



The Cairde Connection

"Keeping the Irish Arts Alive!"

Irish Cultural Center at
Elms College

Volume 13 & Issue 1

September 2012

Annual breakfast to feature noted historian

Our annual member breakfast is scheduled for Sunday, October 14 at 10 a.m. at the Yankee Pedlar. Guest speaker J. Joseph Lee of New York University will address the topic: "An Historian's Perspective on Ireland Since 1985." You don't want to miss it!

The event is a good opportunity for members to meet and mingle; we will also give a short overview of the major happenings at the center during the past year. Ticket price is \$18 for members and \$20 for non-members. Call the Center to reserve a ticket or send a check to ensure that you have a place at the table.



Lee's areas of research and interest include: 19th and 20th Century Irish and Irish American history and politics, as well as the Irish Diaspora.

He is the author of "Ireland 1912-1985, The Modernisation of Irish Society, 1848-1928" and editor with

Marion R. Casey of "Making the Irish American."

He served as a member of the Upper House of Irish Parliament, a member of the British-Irish Parliamentary Body, Chair of the Fulbright Commission for Ireland and was President of the Irish Association for European Studies.

Fulbright teacher welcomed to Elms

For the third year in a row, the Elms College welcomes a Fulbright teacher for the Irish language. Ciara Cosgrove from County Monaghan will play a key role in the Irish language offerings for the year. She will teach a Novice Irish 3-credit course on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 11:30 a.m.-12:20 p.m. beginning on September 5. To enroll, visit the registrar's office or call 413-265-2314. Those who wish to audit the course pay half the tuition: for people 65 or older the cost is \$100, plus a \$20 registration fee.

Cosgrove will conduct an Intermediate Irish course on Wednesday from 6:40-9:10 p.m. also beginning on September 5. The course is offered either for three credits or on a non-credit basis through the Division of Graduate Studies and Continuing Education. This course is designed for students who have studied the language for at least a year and who wish additional opportunities to practice and develop their fluency in the language.

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Documentary presents the Men of Ventry

Brenda Ní Shúilleabháin will present her documentary "Men of Ventry" on Monday, October 15 at 7:00 p.m. in Veritas Auditorium, Berchmans Hall. Documentarian Brenda Ní Shúilleabháin focuses in this film on the rich life experiences of the men of the west Kerry parish known as Ventry. The film presents a story that is funny, poignant and heart-breaking. Emigration and life in London in the 1950s and 1960s is recalled and, this being Ventry, football gets pride of place.

The documentary, shot in Corca Dhuibhne, will feature many familiar faces, young and old, who have many stories to tell.

"They are the men you think of with affection and with gratitude," Brenda told the Kerryman. "They are close

to the soil, familiar with birth and death and they have encompassed vast change within a sophisticated philosophy."

"Some are legends in their time, their feet kept on the ground, they say, by their neighbours. They have lived lives full of work, joy, and suffering. They have endured and they are very funny!"

Brenda and her team also produced the documentary "Bibeanna" which documented the lives of the women of West Kerry, both at home and as emigrants to the USA ("Irish Women at Home and Away") where they still retained a strong sense of their heritage. We have shown both of these films at the Elms College, as well her documentary "Dunquin Forty Years." Now, with this film, it's the turn for the men of Ventry.

Sympathy offered

We offer our sympathy to Rev. John McDonagh on the death of his mother Margaret O'Connor McDonagh; to Sister John Brigid Barrett on the death of her sister Kathleen Rhelihan; to Constance Corr Grippio on the death of her daughter Lori Ann Grippio; to John Harrington on the death of his mother Helen Satkowski Harrington.

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.

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Successful camp teaches Irish arts to the next generation

We completed our 12th successful Celtic Adventures for Kids on Friday, July 27 under the leadership of Mary Ellen O'Brien and a great team of teachers. And again, the children asked that the camp be extended to two weeks. With lessons in Irish language, dance, music, literature and arts and crafts the 40 children from grades 1-9 learned a great deal about Irish culture in a fun, team-building way. One day during the week Ellen Redman invited a group of fellow musicians to join her for a session, and the children turned the workshop into their own dance demonstration with the live music of Ellen on flute, Kira and Joe Jewett on fiddles, Jerry Noble on guitar and Tim Donoghue on concertina. Another day, Mike Carney and Eamonn Burke gave a workshop on the game of hurling. On Friday the children showed family and friends a bit of what they'd learned in five days. One group sang “The Fields of Athenry” with alternate playing of the melody on their whistles. One of the campers had asked Ellen to teach them the song. The audience delighted in the youngest group reciting what they had learned of the Irish language taught by Kathleen Gilhooly. Another group presented a short play in the Irish language.



And during the week all the teachers presented wonderful lessons for the children. Anita Moore shared the stories of heroes and legends, and Erin Mulvagh coordinated outdoor games. Julia Campbell taught arts and crafts and the children brought home treasures they had created under her guidance as they learned the traditions of Ireland. Mary Ellen O'Brien and Kerri Sullivan led the dance classes. Each year the teachers have new ideas to challenge the campers, especially the new participants. Junior counselors Cassidy Cunningham, Sam Martin, Haleigh Franz, Karissa Foley, Marie McCarthy, and Elizabeth Ramah gave invaluable assistance to the teachers. And we have only good words to say about our faithful volunteer Mary Ellen Franz, who had as much fun as the children.



Pictured above: dancing a 3-hand reel; below left to right: volunteer Mary Franz sings along with a class; Julia Campbell shows how to make an item.

The crowds flock to Antiques Night by Mary Ellen Lowney

Lugging in antiques, family treasures and keepsakes, nearly 100 people turned out for the ICC's Antiques Appraisal Night, held on June 20 at the Mary Dooley Campus Center at the Elms College.

Visitors were invited to bring in up to five items for a careful look-over and professional appraisal by Douglas Bilodeau of Douglas Auctioneers of South Deerfield. The event served as a fund-raiser for the ICC language program, and brought in a steady stream of men and women, toting items large and small.

"This is great," said Joyce Coupal of Chicopee, toting a 50-caliber, hand-carved European rifle that was handed down by her late brother-in-law's grandfather.

"My sister has had it hanging on her wall for years. We just wanted to know about it," she added.

The unusual rifle was one of many items brought in for perusal. In her case, it was valued at \$200 to \$250, a number that would have been higher but for missing parts on the piece.

Carol Kobak of West Springfield carried in a Silvestri button accordion, brought over from Italy by her great-

grandfather. Bilodeau gave it a value of \$200.

"It's a family heirloom," said Kobak. "But nobody plays them any more. There doesn't seem to be any use for it, other than it's so beautiful."

Event organizer Katie Doe, who is a member of the ICC Board of Directors, said the appraisal night raised more than \$1,000 for the language program, and proved to be an unqualified success.

"I was very pleased to see so many people take part in the appraisal night. We received a lot of positive response, and will be looking into making it an annual event," Doe said. Visitors paid \$5 for the first item and \$3 for additional items, with a limit of five pieces per person.

While most items brought forward for inspection were valued in the \$200 to \$500 range, Tom Mitchell of Springfield got a \$1,200 value on an 1825 framed needlepoint that has been passed down through his wife's family.

The piece apparently served as a practice in embroidery for Miss Sarah Gowthrop nearly two centuries ago. The young woman used a variety of colors and stitches as she sewed in



prayers, songs, and dedications to family members, along with flowers, trees and designs.

"She's a blood relative of my wife," Mitchell explained. "I'm surprised to hear that it has such a high value."

Paul Bushey of East Longmeadow carried in a carved wooden wall hanging featuring three Spanish horses, likely made a half-century ago. It was valued at \$100.

"I've always been curious about it," said Bushey, of East Longmeadow.

Other items brought in included a Shirley Temple Doll, complete with carrying case and outfits and in pristine condition, many old pieces of jewelry, small tables, paintings, carvings, dishes, pottery, vases, and much more.

ICC Director Judith Kappenman praised the organization and the turnout, and thanked the volunteers who turned out to help make the event a success.

"It was a wonderful night," she said. "We're happy that so many people came to join us, and that we've been able to raise funds for our programming that keeps the Irish language alive in Western Massachusetts."



Pictured above: Mary Ellen Hogan, Mary Ellen O'Brien, Mary Ellen Lowney: below left to right: Carol Kobak with button accordion; Tom Mitchell with 1825 framed needlepoint; Paul Bushey with carved wooden wall hanging.

Remembering Ken by Tom Moriarty

As we began our Lá Gaeilge in May, we paid a special tribute to Kenneth Nilsen. He had died a few weeks earlier in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. Ken was a seminal figure in the Irish Language program at Elms College. Since its founding more than ten years ago, the Irish Cultural Center has continued the work that Ken began by offering language courses as an important component of Irish culture.

After receiving his Ph.D. in Celtic Studies in 1975, Ken spent several years seeking a full-time position. In those years he was, in effect, a wandering scholar living on a shoestring who taught Irish at several institutions throughout New England. Aspiring Gaeilgeoirí like Kathleen Gilhooly, George Bresnahan, Ed Kennedy and I acquired our first knowledge and love of the language in Ken's classes. Several of us continued to meet on a regular basis after Ken finally secured his position at Saint Xavier University in Antigonish.

Ken was of Irish and Norwegian background and was born in Brooklyn, New York. Early on, he became interested in foreign languages and eventually became fluent in Irish, Scottish Gaelic, Welsh, French, Breton and Norwegian. He received his B.A. from Brooklyn and both his M.A. and Ph. D. from Harvard University. He perfected his Irish by living and conversing with native speakers in the Connacht Gaeltacht. The result was a fluency indistinguishable from that of native speakers. Wherever Ken taught he tried to connect with native speakers of Irish in order both to expand his own language skills and to appreciate more fully their stories and customs. As Ken's obituary noted, "His work was his passion and his hobby."

While he taught at the College, I came to appreciate the breadth of

Ken's expertise as a Celtic scholar. In the early eighties a battered, handwritten volume showed up in a collection of books given to Alumnae Library some time earlier. Realizing that the work had an Irish connection, the library staff asked me if I could identify it. I realized that the manuscript was quite old and that it was written in the Irish Language. Fortunately, Ken was then teaching Irish at the College; so I asked his assistance in evaluating the manuscript. He recognized it as the work of an eighteenth century scribe. Ken found the scribe's name at the end of the manuscript, Seaghan O Suillobhain from County Cork. The work he had copied in the 1770's was Geoffrey Keating's history of Ireland, originally written in the 1630's with the Irish language title *Forus Feasa ar Éirinn*. Keating was an extremely important writer in early modern Irish whose literary style influenced later writers of Irish and whose perspective on Irish history and culture challenged many of the dominant views. Keating's work became a favorite subject of Irish scribes.

Inserted in the manuscript was a copy of an obituary of one Timothy Lynch who had died in 1906 at the age of 92. Lynch was born in Castle Gregory, County Kerry, Ireland in 1814 and had immigrated to Holyoke after the Civil War. He settled in the area known as The Flats and was described as a "patriot, scholar and linguist." His large library, readers were told, included a number of works in the Irish Language. Much to Ken Nilsen's delight, the obituary noted that "Not the least interesting is an ancient volume of Keating's 'History of Ireland' in the Gaelic script." With a bit of hyperbole, it continued, "Practically all the important works in the Gaelic tongue has [sic] passed through his hands."

Ken was thrilled to learn that the manuscript was an important part of a collection of an Irish immigrant who

had a genuine knowledge and appreciation of the Irish Language. It strengthened his belief that within Irish immigrant communities were in fact individuals who had not only absorbed and appreciated their native language and culture but continued to cherish them in their exile. In an essay entitled "Three Irish Manuscripts in Massachusetts" Ken discussed and analyzed Timothy Lynch's "ancient volume." I'm confident that the discovery and identification of the manuscript in Kerryman Lynch's collection was one of the high points of Ken's years at Elms College.

After receiving his appointment to the faculty of St. Francis Xavier University, Ken Nilsen spent the next 28 years as a Celtic Language teacher and scholar both in Canada and the United States. Even in recent years, a few of us were fortunate to have participated in Irish Language workshops he conducted in the Boston area. His extraordinary knowledge of and dedication to the language, as well as his wry sense of humor, were still very much in evidence. He was delighted to learn that Irish Language courses at the College have continued. He would have been especially pleased that our efforts have been strengthened by the participation of young Irish Language teachers sponsored by the Fulbright Program. In a sense, Ken started it all.

We remembered that Ken had included the Lord's Prayer in Irish on one of the tapes we had used in class many years ago. What better way to end our recent Lá Gaeilge than to give those attending the opportunity to hear Ken's recitation of the Lord's Prayer in flawless Irish? --" *Ár nAthair atá ar neamh....* " Go raibh míle maith agat, a Ken. Go raibh tú ar dheis Dé. May you be at God's right hand.

**Irish Language Day in Chicopee 5th of June 2010 by Peggy Cloherty
(translation into English by Tom Moriarty and Pádraic Déiseach)**

I
It was there that the gathering was
Both teachers and students
Teaching, questioning, and answering
Part of the richness under the shelter of the house

II
Native speakers were there
From Connemara and County Kerry
They, talking, perhaps, having fun
Another part of the riches under the shelter of the
house

III
There were singers, numerous, both men and women
There were authors of books, musicians
and storytellers
Generous with the talent which God bestowed
on them
Part of the riches under the shelter of the house

IV
A gentleman was introduced to me
Who was born on the Blasket Islands

Delightful was his gentility
And I sitting down beside him

V
His conversation was enjoyable
And their Irish was well spoken and sweet
Our conversation was a part
Of the riches under the shelter of the house

VI
Deirdre Ní Fhallúin delivered a lecture to us
She took questions on each aspect
Of the state of Irish Language in Ireland; another
matter
Along with the riches under the shelter of the house

VII
This crowd came, the whole lot together
It was as if they had as a target to promote the Irish
Language
The weather was muggy in Chicopee
But it was the sound of the Gael under the shelter of
the house

Lá Gaeilge i Chicopee 5ú Meitheamh 2010 by Peigí Ní Clocartaig

I
Annsiúd a bhí an bailiú
Idir múinteoirí agus daltaí
Ag múineadh, ceistiú, agus freagraire
Páirt don t-saidhbhreas faoi dhion an tigh

II
Bhí Gaeilgeoirí ó dhúchas ann
Ó Chonamara agus ó Chondae Chiarraí
Iad ag caint, bhféidir, ag déanamh grinn
Páirt eile don t-saidhbhreas faoi dhion an tigh

III
Bhí amhránaí go líonmhar idir fir agus mná
Bhí údair leabhar, ceoltóirí agus scealaí
Go fial, leis an mbua a bhronn Dia orthu
Páirt don t-saidhbhreas faoi dhion an tigh

IV
Cuireadh fear uasal in aithne dhom
A rugadh ar Oileán na mBlaoscadaí
Ba aoibhinn a chuid uaisleacht
Agus le n-ais a shuí mise síos

V
Ba taithneamhach é a chomhrá
'S a chuid Gaeilge go blasta binn
Ba páirt e ár gcomhrá
Don t-saidhbhreas faoi dhion an tigh

VI
Thug Deirdre Ní Fhallúin léacht dúinn
Glac sí ceisteanna ar gach taobh
Stáid na Gaeilge in Éirinn; ábhar eile
I dteannta an t-saidhbhreas faoi dhion an tigh

VII
Tháinig an slua seo i dteanna a chéile
É mar chuspóir acu an Ghaeilge chur chun cinn
Bhí an aimsir brothallach i Chicopee
Ach bhí glór na nGael faoi dhion an tigh

From the Bog: a story of family ties by Tim Allen

Pete Hogan never spent a day in Ireland. But Ireland spent many a day in him.

His family came over in the 1880s and he, the fourth of 8 children, spent his lifetime working. His was a life where work was celebrated and the legacy of being Irish was always there. But there was no strong family connection to Ireland.

All he had was an address that Auntie Clark had held onto. When Pete Hogan's daughter (my Mom), Mary Allen, made her first trip to Ireland in 1969, on a bus trip with her friend Alyce Sullivan, she had the address in hand. There was a 'free day in Dublin' coming up on the trip.

Mom, not being the shy type, befriended the bus driver and asked him to give up his day off to rent a car and drive her to the address written on the scrap of paper.

He, of course, took her up on the offer and soon they were on their way to Big Bog, Stradbally, County Laois, Ireland.

Most people from Springfield

seemed to be from more famous counties - County Kerry, or County Cork, or County Mayo, or County Galway. Not us - we were from County Laois (pronounced 'leash'), also known as County Leix or Queens County. Nobody had ever heard of it or could pronounce it or knew where it was, or for that matter, knew that it existed!

But Paddy and John Reilly knew about the Bog in Stradbally and didn't much care if anyone else did. In fact, it seemed they preferred it that way.

The Bog was their home and had been their home all their lives. Neither had ever married or bothered to pursue much in the way of material possessions. No electricity. No plumbing.

Paddy was renowned for the beautiful hedges that he so ably trimmed. John was Stradbally's version of the quiet man. Paddy and John lived down the lane from Ramsbottoms, where you start your journey in the lane between their house and barn, then take a brief right and then left again in front of Dorans, then continue on

straight to the bend. At the bend, look left through the iron gate across the large field to the little wooded patch behind another gate. There in the clearing were a couple of ramshackle outbuildings, a clearing, and yes, the thatched cottage belonging to the Reillys.

Welcome to the Bog. This was Pete Hogan's family's home. Paddy and John Reilly were his first cousins. His mother was a Reilly. The two families had lived in this thatched cottage together. But where did the Hogan connection come from? There were no Hogans in the area. This mystery is still unsolved.

But we're glad they found each other. Before coming to America they experienced life in the Bog. In the Bog, you breathe the air everyday. You think about life, but not too hard. You work the fields and earn enough money for the food you need to eat. You keep track of your friends and of your God.

But most of all, you count your steps and you count your blessings.

Fulbright teacher welcomed to Elms College (continued from page 1)

To enroll for credit, visit the registrar's office or call 413-265-2314. To enroll for non-credit, visit the Division of Graduate Studies and Continuing Education or call 413 265-2490: cost is \$175. ICC members receive a \$50 discount.

In addition, Tom Moriarty and Chip Costello will both teach an Introduction to Irish Language courses. Moriarty will teach on Tuesday from 6:45-8:45 p.m. from September 11-December 4, 2012; Chip Costello will teach on Saturday from 9-11 a.m. Both offerings are focused on all four language skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening in an interactive enjoyable experience for

those with little or no prior study of the language. To register for either course, call the Division of Graduate Studies and Continuing Education at (413) 265-2490. Cost: \$150. ICC members receive a \$50 discount.

A County Monaghan native, Ciara Cosgrove received her BA in Education in Irish and her MA in Irish Language/Literature from St. Patrick's College in Dublin. For the past four years, she has taught in an Irish medium primary school in Dublin that practices Immersion Education.

In her application for a Fulbright, she wrote of "the hope of sharing Irish with a new and exciting adult group. It

would be a pleasure to contribute to a Foreign Language department in an American university in any way and I know that I have the training, skills and flexibility to become an asset to the department as well as an asset to the Irish Language abroad."

Ciara follows in the footsteps of her predecessors, Maitiú De Hál and Pádraic Déiseach, who themselves built upon the foundation already prepared by Tom Moriarty, George Bresnahan, Chip Costello and others. With each new teacher, the program becomes stronger. We know that as with Maitiú De Hál and Pádraic Déiseach, we will all have an opportunity to welcome Ciara Cosgrove to Chicopee and the ICC.

Our 8th "Journey of the Soul" Tour!

14-DAY IRELAND & SCOTLAND HERITAGE TOUR

Featuring "New" Titanic Belfast & Edinburgh Royal Tattoo

(with visits to County Kerry & Cork, Dublin, Belfast & Scotland...and more!)

INFORMATION SESSION: SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2012

2:00 p.m. – Dooley Center, Elms College

Visit www.Irish-Cairde.org for more information

Forget your razor by Chip Costello

I wear cotton long sleeved shirts year round, listen to a narrow range of music, and try to have a measured sense of priorities to help guide me through the days. You might call it a severe case of fussiness, but I would quibble with that assessment. Schedules provide structure, context, and a methodology to assess how you have done regarding those daily, monthly, and annual goals.

Given my "limitations," you can imagine the horror I was feeling on a recent trip to Ireland when my wonderful travelling companions insisted on playing some Bruce Springsteen tune as we were driving towards Clifden. My friends were in a state of rapture; I was thinking about the prior day in Sligo and Yeats' admonition:

I heard the old, old man say
'All that's beautiful drifts away
Like the waters.'

As we passed through the Sky Road, we were able to appreciate the magnificent views of Clifden Bay's

shores. The poet was right of course; the beauty did drift away but the music hadn't as we headed into Clifden. Sin scéal eile. (That's another story.)

I was probably out of sorts that morning because I had left my razor at the B & B. As a result, my schedule was out of balance. My companions were kind enough, however, to stop at a supermarket, and I bought the razor. That stop helped us understand why we enjoy visiting Ireland. Let me explain.

When we returned from our purchase, we noticed approximately twelve young people sitting on a wall next to the car. As we got closer, they asked if we were Americans. Once we confirmed that, they wanted to know if we could name the forty four U.S. presidents. Did we vote for our present president? I guess our ages gave it away, but they wanted to know if we had fought in the Vietnam war.

These young people were enthusiastic, smart, and entertaining. Some of



them had relatives in Dorchester, Boston, St. Louis and several other areas in America. There was something else though. These new friends were Irish speakers. When they found out that I had some Irish, we had an extended conversation and a new bond. These students were from a Gaelscoil (Irish Language School) in Galway.

It was time to move on, so we wished each other well. As our car left the lot, our new friends started to clap. The beauty did "drift away", but we will not forget their friendliness and charm.

Fussiness has its rewards. If we didn't stop for the razor, we would not have had the pleasure of meeting those kids. So forget you razor or map on your next trip to Ireland. Take a wrong turn. It's all right. You are bound to encounter people or places that reveal beauty. If I'm not too careful and my guard comes down, I might start listening to some Springsteen.



Pictured above: four Irish young people pose for the camera: left, Chip speaks with the group in Irish. Photos taken by Kevin Fay.

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**“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

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

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

October 14, 10:00 a.m. Annual breakfast with speaker Joseph Lee at the Yankee Pedlar

October 15, 7:00 p.m. “Men of Ventry” presentation with Brenda Ni Shúilleabháin

October 21, 2 p.m. Information session on 2013 Heritage tour of Ireland

November 17 Testimonial in honor of Sr. Judy’s years of service

December 1 Christmas with an Irish Touch

February 6, 2013, March 6, 13, 20 Irish film series

TBA March Ceili celebration

July 21-26, 2013 Celtic Adventures for Kids

For information on our partner Irish organizations, check out their websites.

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.holykestpatricksparade.com

We prepare and mail a newsletter to our members every two months. The post office returns presorted mail if undeliverable because the addressee has moved or is temporarily away, and for each piece, the Center is assessed a fee. Please notify the Center with a new address if moving, or a temporary address if you will be away for an extended period of time.