



The Cairde Connection

"Keeping the Irish Arts Alive!"

Irish Cultural Center at
Elms College

Volume 12 & Issue 5

May 2012

Day brings together language enthusiasts

We will welcome over 50 participants at Lá na Gaeilge - a day of immersion in the Irish Language on Saturday, May 5, 2012 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Elms College. When they registered, participants, depending on their ability chose beginner, intermediate, or advanced level.

The theme for the program is "The life of a language is to speak it." This day enables people either to begin to speak the language or to develop their skill in it.

Experienced language teachers from outside the immediate area will offer classes in the morning and again in the afternoon on several levels.

Accepting registrations for camp program

We are accepting registrations for the twelfth annual Celtic Adventures for Kids, July 23-27, 2012 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Children from grades 1-9 take part in several classes daily: the Maguire Center swimming pool is also available for daily use.

Coordinated by Mary Ellen O'Brien the classes include: Irish dancing, music (including singing Irish tunes, playing the tin whistle and the bodhran), Irish language, storytelling/literature, and arts and crafts.

Cost is \$200 per child: \$20 discount for Irish Cultural Center members: \$20 discount for each additional child from the same family: \$50 non-refundable deposit with registration is due June 11, 2011: balance is due by

The program includes workshops: Irish ceili dancing, Gaelic Games, and Irish film, as well as a lecture by Fulbright Teacher, Padraic Deiseach about the Irish language.

Deiseach, Jonathan Kennedy and Amanda Bernhard will also lead conversations with groups on the different levels. The day will conclude in a seisiún (session) with all present – teachers and participants invited to join in the music with voice or instrument.

We are grateful to Chicopee Savings Bank for a \$500 grant received. The John Boyle O'Reilly Club sent \$50 as sponsor support.

July 11, 2011. Email or call the Center for further information and/or a registration form. You can also find information and a form on our web site: www.irish-cairde.org

Each year visiting musicians demonstrate for the children the various instruments by playing jigs and reels. For several years Mike Carney has taught a session on Gaelic football. Also Tom Feeley has taught Irish road bowling to the campers.

Some experienced senior campers will return to assist the staff with the younger children. On Friday, July 27 at 2 p.m. in the Dooley Center proud parents, grandparents and siblings will gather for the program showcasing what the children have learned during the week.

Do You Have Hidden Treasure?

Here is your chance to find out at Hour Antiques Appraisal Night! On June 20, from 5:00 - 8:00 p.m. we invite you to bring your special treasures to the Dooley Campus Center at Elms College, where Douglas Auctioneers will provide verbal appraisals.

Whether it's a piece of jewelry, an old clock, an antique piece of furniture, or that odd "thing-a-ma-jig" let Douglas Auctioneers tell you all about it. The cost is \$5 for the first item, and \$3 for each successive item (limit of 5 items per person). Come satisfy your curiosity and join in the fun - bring your family and friends!

Sympathy offered

We offer our sympathy to Mary Quigley on the loss of her sister Ann Moran; Robert Loughrey on the death of his brother James; to family and friends of Mary Troy (long-time Hungry Hill Director); and two local musicians who played at the ICC: Nancy Marshall of the Kiltie Band and fiddler, Al Lemieux.

We received word that Ken Nilsen died on Friday, April 13, 2012 in Antigonish, Nova Scotia where he had taught in the Celtic Studies program for the past twenty-eight years at St. Francis Xavier University.

Years ago, Ken Nilsen taught the Irish language at the Elms College and the fruit of his work is shown in his students who stayed with the language, including Tom Moriarty, George Bresnahan, Ed Kennedy, and Kathleen Gilhooly. Tom will write a tribute of his former teacher for the next newsletter edition.

The Irish Cultural Center strives to “keep the Irish arts alive.”

The Irish Cultural Center...

- Serves as a public forum for events, including lectures, musical presentations, films and exhibits
- Promotes ties between the Center and educational organizations in Ireland, especially with the Blasket Cultural Center
- Serves as an academic link with Irish American social organizations in Western New England.

Director:

Judith Kappenman, SSJ, Chicopee

Board of Directors

Officers:

Chip Costello, E Longmeadow

Fran Hennessey, Springfield

Kevin Taugher, So Hadley

Mary Ellen Lowney, Chicopee

Rose Baker, W Springfield

Jean Brigham, Palmer

James Cannon, Holyoke

Kathleen Doe, Northampton

Jerry Donovan, W Springfield

William Dziura, Chicopee

Dennis Egan, Longmeadow

Christine Fay, Springfield

Kathryn Gallivan, So Hadley

James Hoar, Holyoke

Ann Lowe, Holyoke

Kathleen Lynch, Chicopee

Caroline Murray, Westfield

Mary Ellen O'Brien, Springfield

291 Springfield Street

Chicopee, MA 01013

265-2537 irishcenter@elms.edu

www.irish-cairde.org

www.facebook.com/

irishculturalcenter

An Capall Bán: The White Horse By Gearoid Costello

I am probably as impatient as any slightly unbalanced person. There must be a simple, complete solution to introducing and highlighting the beauty of the Irish language to as many people as possible in our area. Maybe I could just sneak out at night and start changing the street signs, buildings' names, and other places on campus and write them in Irish. Although it would be highly satisfactory to me, I'm not convinced that I would get the longer term results that I am seeking.

There is an Irish expression that would lessen my ingrained need for quick results. Fear ag lorg an chapail bháin agus an capall bán faoina thóin. (A man is searching for the white horse, and the white horse is right under him.) So where's the white horse? It's already here at the ICC!

The introductory Irish class has been very popular for years – thanks to the dedication of Tom Moriarty. One of Tom's former students, Mike Conlin, is now assisting and providing a strong level of support to the class. Many of these students will continue to the next level of classes.

As was the case last year, we are

very lucky to partner with the Elms and have access to a talented Irish Language Fulbright teacher: Pádraic Déiseach. He is a fantastic resource for the Elms' students and ICC members taking the Wednesday evening course. Everyone in that class has made significant strides in understanding the language.

The advanced class meets weekly as a study group. Ed Callahan, Paula Dugan, Ann and Kathleen Gilhooly find a variety of ways to work on and further develop their Irish language skills.

Oh, by the way, did I mention the John Johnson scholarship for introductory Irish, the Lá Gaeilge being held on May 5th at the ICC, the introduction to Irish at the Celtic Adventures for Kids' Camp this summer, Katie Doe's updating of our Facebook Page with a new seanfocal each week, or the Irish language teacher workshop held in NYC this past weekend? Mar sin féin, I'm still impatient, but that white horse is faoi mo thóin.

Don't look at me if you see some strange street sign in your neighborhood that looks as if it should be on the wall at your optometrist's office.

I will not know anything about it.

Fulbright news

Congratulations to ICC member Jonathan Hohl Kennedy who has received a Fulbright to study for the year for his master's language degree at National University of Ireland, Galway.

Elms College student Christina Borgatti has applied for a scholarship to study Irish in the Irish speaking area (Gaeltacht) of An Cheathrú Rua in Conamara, Co. Galway this summer. She has yet to find out if she has been accepted. This is the second year of the Gaeltacht Summer Awards and they are being offered by the Fulbright Commission in Ireland. These awards are awarded to those studying Irish in the USA who wish to spend a few weeks on an immersion course in an Irish speaking area of Ireland.

The Titanic one century later – “Even God could not sink this ship.” by Mary Ellen Lowney

More than 100 men, women and children crowded into the Elms College Library Theatre on April 11 for the ICC-sponsored event “The Sinking of the Titanic.”

The night, organized by ICC board members Francis Hennessey and Kathy Gallivan, featured the showing of two 50-minute films, and a lively discussion following the films by ICC member Mary Ellen Lowney.

The films included “Titanic: Death of a Dream,” a 1994 Arts & Entertainment special that provided an historical overview of the building of the ship at the Harland and Wolff Shipyards in Belfast, Northern Ireland. It was completed in early 1912 and was on its maiden voyage when it went down.

The second film was “Titanic: How it Really Sank,” a forensic analysis done after the ship was found off the coast of Newfoundland in 1912. That National Geographic film gave viewers a good idea of the many things that

went wrong the night of April 14, 1912, from an overly confident Capt. E.J. Smith to a missing pair of binoculars, the inadequate space on the 20 lifeboats, poor training of staff, and finally, to the cost-savings materials used in the bolts that gave way when the iceberg hit at 11:40 that night.

The ship went down at 2:20 on the following morning, taking with it 1,517 lives. Just 706 were saved from the frigid waters. They were picked up hours later by the Carpathian, which turned around and made haste on its way to Europe to save survivors.

The Titanic has a particular interest to those of Irish descent because it was built in the northern part of the country, and its last stop out on its maiden voyage was in what is now known as Cobh, County Cork, then called Queenstown.

The people of Cobh have erected a



memorial to the Irish victims of the voyage.

Also, 123 Irish people died on the ship, many of them members of the crew. Also killed were prominent Americans, among them John Jacob Astor IV and Meyer Guggenheim.

The ICC discussion included information about the new Titanic Museum in Belfast, along with the historic Titanic Walking Tour in Cobh.

Hennessey said the event was intended to educate as well as to stimulate. The attentive crowd showed just how successful the night was.

“People want to learn, and part of our purpose is to educate about our Irish

“Ties that bind” parade float points to the pride of the ICC by Will Dziura

This year’s Holyoke St. Patrick’s Day Parade was a very special one for the Irish Cultural Center, as it marked the inaugural year for a brand new parade float that was built to reflect the Center’s current theme: “The Ties That Bind.”

With the sun shining and not a cloud in the sky, over a dozen members and friends of the Center marched behind the float as it made its way from the top of Northampton Street, right through to downtown Holyoke, where at the end, members took the opportunity to enjoy the splendid weather and the



excitement of the day’s festivities. After nearly 3 months of construction, the Center’s float glimmered brilliantly in the sun and drew much attention from the crowd who cheered proudly for the Center as

the group marched by. Standing tall in the middle of the float were the themes: Gaeilge (Irish Language), Taisteal (Travel), and Stair (History) – promoting the major themes of the Center in true Irish fashion on traditional Irish road signs.

And with another St. Patrick’s Day come and gone, we can now look back and enjoy the memories made throughout this exciting project and look to the year ahead where we hope to continue with the wonderful tradition of bringing the mission of the Center to everybody’s favorite day: the Holyoke St. Patrick’s Day Parade!

Searching family and finding ‘Scotchby’ by Tim Goodhind

My twin brother Patrick and I grew up without our father. Our mother died when we were eleven and we were raised by our maternal grandmother, one of the most wonderful women on this green earth. But I was raised without knowing my paternal Irish heritage. My father was the South Hadley-born son of a Fitzgerald father from Ballynavenooragh and a Garvey mother from Brandon, both on the Dingle peninsula of County Kerry.

For many years, I gave little attention to my background. I never carried my father's surname of Fitzgerald and I felt very much the 'pretender' to the name and its heritage. About 1998, when my son was researching a family history project at school, I became interested in genealogy and family history myself. After some searching in 2002, I found a Fitzgerald first cousin of mine, Barbara, in Holyoke. What a treasure! I contacted her and we have become fast friends and dear cousins. She has filled in so many gaps in my understanding of my family and its past. I so wish that she were my sister.

Sometime before 2008, I became a member of a County Kerry genealogy researchers group on the internet at rootsweb.ancestry.com/irl-kerry. There, I met another researcher, Peg Fitzgerald Stainer, from the Washington DC area. She was trying to understand her own roots, also from a Fitzgerald family in Ballynavenooragh. "Wow," I thought naively, "It was such a little townland; we MUST be related!"

Peg was just getting into DNA researching, and, to me, that offered a lot of interesting possibilities. So along with Peg, I contracted with FamilyTreeDNA.com to test my DNA. Big surprise – my paternal roots were Irish...but from the

O'Brien clan, a truly Irish Dalcassian lineage from County Tipperary, not the Fitzgerald/Norman ancestry that I had anticipated! And it turned out that Peg's descent was from NorthWest Irish lineage (also known as "Niall of the Nine Hostages"). So neither of us were true Fitzgeralds...and Peg and I were not related at all! Who knew?

In 2008, my wife and I traveled to Ireland. During our tour of the country, we stayed near Ballynavenooragh in a Bed & Breakfast in Feohanagh (Coille na Rois, a place I would recommend highly!). There, I mentioned my relationship to the Fitzgeralds to our host, Jimmy Bruic, who immediately said, "Oh, you have to go visit Tommy Fitzgerald. He lives in Ballynavenooragh." Tom was then 91 years old. Unfortunately, I could not overcome my own hesitation, my own ghosts. I didn't visit Tom; I never even called him during that visit. I know it must seem strange, after traveling so far, but there it is.

All the next year, my wife and I discussed our trip and decided we had to return. I was literally haunted, haunted by questions that would not leave me alone. Meanwhile, my twin brother had decided that he and his wife (herself a Downie/Walker, who descended from families in counties Cork and Mayo) wanted to visit Ireland as well. We made the trip together with our wives that same year, in 2009.

We spent the first week of that trip traveling around Ireland with them, visiting many historical sites, after which they returned to the US. During the second week, my wife and I stayed at a 'self-catering' in Cappagh on Dingle. It was then that I contacted Tommy Fitzgerald's daughter, Geraldine. She called her father on our behalf and he said, that same day, "You have to bring them to the house." Such are the Irish: eternally

gracious and welcoming. So we spent the late afternoon that very same day with Tommy, his son Tom, and his daughters Geraldine and Mary discussing what I knew about my family, but we could make no connection between his and ours. Tommy's wife Mary had passed away the year before. She was the one, Tommy said, who would have been able to help us the most. So, if I had called Tom when we were in Ireland the year before, we would have met her. *Nach díol trua mise?*

As we discussed what we knew about my family. Tommy suddenly said, "Well, what about 'Scotchby'?" This silenced them all. "'Scotchby,'" they intoned quietly, as they let that thought sink in. And then the Gaelic kicked in and they began talking rapidly amongst themselves. I asked in an aside to Geraldine, "Was 'Scotchby' a relative?" "Oh, no," she said. "'Scotchby' was...well...'Scotchby!'" "Does the name 'Scotchby' mean he was actually a Scotsman?" I asked her. "Oh no," she said. "'Scotchby' was just the name everybody knew him by!" Turns out 'Scotchby' was the progenitor of another Fitzgerald family in this same little village of Ballynavenooragh who had no relation to their Fitzgerald family. AND he had lived a full hundred years before any of them was even born...but they knew about him as if he had been born last week! Most of 'Scotchby's' family had emigrated and the remaining members had died off. "Could this even be possible?" I thought to myself, "Tom must be wrong. They all had the same name of Fitzgerald in this tiny village of less than 50 families! We MUST have been related, even if it was distantly in the past." But it was here that things had to be left. We would find no answers on this visit.

Continued on the next page

Searching for family and finding ‘Scotchy’ continued from page 4

Upon our return to the US, I found that Peg Stainer had herself visited once with Tommy Fitzgerald in Ballynavenooragh. Upon our joint request, Tommy agreed to have his DNA tested. It turned out that he and Peg Fitzgerald Stainer were in fact cousins, and thus, they were in no way related to me. So, Tommy was right after all: there were two Fitzgerald families in the little village of Ballynavenooragh in the mid 1850s who were unrelated to each other. Who could even have anticipated such a thing? Even more interesting is another supposedly-Fitzgerald DNA line, this one from Murreagh in the was of Dingle, that Peg has since run across which has Germanic origins, and is not Irish at all!

Later in 2009, my cousin Barbara read in the Holyoke news that an Irish language course was going to be offered through the Elms College the next spring. She knew that I had been searching for such a course. My wife

Sue and I enrolled immediately. Tom Moriarty, a founding member of the Irish Cultural Center at Elms, was the teacher. As many of you know, Tom’s own family hails from Dingle. In that class, we met another student, Sue Fitzgerald and her daughter Katie. It turned out that Sue was married to Michael Fitzgerald, himself an Irishman from the area of Ballyferriter!

Eventually, we spoke at length with Sue and through her, to her husband Mike. Mike agreed to enter our little Fitzgerald DNA study via FamilyTreeDNA. We discovered that he and I were distant ‘cousins,’ broken by several generations but of the same O’Brien DNA! *Buíochas le Dia!* And someday, we may yet learn that we are both descendants or relatives of ‘Scotchy’ Fitzgerald from Ballynavenooragh. By the way, Mike, Sue and Katie have since moved back to Dingle.

So what’s ahead? I continue looking

for Fitzgerald and Garvey cousins. Peg and I would still like to find out more about the various Fitzgerald families that originated from the Dingle peninsula. To that end, we would appreciate that any male Fitzgerald descendants from Dingle, who might read this article, would contact me, especially if you would be interested in participating in our DNA study. I can be reached at tsg@goodhind.us.

In closing, I’d like to acknowledge the lifetime of gratitude I owe to my cousin Barbara Sims, a Holyoke teacher for many, many years and a woman of continued inspiration to me. Instead of turning me away when I first contacted her, she welcomed me with open arms into a family I never knew. I am also indebted to Tom Moriarty and the Irish Cultural Center for bringing me together with a larger Irish family and providing a previously-missing appreciation of Irish language and culture.

Go raibh maith agaibh.

Ceili offers good time to a happy crowd in March



Pictured left to right: son and mom ready to begin; mother and daughter smile at one another; 2 eager children smile for the camera; Westfield colleens lead the set

**Irish Cultural Center
at Elms College
291 Springfield Street
Chicopee, MA 01013-2839**

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
College of
Our Lady of the Elms

**Phone: 413-265-2537
Email: irishcenter@elms.edu
www.irish-cairde.org
www.Facebook.com/IrishCulturalCenter**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**“Keeping the Irish
Arts Alive!”**

ICC Calendar of events

Ongoing: Language Classes offered each semester; call the Registrar at 413-265-2314 or Continuing Ed Office at 413-265-2490.

Genealogy volunteer
Ed Callahan 413-527-5091 or email eastgram@aol.com

May 5, 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
La Na Gaeilge—day-long Irish workshop

June 20, 5-8 pm Antiques Appraisal Night

July 23-27, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
Celtic Adventures for Kids

August 25-September 3
Journey of the Soul - Trip to Ireland

September 14-30 exhibit at the Big E with Dingle merchants

October TBD Annual breakfast;

October TBD, 7:00 p.m. “Men of Ventry” with Brenda Ni Shúilleabháin presentation

December 2 Christmas with an Irish Touch



For information on our partner Irish organizations, check out the programs.

AOH
www.AOH-Holyoke.com

John Boyle O'Reilly Club
www.jbo-club.com

Sons of Erin
www.sonsoferin.com

St. Patrick's Parade Committee
www.holyokestpatricksparade.com

You too can write for the newsletter. Submit a story about your Irish heritage or recount a story of the old country that you heard as a child from an elder relative or share the story of an incident/experience you had while visiting Ireland. We will print our next edition at the end of July. Please consider submitting your story.