



The Cairde Connection

"Keeping the Irish Arts Alive!"

Irish Cultural Center at
Elms College

Volume 12 & Issue 1

September 2011

Photographic exhibit of Irish immigrants opens September 29

We are excited to announce that the photographic exhibit "To Love Two countries: Ireland's Greatest Generation in America" will have its opening reception on Thursday, September 29, 2011 from 6-8 p.m. in Borgia Gallery, Dooley Campus Center. The exhibit will be open daily from 8:30-4:30 through October 23.

World-renowned photographer John Minihan was commissioned by the Irish Arts Center of New York and the Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland to capture images of people who emigrated from Ireland to America in the early decades of the twentieth century.

Minihan visited his subjects in their homes, in their churches, and in their local Irish centers. The exhibit at the Elms includes people from Rhode Island, Connecticut, the Boston area, Worcester, as well as the Springfield area, including Springfield, West Springfield, Easthampton and Northampton.

John Minihan's photographs of such luminaries as Samuel Beckett, Edna O'Brien, Gloria Swanson, Ray Charles, Al Pacino, and Diana Spencer have established him as one of the finest portrait photographers of his generation. The subjects in "To Love Two Countries" are "real people" – untouched by "celebrity."

This is the second project that the Irish Arts Center undertook; the first encompassed areas of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. President Mary McAleese said, "The immigrant's heart marches to the beat of two quite different drums, one from the old homeland and the other from the new. The immigrant has to bridge these two worlds, living comfortably in the new and bringing the best of his or her ancient identity and heritage to bear on life in an adopted homeland." A catalog of the images will be available for sale.

Sympathy

We extend our sympathy to Maureen McDermott, her family and friends on the death of her daughter Maureen; to Lois Lynch on the death of her mother, Eva.

Annual breakfast set for October with speaker

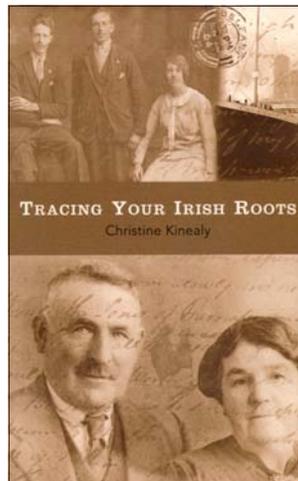
We are pleased to announce that Christine Kinealy will speak Sunday, October 23 at 10 am at our annual breakfast at the Yankee Pedlar, Holyoke. Ticket price is \$18 members; \$20 non-members.

Kinealy has chosen to address the topic, "Who do you think you are? Learning more about our Irish Ancestors."

Named to the Top 100 Irish Americans in 2011 by Irish America magazine, she has been a history professor at Drew University, New Jersey since 2007. She has published several books on the Irish famine, several 17th Century history books, and a book called "Tracing Your Irish Roots." Her latest publication is "Daniel O'Connell and the Anti-Slavery Movement."

In addition, she has authored numerous articles and chapters. She has lectured and taught widely throughout the

world from Australia to England to Ireland to the United States. She has served on several boards and commissions, and in April, organized and hosted at Drew, a symposium called "Emigrants and Exiles: A Family History Symposium" with nationally



known genealogist Megan Smolenyak as the featured speaker.

Kinealy received her PhD from Trinity College, Dublin in 1984. She got work as a family researcher when she was completing her doctorate and saw firsthand the importance of family lore. She has seen academics increasingly use techniques that had previously been confined to family research. Television documentaries, folklore, and oral history have also been helping the discipline. She said, "Historians know now that they're not just communicating with each other."

Call the Center to reserve a place for the breakfast and talk, or plan to invite friends to fill a table.

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

Kate Daly, Westfield

Kathleen Doe, Northampton

Jerry Donovan, W Springfield

William Dziura, Chicopee

Dennis Egan, Longmeadow

Christine Fay, Springfield

Sheila Foley, W Springfield

Avery Freniere, Springfield

Kathryn Gallivan, So Hadley

James Hoar, Holyoke

Ann Lowe, Holyoke

Kathleen Lynch, Chicopee

Kellie Mayo, Enfield

Kelly Moore, W Springfield

Mary Ellen O'Brien, Springfield

291 Springfield Street

Chicopee, MA 01013

265-2537 irishcenter@elms.edu

www.irish-cairde.org

Children enjoy a week at Celtic Camp

We are happy to report that another successful Celtic Adventures for Kids took place in July when 43 young people from grades 1-9 spent a week at Elms College immersed in Irish culture. One mother in her evaluation wrote, “My daughter loves the program and staff.” We are fortunate to have teachers who are committed to the program. They plan their lessons around learning in a fun and relaxed atmosphere.

We are especially grateful to Mary Ellen O'Brien who has coordinated the program since its beginning in 2001. She also teaches the Irish dance classes, with the able assistance of Kerri Sullivan, and as an added bonus this year with volunteer Mary Franz—all of them sharing their love of the dance with the children. On Friday, for the first time, the middle grades showed off a waltz that they had learned.

In 2012 Mary Ellen will hand over the reins of coordinator to Nikcole Allen, who worked with her this year to learn the program and procedure. We are confident that the 12th annual program will be as strong as ever.

For music, the children reported to Ellen Redman who taught them to play the tin whistle. One mother told us that her “younger child played the whistle continuously for the 4 days of the camp.” He was not the only one; most children left each afternoon practicing what they had



learned that day.

An older camper taught himself to play “Amazing Grace” at home and on the following day taught the others.

Two musicians joined her for a session: Tim Donoghue and Jerry Noble. They shared information on their instruments; Ellen on the flute, Tim on the melodeon, and Jerry on the guitar as they demonstrated different kinds of Irish music. Mike Rancitelli spent some time on another day, teaching songs to the campers.

Parents are always awed on the last day when they hear their children speak in the Irish language taught by Kathleen Gilhooly. And what can we say about the products of arts and crafts taught by Julia Campbell! Each creation speaks volumes of the time and effort in preparing something for everyone.

Anita Taylor shared the stories of heroes and legends during storytelling/literature session; Erin Mulvagh coordinated outdoor games. One day Tom Feeley taught Irish road bowling and Eamon Burke worked with the children in learning how to play Gaelic football.

We have only the greatest thanks to offer junior counselors who gave invaluable aid throughout the day: Cassidy Cunningham, Sam Martin and Haleigh Franz.



10-DAY SUMMER TOUR!

**“Emerald Isle Classic”
Notre Dame vs. Navy Game Tour
August 25-September 3, 2012**

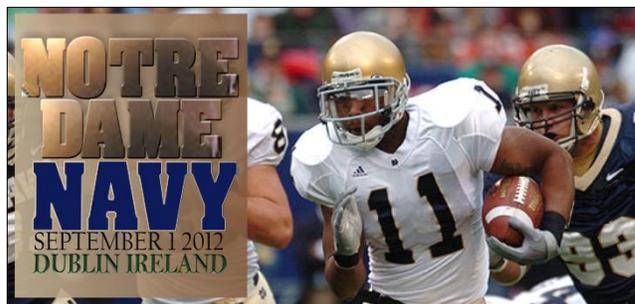
The excitement is building! In 2012 the Irish Cultural Center will be heading off to the Emerald Isle for another grand 10-day tour, but this time we are offering a **very rare** opportunity to see the famed University of Notre Dame Fighting Irish play against the Naval Academy’s Midshipmen on Irish soil. This will be the second time in their 86-year history that the rivals have played in Ireland at the “Emerald Isle Classic”—the only other time they played in Ireland was in November of 1996! This time they will be playing on September 1, 2012, in the brand new state-of-the-art Aviva Stadium in Dublin. This incredible 410 Million Euro stadium, which opened on May 14, 2010 was built on the grounds of the old Lansdowne Road Stadium, and is home to the Irish Rugby Union Team & National Soccer Team. The stadium has been described by Naval Athletic Director, Chet Gladchuk, as “one of the finest venues in the world...few stadiums anywhere have attended to the detail, aesthetics and fan comfort as in Aviva Stadium.” All 51,700 spectator seats are covered. This is a much more intimate stadium than the ones the teams usually plays in that holds over 80,000 spectators.

Enjoy Ireland’s history, scenic beauty and rich cultural traditions—and witness a game of a lifetime! Built-in flexibility to explore on your own or to engage in other options such as golf, historic walking tours, harbor cruises, culinary delights (especially in Kinsale, Ireland’s Gourmet Capital!), etc.

Visits/tours included:

Breathtaking Dingle Peninsula tour, Blarney Woolen Mills, Old Middleton (Jameson) Whiskey Distillery, 400 year old English Market in Cork City, Adare, the magnificent Gardens of Powerscourt in County Wicklow, Tickets to the Notre Dame vs. Navy Game with box lunch...and more!

We’ve secured top rated hotels in Ireland’s most sought after locations! This is truly a “Journey of the Soul Tour” (our 7th!) not to be missed! A once in a lifetime unforgettable experience!



The tour is well-rounded, with visits to some of Ireland’s most historic and romantic settings with multiple night stays for a more leisurely tour. Our hotels are in the colorful town of Dingle (2 nights), the beautiful historic harbor town of Kinsale (2 nights), the medieval town of Kilkenny (1 night) and (3 nights) in the heart of Dublin’s fair city.

This is an exclusive, “one-of-a-kind” customized tour. Land cost is only \$2,049 pp/sharing room and includes hotels, transportation to and from the airport from Elms College as well as all transfers and touring in Ireland—13 meals including 8 full Irish breakfasts, 3 table d’hôte dinners including a welcome drink the first night, 1 Farewell Dinner with Irish entertainment in County Meath, and 1 Box Lunch and **game ticket**, all hotel tips/taxes. Our special group airfare & departure tax is additional and will be available mid-October 2011, 11-months prior to the tour. A \$500 deposit per person will secure your spot. Optional travel protection (\$144). Space is limited to **ONLY 45**.

***DON’T BE DISAPPOINTED
RESERVE EARLY!***

For more information visit our website: www.Irish-Cairde.org. Call the Irish Cultural Center at (413) 265-2537 or Kathy Gullivan at (413) 536-9709 E-mail: kgallivan04@gmail.com

HOTELS: Dingle Benners—Dingle; Carlton Hotel & Spa—Kinsale; Kilkenny River Court Hotel—Kilkenny; O’Callaghan Mont Clare Hotel—in the heart of Dublin on Merrion Square!

- Adare * Dingle * Blarney * Kinsale *
- * Cork City * Middleton * Kilkenny *
- * County Wicklow * Dublin * County Meath *

NEXT INFO SESSION
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2011
2:00 P.M.
DOOLEY CAMPUS CENTER (2nd Floor)
Elms College, Chicopee, MA

My Nana Mac – A hard-working woman with a twinkle in her eye

By Mary Ellen Lowney

Officially, Margaret Mary Coen MacLeod seems to have vanished without a trace in her Irish homeland. But to those who knew and loved her – seven children, 21 grandchildren, and many cousins, nieces, nephews and friends – my grandmother lives on.

Margaret was born on July 2, 1893, in a tiny village outside Athenry, a walled town about 20 miles east of Galway. Her life came with its challenges. She was the second of the six children of Tomas and Bridget O'Brien Coen, and at age six, watched her mother and baby sister die of diphtheria. As the sole surviving female in the family, her life as a homemaker took shape when she was just a girl. She cooked, cleaned and cared for her father and four brothers – John, Tomas, Martin and Mark – while they were busy farming the rocky land they called home.

A village priest visited regularly, beseeching my great-grandfather Tomas to keep his children in school. Margaret made it through grade six. The outcome of the boys' education is anyone's guess, but likely they spent more time in the fields than the classroom.

Margaret also had women watching over her. Several aunts and a grandmother ensured that she learned the womanly arts of cooking, sewing, knitting, gardening, canning, and all else it took to run a household a century ago. Surely there were joys in her formative years. Friendship, music, dance, play and conversation must have brightened some of her days. But there is no record of that. She toiled as she grew to a tall, dark-haired beauty. She was known for her shy manner, but she also had a playful side and a twinkle in her eyes when she smiled. Without saying much, she

conveyed thoughtful intelligence. She was also quick to call out a wrongdoing, though her children considered her a kind, gentle mother.

Certainly she was strong-willed, and determined to find a better life than what fate seemed to be carving out for her.

With help from an aunt, Margaret walked the 20 miles from her home to Galway in 1910. She was 17 years old, and kept her travel plans a secret from her father and brothers, who must have missed her terribly. She lived with a relative in London for a short while, crossing the Atlantic Ocean by boat later that year. She stayed with another aunt in New York until a job was found as a housekeeper for a wealthy family in Brighton, a section of Boston.

Margaret worked in the kitchen, where she came to know the young man who delivered ice to the back door several times a week. Thus began the romance between the young maid and my grandfather, Murray Hugh MacLeod, a Scotsman from Spring Hill, Nova Scotia.

They were married in 1916. The couple moved to Medway, and then to Hopedale, as they raised seven children – twins John Henry and Murray Hugh Jr., Hildreth Eileen, Angus Vincent, Robert Lloyd, Margaret Muriel and my mother, Shirley Evelyn.

What was my grandmother like as a mother? As the baby of the family, my mother believes she probably had it easier than the older children, though not by much.

“She was quiet, and easy. She wasn't a hard mother, she was never strict. We knew what was expected of us



without her setting curfews or making a lot of rules,” said Shirley, a retired nurse, the mother of six children and 18 grandchildren.

This family lore may illustrate the strong side of my grandmother: Tired of asking my grandfather to expand the kitchen for their growing family, Margaret took an axe to the outer wall one day while he was out working for the Hopedale Coal and Ice Company. When he came home, the entire wall was gone, leaving him little choice but to help with the project. She cut and stitched every piece of clothing her children wore growing up, and had a garden, which produced vegetables that she canned for the winter months. She was every bit the

Continued on page 5

A hard-working woman with a twinkle in her eye

Continued from page 4
homemaker, making good use of her early years.

As a grandmother, she was perfect, inviting my sisters and me to visit her for weeks at a time during our vacations. I remember my 'Nana Mac' curling my hair with rags, making me look and feel like Shirley Temple, or so I thought at the time. Margaret missed the death of her father about 1939, and cried for days

over the loss. She returned to Ireland just once, in the early 1960s, staying for one month on the farm where she grew up.

Whenever I asked her about Ireland, she had little to say other than, "It was a bunch of rocks."

Trying to find a record of her in Ireland has proven impossible. The church where her family's life was recorded burned to the ground years ago, and the official records of

the country do not mention her, her parents, or her siblings.

My mother said her mother never looked back, and was happy to find a better life after her hardscrabble childhood.

My grandfather, 'Papa Mac,' died in 1968, just four years after he retired from the ice company.

My grandmother lived beyond two of her children. She died in 1985, at the age of 92.

St. Patrick's Day Parade float: planning for 2012

Will Dziura, newly elected to the Irish Cultural Center board is working to organize a project so that we can enter a float in the 2012 Holyoke parade. Will is gathering information on the requirements, as well as working on the theme.

Of course, of prime consideration are all the details about cost of materials, having enough help to complete the project and a place to store the float during the months when a heated garage is not only a priority, but also a necessity. If anyone can help or knows where we may find a place where we can build the float is asked to email Will at dziuraw@elms.edu.

Over the years we have entered several floats. The first was an Irish cottage that also had an Irish jaunting cart and a wooden horse, the last

two treasures belonging to the family of Tim Allen and stored at the Wherehouse?

Another year we had a large Celtic Cross. Several years later Tom Feeley designed an Irish pub and the musicians kept things lively all along the route. We reused the basic structure of that float after the death of Dan Curran who had been the chief architect and builder in all of the floats listed above.

Though it was not a float, we used the jaunting cart in 2007 with a real horse, and riding the cart we had our own elders, followed by a young couple representing Irish immigrants. The years we did not enter a float we participated with a marching contingent.



Scholarship announced

The first presentation of the Great Blasket Island Bursary established by Michael Carney will take place at the Blasket Island Center in Dunquin on Saturday, September 24, 2011 at noon. Thirty-five students have made application for the scholarship award.

**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**

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 413-265-2218.

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

September 3-13
Journey of the Soul Trip to Ireland

September 15-October 2
Big E exhibit

September 19
Information session for the 2012 10-Day Ireland Notre-Dame/Navy Tour From August 25– September 3, 2012

September 29, 6-8 pm
Photography exhibit in Borgia Gal-

lery, Mary Dooley Campus Center “To Love Two Countries.” Exhibit open through October 23.

October 23 brunch with speaker Christine Kinealy: “Who do you think you are? Learning more about our Irish ancestors”

November 2
Dramatic recital “J.M. Synge: The Aran Islands”

December 3
Christmas with an Irish Touch

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

We send our members this newsletter every second month beginning in January. Please let us know of a change of address. Also, if you notify the post office that you will be temporarily away, and to hold your mail, let us know that. Each piece of pre-sorted mail that is not delivered is returned to the Center with a charge of \$.44.