



the CAIRDE CONNECTION

IRISH CULTURAL CENTER OF WESTERN NEW ENGLAND

FEBRUARY 2016 VOLUME 17 ISSUE 1

House of Hamill Returns to Chicopee to Perform Trad Fiddle and Folk Music

The Irish Cultural Center invites you to an afternoon of **Irish fiddle and eclectic folk music with the group House of Hamill**, featuring **Brian Buchanan** (of Enter the Haggis), and **Rose Baldino** (of Burning Bridget Cleary). The intimate, relaxed performance will include trad Irish sets and songs, and original compositions. This duo proved extremely popular in their previous appearance for the ICC this past summer.

House of Hamill will perform on Saturday, February 20 at 3:00 pm at the Collegian Court Restaurant, 89 Park Street in Chicopee, MA. Food and drink will be available for purchase during the show.

Tickets are limited: advance purchase by February 18 is recommended. Cost is \$15 for ICC members, and \$18 for non-members. **Get your tickets** online at www.IrishCenterwne.org or call the ICC at 413-265-2537.

Brian and Rose are both accomplished traditional fiddle players and classical violinists, and have over 25 years of writing and performance experience between them. Whether House of Hamill is covering one of their favorite songs in a new way or stomping through a set of original jigs and reels, their chemistry onstage is always engaging and often hilarious. You'll leave with tired feet, a huge smile, and a new appreciation for the versatility of folk instruments in a modern context.



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.

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.



SPECIAL THANKS

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Donovan's Irish Pub

Eastfield Mall, Springfield, MA
donovanspub.com

GREEN SPONSOR



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CONTACT US

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

291 Springfield Street
Chicopee, MA 01013

413-265-2537

irishcenter@elms.edu

www.IrishCenterwne.org



Dear Irish Cultural Center Member,

We are excited to report that we are making significant progress in the redesign and refurbishment of the Irish Cultural Center's new facility at 429 Morgan Road in West Springfield. The former Elks Lodge property has been leased to us by the City of West Springfield for 20 years. The 10,000 square foot building and 9.8 acres of land will allow the ICC to expand our program offerings for our members and for the overall community. We are on track to move into the administrative offices by the beginning of March.

The refurbishment of the building and grounds is taking place in two phases. Phase One includes the main level, including meeting area, entry lobby and offices, the Traditional Irish Pub, outdoor deck, parking lot, athletic field, and nature trail. Completed work includes upgrades to the heating and AC systems, plumbing, electrical wiring, carpentry, and painting. The building project is coming together quite nicely, including fresh paint, flooring and furnishings now being completed.

Phase Two will follow later, and will include the upstairs Performance Center and Lecture Hall, and the Cultural Center Museum and Library with genealogy research resources center.

The ICC will soon be launching a capital campaign to raise funds for the capital improvements required for Phase One and Phase Two; the funds will be used to refurbish and furnish the facility. The Irish Cultural Center is moving forward, expanding our event offerings, travel trips to Ireland, community outreach and member benefits, thus fulfilling our promise of keeping the Irish arts alive.

We value our members and thank you for your support; we want you to be part of this future process with us. Please visit our website, subscribe to our emails, and join our Facebook page, for updates and photos posted throughout this exciting transition.

On behalf of the ICC Board of Directors,

Sean Francis Cahillane, President



Design rendering of the refurbished ICC building

March in the Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade

PLEASE JOIN US ON MARCH 20!

Walk proudly behind the ICC banner in the Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade on Sunday, March 20! **We invite all our members and friends to join us** as we march with the West Springfield contingent this year, to celebrate our upcoming move to our new location. We want to thank the Chicopee Parade Committee for all the years of friendship and hospitality that they have shown to the ICC.

RSVP to irishcenter@elms.edu or 413-265-2537. Please let us know if you would like to march, to make sure you receive more detailed information such as meeting time, etc. as we organize for this celebration of all things Irish.

The parade is a 2.9 mile walk through Holyoke. We will meet at the K-Mart parking lot on Route 5, Northampton Street, Holyoke, the morning of March 20. The parade will start at the parking lot just before noon, and ends at Holyoke City Hall. Marchers should arrange for their transportation at the end of the parade. We will be wearing our Irish sweaters or green jackets, with dark trousers.



Educational and Cultural High School Exchange Program

The Irish Cultural Center is partnering with the high schools of West Springfield, MA and Dingle, Ireland to cooperatively conduct an exciting educational and cultural exchange program between our two countries.

This year's arrangement for the exchange program is sending West Springfield High School students to the Dingle Peninsula in April.

Twenty three young women in 10th and 11th grade at West Springfield High will participate in this unique experience, in the program's second year.

The cohort of students will be traveling to the Dingle Peninsula along with trip chaperones, visiting many Irish locations over their April vacation, such as the Blasket Islands, Blarney Castle, Limerick, Killarney Castle, and more. While in Dingle, the students will stay with host families who will provide a taste of Irish culture, including hiking, boat tours, local foods, and pottery making.

Many of their hosts are families of Dingle students who visited Springfield last year, the first year of this cultural exchange. The students were on a basketball team, many of them musically talented, and had the chance to

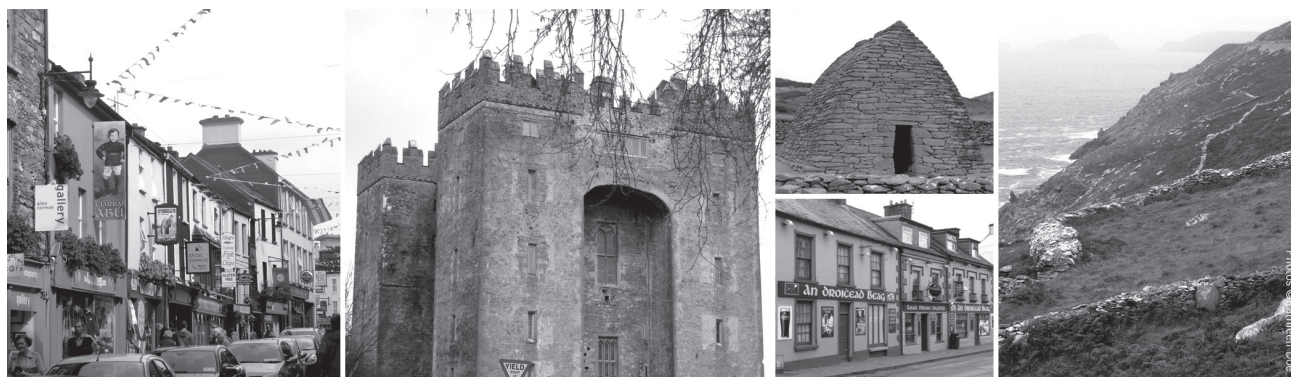
experience Irish culture in our western MA community, and to take part in cultural and athletic activities.

The West Springfield students traveling to Ireland this year have a broad array of talents. Some are athletes as well, and will have the chance to take part in sporting events in Dingle. All of the students in this well-rounded educational exchange program will be able to experience the culture of Ireland, the arts, music, history, and daily life.

With the visit of the Dingle students last year being such a positive experience, the idea of an exchange program with the two communities was developed. The ICC is a proud co-sponsor of this endeavor, which supports our mission of cultivating a connection with Ireland, through the arts, culture, history, and education.

For many of the students, this is their first time flying and visiting another country. The opportunity to experience Ireland first-hand on such a personal level will be the adventure of a lifetime. *National Geographic Magazine* lists the Dingle Peninsula as one of the most beautiful places on earth. West Springfield High will be launching fundraising activities for this 10-day trip, with more information to come.

Autumn Tour of Ireland with the Irish Cultural Center
Visiting Dingle, Killarney and Bunratty – Ireland's Southern Gems
October 13 – 22, 2016



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

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

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

The tour includes round trip bus transportation to Boston's Logan Airport, including driver's tip; round trip airfare from Boston to Shannon, Ireland via Aer Lingus; 8 nights in three Top Rated Hotels; full Irish breakfast daily; 8 dinners, including Kate Kearney's Cottage Irish Night; one pub lunch at South County Pub in Douglas, Co. Cork; admission to Blarney Castle, Blasket Centre, Gallarus Oratory, Dingle Brewing Company, horse-drawn jaunting cart ride

in Killarney, Bunratty Castle and Folk Park; optional day trips (included in cost of tour) – Blarney, Slea Head Drive tour of Dingle Peninsula, Gallarus Oratory, Kilmalkedar Church, and Kenmare; 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 \$2,580 per person/double room occupancy, or \$2,880 single room occupancy (limited availability). An initial \$1,000 deposit, accompanied by a fully completed reservation application and copy of your passport, reserves your seat.

Tour is limited (48 passengers) and will be filled on a first come, first serve basis. Don't miss out – reserve your seats today!

Information Session – Please join us!

Sunday, February 28, 2016 • 1:00 – 3:00 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

THE IRISH CULTURAL CENTER *proudly presents*

THE ELDERS

SPECIAL ONE NIGHT ONLY SHOW!

Back by popular demand! The Irish Cultural Center invites you to an evening with The Elders, one of the most critically acclaimed American Celtic folk rock groups touring today, as they return to western MA.

Don't miss this opportunity to see The Elders in their triumphant return – get your tickets today.

The Elders have performed across the United States, Ireland, and Europe, drawing faithful crowds and earning new fans wherever they go. They first played for the ICC last fall to a full house, creating new fans from a very enthusiastic crowd. We heard several audience members comment that it was the best show they had ever seen.

Since forming in 1998 in Kansas City, The Elders have set the music scene on its ear, thanks to a skillful blend of American roots rock and amped-up Celtic folk. Employing a variety of instruments including guitars, drums, banjo, accordion, mandolin, piano and fiddle, these six artists collectively create music that transcends the stereotypical notion of Celtic music.



"Contemporary Irish Folk Rock at its very best."

Shay Clarke – Irish American News

The Elders are fronted by vocalist and percussionist Ian Byrne, a native of Ireland's County Wicklow, with guitarist Steve Phillips, bassist Norm Dahlor, keyboardist and fiddler Brent Hoad, drummer Kian Byrne, and fiddler Diana Ladio.

The Elders will perform on Saturday, April 9 at 8:00 pm at the Portuguese American Club, 149 Exchange Street, Chicopee, MA. Doors open at 7:00 pm.

Advance tickets are \$25, and \$22 for ICC members. All tickets are \$30 at the door. General admission, table seating. **Get your tickets:** www.IrishCenterwne.org or 413-265-2537.

Cherish The Ladies Concert Provided Holiday Spirit

by Mary Ellen O'Brien

On Thursday, December 10, 2015, the Irish Cultural Center sponsored a bus trip to the UMASS Fine Arts Center for a concert by one of the best known and highly regarded Irish musical groups in both this country and Ireland, Cherish The Ladies. Their "Celtic Christmas" show proved to be an extremely enjoyable evening of Irish and holiday entertainment.

American-born Joanie Madden, who is the youngest member to be inducted into both the Irish-American Musicians Hall of Fame and the Comhaltas Hall of Fame, led a cast of talented singers, dancers and musicians from Ireland, Scotland, Canada and the US. The UMASS

program booklet described the evening as "a spectacular blend of virtuoso instrumental talents, beautiful vocals, captivating arrangements, and stunning step dancing. Their continued success as one of the top Celtic groups in the world is due to the ensemble's ability to take the best of Irish traditional music and dance and put it forth in an immensely entertaining show." The overall consensus of those who made the trip that evening was that it was indeed one of the best shows we had seen.

Hopefully, Cherish The Ladies will make a return engagement to the area sometime in the near future, and if so, you won't want to miss it.

Johnson Family Pride in Language

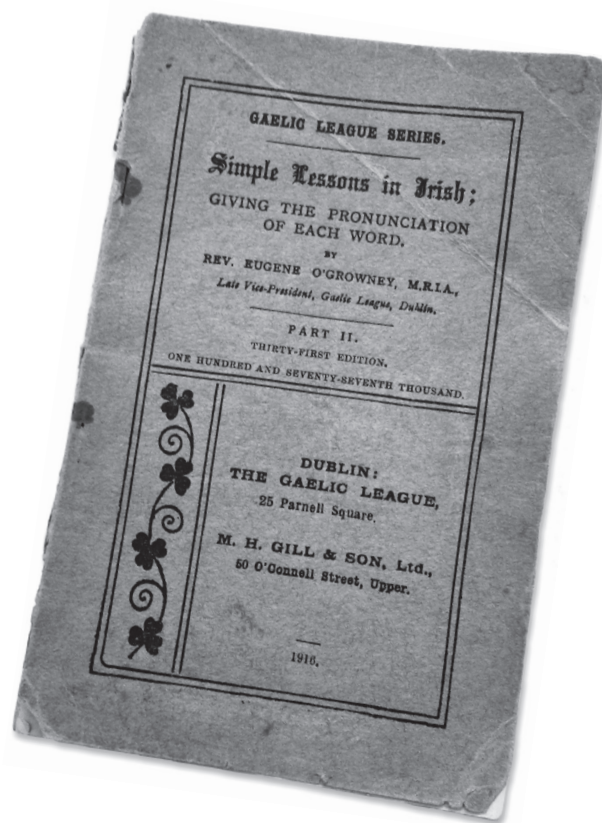
by Chip Costello

What would be in the day's mail? Of course we all get those postcards imploring us to join the local fitness center after our undisciplined holidays, invitations from the new dentist in town for a checkup, glossy brochures from financial planners, and, sadly, too many bills. So it was a pleasure to see a handwritten addressed envelope that was thicker than the other pieces of mail. I opened the envelope to find a picture, letter, and a slender paperback book.

The picture captured a contented couple, the letter – the details of their journey, and the book “Simple Lessons in Irish; Giving the Pronunciation of Each Word.” What really captured my attention was the 1916 publication date. The book was the second in a series and was in its thirty-first edition. On the front cover were the words *Gaelic League, 25 Parnell Square, Dublin*. This would be a great piece of mail.

The confident, relaxed couple in the black and white photo was Mike Johnson and Mary Byrne Johnson, the great grandparents of the donor, Nancy Callahan Strycharz. Mike and Mary were born in Rathdrum, County Wicklow in 1857. They married at twenty five and then moved to Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Mary had been an Irish teacher in Ireland. Mrs. Strycharz had received the book from family and wanted to make sure that sure that it was kept at the Irish Cultural Center so that its members would be able to see and appreciate this artifact in light of the Centenary. The letter noted that “As the story is told, Mary’s sister, Lucy Byrne, was in the Easter Rising.” The connection between the language and independence was strong in this family.

“The 1916-2016 Centenary Programme” notes that “The vision of an Independent Ireland with its own spoken and written language as the foundation stone of its unique culture informed much of the thinking of the 1916 leaders.” The revival of the language would continue to encourage many to do something to motivate their neighbors to learn and use what had been a neglected language. It is interesting to think about the countless number of people who learned the basics from this book that was written and designed by Reverend Eugene O’Growney. The interest and pride in the language existed in its sons and daughters in Ireland and throughout the world. We see that in the Johnsons’ having a copy.



In order for the Irish people to tap into all the potential they possessed, “1916-2016 Centenary Programme” concluded that “it was necessary for Ireland to be an Independent country.” The Gaelic League certainly played a major role in that regard.

The slender, fading copy of the text that the Center now has because of Mrs. Strycharz’s generosity will help us to remember one of the many pivotal pieces that helped shape events one hundred years ago. This was the best piece of mail that I could have hoped for.



Mike Johnson and Mary Byrne Johnson

Join or Renew Today!

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)

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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.

February 20, 2016

House of Hamill Concert

March 20, 2016

Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade

April 9, 2016

The Elders Concert

May 3, 2016

Valley Gives Day

May 2016 TBD

Lá na Gaeilge:

Day-long Irish language workshop

May 10 – 19, 2016 (SOLD OUT)

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

September 10, 2016

Bus Trip to Boston

October 13 – 22, 2016

ICC Ireland Tour: Visiting Dingle, Killarney and Bunratty

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

For information on the ICC's 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