



The Cairde Connection

"Keeping the Irish Arts Alive!"

Irish Cultural Center at
Elms College

Volume 11 & Issue 3

January 2011

Film series promises variety

Join us for the Irish film series with a promise of great entertainment. All films are on Wednesday at 7 p.m. in the Alum Library Theater. If the Elms College is closed because of weather we will show the scheduled film on February 23.

January 26 "The Race" with Colm Meaney, Susan Lynch, Niamh McGirr. Eleven-year-old Mary loves to race Go-Karts. In her poor, rural community in Northern Ireland, it is the activity that gives her the most joy. Her goal is to win first prize in the Championship race. However, finding time to train is not her only obstacle. Mary has to deal with school bullies, her stubborn father, her parent's crumbling marriage and her daily farm chores before she can bring home the gold.

February 2 "The Fighting Prince of Donegal" with Peter McEnery, Susan Hampshire. Young Hugh O'Donnell has his hands full with the army of Queen Elizabeth I. He must lead his

kinsmen in battle against the villainous Captain Leeds. How can you lead the charge when you've been captured and imprisoned by the enemy? Keep your friends close and duck for cover.

February 9 "Five Minutes of Heaven" with Liam Neeson, James Nesbitt. In 1975 an Irish-Protestant teen assassinated an Irish Catholic teen in his Ulster home. The murder was witnessed by the Catholic boy's younger brother. Thirty years later, the murderer has been rehabilitated and released from prison. A television talk show will bring the Protestant and his victim's brother together for a live on-air reconciliation.

February 16 "Ondine" with Colin Farrell. An Irish fisherman hauls in an unexpected catch when a mysterious girl gets tangled in his nets. Soon her mysterious presence affects the lives of everyone in town. Questions remain if the beautiful stranger is a mythical creature or something far more common.

Ceili offers a fun time for all in March

The Irish Cultural Center invites one and all to come to the Sons of Erin in Westfield for our ceili on March 6, at 2 p.m. We will have ceili dancing with ceili musicians providing the music. We will serve Irish tea and breads. We especially invite families with children to attend this free event.

If you have never attended a ceili we provide here a little history for you. In modern usage, a céilidh is a traditional Gaelic social gathering, which

usually involves playing Gaelic folk music and dancing. It originated in Ireland, but is now common throughout the Irish and Scottish Diasporas. Before discos and nightclubs, there were ceilis in most town and village halls on Friday or Saturday nights; they are still common today.

The music is cheerful and lively, and the basic steps can be learned easily; a short instructional session is often provided for new dancers before the start of the dance itself.

Join us for bus trip to the Famine exhibit

Quinnipiac University houses the largest Famine exhibit in the world. We invite members to join us on Saturday, February 5 for a bus trip to Hamden to visit the exhibit. Tickets for members are \$20; non-members \$25.

We will leave the Elms campus at 9 a.m. for arrival at 10:30 a.m. where we will meet either Dr. Lahey and/or a faculty member who specializes in the Great Hunger for the tour.

At our annual brunch in October, attendees heard Dr. John Lahey, president of the university speak about Ireland's Great Hunger.

After we leave the college we will drive to Westfarms Mall where people may eat lunch and shop before the return to Chicopee.

Lifetime member

Dolores Costello joins the ranks of our lifetime members. She is one of the members who paid dues as a patron for four years in succession. We now list 17 lifetime members.

Sympathy

We extend our sympathy to the family and friends of Alice Moriarty Wales who died recently; to Damien Murray on the death of his mother Pauline; to Nancy Shea and Mary O'Keefe on the death of their sister Joan Carney.

The Irish Cultural Center, founded in 1999, 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 Basket Cultural Center
- Serves as an academic link with Irish American social organizations in Western New England.

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www.irish-cairde.org

Volunteers are the backbone of the ICC

Every non-profit organization benefits from volunteers who give invaluable service throughout the year. Our own board of directors members give hours working on committees and planning events. In addition, we have members who volunteer in various capacities. Listed are the helpers of 2010. Please let me know if I have omitted your name and I will include it in the next newsletter.

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Craig Baker | Kathy Donnellan | Marilyn Logan |
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SAVE THE DATE

Event for Irish Studies Minor program

We announce our 3rd fundraising wine tasting event for May 21, 2011. This fun event raises funds to support the Elms College Irish Studies Minor program. We have given scholarships to several students to support study in Ireland. Plan to purchase your \$30 ticket. Jane Rosso of Eddie's Liquors of Springfield will work with distributors to provide the best in wine, beer, and ciders for sampling. Aramark, the Elms College food service, will prepare a fruit and cheese tray, green salad, pasta dish, desserts and bread, cookies, water and soda. We'll also conduct a raffle. To help our fundraising effort we are printing a program ad book. We will solicit businesses to take ads for \$100 and, those who donate will receive a ticket to the event. The ad book will be distributed at the event. Some readers may be surprised to learn that Ireland boasts a long standing wine tradition dating about

2000 years. Desmond Castle in Cork houses the International Wine Museum and is home to the Order of the Winegeese. Soldiers who fled Ireland in 1691 were called "Wild Geese."

In addition, Irish emigrants have played a pivotal role in the world's wine trade since the early 1700s. Some of the native-born Irishmen who have established successful ventures in vineyards and wine production throughout the world are Clarke, Dillon, Johnston, Lawton, Lynch, McCarthy, and Quinn. The Irish Studies Minor became a reality at the Elms College several years ago, and seven students took advantage of an opportunity to study in County Sligo for a two-week course in Celtic Studies. The Center subsidized the cost to the students, as well as more recently to Will Dziura who writes about his experience on page 5. It is just such experiences that we wish to support.



The 6th “Journey of the Soul” Tour
2011 WEST & SOUTHWEST COAST OF IRELAND
An Exclusive “ONE-OF-KIND” Custom Tour
11-DAY TOUR TO IRELAND – SEPTEMBER 3-13, 2011
“Some Lands touch the Heart, Dingle touches the Soul”

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS: Galway, Dingle Peninsula, Killarney, Adare, Aran Islands, Connemara Region/Kylemore Abbey & Gardens, Burren, Iveragh Peninsula including the Kerry Bog Village and Valentia Island/Skellig Experience Centre...and more!

Enjoy additional time built in for a more leisurely experience...less time on the bus!

Our “In Town” Hotels:

3 Nights in GALWAY (Park House Hotel– www.parkhousehotel.ie)

3 Nights in DINGLE (Dingle Benners Hotel – www.dinglebenners.com)

2 Nights in KILLARNEY (Killarney International–www.killarneyinternational.com)

1 Night in ADARE (Dunraven Arms Hotel—www.dunravenhotel.com)

For a one-hour slide presentation and further details, come to the

INFORMATION SESSION

SUNDAY, JANUARY 16, 2011, 2:00 P.M.

Where: Elms College, Dooley Campus Center – 2nd Floor – Room CC 207

For more information please call: Kathy Gallivan at (413) 536-9709
or e-mail: gallivan@admin.umass.edu

Visit our website at: www.Irish-Cairde.org

Fulbright experience has a home feeling by Maitiú de Hál

It is hard to believe that Christmas is almost here. It feels as if it were only yesterday when I walked the grounds of Elms campus for the first time. From that balmy Summer's day, through New England's iconic Fall and now in her notorious Winter, I have a lot of memories to take home with me to Ireland over the break.

There have been many things that have overwhelmed me in my visit so far to the United States. One of them is the warm welcome that I have been given by so many people, from the likes of Joyce Hampton of the International Studies Office, Gearóid "Sceallóigín" Costello and Sister Judy of the ICC and Tom and Bonnie Moriarty who have been like a second family to me since my arri-

val.

This spirit seems prevalent in the campus culture and the Irish community in general. I am flattered by the enthusiasm for the language and culture shown either by my students in class or by members of the community who have attended the events I have organised this semester. Be it All Ireland football weekend, Oireachtas na Gaeilge, conversation tables or lessons in hurling, people have showed up and taken part time and time again which is a great motivator to organise events like this in the New Year.

The interest in the language has been surprising but the proficiency and determination of some students has been truly astonishing. It is inspirational to see students reclaiming a

cornerstone of our heritage and to speak it as a living language as opposed to dusting off an old relic and admiring it before putting it back on the shelf where it would remain unused.

It is a common trend that I have seen here in this country. There is a need, I think, amongst people to belong and to connect with their roots. It is a need I can see when people drive long distances just to learn Irish, congregate in the John Boyle O'Reilly or practice with the Springfield Kiltie Band (I'm glad to be a member) or take trips to Ireland. After spending four months in a community that is very much connected with its past and that has a very sure idea of itself, I must say, I have felt right at home.

SAVE THE DATE

La Gaeilge day-long workshop in April

We will host La Gaeilge - a day of immersion in the Irish Language on Saturday, April 2, 2011 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on the campus. The registration fee of \$40 for members and \$50 for others is due March 25. It includes lunch and all activities: classes, workshop, music session and a lecture. Young people of high school and college age may participate at a reduced cost of \$10 to cover the cost of lunch. When they register, participants, depending on their ability will choose beginner, intermediate, or advanced level. Call the Center for a brochure or download from the web site: www.irish-cairde.org. The day offers a learning opportunity for those who would like to begin the study, for those with some background in the language, as well as for fluent speakers. Sign in will take place in the Center, 3rd floor of

Berchmans Hall, which is handicapped accessible. Coffee, juice, muffins and pastries will be served. Experienced language teachers from outside the immediate area will offer classes in the morning and again in the afternoon. The program includes several workshops: Irish set dancing, Irish singing and Irish drama. Maitiú de Hál, who holds an advanced degree in the study of the language will give a presentation on the state of the Irish language in Ireland as part of the program. The day will conclude in a seisiún (session) with all present – teachers and participants invited to join using voice or instrument. Participants are encouraged to bring instruments and songbooks with them.

Irish (Gaeilge) is a Celtic language spoken in Ireland. Although once spoken across the whole of the is-

land, it is presently a minority language. It is constitutionally upheld as the national and first official language of the Republic of Ireland and is an official language of the European Union. Many Irish in the Gaeltacht regions of Ireland have Irish as their mother tongue. In addition, a significant number throughout the Republic regard themselves as competent in the language.

We invite especially the Elms College students in the Irish Studies Minor program, as well as the young people who have participated in our Celtic Adventures for Kids to take advantage of this day of immersion as an extension of the learning they have had, and an opportunity to further develop their facility in the language. Several local high schools have Irish clubs and we hope that some will come for an introduction to the language.

Unique and enriching study in Galway

By Will Dziura

In the summer of 2009, I embarked on a backpacking trip through Europe, my first stop - Galway city. My stay in Galway lasted only three days, but during that short stay, I fell in love with the character of the vibrant city. So much so that when I arrived back home in America, the one thing I knew for certain was that I had to see Galway again.

And so, this last summer I once again packed my bags and boarded a plane headed for Shannon. This time, however, I was going to participate in a summer long Irish Studies program, at the University of Ireland in Galway.

The Irish Studies summer school at NUIG offered me the experience of a lifetime. The program lasted six weeks, from the end of June to the start of August. During this time I completed two courses: *Irish History* and *Irish literature and Film*. In the first, our class covered nearly the entire course of Irish history, up until the 1916 Rising.

In *Irish Literature and Film*, we studied the great Irish writers, W.B. Yeats, James Joyce and John Millington Synge. We also read through the works of many other Irish poets and novelists, both historical and contemporary. Perhaps the best aspect of these classes was how, by the end of the program, I felt as though I had not taken two classes but one. My studies in these two fields had come to show me how all facets of Irish studies are in some way interrelated. This particular pairing of classes allowed me to recognize the unique role Irish literature has played in shaping and responding to Ireland's political history.

While classroom learning was a major



part of the summer program at NUIG, the university also placed a large emphasis on the use of out-of-classroom activities for their foreign visitors. Each week the school ran a seminar on issues ranging from the troubles, to the GAA and Irish Nationalism, to the current political situation of the North. Also during the six weeks of the program, we were taken on four different field trips. The university sponsored a trip to the Galway city theatre, where we saw a production of the play *The Matchmaker*. We visited Coole Park in County Galway, the former estate of Lady Gregory and a place of inspiration for many famous Irish writers.

We also were taken to the Aran Islands, and to Dingle, where we spent a weekend exploring and learning about the scenic peninsula in South Western Ireland. These trips were great in that the school



coordinated these activities to coincide with the classroom material we were studying; in that way, our studies seemed to come alive right before us.

School certainly was great, but another part of the trip that made my experiences all the better was time spent exploring and enjoying Galway city. Each day I found myself walking through the narrow streets and alleys that make up the downtown area. Down the pedestrian-only *Shop Street*, where artists, musicians and pubs surround you, I recollect the enjoyment of settling into this new pace of life. New friends were made, from all over the world - Australia, Croatia, Norway and of course Ireland - all of whom taught me new things about our world; all of us converging on Galway city, whose inhabitants were more than hospitable and friendly to us.

As you can probably tell, my time spent in Galway while attending the NUIG Irish Studies program was something I immensely enjoyed. Without a doubt I would recommend NUIG to any person in search of a solid study abroad program. At the same time I would recommend Galway as one must see city in Ireland; its lively culture and young population makes it particularly unique amongst Irish cities.

I am extremely grateful for the opportunity I had to visit this beautiful part of the world, and I am particularly grateful for the generous support of the Irish Cultural Center at Elms College. The Scholarship I received from the center greatly lowered the cost of this trip, and for that I owe many thanks.

Searching for Roots Part II by Kathy Gullivan

Maybe it all started with the 1977 TV miniseries, *Roots*, based on Alex Haley's work, *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*. It aired over eight consecutive nights in January of 1977. Haley's book of the same title, first published in 1976, was an instant hit and remained on the New York Times Best Sellers' list for 43 weeks and sold over 1.5 million books in seven weeks after the miniseries aired. Before that time, I don't think many of us gave much thought about where we came from--I mean, where we REALLY came from.

It is just about that time that people began to wonder about the depths of their own being. For many, that wonder went even further than grandparents and great grandparents. Maybe it is more of an American phenomenon, since most of us have ancestors who were transplanted from another country at one time. I remember my first visit to Ireland and my attempt to find more information about my paternal Irish roots and was asked, "Why do you think there is such an interest by Americans to find out where their ancestors came from?" They told me that they have encountered several people knocking on their door in search of finding a relative. We both agreed that the interest seems to appear when you reach 35 or 40 years of age. Perhaps that is the age when we realize that our parents or grandparents may not be around forever and our past will be lost or forgotten. I do believe "Roots" had an impact on many Americans. After all, I don't remember too many families not being glued to their TV set when the series first aired. We were mesmerized. The finale was the first miniseries "block buster"—with 71% share of the audience and 130 million viewers which made it



Seated: Patrick, Sheila, and Denis (all Gullivans); Standing: Peg Gullivan (wife of Denis) and me. Peg and Denis were visiting from Killarney.

the highest rated TV program. In fact, it still holds as the highest rated miniseries of all time!

It has been almost 34 years since *Roots* aired for the first time and since then the interest in genealogy and researching family histories has grown tremendously—you could even say it has exploded! All around the country there are talks at public libraries, genealogical organizations, genealogy conferences, ethnic festivals, cultural organizations, genealogy study groups, genealogy databases and websites—numerous places willing to help guide you in your search with many free of charge. Even celebrities are jumping into the act and having their family roots traced for all of us to see, as in the NBC TV series "Who Do You Think You Are?" All serve to peak our interest in our family's past. Whether you find a hero or solve an unspoken mystery in your family history, it is truly fascinating and rewarding to unravel that long ago past and discover where we REALLY came from.

Ironically, soon after my return from our recent group tour, I was sitting at my computer typing the final sentence to this article that was started months ago, and my phone rang. When I answered it, there was a woman on the other end with an Irish accent--to my surprise, it was a

call from the sister-in-law of the family in Ireland that I met on my very first trip to Ireland in 2001 and on a return trip in 2004 when I was searching for more information about my grandfather's family and birthplace. I could hardly believe it! The Gullivans from Ireland were here, in Massachusetts, visiting relatives in the Worcester area and they called to invite me to their home to meet some of their other family members. Within a couple days we confirmed our arrangements. I was thrilled!

Our families are from neighboring townlands in Killarney and we met through the sacristan at St. Mary's Cathedral in Killarney who thought we might be related. When I was in Ireland in 2004, this was the family who graciously met me at my hotel and drove me out to see the old family homestead and brought me up to the Killarney cemetery at Aghadoe Heights to help search for my great grandfather's gravesite. Time ran out before we were able to locate the gravesite, but they were able to show me the gravesites of other Gullivan family members. Since that time, we have kept in touch through occasional Christmas greetings, and now, six years later, a surprise phone call and a visit to the Worcester area to see if we could piece the puzzle together and find our ancestral link. What a coincidence to get that phone call at the exact time I was beginning to refocus my interest in my family's genealogy. I thought this must be a good sign or at least a stroke of very good luck!

Finding your "roots" is a journey that takes patience, a bit of luck and a lot more time than you probably first imagined, but sooner or later you may find all the right pieces falling together. I will gladly continue my search--and, at the same time make some wonderful new friends along the way! *I already have!*

Members invited to share culture and heritage By Mary Ellen O'Brien

Here at the Irish Cultural Center at Elms College we are always looking for new ways to preserve the old. If you have any fond memory that relates directly to your Irish heritage that you would be able to write about we would appreciate it if you would submit it for possible publication in our newsletter and also to be a part of our ongoing heritage project.

Also, if you or a family member are in possession of any article that is symbolic in some way of your ancestry and Irish roots please consider writing about it. It could be a picture, christen-

ing gown, piece of jewelry, book, article of clothing, etc. Please describe it, detail any of the history that you know about it, tell how you came to possess it and how it ties to your culture and heritage.

As a junior high teacher at Our Lady of Hope School, this was an assignment that I gave to my eighth grade students each year as part of our Heritage Fair. What started as an attempt to get the kids writing turned in to one of the most emotional and fulfilling projects for both students and teacher. This may

simply be a paragraph or two written by you but you might be surprised at how memorable and valuable it becomes.

We hope to publish these in future issues of the newsletter. Tell us your stories.

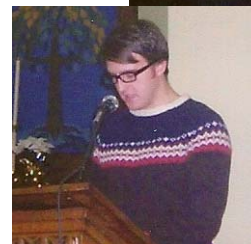
Mary Ellen O'Brien has begun the Life Stories project and we remind you again to look for documents, such as birth certificates, marriage licenses, baptismal records, passports, citizenship papers, etc. We will ask you to send copies or allow us to copy them for you. We would also like the names of people who have immigrated or their children who would be willing to be interviewed. Please contact the Center.

Christmas season ushered in with joy

On December 4 we celebrated Christmas with an Irish Touch with Liturgy in Our Lady's Chapel with Monsignor Chris Connelly presiding. The music was led by Kathleen Gilhooly and the Mary, Mother of Hope Folk Group.

Maitiú de Háil read the first scripture reading from Isaiah and Tom Moriarty the second from Paul to the Romans. Chip Costello led the recitation of the Our Father in Irish. In his homily Fr. Chris compared the work of John the Baptist to that of Patrick in Ireland in spreading the message of Jesus.

Prior to the mass a large and enthusiastic audience gathered in Veritas to enjoy the performance of Dan Kane's young singers who sang many of the familiar songs of the season.



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**Phone: 413-265-2537
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www.irish-cairde.org**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

ICC Calendar of events

Ongoing: Language Irish Study Group meets weekly. Classes offered each semester; call the Graduate Office at 265-2218.

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

January 26, Feb 2, 9, 16, 7 p.m.
winter film series Alum Library Theater

February 5
bus trip to Quinnipiac to visit the Famine exhibit

March 6
Irish Ceili

March 27
Brid Barnett storytelling 'Peig Sayers' at the Boyle

April 2 day-long La Gaeilge language immersion and workshop

May 4
Brenda Ni Shuilleabhain, author of 'Bibeanna'

May 21
Irish Wine Tasting fundraiser

July 26-30
Celtic Adventures for Kids

September 3-13
Journey of the Soul Trip to Ireland

September 15-October 2
Big E exhibit

December 3
Christmas with an Irish Touch

Contact the Center to make an appointment to use the Rosetta Stone program to learn the Irish language on the computer.

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

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