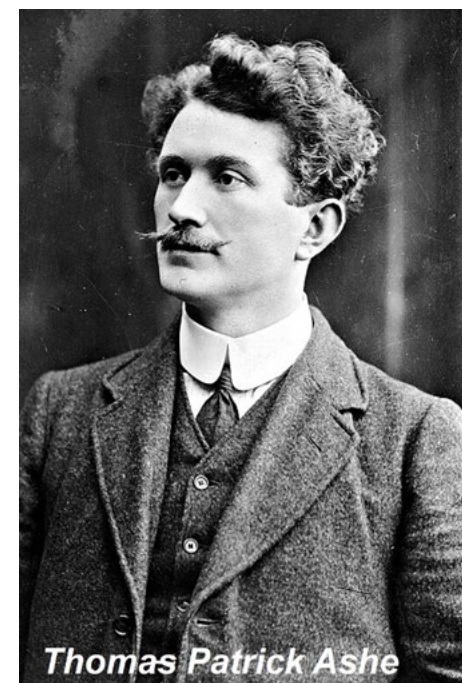
Ashe was imprisoned in Dartmoor prison and then at Lewes Prison in England. While at Lewes, he was in regular communication with Michael Collins and so was better informed about developments in Ireland than many of his fellow prisoners. It was at Lewes Prison that Ashe penned his famous poem titled, *Let Me Carry Your Cross for Ireland, Lord!*

At Lewes, Ashe and Thomas Hunter led a prisoner hunger strike, which began on May 28, 1917. With accounts of prison mistreatment appearing in the Irish press, Ashe and the remaining prisoners were freed on June 18, 1917 by Prime Minister Lloyd George, as part of a general amnesty.

On June 20, 1917, four thousand people welcomed Ashe back to Tralee, County Kerry. He was by then serving as president of the Supreme Council of the IRB. Ashe embarked on a series of meetings and speeches, reorganizing the Irish Volunteers and promoting the republican cause.

Defense of the Realm Act (DORA)

A July 25, 1917 speech, in



Thomas Patrick Ashe

Ballinalree, County Longford, brought about his re-arrest in Dublin and he was prosecuted under the DORA. He was sentenced to two years' imprisonment. In Mountjoy Jail he was among forty DORA prisoners who began a protest against their treatment, demanding "political prisoner" or "prisoner of war" status.

The prisoners initiated a hunger strike on September 20, 1917. As this was a breach of prison discipline, the authorities retaliated by taking away the prisoner's beds, bedding and boots. After 50 hours lying on a cold stone floor, the prisoners were subjected to force feeding.

On September 23rd and 24th, Dr. Raymond Dowdall, the prison medical officer, force fed Ashe. On the morning of September 25, 1917, the same operation was carried out by Dr. William Lowe, who was unfamiliar with the procedure.

Immediately after the feeding, Ashe collapsed. He was transferred to Mater Misericordiae Hospital (also known as the Mater Hospital), where he died later that evening.

On September 27, 1917, a coroner's inquest was held to investigate the death of Ashe. The jury condemned the staff at the prison for the "inhuman, dangerous and



Let me Carry Your Cross for Ireland, Lord!

Let me carry your Cross for Ireland, Lord!
The hour of her trial draws near,
And the pangs and the pain of the sacrifice
May be borne by comrades dear.
But, Lord, take me from the offering throng,
There are many far less prepared,
Though anxious and all as they are to die
That Ireland may be spared.

Let me carry your Cross for Ireland, Lord!
My cares in this world are few,
And few are the tears will fall for me
When I go on my way to You.
Spare, Oh! spare to their loved ones dear
The brother and son and sire,
That the cause that we love may never die
In the land of our heart's desire!

Let me carry your Cross for Ireland, Lord!
Let me suffer the pain and shame;
I bow my head to their rage and hate,
And I take on myself the blame.
Let them do with my body what'er they will,
My spirit I offer to You,
That the faithful few who heard her call
May be spared to Róisín Dhu.

Let me carry your Cross for Ireland, Lord!
For Ireland weak with tears,
For the aged man of the clouded brow,
And the child of tender years.
For the empty homes of her golden plains,
For the hopes of her future, too!
Let me carry your cross for Ireland, Lord!
For the cause of Róisín Dhu.

THOMAS ASHE.

LEWES PRISON.

unskillful operation performed on the prisoner, and other acts of unfeeling and barbaric conduct.”

They concluded that Ashe had died of heart failure and congestion of the lungs, and that this was due to force-feeding, combined with the previous removal of his bedding and boots (which had left him in a physically weakened state).

In the words of Michael Collins, “The death of Tom Ashe has filled everybody, even political opponents, with horror and indignation, but a day of reckoning will come.”

The funeral services for Ashe were organized by the IRB (using a cover name the Wolf Tone Memorial Society) and the Dublin brigade of the Irish Volunteers. Richard Mulcahy was in charge of the arrangements. Michael Collins was designated to deliver the graveside oration.

Thomas Ashe's body was taken to the Pro-Cathedral on Marlborough Street for a solemn Requiem Mass on Thursday, September 27, 1917, and from there, to the City Hall to lie in state until the day of his funeral. An armed guard of uniformed Irish Volunteers kept vigil as thousands came to pay their respects and offer a prayer for his soul.

On Sunday, September 30, 1917, after lying in state at Dublin City Hall, Ashe's cortege made its way through Dublin to Glasnevin Cemetery, where he was buried. An estimated 40,000 people lined the route.

At the graveside, twelve uniformed Volunteers fired a volley of three shots and then Michael

Collins stepped forward and made a short and revealing oration in English and Irish. His words were: “Nothing additional remains to be said. That volley which we have just heard is the only speech which it is proper to make above the grave of a dead Fenian,” leaving the Irish population in no doubt what was needed to gain independence from England.

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

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intricate, traditional, and vital to the highly competitive sports of Irish dance. We are lucky to have some amazing veteran Feis (pron. Fesh) musicians in Ohio that play at local competitions and are mentoring and encouraging the next generation of talented Feis musicians to keep the Irish culture thriving locally.

Ohio is “home” to many talented and veteran traditional Irish musicians, including Marty Kilroy, Mike Shaffer, Jimmy Butke, Samantha McNamara, Francis Quinn, Fr. Ryan Duns, and so many more. From playing tunes at festivals and pubs, playing for competitions, both local and major, and mentoring the next generation of Feis musicians, the Irish dance world is alive and well in Ohio because of these talented individuals.

Talented Irish Musicians in Ohio

One of Lakewood’s own, Cian Wolff, is a budding feis musician, he plays the accordion. He also plays the tenor drums in the Lakewood High School Marching Band, and the bass guitar in the



pep band.

Cian was recently given the accolade of “most outstanding musician” by his percussion advisor in the marching band. His musical talent and passion are now blessing the Irish dance community.

Cian has been around the Irish dance community his entire life, as his mother, Marcy Smith, was a former champion dancer at the Burke School of Irish dance. Cian started dancing at the young age of four at the Burke School of Irish dance, continued his dancing career at the Brady Campbell School and finished out his dancing career at the Kavanagh Porter Academy in Maryland, where he decided to retire early from the sport to pursue his love and passion for traditional Irish music.

In 2020, Cian started taking accordion lessons via ZOOM with NYC based musician, Niall O’Leary. This ended up being the perfect time to pick up a new hobby when we were all confined to our homes during the pandemic.

He was a natural, and quickly learned and perfected his skills, learning hundreds of tunes, with many hours of practice to play them at various speeds. As Cian progressed in his skills, he started

studying under world-class talent Kevin Murphy, of Glasgow, Scotland.

As the world opened back up post-pandemic, Cian had opportunities to “sit in” with several feis musicians to gain experience on the other side of the stage. Playing at a feis in Glasgow this past January alongside his teacher, Kevin, was a major highlight of his career thus far.

Irish Music in Canada

Cian was officially hired to play his very first feis this past spring by the Wilson Bryson Dennis School in Canada. This was an incredible milestone in Cian’s career at the ripe age of fifteen! He is thankful for all his mother has done for him on his journey as well as his mentors and teachers along the way.

“I am very lucky to be surrounded by all these musicians and inspirations, including my mother. It was always just her and me throughout anything that had to do with Irish dance or music. She has tried her best to get me involved in all the things about music and dance through local sessions all the way to driving me countless hours to see my friends and other musicians.

I also won’t have gotten here without my teachers, who I am very thankful for as well. I try and play my accordion almost every day and it has just become something that is really fun! I want to keep playing to spread what I love doing the most, which is just being in the Irish community.”- Cian

For those of you who are local to Cleveland, Cian, along with many other local musicians, can be found playing in sessions on Thursday nights at the Plank Road Tavern in Lakewood with the legendary Al O’Leary, and on select Sundays at Gormley’s Pub in Rocky River. Come on out, enjoy traditional Irish music, and ... you may even catch someone do an Irish dance step or two.

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<p>Sunday, March 9 The Irish Troubadours Pub Songs & More</p>	<p>Saturday, March 15 the DOGUES Tribute The Boys From The County Hell</p>
<p>Thursday, March 13 To Kill The Irishman: DANNY GREENE Rick Porrello Cleveland Stories – No Cover Charge</p>	<p>Sunday, March 16 The Kilroys Traditional Celtic Tunes</p>

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Journey into Westeros

It is no wonder filmmakers look to Northern Ireland when considering locations to inspire. From coastlines of mythical proportions to dense forestry, the North is a definite contender. But the magic of Northern Ireland isn't just for filmmakers—it's for everyone.

Shannon Relates:
Ballintoy Harbour

My love for *Game of Thrones* developed as an unexpected result of the Covid pandemic. The entire series came and went, and I was just like Jon Snow—I knew nothing.

Armed with hesitation and time, I sat down to watch the tv series I had so successfully avoided.

After the first episode, I could not believe I had denied myself for so long. Reputation of Houses, battles, complicated bloodlines. You name it, *Game of Thrones* has it.

It wasn't until several seasons in that I discovered Northern Ireland was one of the main filming locations for the series. Naturally when planning our second trip, seeing Northern Ireland made sense. Mentioning our *Game of Thrones* interest to Philip, our trusted tour guide and now friend, was all it took to have some filming locations added to our Northern adventures.

You don't need to be a *Game of Thrones* fan to appreciate the stunning locations chosen for the series. Ballintoy Harbour is just one example of many that highlights Northern Ireland's stunning landscape.

Ballintoy Harbour is in County



Antrim, along the Causeway Coast. This 30-mile stretch of coastline features many natural wonders, including rugged cliffs and caves.

If there's ever been a beach that could be called cozy, Ballintoy Harbour would be it. Ocean spray flitting off an assortment of weathered rocks that create many alcove-like spaces allows visitors the opportunity to retreat and enjoy moments of solitude. This location offers both concealment and visibility.

The small beach invites investigation. Its compact size makes the beach and the surrounding areas easy to explore on foot. A stunning feature this stop yields is an abundance of natural black rocks, mostly made from basalt.

Game of Thrones

Shapes sculpted by the forces of wind and water, these rocks enclose small tidal pools. A further glance along the beach coastline and Theon Greyjoy's baptism scene in *Game of Thrones* comes to life.

If you're a fan of a good scavenger hunt, embarking on a quest to find the 10 *Game of Thrones* doors might just be the adventure you didn't know you were craving. Created



from two beech trees damaged by the famous storm at the Dark Hedges, these 10 doors depict key moments from Season 6. Seeing all 10 would be a real accomplishment!

Titled "The Battle of the Bastards," Door #9 can be found near the front entrance of the Garden Restaurant in the Ballygally Castle. The intricately carved



wooden direwolf lets you know you are in Stark territory, along with the depiction of Winterfell.

House Bolton's hounds are also represented, ensuring a shiver of those who know what happened at the end of episode 9 from Season 6. Forgoing any direct interest in the series, the craftsmanship alone is worth a visit to any of these doors.



Throw in the positive reuse of the Hedges, then this makes this stop a no-brainer.

Karen Relates:

The Dark Hedges

If you haven't watched Game of Thrones, you can still enjoy a visit to the Dark Hedges, also located in County Antrim. This highly photographed location features a picturesque line of beech trees that transform the landscape with the changing light from sunrise to sunset.

These trees were planted in the late 18th century to create a grand boulevard leading to Gracehill House, designed to impress visitors as they approached the estate. Today, fewer than 90 of the original 150 trees remain, as many have been lost to storms and other environmental factors.

What I find most fascinating about the Dark Hedges is the shape of the trees. Their smooth, elongated trunks stretch upward, with branches reaching out like arms locked in an otherworldly dance. Walking through this tunnel of trees feels almost magical, as though you're being enveloped and shielded from whatever lies beyond—or perhaps drawn toward something enchanting, like the entrance to Narnia.

It is easy to imagine tree nymphs or tree folk hiding here, naturally blending into the mythical landscape. As an avid reader of fantasy books, I can't help but imagine endless possibilities of what might inhabit the landscape.

As a fan of the Game of Thrones books, I decided to dive into the HBO series after reading them twice. Seeing the Dark Hedges on-screen

as the King's Road and then visiting the site in person, you will notice it is not quite the same, as the line of trees is thinner. While CGI enhanced the visuals for the show, the trees still exude an eerie, haunting atmosphere, especially during early dawn or dusk, as captured in many photographs online.

While the Dark Hedges might not look exactly like they do in Game of Thrones, there's still much to appreciate about this place, if not just for the beauty of nature itself.

Recently, since our visit to the Dark Hedges, some trees have been cut down, and more are being monitored for potential removal as they continue to decline. Preservation efforts are in place, such as banning cars from driving through, but other factors continue to contribute to the deterioration of the beech trees. If you find yourself traveling in Northern Ireland, it might be worth a visit while many of the trees still stand.

Karen Bennett and Shannon Thomas-Ziemnik are two old friends who share a passion for all things Irish. You can find them at PJ's on Tuesday nights with a Jameson and ginger in hand attending the Speak Irish Cleveland class. As far as their column-writing abilities, this is, in fact, their first rodeo. They can be reached at ksiirish@gmail.com.

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The Fascination of What's Difficult

I often get asked for reading recommendations at this time of year, when book clubs draw up new discussion plans. I take my cue from hearing about what they have already read, but I invariably slip in something I have recently admired, often a compelling but challenging book.

I'm taking this opportunity to come clean and make the case for why reading should be difficult and even uncomfortable. I took

my title from the name of a Yeats' poem, where he — an often-difficult poet- decides he is done with writing hard plays or poetry. But Yeats never was, because he needed “difficult” art to express his sometimes contradictory but always complex reactions to his world.

Artistic complexity is needed to replicate, investigate or represent the complexity of human situations, perceptions, or emotions. It aspires to say something revelatory even as it concedes that it always falls short. Consider that there is no *exact* word for the pain one might be feeling — only an approximation, some far from adequate.

Reading is Good

My fundamental opinion is any reading is good, and reading for escapism, relaxation, club-membership, etc. should all be celebrated. One kind of enjoyment is that which genre readers prefer: they want more thrillers, more detective fiction, more science fiction, more romance, etc. Genre fiction, like all writing, has wide qualitative ranges within its formulas, and we all have our

preferences — and exceptions.

I do not generally like time-travel narratives, but I do love Octavia Butler's *Kindred*, which I would not have known about except for a member of my own beloved book club. Nor do I care for stories about zombies or monsters (not even the illustrated, deluxe edition of *Pride and Prejudice and the Zombies*), but then there is *Frankenstein* (Mary Shelley, must-read) and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*. Nothing is really off limits, but as a teacher, I tried to show my students how they should at least argue the merits of their choices.

Reading Suggestions

Most often, I am asked for suggestions from people who love a good, solid story, one that isn't a “beach book” or “lit-lite,” but that has substance without being too daunting. Top of my list for this kind of book are authors like Alice McDermot (an Irish American, especially *The Ninth Hour*), Ann Patchett (especially *Bel Canto*), and Elizabeth Strout (*Olive Kitteridge*): these writers are all very skilled, attuned to subtleties in relationship turns, and draw compelling characters.

Other candidates might include Delia Owens, Lucy Foley, and Kristin Hannah. Barbara Pym, Dorothy Sayers, Daphne Du Maurier, Murial Spark, E.M. Delafield are British writers with similar virtues. I have read all these authors and enjoyed them. And these novels get made into some pretty good movies and bingeable mini-series too.

In literary criticism, these books are sometimes considered “middlebrow literature.”

Virginia Woolfe

That may sound kind of offensive, and it was meant to be insulting when Virginia Woolf used it in a letter she wrote to the “New Statesman” in which she assailed middlebrow readers as “busy bodies who run from one to the other with their tittle tattle and make all the mischief.” Warming to her theme, she called us “bloodless and pernicious pests.”

Woolf, like our friend Yeats, did not care for the middle class: remember “September, 1913,” when

Yeats described the middle-class as unheroic dullards praying and saving with “fingers in a greasy till.”? The middle-class threatened Culture with a high C.

But like Thomas Mann, who feared the demise of the great German literary tradition, Yeats was tempted by fascism. Woolf, much more suspicious of aristocrats and a vocal champion of women's rights, still did not see how and why middlebrow fiction was (and is) primarily written by and for women.

Today “middlebrow” is not a widely used term, but it is certainly no insult. Rather it is a nod to a fictional enterprise with its own social power and influence.

“Literary fiction” is the term used more often than “highbrow” to describe works that the modernists, like Woolf, would have praised as difficult, ambiguous, experimental in form, polyglot, and referential. They were also called “masterpieces,” a term also retired for its implicit male reference and for its view that a work of fiction is shaped completely by its author, with its meaning independent of its reader.

Literary Fiction

Today, we call literary fiction that which prizes clear artistic features and merit. Importantly, this kind of writing challenges readers to identify why some kind of stylistic innovation (including innovative realism) is necessary to convey meaning(s). This innovation does not mean that the books are necessarily abstruse or unapproachable, though some may be (looking at you Thomas Pynchon and William Gaddis). It does mean they require some effort.

You, dear reader, must identify and see the solution to the problem of representation. This is the effort that makes reading not only pleasurable, but of the highest intellectual, social and ethical practice. That sounds like a big claim. It's a true one.

So here are three books by contemporary authors that repay every effort and are on my list of recommendations this year. Well, they are always on my list of

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The Vegetarian

This slim book by the Nobel prize winning South Korean writer, Hans Kang, tells the story of a woman who refuses to eat meat or to explain why, except that she had a dream. It is told in three parts, and each part describes how her refusal affects a key familial relationship.

Yes, her behavior gets more bizarre. Because she refuses to explain (or won't be listened to), our attention is trained on the self-interested reaction of others.

The Metamorphosis

The germ of this narrative is at work in Kafka's great story, *The Metamorphosis*. I co-taught Kafka's story at the Lerner School of Medicine to the MD/PHD students as part of a medical humanities course. In that section of the class we read texts that helped think about how to assist resistant, constrained, or non-communicative patients - or non-supportive family members. The point here is that doctors - and the rest of us humans - must attend to the silences, and literature can show us how to try to decipher them.

Disgrace

J.M. Coetzee is another Nobel prize winner. As a South African, he wrote during the height and aftermath of apartheid, but unlike his great contemporary, Nadine Gordimer, his approach largely eschewed realism. Rather, in his distinctive construction of nearly parabolic tales told against identifiable historical circumstances, Coetzee examines how every kind of imposition deforms what it encounters, whether it be it through political oppression, such as *de jure* and *de facto* racism, or through an entitled control of bodies made to work for us or to satisfy a need.

Life and Times of Michael K and Foe

I considered two other novels by Coetzee—the *Life and Times of Michael K* and *Foe* before settling on this recommendation because *Disgrace* is more “accessible.” While *Disgrace* may be easier in some respects, however, you will

still need to determine whether the remorse and contrition this disgraced professor and father assigns himself is a sufficient moral response. And you'll need to decide if reparation for harm done is every really sufficient, or if political divisions can be ameliorated.

In keeping with the question of whether a work of fiction has useful or “pragmatic” applications, I recall being present at a discussion in South Africa of how members of President Mandela's cabinet discussed *Disgrace* while the country was dealing with the limitations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Perhaps more leaders should be part of book clubs.

Beloved

I used to tell my students that I thought this novel should be required reading to be allowed to vote. I concede that is not likely to happen, but of all the writing that can help us to understand our shared American history, this novel by Nobel Prize Winner (and Elyria native) Toni Morrison is indispensable.

Like the other books discussed, *Beloved* is formally innovative. Its three distinct parts are shaped around the true story of an escaped slave, Margaret Garner, living in Cincinnati in 1873, who kills her two-year-old daughter and attempts to kill her other children, rather than have them all be returned to slavery. Set in 1873, the first section is comprised of 18 parts; the second of seven, and the third has three: the form mimics a date carved into a headstone.

Margaret's (Sethe in the novel) action enunciates the moral premise of the book. If that premise is not appalling on its own, the depiction of the scarred back of the beaten protagonist, the madness of her grief, the return of her dead daughter, and the haunting of every moment of her life, so affects her entire local community that in the end they want to forget or “disremember” the horror.

Morrison will not allow that. Her novel is the absent monument to the unmentioned.

The novel announces that goal in its opening dedication to the

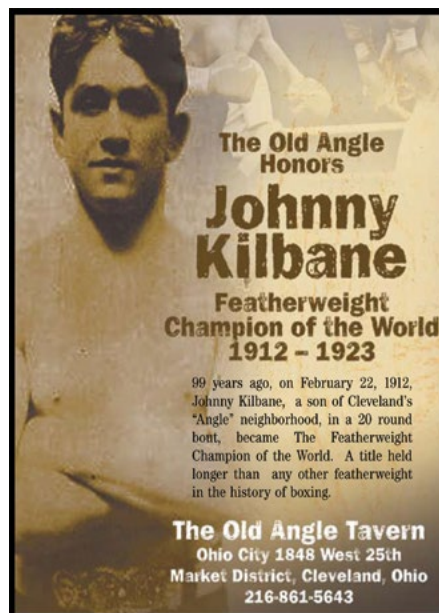
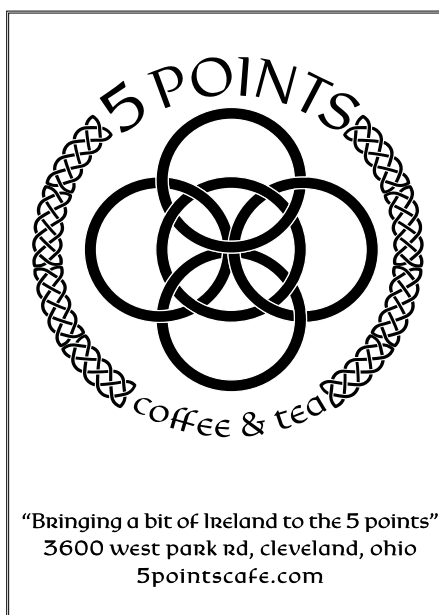
“sixty million and more” Africans who perished in the middle passage. *Beloved* refuses to permit forgetting: this story of African American terror and heartbreak will not be obliterated.

Structurally, a ghost story is always about the return of the unresolved. This is ours. Wishing you an abundance of happy and meaningful reading in 2025. Some of it “difficult!”

Jeanne Colleran, PhD is professor emeritus of John Carroll University.

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1. True or False? The song Lisdoonvarna was written by Christy Moore
2. Lisdoonvarna is in what county?
3. The song, “City of Chicago,” is about the emigration of the Famine Irish to America. What hills are the immigrants dreaming of?
4. Who is the author of the poem Easter 1916?
5. True or False? “No Irish Need Apply,” was a popular song in America during the second half of the 19th century.
6. H-A-R-R-I-G-A-N, a song about proud Irishmen in America, was written by who?
7. True or False. Derek Mahon is the author of the poem, ‘Rock Music.’
8. What Irish American entertainer is the author of the song, ‘Four Green Fields’?
9. True or False. The county capital of County Wicklow is Bray
10. Who made the following quote in April 1999? “I don't need publicity. If I fart, I get it.”

1. False - it was written by Greg Stephens (in the 1970s), Moore recorded it later
2. Clare
3. Donegal
4. William Butler Yeats
5. True
6. George M. Cohan
7. True
8. Tommy Makem (1967)
9. False (Wicklow Town)
10. Sinead O'Connor





THE FITNESS DOCTOR

DR. FREDERICK PETERS



Should Men and Women Eat Different Breakfasts to Lose Weight?

You want oatmeal, your partner wants eggs, here's why it matters. In fact, that difference could help you lose some weight!

3 YEARS

WRITING FOR ilrish newsmagazine

According to a new study, men's metabolisms respond better on average to a meal laden with high carbohydrates like oats and grains

after fasting for several hours, while women are better served by a meal with a higher percentage of fat, such as omelettes and avocados.

We live busy lives, so it's important to understand how seemingly inconsequential decisions, such as what to have for breakfast, can affect our health and energy levels. Whether attempting to lose weight, maintain weight, or just keep up your energy, understanding your diet's impact on your metabolism is important. The study builds on an existing gap in research on sex differences in how men and women process fat.

"We often have less research data on women's bodies than on men's bodies," said Anita Layton, a professor of Applied Mathematics and Canada 150 Research Chair in Mathematical Biology and Medicine. "Since women have more body fat on average than men, you would think that they would burn less fat for energy, but they don't."

The results of the model suggest that women store more fat immediately after a meal but also burn more fat during a fast. Going forward, the researchers hope to build more complex versions of their

metabolism models and extend beyond the consideration of biological sex by incorporating an individual's weight, age, or stage in the menstrual cycle.

Hormonal Differences
The differences in fat-burning mechanisms between men and women stem primarily from hormonal, physiological, and metabolic variations. Estrogen promotes fat storage, particularly in the hips and thighs, which is thought to be evolutionarily advantageous for childbearing.

Hormonal Differences

It also enhances fat oxidation during exercise, especially at lower intensities. Progesterone can counteract estrogen's effects and may lead to fluid retention and fat storage during certain phases of the menstrual cycle.

Higher levels of testosterone in men promote muscle growth, which increases basal metabolic rate (BMR) and enhances overall calorie expenditure. Men generally rely more on glycogen for energy during exercise rather than fat, particularly at higher intensities.

Fat Oxidation During Exercise
At low to moderate exercise intensities, women tend to burn a higher percentage of fat compared to carbohydrates, while men rely more on glycogen. This is partly due to estrogen's effects on fat metabolism. During high-intensity exercise, men

Fat Oxidation During Exercise


generally shift to burning more carbohydrates, whereas women continue to oxidize fat to a greater extent.

Response to Diet
Women's bodies are more sensitive to calorie deficits, often triggering a metabolic slowdown as a protective mechanism against perceived energy scarcity. Men typically experience fewer hormonal disruptions in response to caloric restriction, which may make fat loss slightly easier.

Response to Diet

Understanding these differences is important to maximize your weight loss goals. A qualified professional, like The Fitness Doctor, can help tailor nutrition and exercise strategies for optimal fat-burning in men and women.

Dr. Peters is the founder of a personal training company called "The Fitness Doctor" (www.thefitnessdoctors.com). He has a Ph.D. in Exercise Physiology from Kent State University and is a certified member of the American College of Sports Medicine. Dr. Peters was born and raised in the Cleveland area and is a graduate of St. Ignatius High School and John Carroll University. He can be reached at fred@thefitnessdoctors.com

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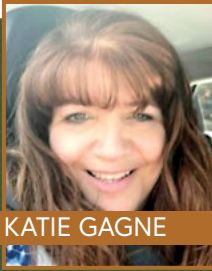


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COOKING UP A HOOLEY

KATIE GAGNE

What Are They Eating in Ireland?

I thought it would be fun and interesting to take a close look at the specific cuisine that areas of Ireland are known for. Most of us are familiar with many of the traditional dishes popular all over Ireland. Yet, each area of the country boasts some foods unique to them.



Being an island, seafood is abundant all over the country. Being on the Atlantic Ocean, Mayo and its surrounding locales often cook and serve Breac Geal or Brown Trout. Similar to other varieties of trout, this one, common in the Atlantic waters, is a favorite of those in that region.

While Brown Trout is not easy to find here in Ohio, the preparation and how this is cooked and enjoyed can be used for all kinds of fresh fish available locally.

Brown Trout

Makes 4 servings

Ingredients

- Scones
- 4 eight-ounce fish fillets (you can choose any type of white fish – cod, halibut, trout,
- 1/2 cup All Purpose Flour
- Lemon Wedges
- 2 tablespoons Olive Oil
- 4 tablespoons Butter
- Kosher Salt and Black Pepper to taste

This quick and easy method for pan frying fish is perfect for the Lenten season and any time of year. If you have not tired cooking fish this simple way, you must. My dad absolutely loved cooking fish like this in a cast iron skillet and truthfully, there is nothing better.

Pat dry the fish fillets.

Place the flour in a shallow bowl and season with salt and pepper. Heat the oil in a skillet over medium heat.

Dredge each piece of fish in flour and place in the hot skillet.

Cook on each side for approximately 4-5 minutes each or until done.

Add the butter halfway through cooking and baste the fish as it cooks.

Remove from the skillet, sprinkle with more salt and pepper, and serve with lemon wedges.

Serve with your favorite side dish or salad.

A trick to removing skin from the



one side of the fish before serving is to put the skin side down and cook that first. When you flip the piece over, you can gently scrape off the skin while it is still hot.

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 mkbbluebows@aol.com, or find her on Facebook at [@sassyssweetsandmore](https://www.facebook.com/sassyssweetsandmore).

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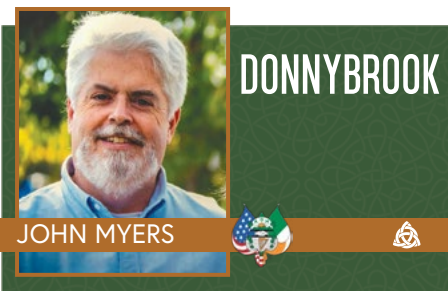
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A Snowy New Year

Ireland started 2025 with a rare heavy snowfall. Met Eireann, the Irish National Meteorological Service, issued warnings of “extremely cold with widespread severe frost, ice and lying snow, dangerous travelling conditions on roads and underfoot, travel disruption and delays and animal welfare issues. Up to a foot of snow fell in parts of Ireland with prolonged below freezing temps,” “Many Irish winters are free



from major snowstorms, but because of its infrequent and irregular occurrence, snow in large quantities causes serious disruption. A marked feature of snowfall in Ireland is its variation in depth from place to place. Some heavy snowfalls can be quite localized. A deep fall of snow can be short lived if it is followed by a sudden influx of warm air from the Atlantic.” **39 for 32**

“The people of Northern Ireland should know that they have our complete support in their quest for a peaceful and just society.” President Jimmy

Carter issued this statement on August 30, 1977, countering his State Departments strong recommendation to not disturb the so called “special relationship” between the Anglophilic Washington establishment and the U.K. corporate and political establishment.

With that policy statement, late President Jimmy Carter became the first U.S. President to lean in on London and began the process of “internationalizing” matters related to the Six Counties. The U.S. State Department and Foreign Policy establishment’s devotion to all things English had their silk stockings in a knot.

Speaker of the House Tip O’Neil and Sen. Ted Kennedy had made President Carter aware of the work of Irish Civil Rights advocate John Hume. Hume’s son issued the following statement upon the death of the 39th President: “guided by my father’s deep commitment to non-violence, peaceful change and human rights, President Carter made a ground-breaking statement on peace and economic support for Northern Ireland. This statement was the foundation stone in the United States positive and constructive influence on the NI peace process over the next 30 years.” Thank you, President Carter, for your commitment to Human Rights.

Bedminster or Bedfellows?

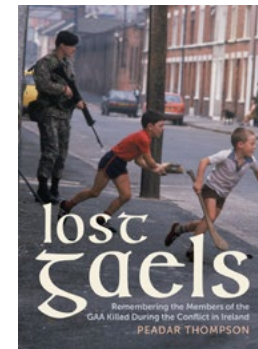
In this recast of the Drumpf Administration (the name of 45/47’s immigrant Grandpa who dodged the draft in the Rhineland, later anglicized to Trump), 47 has nominated Edward Sharp Walsh to the post of U.S. Ambassador to Ireland. Walsh is a successful construction contractor who lives in Bedminster, N.J., the site of Trump National Golf Club. Walsh is a member of Drumpf’s golf club.

Footnote: the Georgian Club House at Bedminster is the former home of John DeLorean, the architect of the DeLorean Motor Car, famously built in Belfast, Ireland. Walsh replaces former Massachusetts Senate President Claire Cronin at the Ambassador’s residence in Dublin’s Phoenix Park. Time will tell if Walsh can match the contributions of Cleveland’s Edward

Crawford, Drumpf’s previous Ambassador to Eire.

Lost Gael Book Tour Comes to Cleveland

Author Peader Thompson has a new book, *Lost Gael*, released in late 2024, chronicling the impact of *The Troubles* on the Gaelic Athletic Association. The Irish Academic Press writes: “The GAA has long been at the heart of



Irish life, nurturing our culture and communities and fostering powerful social bonds. However, as sectarian conflict intensified in the North, the GAA became the object of animosity and surveillance by loyalist paramilitaries and Crown forces.

Clubhouses and pitches were occupied by British forces, fans were security checked and harassed on their way to and from games, and over 150 members were killed. *Lost Gaels* is the first comprehensive account of the devastating impact of the Troubles on the GAA, providing a platform for bereaved family and friends to pay homage to their lost loved ones. Capturing the deep connection between the GAA and the everyday lives of Irish people, this is a poignant and powerful tribute to the lives of lost Gaels.”

Thompson is travelling the U.S. on a book tour this February and March. He will be in Pittsburgh on March 1st, Cleveland (West Side Irish American Club) on March 2nd and Chicago on March 4th.

DC Welcomes McElroy

Pope Francis recently appointed Cardinal Robert McElroy, the current bishop of San Diego Diocese, to be the leader of the Washington, D. C. Diocese. While not a large Diocese, The Bishops chair in Washington is very visible and a highly placed posting.

McElroy is seen as a close supporter of Pope Francis, who sends a not-so-subtle message to the incoming Administration, as McElroy is a clear believer in a sane and humane immigration policy. McElroy stated: “*The Catholic*

CLOSED SUNDAYS

February

- 1- Twin B Project
- 7- Jay Sparrow
- 8- The New Barleycorn
- 14- TBA
- 15- Danny Christian
- 21- Crowley and Sofranko
- 22- The Music Men
- 28- The Smug Saints
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Church teaches that a country has the right to control the borders, and our nation's desire to do that is a legitimate effort," he said.

"At the same time, we are called always to have the sense of the dignity of every human person, and thus plans which have been talked about on some level of having a wider indiscriminate, massive deportation across the country would be something that would be incompatible with Catholic doctrine."

In addition to the Capitol City, D.C. is also the home of the National Conference of Bishops, Catholic University, Georgetown University, Trinity College and, The Shrine of the Immaculate Conception (the largest Catholic church in North America, one of the ten largest in the world).

Dolan Vision

Native Clevelander Charles Francis Dolan, a successful Irish American entrepreneur, died last month in the New York City area. Dolan, brother of Larry Dolan, owner of the Cleveland Guardians,

attended John Carroll University before heading to NYC to create much of modern media, companies such as Cablevision, HBO, Madison Square Garden Sports Corp. (Knicks & Rangers), American Movie Classics channel, and many more.

The \$66 million dollar Dolan Science Building at John Carroll University honors his generosity to the school. Dolan's pastor, Msgr. Thomas Coogan, of St. Dominic Parish in Oyster Bay, N.Y. shared: "Mr. Dolan's legendary accomplishments were much covered in the press. To them he was an inspiring visionary and business mogul. But to us here at Saint Dominic, the Dolans were just fellow worshippers kneeling by our side in the pews," The 98-year-old billionaire is the father of six children and grandfather of nineteen.

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as when he is well and can be
of service to him."

– St. Francis of Assisi

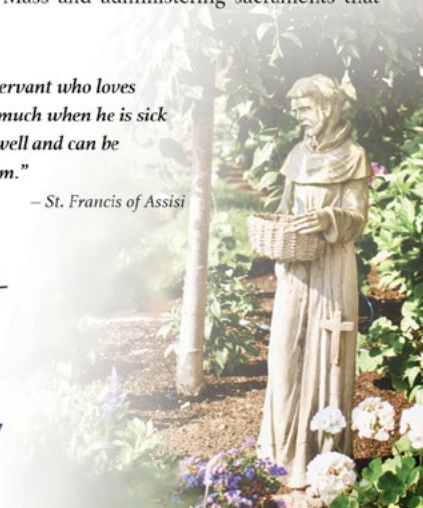


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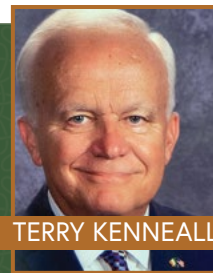
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OFF THE SHELF

TERRY KENNEALLY

Intermezzo

By Sally Rooney

ISBN 973-0-374-61900-B 2024

454 pp.

Sally Rooney has been described as the preeminent millennial, one of the most loved women

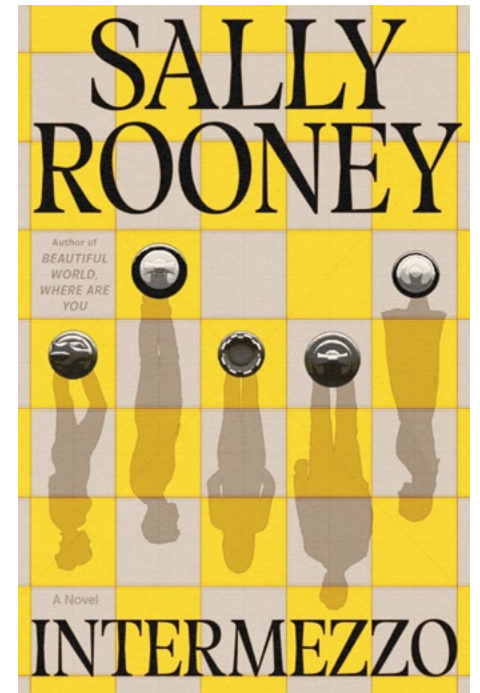
writers working today. Her success rankles. Two to 3 lines per paragraph

Midnight release parties are scheduled in many bookstores for her new novel, *Intermezzo*, as if it were "Harry Potter," Book 8. She's been called the Salinger of the Snapchat generation.

Intermezzo is her fourth novel. In her previous three novels, *Conversations with Friends*, *Beautiful World Where Are you* and *Normal People*, her characters don't arrive singly, but in twos and threes. She follows that formula in *Intermezzo*.

Intermezzo is about two brothers, Peter, a successful barrister in Dublin, and Ivan, who is shy, geekier, 10 years younger, wears braces and plays competitive chess. They are mourning the death of their father and there is a lingering bitterness between them.

Peter, 32, is caught between two women, Sylvia, his longtime girlfriend who left him after she was gravely and permanently injured in a car crash, and Naomi, who is 23 and borderline homeless. The overriding love story in the novel however is between Ivan, who is 22, and Margaret, a 36-year-old, divorced, arts-program director he meets at a chess event. She fears



the social repercussions of dating a much younger man, yet she blossoms under his touch and he under hers.

An intermezzo in music is a light composition played between the acts of an opera; in dining, it is a palate cleaner between courses; in chess it is an unexpected move. Between the time of mourning, the brothers begin romantic relationships that would be what they need to survive in a trying time. I don't want to ruin *Intermezzo* for readers who may have queued at midnight for a copy, but I don't think any of them will be upset by the ending.

In *Intermezzo*, Rooney molds a style for each of the brothers, who narrate the novel in alternate chapters (the thoughts of the women they love are heard in each chapter too). The book has been called overlong and undercooked by some critics, nonetheless, it is a TOP SHELF read about grief, love, and family.

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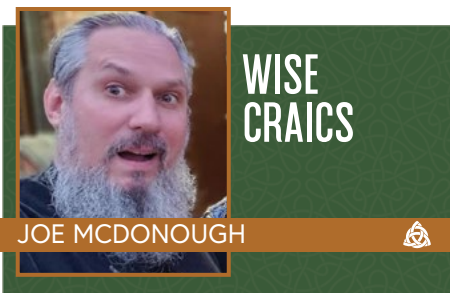
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Aunt Gussie Rides Again

A very rich Dublin politician is approached by a charity worker, who is concerned that the politician didn't donate any money to charity. "First of all," says the politician, "my mother is bedridden and gets no help from social services. Secondly, I have five kids through three failed marriages. Third, my sister's husband recently died, and she has no one to support her four children."

"I'm terribly sorry," says the charity worker, "I feel bad about asking for your money." "So, you should," replies the politician. "If I'm not giving them any money, why should I give any to you?"

The Proof is in the Puddin

A man and his wife were at a family wedding. The man came back from the bar with two glasses of whisky and set one down in front of her. "What's this?" she asked, surprised. "I asked you for a sweet sherry!" "Never mind that," said the man. "Drink it!" She picked up the glass and sniffed it warily. Then she took a tiny sip and instantly screwed up her face. "That's



disgusting!" she exclaimed.

"Exactly!" said the man. "And you think that when I'm out with my mates every night, drinking that, I'm enjoying myself!"

Elemental

New research has uncovered the heaviest element yet known to science. The new element is Governmentium (Gv).

It has one neutron, 25 assistant neutrons, 88 deputy neutrons and 198 assistant deputy neutrons, giving it an atomic mass of 312. These 312 particles are held together by forces called morons, which are surrounded by vast quantities of lefton-like particles called peons.

Since Governmentium has no electrons or protons, it is inert. However, it can be detected, because it impedes every reaction with which it comes into contact.

A tiny amount of Governmentium can cause a reaction normally taking less than a second to take from four days to four years to complete. Governmentium has a normal half-life of 2- 6 years. It does not decay but instead undergoes a reorganization,

in which a portion of the assistant neutrons and deputy neutrons exchange places.

In fact, Governmentium's mass will increase over time, since each reorganization will cause more morons to become neutrons, forming isodopes. This characteristic of moron promotion leads some scientists to believe that Governmentium is formed whenever morons reach a critical concentration. This hypothetical quantity is referred to as critical morass.

When catalyzed with money, Governmentium becomes Administratium, an element that radiates just as much energy as Governmentium, since it has half as many peons but twice as many morons. All the money is consumed in the exchange, and no other by-products are produced.

Doc, It Hurts When I do This.

Don't Do That!

A guy comes to his doctor, and says, "Hi, Doc ...well ... every time I put my finger on my elbow, uuuuuuhhhhhh ... so painful. Every time I put my finger on my leg ... uuuuuuhhhhhh ... so painful ... Every time I put my finger on my head ... uuuuhhhh ... so painful. Everytime I put my finger on my belly ... uuuuhhhh ... so painful. Do I suffer Fibromyalgia???"

"No," said the Doctor, "I'm afraid you've got a broken finger."

Lift with the Knees

Paddy O'Toole, the strongest man in Ireland, was making his way home from the pub. As he passed the peat bog, he heard a voice: "Help! Please Help!"

Paddy finds a man stuck in the peat with just his head and shoulders

sticking out. "No Problem," says Paddy. "I'm Paddy O'Toole, the strongest man in Ireland - I will pull you out!"

Paddy gets hold and starts pulling. Despite his efforts the man remains stuck. "I'll try again," says Paddy. But after a couple of minutes more of heaving and pulling he gives up.

"It's no use! I'm Paddy O'Toole, the strongest man in Ireland, and if I can't get you out, nobody can. I will just have to nip back to the village and get some help."

As Paddy turns to leave the man shouts to him. "Paddy! Paddy! Before you go, do you think it would help if I took my feet out of the stirrups?"

Contextually

A farmer saw thieves stealing from one of his sheds. He immediately phoned the police.

He was told "sorry, we can't send anyone for over an hour."

"But if you come now, you can catch them red-handed."

"Sorry, no one available for over an hour."

The farmer hung up, waited two or three minutes, then phoned the police again. "There's no rush to send anyone now," he told them.

"Oh, why is that?" he was asked.

"Because I just shot them. They're not going anywhere at all now."

Three armed response units were at his house five minutes later.

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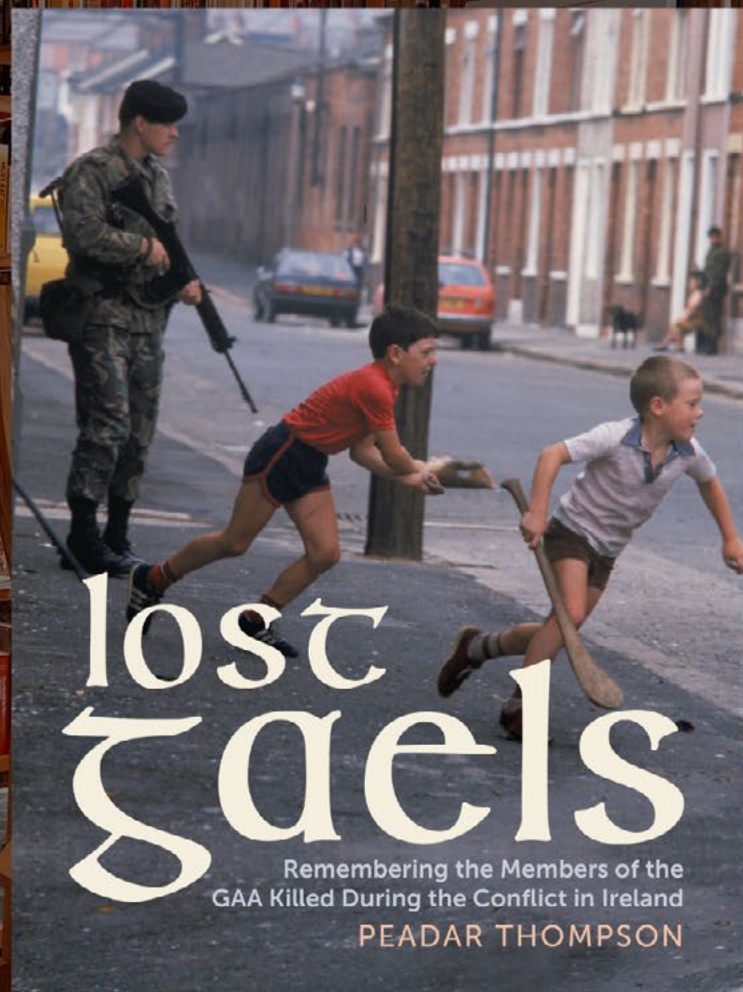
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