



the
CAIRDE CONNECTION

IRISH CULTURAL CENTER OF WESTERN NEW ENGLAND

SEPTEMBER 2015 VOLUME 16 ISSUE 3

Attend Our Annual Breakfast on October 4, Featuring Authors of New Blasket Island Book

by Mary Ellen Lowney

The Annual Breakfast, on **Sunday, October 4 at 10:00 am at the Yankee Pedlar in Holyoke**, is a great opportunity to meet and mingle, with good food, pleasant company, and a review of the year's activities at the Irish Cultural Center.

Tickets are \$20 for members and \$23 for non-members. They will not be sold at the door; **please call the ICC for more information or to reserve your place at a table: 413-265-2537.**

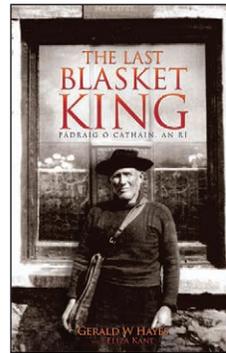
Authors Gerald Hayes and Eliza Kane will be featured speakers at the event. Hayes and Kane are authors of the recently released *The Last Blasket King, Pádraig Ó Catháin, An Rí*, which tells the story of the last King of the Great Blasket Island located off the coast of Dingle, County Kerry, Ireland.

The Great Blasket has special significance in the Springfield area because so many islanders relocated here during the island's decline in the first half of the twentieth century. Among those who settled in Springfield was Mike "The Fiddler" Kane, the King's first-born son.

Eliza Kane is great-great-granddaughter of Pádraig Ó Catháin, the last King of the Great Blasket Island. She is co-producer of *The Crest*, a documentary film about the King and his descendants.

Gerald Hayes is the son-in-law of Michael Carney, a Blasket-born Springfield resident who passed away in late August. In 2013, Hayes and Carney co-authored *From the Great Blasket to America: The Last Memoir by an Islander*, which tells of Carney's own life voyage from the Great Blasket to Dublin and finally, to Springfield, where he lived, raised a family, and nourished his Irish heritage.

Hayes and Kane will speak about their book, which has been published by The Collins Press of Cork, Ireland. Autographed copies will be on sale at the event.



From the book:

There is something magical about the notion of a King on a small isolated island. Few would look at the ruins on the Great Blasket and imagine a King had lived there. Yet the King was a very forceful presence on this island. The last was Pádraig Ó Catháin, known as 'Peats Mhicí,' who served

for about twenty-five years until his death in 1929. To the islanders, he was arguably the most important citizen and was the central figure on the island during its literary flowering. He helped the islanders navigate through life and national and world events such as the 1916 Rising and The Great War. He collaborated with the other 'elders' in planning the transfer of ownership of the island from the Earl of Cork to the Congested Districts Board in 1907 and, in turn, to the islanders themselves. They also participated in the reorganization of the field system between 1907 and 1917.

This is the first account of the King's extraordinary life, written in collaboration with his descendants in the USA and Ireland. It tells of the very special, unique man, his many contributions to the island and his extended legacy.

We hope you can join us for this enlightening and entertaining event.



IRISH CULTURAL CENTER

OF WESTERN NEW ENGLAND

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CONTACT US

We are located in the lower level of the Alumnae Library at Elms College.

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Chicopee, MA 01013

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www.IrishCenterwne.org



Dear Irish Cultural Center Member,

This is a time of great opportunity, progress and growth for the Irish Cultural Center. The ICC has been seeking new space that would allow us to expand our program offerings for our members and the community. **We are excited to announce that we have signed a twenty-year lease with the City of West Springfield. In due time, we will be moving to the former Elks Lodge property at 429 Morgan Road.** The chosen facility is the end result of an extensive search of dozens of alternative sites examined over the course of the last 12 months.

Another exciting change for us is an update to our organization's name.

To reflect the broadened scope of our mission and membership, we have changed our name from the Irish Cultural Center, Inc. to the Irish Cultural Center of Western New England. The new facility and name change are the culmination of two years of strategic planning, guided by an outside facilitator. The ICC's mission is always to cultivate a connection with Ireland through the arts, culture, history, language and heritage, throughout the Western New England region. Our membership and support already stretches well beyond the local area, into the whole of Western Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont, and even New York. Our name change is recognition of that broad reach.

The ICC has always been an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable cultural organization. **We are extremely grateful to Elms College for the supportive affiliation they have given to us since our founding in 1999.** As the college continues to grow and expand academically, we feel the time is right to establish our own independent ICC location in which to operate and prosper. We are happy to continue to collaborate with the college, and are again offering Irish language classes this year, with our sixth consecutive Irish Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant.

The Morgan Road site provides an amazing opportunity for the ICC to expand into larger space, with 9.84 acres of land, and a building of approximately 8,500 square feet, adjacent to a dedicated parking lot. The facility will include a Performance and Lecture Hall with banquet capabilities, an Irish/Celtic Museum, a Library with genealogy research, three administrative offices, a traditional Irish Pub, athletic playing fields for Gaelic sports, rugby and little league soccer, and expansive grounds with space for gardens.

The ICC will be launching a capital campaign to raise funds for the refurbishment of the building. We will be moving forward, expanding our event offerings, community outreach and member benefits, thus fulfilling our promise of keeping the Irish arts alive. **We value our members and thank you for your past support; we want you to be part of this future process with us.** Please stay tuned for more information as we will continually update you throughout this exciting transition.

On behalf of the ICC Board of Directors

Regards,

Sean F. Cahillane, President

Irish Cultural Center of Western New England Future Site at 429 Morgan Road, West Springfield, MA



The property at 429 Morgan Road, and ICC board members and West Springfield Mayor Ed Sullivan standing with the new sign.

Facts and Information

The premises are 9.84 acres in size, including an 8,500 square foot four-level concrete block and steel building. The building and grounds will be renovated and repurposed to accommodate a broad range of amenities and events.

- Performance and Lecture Hall with banquet facilities for a capacity of over 200 seats
- An Irish/Celtic Museum to display and maintain our collection of artifacts, photographs and historic materials
- A Library to house our book collection with access to genealogy research materials
- Large administration office space
- Athletic fields to host the Gaelic football youth teams, adult men's and women's rugby and West Springfield under-14 youth soccer
- A traditional Irish Pub with an outdoor patio overlooking the athletic fields
- A replica of a traditional 1860 thatched Irish cottage to serve as an historic educational tool
- Private on-site parking lot for 200 cars to accommodate visitor and member needs
- Gardens and landscaping

Please visit our website at www.IrishCenterwne.org and our Facebook page for all the latest information on the renovations and refurbishment of the building. You are welcome to drive by the property to see the grounds. ICC members will have access to all the facilities at 429 Morgan Road when renovations are completed.

We are excited to be able to share this process with you!

Leo & Anto Delight the Crowd at Sold-out Acoustic Show

by Kathleen Doe

Leo Moran and Anthony Thistlethwaite have been busy since The Saw Doctors have taken a break from touring. The two musicians and friends returned to the U.S. with their third acoustic tour this past spring, and performed a sold-out show on April 11, 2015 for the Irish Cultural Center. The Munich Haus Restaurant in Chicopee, MA, held an enthusiastic crowd of almost 230 people.

Leo and Anto delighted the audience with reworkings of many Saw Doctors songs, culminating in a sing-along to fan-favorite *Clare Island*. Songs like *Exhilarating Sadness* and *Red Cortina* became quieter and more reflective, letting the words and meaning shine through. *Share the Darkness* and *Same Ol' Town* are favorites of Leo's and Anto's, and they performed them beautifully and simply.

They also introduced their own original songs, with plenty of laughs and stories to go along with them. It was clear that originals from previous tours, such as *Credit Union* and *Fill Her Up There Mister Oilman* are already loved by audiences. Anto also sang the beloved *Fisherman's Blues*, from his days of performing with The Waterboys.

Leo & Anto have released three CDs from their acoustic duo, *Pushin' It*, *Flyin' It* and *Shovin' It*. Learn more about Leo & Anto at www.leoandanto.com; CDs are available at www.sawdoctors.com.

Thanks so much to our sponsors and volunteers who helped make this show possible! It was a night full of music and stories, warmth and laughs.



Leo and Anto delighted the sold-out room at The Munich Haus, and stopped by the City Line for a bit of craic after the show.

Pictured at left: Leo Moran with ICC board member Rose Baker, member Megan Doe, and board member and show organizer Kathleen Doe.

Summer Concert Series Brings New Music to Western Massachusetts

by Kathleen Doe and Mary Ellen Lowney

This summer, the Irish Cultural Center showcased traditional and popular Celtic music with our Summer Concert Series. We lined up three shows with highly acclaimed performers who represent some of the best of the Celtic music world. Some names were more familiar to people in this local area than others, and the series introduced audiences to world-class music that they may not have heard before.



Searson performed the first concert in the series, on July 11 at the Delaney House in Holyoke, MA. Their special album release show featured their original Ottawa Valley-style music mixed with Celtic, East Coast and Scottish, including high energy fiddling, passionate vocals and step dancing. Sisters Colleen and Erin Searson performed on a variety of instruments, including fiddle, piano and acoustic guitar. Rounding out the group were Danno O'Shea on drums and Fraser Gauthier on bass. The show also featured local Irish step dance students. Most of the 100-plus audience members had never heard of Searson before, but it didn't take long for them to make a lot of new fans.

The second concert on July 19 featured **House of Hamill**, a traditional Irish fiddle and eclectic folk group formed by Brian Buchanan of Jubilee Riots (formerly Enter the Haggis), and Rose Baldino of Burning Bridget Cleary. Brian and Rose played an intimate, relaxed show of traditional Irish sets and songs and original compositions for the audience of almost 100 people at the Collegian Court in Chicopee, MA.

Brian in particular has a large following in this area with his band Jubilee Riots, and it was a special treat to hear him perform a more traditional set, blending beautifully with Rose's melodic voice and fiddle-playing.



The third and final show in the series was a success, with the **Irish Trad Ensemble** bringing a few big names in traditional Irish music to the Collegian Court in Chicopee on Sunday, August 9. The three musicians included Matt Molloy of Chieftains fame on flute, John Carty of Patrick Street on fiddle, and Arty McGlynn, considered Ireland's finest guitar player, rounding out a very enjoyable set of tunes on their first ever tour of the United States.

The mid-day show was a sellout, with 130 people making up a very enthusiastic audience.



2015 Spring Ireland Tour: Dingle to Galway

by Rose Baker

The Irish Cultural Center's May 2015 Ireland Tour, led by Rose Baker, Pat Baker and Steve O'Brien, was an unforgettable journey to beautiful Dingle and Galway. With 70 passengers, we landed in Shannon Airport on May 6 and were greeted by our drivers/guides James Finn and Pat Griffin.

We travelled to Dingle where we spent five fantastic nights at the lovely Dingle Skellig Hotel. Some of the highlights from our stay in Dingle included a drive along the beautiful coast of Slea Head with visits to the Gallarus Oratory, Kilmalkedar Church and the Blasket Centre. At the Blasket Centre, we learned about what life was like for the people who lived on the Blasket Islands and the families who immigrated directly to the Springfield area. After the Slea Head drive, we made a visit to Ballydavid for a fun afternoon at Begley's Pub with musical entertainment provided by Noreen Finn (James Finn's wife). At Begley's Pub, we spoke to locals and others on the tour and enjoyed the camaraderie of sharing good memories of our days in Dingle over pints of the "black stuff."

On another day, we travelled to the Cobh Heritage Center in Co. Cork where we learned about emigration from Ireland during the Great Hunger, as well as the Titanic's voyage from Cobh, which was the ship's last stop before its tragic end. After our visit to Cobh, we stopped for lunch at the South County Pub in Douglas, Co. Cork, and enjoyed the craic of an afternoon session of traditional Irish music. We also visited the charming town of Killarney, where many of us engaged in a horse-drawn jaunting cart ride through the beautiful Killarney National Park, with lovely views of the Lakes of Killarney. Thanks to Steve O'Brien, our group was treated to a surprise Irish step dancing performance by David Geaney, a five-time World Champion Irish Step Dancer, at the Skellig Hotel.

After Dingle, we travelled to Galway. On our way to Galway, we made a visit to the Cliffs of Moher where we stood 700 feet above the ocean. We spent three lovely evenings in Salthill at the Galway Bay Hotel. We shopped at Standun's in Spiddal, and then Moycullen to visit Celtic Crystal and Connemara Marble. We enjoyed a free day in

Galway City to shop or independently explore the "City of the Tribes." Some of us were even able to practice our Irish language skills in many of Galway's pubs over a pint!

After just a short time, our group felt like we were old friends. Every day was a full experience and we learned so much about Ireland and its history, culture and language from our guides – James and Pat. Leaving Ireland was bittersweet at the end of our 10-day trip. We were tired, but full of wonderful memories that will forever be in our hearts.

We (Rose, Pat and Steve) send a heart-felt thank you to those who travelled with us to experience the best of the Emerald Isle – Dingle and Galway, and for making the 2015 Spring Ireland Trip a success. We are already planning our 2016 journeys (May and October) to Ireland and hope to see you again.



Thanks to Ann Marie Fitzgerald for your great photos!

Springtime Tour of Ireland with the Irish Cultural Center
Visiting Dingle and Galway – Ireland's Two Treasures
May 10–19, 2016



The Irish Cultural Center's Rose Baker and Pat Baker are hosting the trip. Please join us as we tour the wild and beautiful West Coast of Ireland!

Embrace two of Ireland's treasures, Dingle and Galway, on a leisurely paced tour through gorgeous countryside, charming towns, and bustling cities.

Multiple night stays in Dingle and Galway allow you to immerse yourself in the beauty, hospitality and culture of Ireland's Historic West Coast Towns.

The tour includes round trip bus transportation from Elms College to JFK Airport; round trip airfare from New York to Shannon via Delta Air Lines; 8 nights in two Top Rated Hotels; full Irish breakfast daily; 8 dinners; 2 lunches at South County Pub in Douglas and Gus O'Connor's Pub in Doolin; admission to Blarney Castle, Blasket Centre, Gallarus Oratory, Dingle Brewing Company, Cliffs of Moher; optional

day trips to Blarney, Sleat Head Drive tour of Dingle Peninsula, Gallarus Oratory, Kilmalkedar Church, trip to Spiddal and Moycullen for shopping at Standun's, Celtic Crystal and Connemara Marble; deluxe touring motor coach for all transportation and sightseeing with the services of a professional Irish driver/guide throughout; portage of 1 suitcase per person; tips and taxes while in Ireland (note: gratuity to the driver/guide in Ireland **is** included).

The cost of the tour is \$2,425 per person/double room occupancy, or \$2,750 single room occupancy (limited availability). An initial \$1,000 deposit, accompanied by a fully completed reservation application and copy of your passport, reserves a seat. Members in good standing with the Irish Cultural Center are entitled to a refund of €30 to be provided by the tour hosts upon arrival in Ireland!

Information Session – Please join us!

Sunday, October 18, 2015 • 2:00 pm • Room 207, Dooley Campus Center, Elms College

For more information, tour itinerary and application,
call Rose Baker at 413-519-2135 or the ICC office at 413-265-2537
or visit our website: www.IrishCenterwne.org

Recent Happenings

Lease Signing Ceremony for New Morgan Road Location

JULY 28, 2015

ICC board members and supporters, West Springfield Mayor Ed Sullivan, and West Springfield officials took part in an official lease signing ceremony at the ICC's new future property at 429 Morgan Road.



ICC President Sean Cahillane addresses the crowd before the official signing.



ICC President Sean Cahillane leads a tour of the building.



West Springfield Mayor Ed Sullivan with ICC President Sean Cahillane.

Searson Concert

JULY 11, 2015

Searson's performance at The Delaney House in Holyoke, MA, was the Ottawa Valley-based band's first time playing in the Pioneer Valley.



Erin and Colleen Searson with board member Mary Ellen O'Brien, Irish dancers, board member and show organizer Kathleen Doe and ICC President Sean Cahillane.

Celtic Adventures Immerses Kids in Irish Culture

by Mary Ellen O'Brien

Celtic Adventures For Kids, the summer program offered by the Irish Cultural Center, took place this year from July 27 – 31. Once again it turned out to be one of the warmest summer weeks, but that did not deter the campers, teachers or counselors from having a lot of fun.

The week started with a demonstration of Gaelic football, with Mike Carney and Eamonn Burke directing the clinic, and as always it was one of the kids' favorite activities. Wednesday afternoon has also become one of the days that we all look forward to. Every year we have an Irish music session led by our own Ellen Redman, who is the music teacher at camp. It is an opportunity for all the campers to sing and dance together and to see and hear our visiting musicians, Jerry Noble, Tim Donoghue, and Bill Dempsey, play instruments, sing songs, and answer any questions the kids might have. Tom Feeley joined us on Thursday morning for road bowling, and it was a pure delight to see him teaching not only the sport, but also a bit of Irish language to the kids.

All of this is done in conjunction with accomplished teachers holding class each day in language, literature, art, dance, music and sports, and leads to a Friday afternoon party where the campers display some of what they have learned for their parents, grandparents, and other family members and friends.

The success of this program is due to the efforts of many individuals, but would never have been possible without the support of Elms College. Heartfelt thanks to Elms president, Sr. Mary Reap, and the staff of both the Maguire and Dooley Centers for always welcoming and providing for us, especially campus nurse Jill Gagne who served as our medical advisor. The experience and professionalism of the teachers, the youthful energy of the counselors, and the invaluable assistance from Kathy O'Connor Duquette, provided for a week that gave fifty two youngsters a chance to learn about and celebrate the very best of Irish culture.



The campers enjoyed a week of learning about Irish culture.

The ICC Welcomes Síle Dolan, Irish Fulbright Language Teacher



The Irish Cultural Center and Elms College welcome our sixth consecutive Irish Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant, Síle Dolan, from County Offaly (as she likes to say, the heart of Ireland!). Síle has earned a Bachelor of Arts in Irish and French from the National University of Ireland, Galway. She has just completed her Masters from University College Dublin, in which she focused mostly on Irish-English and English-Irish translation. She is also a teacher at the Arena School of English in Dublin.

"I'm very happy to be here and I'm really looking forward to teaching at the Center. I'm excited to meet lots of new people," Síle says. She brings a great deal of talent and enthusiasm, and will help us showcase the language in our community. Síle teaches a Novice class for credit during the day. In addition, she teaches the evening Intermediate class. We look forward to our partnership with Síle this year.

Visit www.IrishCenterwne.org for complete class info.

The ICC is a proud sponsor of Don and Sheila Healey's Irish Program. The radio shows air on two days on two different stations. Listen in for information about "all things Irish," including ICC news.

- Saturday: 9:00 to 11:00 am on WACM 1490 AM West Springfield, MA and WXCT 990 AM Southington/Hartford, CT
- Sunday: 10:00 am to noon on WACM 1490 AM West Springfield, MA
- All programs stream on line: Search WACM 1490 at tunein.com.

Stay Up to Date

If your email, phone number or address has changed, please let us know so we can ensure that you don't miss any news from the ICC.

E-News

If you are not on our email list, you can easily subscribe on our website, www.IrishCenterwne.org.

Be sure to check your spam folders if you are not receiving our emails! Let your friends and family know they can sign up to receive the latest news and updates on events from the ICC.

Help Us Mark the 100th Anniversary of the 1916 Rising

The Irish Cultural Center is looking for people who may have personal artifacts, family memorabilia, or stories relating to the 1916 Rising. We are hoping to put together a short film with videos and interviews, and we invite you to share your memories with us.

Please contact Director Ellen Gallivan if you are interested, at 413-265-2537 or irishcenter@elms.edu.

Remembering Michael Carney

The Irish Cultural Center was saddened to hear of Michael Carney's passing. He was a friend to the ICC and especially our Irish language program, participating in our Lá na Gaeilge and always available to talk with our Irish language Fulbright teachers.

The following is an excerpt of an article written by Anne-Gerard Flynn of The Republican and published on MassLive.com on August 29, 2015.

A notable Irish speaker and a resident of East Longmeadow, Michael J. Carney, has died at the age of 94.

Carney was the embodiment of Irish wit and wisdom for many admirers of the culture, and was beloved on both sides of the Atlantic for his efforts to preserve it. His death was being highlighted in the Irish press, with RTE, the national TV and radio broadcaster in Ireland, showing video of Carney and referring on its website to Carney's meetings with current and past Irish presidents.

The oldest living native of the Great Blasket Island off Ireland's West Coast, Carney was born on the Great Blasket, known, as Carney liked to say, for its "pure form of Irish," on Sept. 22, 1920. He was instrumental in the establishment of The Blasket Centre there, a museum that now attracts 50,000 visitors a year.

"I am a native-born Irish speaker and I love the Irish language. Everybody on the island grew up speaking a pure form of Irish. We also learned a little bit of English in school and even more from the visitors that came to the island," Carney wrote in his memoir.

"Storytelling was very important on the island. It built a very close-knit community. It was the basis for all the fine literature that came from the island. All my life I have told stories about the island. It is my own way of spreading the word, perpetuating the memory of my beloved island. The island was a place that got into your soul."

In 2013, he, along with son-in-law Gerald W. Hayes, authored "From the Great Blasket To America: The Last Memoir by an Islander."



Michael Carney (left) at the ICC's annual Lá na Gaeilge in May 2014.

Join or Renew Today! — Join now for 2016 and receive benefits for the rest of 2015!

YES! I would like to **support** the Irish Cultural Center at the following yearly membership level: (see listing below):

Single Family Junior Patron Lifetime

NAME(S)

STREET ADDRESS

CITY / STATE / ZIP

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I would like to become a **corporate sponsor** of the Irish Cultural Center at the following level (see listing below):

Green Sponsor White Sponsor Gold Sponsor

BUSINESS NAME

I would like to make an **additional donation to support the ICC:** \$ _____

I am enclosing my employer's matching gift form.

I am interested in sponsoring an event at the ICC. Please contact me.

I would like more information on including the ICC in bequests. Please contact me.

Please cut along dotted line, and send with payment to:

Irish Cultural Center of Western New England, Elms College, 291 Springfield Street, Chicopee, MA 01013

Make checks payable to: Irish Cultural Center of Western New England

Show Your Support for the Irish Cultural Center

The Irish Cultural Center is devoted to keeping the Irish arts alive. We work to preserve, share, and promote Ireland's cultural heritage, so that all people will have the opportunity to appreciate its rich legacy.

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, your support is vital to the ICC's continued success. Your generosity allows us to maintain operational expenses, develop new programs for all ages, expand and exhibit our collection of cultural artifacts, and continue to provide high quality events for the community.

We invite you to join our membership. Whether you are Irish or not, love the language or the music, or you just want to support the preservation of art and culture, your contribution is greatly appreciated. If an opportunity exists for you to seek out a friend or family member to join the ICC, please encourage them to do so.

Now you can easily pay your membership dues online at www.IrishCenterwne.org

Membership in the Irish Cultural Center makes a great gift. Or honor your loved one by requesting a memorial donation in lieu of flowers or other gifts.

Membership Levels

- Single \$50
- Family \$80
- Junior \$15 (high school – college)
- Patron \$250
- Lifetime \$1,000

Corporate Sponsorship Levels

- Green Sponsor \$1,000
- White Sponsor \$3,000
- Gold Sponsor \$5,000

Advantages of membership include free admission or discounted pricing for events such as concerts, Irish language classes, and Celtic Adventures for Kids, advance notice of events, and our printed newsletter.

Membership lasts for one calendar year (January – December).

For detailed benefits, please visit our website at www.IrishCenterwne.org.

**Irish Cultural Center
of Western New England**

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Irish Cultural Center Calendar of Events

Ongoing

Irish language classes offered each semester; please call the Registrar at 413-265-2314 or visit our website for more details.

Sept. 18 – Oct. 4, 2015

Big E exhibit in the Young Building

October 4, 2015

Annual Breakfast
at the Yankee Pedlar

October 18, 2015

Info session for Spring
2016 Ireland tour.

May 10 – 19, 2016

ICC Ireland Tour: Visiting Dingle
and Galway – Ireland’s Two Treasures

Visit our website and like our

Facebook page for news and the most current information on our programs and events.

Have you seen us on YouTube? We are continually adding interviews and event videos to our YouTube channel.

Links on www.IrishCenterwne.org

Our Mission

The mission of the Irish Cultural Center is to cultivate a connection with Ireland, through the arts, culture, history, language, and heritage. The Center offers opportunities to engage in educational, travel, and social events that promote Irish culture.

For information on our affiliate 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.holyokestpatricksparade.com

“You should keep up the good work because there are so many lessons to be learned from Irish history, and Irish culture is beloved to so many people.”

Christine Kinealy, Professor of History
and Irish Studies at Quinnipiac University